

Simon Starling

Phantom Ride

Museums and libraries have become heterotopias in which time never stops building up and topping its own summit, whereas in the seventeenth century, even at the end of the century, museums and libraries were the expression of an individual choice. By contrast, the idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity.
Michel Foucault 'Of Other Spaces' 1967

To experience the Duveen Galleries is to experience a series of dislocations. We find ourselves in a street of sorts, an arcade perhaps? The street that we took to get here is now very much elsewhere. Now, within the galleries' bombastic stone walls, time and space as we understand them are temporarily suspended. For all its stylistic nods to the exterior world, this is an architectural echo chamber, both acoustically and temporally. It's a space that seems to hold ideas, sounds and memories in perpetual play. Where this outside-in, enveloped facade is punctured – by doorways that lead into light-filled galleries – we find no respite. We are thrown around, like the sound of our footsteps, from doorway to doorway, between then and now, between the past and the present: contemporary art to the Pre-Raphaelites, mid-century modernism to neoclassicism, from chiselled stone to moving image. We are bounced from moment to moment along the considerable length of this corridor-cum-heterotopic-highway (to return to Foucault).

We discover a large projection screen on which we find the space redoubled. We are invited on a *Phantom Ride* courtesy of a disembodied eye, its looping trajectory pulling us up and back, and from side to side, circumscribing the empty space through the repetition of the same movement – there and back, again and again like some perpetually turning hour-glass – and in so doing, cut backwards and forwards through time.

The phantom ride was a genre of film popular in the very early days of cinema. A camera was fixed to a moving vehicle to simulate a journey for an immobile cinema audience. They sat pinned to their seats, white-knuckled for fear they might de-rail on the next precipitous bend. The train tracks or the road anticipated the trajectory of the 'phantom' vehicle. Here though, the way has vanished. The highly precise and repeatable movements of the huge robotic arm on the similarly track-bound 'motion control camera' used to make this film facilitate a roller-coaster ride on invisible rails. The film's soundtrack is the only remaining evidence of the camera's week-long presence in the Duveens – the audible contractions and expansions, the ascents, descents and contortions, of a very real machine.

Phantom Ride was triggered by the discovery of a momentary rupture to this hermetic place. In 1940 the gallery roof was brought down by a bomb that hit the building and its grounds. We now float weightlessly over the rubble, tracking the shadows of past exhibitions and the ghosts of works seen here before. The motion control camera's ability to repeat programmed

moves precisely time and again, and from place to place, allow this vast and cumbersome machine to function as a miraculous compositing device – capable of collapsing time and space into a single cinematic sequence – into something approximating 'real time'. More images of violence and trauma follow: a contorted group of corpses piled up under a table; a Jaguar jet fighter lying belly-up, its mirrored surfaces dematerialising its mechanical menace. The technology of war is pitched against the technology of the digital age – the ancestry of both seemingly interwoven. Four simple mirror cubes fracture the space around them – a quiet refusal – as if aping the three protective wooden boxes for sculptures packed and ready to be shipped to a safe haven in 1939. The sound of urgent footsteps momentarily fills the galleries and then is gone. A machine-gun-toting mouse-creature guards the entrance to the galleries, monumental in polished bronze. We pass a bricked-up door, then, as if dragging us with it, a tiny paper and balsawood plane flits past, swooping down to land. A prophetic reptilian droid cranes its neck towards our robotic eye – an image of the future, back from the past. Open your mouth, close your eyes.

Turning away, past a now empty South Duveens, the rubble again an after-image, we find a painting, floating, ghost-like, freed from the provisional shell of flimsy walls and suspended ceilings that for decades obscured the architectural bombast below. Its staccato repetitions like an echoing gunshot from its three iconic cowboys. Are they shooting or dancing? We spin around a dandyish and heavily foreshortened St George and his vanquished dragon – the medieval sculptor's perspectival sleight of hand that made him plausible in his lofty position, seeming to foreground the digital technology that now facilitates his return.

