

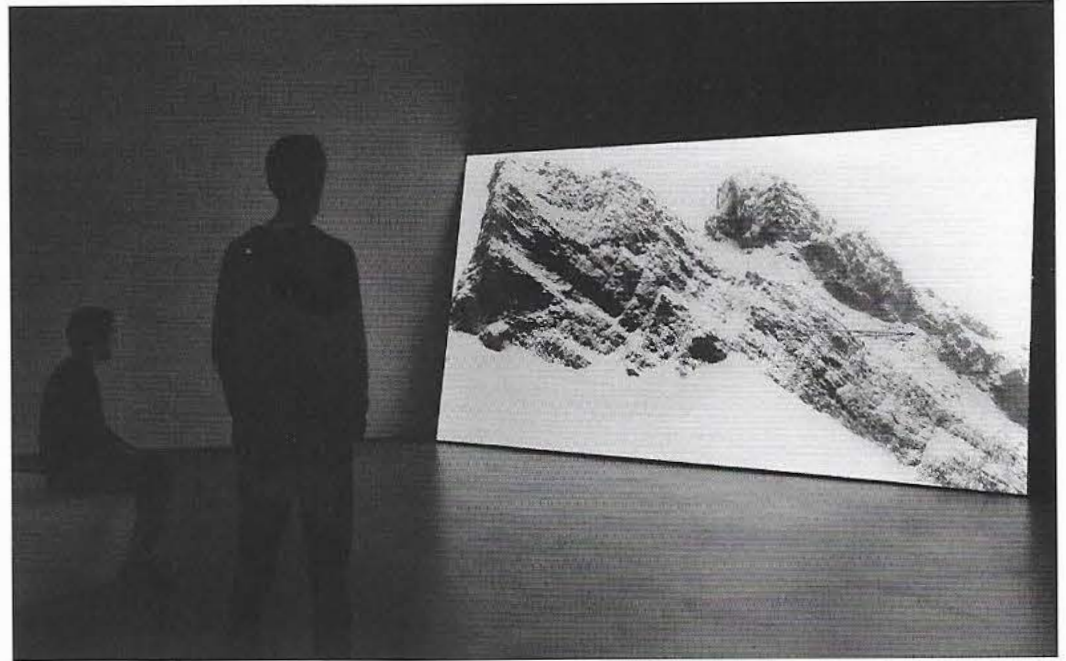
the exhibitionary space of the gallery in contrast to the foreclosure of architectural space in cinematic viewing or nomadic viewing on mobile devices. What gets flagged up is theatricality.

Manchot's other works, *11/18* and *Twelve*, both 2015, are sited like two separate acts between the photographic prologue and *Out of Bounds* as epilogue. *11/18* is a nine-channel video installation for nine different 4x3 monitors displayed like characters on a raised platform confronting the viewer. The work stems from a seven-year collaboration with Manchot's daughter Billie in which she agreed to pose for one minute each month in front of the camera during her adolescence. Shot on Super 8, the 18-minute loop contains its own internal choreography. Different moments from the series of films fade in and out achronologically, sometimes simultaneously. It is impossible to fix the sitter in time, the portrait a poignant paean to adolescence and loss, the personal nature of which is refracted by the anonymous gaze of the camera. While the reference to Andy Warhol's screen tests is somewhat obvious, Manchot's edit shows the slippage of time, whereas Warhol, in slowing down the projection time of his screen tests to 16 frames per second, captured a stasis close to death.

