

David Cotterrell: Defying Dog

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Materials:

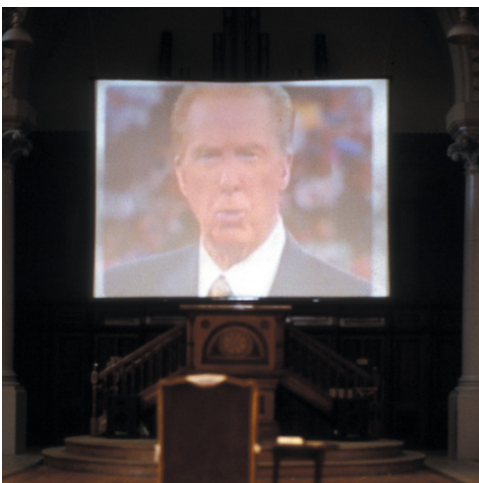
Projection Screen, Macromedia Director Software, Data Projector, Apple Macintosh computer, arm chair, side table & customised remote control

Video installation in a de-consecrated church, reflecting on the spectacularisation of the role of the church and faith

A site-specific installation for a de-consecrated church in Clapton, East London, Defying Dog was Cotterrells response to the shifting uses of architecture. The Round Chapel was built in 1871 to house one of Londons largest dissenting congregations: by 2000, the building had been salvaged by a consortium of government agencies and was used as a community centre; the congregation having shrunk so radically that a small room upstairs was now adequate for services.

Cotterrell started examining the growth of televangelism: was a shrinking church-going community the result of spectacularised prayer? Culling footage from American televised sermons and healing sessions, Cotterrell created a remote control theology, suitable for use in the churchs central hall. Placing an armchair 5 metres in front of an enormous projection screen, which hung directly above the churchs pulpit, he created a mise en scene which immediately juxtaposed the intimacy of front room worship with the emptiness of the massive church hall. Once comfortably seated in the armchair, viewers were able to activate the video using a remote control. Choosing from a menu of seven theological and ecumenical issues, the participants were able to select clips responding to their chosen topic.

From the righteous zeal of Steve, for whom the filth of Bill Clintons fellatio is a constant source of ministerial concern, to John & Dodi, the husband and wife double act promising heaven as a tax free haven, these snippets reveal an obsession with the mortal world ruthlessly exploited by televangelism. The clips include footage of the congregations participation in each sermon: in Texas, thousands are whipped into a frenzy of rolling eyes and stamping feet as their minister begins speaking in tongues. But this audience, a congregation of one, is connected to the Holy Spirit via pre-recorded footage and a remote control. Towering above the isolated individual in the easy chair, Cotterrells televangelists rain fire and brimstone over a nice cup of tea.



10 Second Sermon Credit: David Cotterrell (2000)



Promises Credit: David Cotterrell (2000)



Threats Credit: David Cotterrell (2000)