These few moments from the past recreated here seem to drag others with them. We populate the space with our own experiences and memories. It is suddenly just yesterday as we float past a group of bronzes – a drum, a gun – the instruments of war – the last objects to occupy this space. Then, an image from the day before yesterday, as the absurd calligraphic arabesques of a desert-bound racetrack give way to an aerial dog-fight playing out endlessly above the hills of Kurdistan. A bomb is caught falling into water, we hit the floor and then rise again into the roof just as the runner returns, powering towards us down the space, then the floor again, the mechanistic mouse, the blocked doorway, the loop...

Simon Starling 2013

Born in Epsom in 1967, Simon Starling studied photography and art at Maidstone College of Art, Trent Polytechnic Nottingham and Glasgow School of Art. Since his first solo exhibition at the Showroom in London in 1995, his work has been widely exhibited in the UK and elsewhere. Recent exhibitions include *Simon Starling: Recent History* at Tate St Ives in 2011, *Project for a Masquerade* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima in 2011, *THEREHERETHENTHERE (Works 1997–2009)* at the Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Paris in 2009 and *Cuttings (Supplement)* at The Power Plant, Toronto in 2008. He was awarded the Turner Prize in 2005 for *Shedboatshed*.

Using video, film, photography, slide projection and sculpture, Starling reworks existing objects and architectural spaces, adding layers to their histories to create compelling poetic narratives. His works often use historical or geological research as a point of departure, and explore the origins of materials and the processes which transform them into functional objects.

Works featured in *Phantom Ride*

In order of appearance

Michael Sandle born 1936
A Twentieth Century Memorial 1971–8
Tate. Purchased 1994

Scott Myles born 1975
The End of Summer 2001
Courtesy of the artist and The Modern Institute, Glasgow

Pablo Picasso 1881–1973
The Charnel House 1944–5
Museum of Modern Art, New York
Mrs Sam A Lewisohn Bequest (by exchange), and Mrs Marya Bernard Fund in memory of her husband Dr Bernard Bernard, and anonymous funds
© Succession Picasso/DACS, London 2012.
Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence

Chris Burden born 1946
Plane from *When Robots Rule* 1999

Douglas Gordon born 1966
pretty much every word written, spoken, heard, overheard from 1989... 1989–
Courtesy Studio lost but found, Berlin

Andy Warhol 1928–1987
Triple Elvis 1963
Private Collection
© The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London 2012
© Photo Giorgio Colombo, Milan

Statue of St George c.1510
The Provost and Fellows of Eton College

Patrick Keiller born 1950
Footage from *Robinson in Ruins* 2010
Courtesy of the artist

Sir Jacob Epstein 1880–1959
Torso in Metal from 'The Rock Drill' 1913–14
Tate. Purchased 1960

Robert Morris born 1931
Untitled 1965/71
Tate. Purchased 1972
© ARS, NY and DACS, London 2013

Fiona Banner born 1966
Jaguar 2010
Courtesy of the artist

Ian Hamilton Finlay 1925–2006
Ventose 1991
Osez 1991
Drum 1991
Quin Morere 1991
Flute 1991
Tate. Purchased 2006

Patrick Keiller born 1950
The Robinson Institute 2012 (fragment including works from Tate and The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)
Courtesy of the artist

James Boswell 1906–1971
Untitled (Iraq) 1948
Untitled (Iraq) 1948
Tate. Presented by Ruth Boswell, the artist's widow 2000

Andreas Gursky born 1955
Bahrain I 2005
Tate. Purchased with funds provided by David Roberts 2007

British Pathé
Oil for the Twentieth Century 1951
British Pathé archive

Muirhead Bone 1876–1953
Building Ships: On the Stocks c.1917
Tate. Presented by the Ministry of Information 1918

Sydney Carline 1888–1929
Over the Hills of Kurdistan: Flying above Kirkuk 1919
The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
Presented by Gwendolyn Harter, the artist's widow 1929

Leonard Rosoman 1913–2012
Bomb Falling into Water 1942
Tate. Presented by the War Artists Advisory Committee 1946

Jackson Pollock 1912–1956
Number 23 1948
Tate. Presented by the Friends of the Tate Gallery (purchased out of funds provided by Mr and Mrs H.J. Heinz II and H.J. Heinz Co. Ltd) 1960
© The Pollock-Krasner Foundation ARS, NY and DACS, London 2012