Manchot's ethical gaze, which allows the 'other' to be without judgement, may be why she was commissioned to make a work with 12 people in recent recovery from substance misuse in rehabilitation communities in Liverpool, Oxford and London. Made over three years, *Twelve* features the stories of her collaborators, all of whom had control over how they wanted to represent themselves. Their stories are refracted through self-selected adaptations of scenes or ideas derived from art-house films from Michael Haneke, Chantal Akerman, Bela Tarr and Gus van Sant, among others, which Manchot used in the workshops that preceded filming. Eight of the films feature in *The Triptych*, which is shown in a room by itself, its three monitors staggered rather than flush with the wall. This allusion to the sculptural aspect of installation is accentuated in the next room which houses the other four films, each in its own cubicle of the cross-shaped architectural structure that takes up most of the gallery space. This structure, which lends intimacy to the work, was Manchot's initial installation plan but it has only been realised at this final stop of its countrywide tour since it premiered at Peckham Platform in 2015.

The films are hard to watch. Some of them have the emptiness of a lot of art-house cinema. Some of the psycho-dramatic techniques are not very engaging for a spectator removed from their workshop enactments. Some are simply painful – a pair of hands repetitively scouring a black tile or cutting daisies with nail scissors alluding to the internally grating nature of addiction. But what is clearly communicated, especially perhaps in the component films *The Lost Weekend* and *Bronson Monologue*, is the value of film as a vehicle for working through trauma, both in its capacity as a collective storehouse of memory and identification, and in its role as providing a less damaging mode of compulsive behaviour, such as acting, to channel existential vulnerability.

The exhibition as a whole registers how we use technology to mediate human fear of loss, of time, of nature. The proposition might be that we see these entities as being embedded in material relations in which the human is a participant rather than a master. When the snow falls across the screen in the final moments of *Out of Bounds*,



it is sublime, but the explosion is a landscaping that has environmental effects in the here and now. ■

Melanie Manchot
Out of Bounds 2016
video installation

MARIA WALSH is author of *Art and Psychoanalysis* and co-editor of *Twenty Years of MAKE Magazine: Back to the Future of Women's Art*.

Josh Bitelli: A Partition

Cell Project Space London 29 April to 12 June

Curated by Rebecca Lewin, the title 'A Partition' is taken from Michel Serres's seminal text *The Parasite*, and, read in this post-humanist context, it implies a barrier or a distancing from certain human interactions and behaviours understood as parasitical within a reading of the text. It is collaboration and a perceptible sense of dialectical process, however, that emerge more visibly through layers of the exhibition's making and present an obfuscation of a hierarchical framework.

A distinction between the exhibition and the work is noteworthy here, as it is in the exhibition's very staging that the dialectical and collaborative approach first emerges. An institutional tiled ceiling, lowered to a more penurious regulation height and, bathed in flat light on one side, an off-white disposable medical curtain – used to give patients privacy – divide the space, rendering a clinically prepared environment, stark and clean. Reminiscent of a hospital, it offers a momentary disorientation that frames the reception of the video work *All Doors and No Exits*, 2016. The curtain is deliberate in its proportion and treatment, and yet it is confusing as to who has authored this clearly purposeful intervention into the space. Two flat screens stacked vertically on a unicol stand suggest a seminar room. On them we see healthcare professionals engaged in a seemingly endless, tautological performance of both scripted and improvised dialogic action which plays out like an absurdist training manual for the corporatisation of care. Offered guidance via headphones, the participants respond, perform and adapt. Self-monitoring their sincerity and their ability to perform, while improving and ensuring the improvement of their peers, this is an exhausted end game in which the exercise inevitably disintegrates.

One might assume the altered environment forms the material components of *All Doors and No Exits*, but instead it is simply a bold staging of the work, a co-authored extension rather than a constituent part. The determined curatorial

credit and the two available titles (one for the work and one for the show) assert that the exhibition has been conceived as an independent project, touting the intellectual remit of the enquiry and simultaneously housing Josh Bitelli's video. Disconcertingly, if 'A Partition' is authored separately and only within its form can *All Doors and No Exits* exist, the question arises as to which operates as host and which is exposed as parasite. The curatorial voice is clear. A larger project is offered, but the video work also benefits immeasurably from this curatorial strategy. This is co-dependency made manifest, and it is tempting to think of Boris Groys's notion of 'curating' as etymologically linked to the word 'curing'; an artwork that exists outside a given context does not have the necessary strength or health to present itself for contemplation. Curating is curing an artwork of its latency, nursing it into being.

This dialectical entanglement of the artist and curator operates as a mirror. Both in real life and in the making of the work, healthcare professionals depend on each other. These dependencies are revealed in a choreography that demonstrates the collaborative relationships at play between all parties. But if curating is to 'cure', it is also surely to 'care for', and in the context of an ever-diminishing public sector it is impossible to ignore a political backdrop. In his 2010 essay 'Exhaustion and Exuberance', Jan Verwoert outlines a possible way through capitalism's increasing coercion of people to perform. If performance inevitably results in exhaustion, exuberance and defiance are inherent in activity that does not derive its value from external criteria of necessity or success. In other words, not to demonstrably achieve anything but simply to do. This is latency as activity, one that creates an inherently politicised space which sits outside conventions of productivity. For the curatorial voice within 'A Partition' to have such an effective agency as that of the artist's, it too must inhabit a reflexive field. This can only happen by embedding Bitelli's artistic strategy within his film in the physical staging of the exhibition.

The disconcerting demonstration of collapse in Bitelli's work reveals the complicated nature of one's relationships to others



Installation view of
'A Partition'

and also to a system of care within society. Institutions cannot accommodate latency, but in collaborative activity, where the criterion for measuring value emerges from within, latency asserts itself as a reflexive interrogation of performance as complicity. In 'A Partition', collaboration emerges as a politicised position. Not one in advance of or indebted to another, but one that together resists hierarchy and a susceptibility to external value judgements predicated on disingenuous notions of progress and value. 'A Partition' values human interaction and an organised notion of collective care. ■

LYNTON TALBOT is a curator and lecturer based in London.

Midlands Round-up

Eastside Projects • Grand Union • New Art Gallery
Walsall • Rugby Art Gallery and Museum

'Artists know that the way to solve a problem is to begin.' The words of Heather & Ivan Morison take up residence on the Eastside Projects billboard, beckoning visitors into **Production Show**. The beginning is, appropriately, the current state of this exhibition, as 'Production Show' follows various artists through the production of new work, in part with the intention of opening up the process of production in a way that is normally hidden behind the scenes. For instance, the second gallery space is currently a functioning workshop where visitors can track the progress of Nicolas Deshayes's experiments in making sculptures that can be hooked into a building's plumbing system to function as a radiator.

At this early stage in the exhibition, projects such as that from Des Hughes are still 'pending', while AutoItalia have made it as far as to pose a question: 'Can we work collectively and still have individual freedom and autonomy?' The contributions of the various artists are recorded on the gallery walls in a diagrammatical fashion, listing 'inputs' and 'outputs' among the various details. One of the few finished projects, Richard Woods's *Duck Weave* (the gallery's previous exhibition) features such inputs as '15 days installation time' and outputs including 'six wall paintings' and '50 silk screened canvas tote bags'. By listing the various details of production, Eastside Projects demystifies the production of art, in opposition to the traditional white cube mode of display where work is presented as if produced effortlessly.

With 'Production Show', Eastside Projects is attempting to reclaim Birmingham as a city of production, and while this incarnation of the exhibition ends in July, it should be fascinating to follow the developments of the projects initiated here over the two years that the 'Production Show' programme runs.

Around the corner from Eastside Projects, **Prem Sahib** has turned Grand Union into a changing room with 'Grand Union'. Sahib repurposes the gallery name into an explicit suggestion of bodies coming together. A black bench outlines the edge of the gallery space, circling a freestanding white-tiled wall, utilising an aesthetic that suggests spaces where physical encounters might happen. By creating this environment within a small gallery space, Sahib produces an interesting clash that heightens an awareness of viewers' physicality. Visiting alone, there is a feeling of being somewhere off-limits, intruding on a space meant for something and someone else.