Peter Kennard born 1949
Haywain with Cruise Missiles 1980
Defended to Death 1983
Tate. Purchased from the artist 2007

Martin Creed born 1968
Work No.850 2008
Rennie Collection, Vancouver

Leaflet images
Cover: Crates packed in the Duveen Galleries. Photo Alfred Carlebach 1939

Reverse, main: Crack in the floor of Gallery 29, Tate Britain

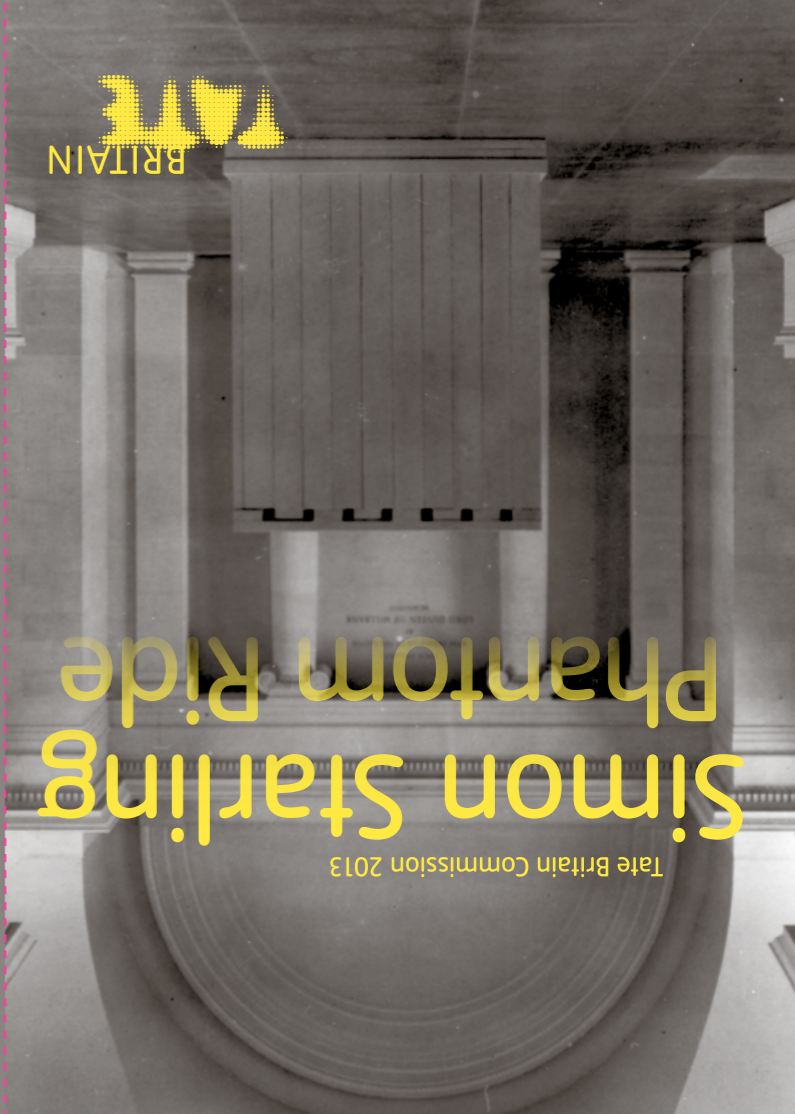
Reverse, side, top to bottom:
Scott Myles *The End of Summer* 2001
Installation view, Tate Britain 2006

Tate Director John Rothenstein with Tate staff surveying the damage caused by a bomb which hit the gallery on 16 September 1940

Fiona Banner *Jaguar* 2010
Installation view, Tate Britain 2010

Martin Creed *Work No. 850* 2008
Installation view, Tate Britain 2010

Statue of St George 1510
Installation view, Tate Britain 2001



Tate Britain Commission 2013

Simon Starling *Phantom Ride*

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The Duveen Galleries

The Duveen Sculpture Galleries opened to the public in 1937. Stretching over 300 feet, the two long galleries with high, barrel-vaulted ceilings were the first public galleries in England designed specifically for the display of sculpture. They were funded by Sir Joseph Duveen and designed by the architects Romanie-Walker and Gilbert Jenkins.

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