

David Cotterrell: Nobody Loves Everybody

Date: 15th March 1997

Dimensions(m):2.0, 0.6, 0.4

Materials:

Modified Gambling Machine, Duratran Prints

Modified fruit machine offers to play a game with heavy references to Tom Stoppard's 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead'

I'm willing it. Inside where nothing shows, I am the essence of a man spinning double-headed coins, and betting against himself in private atonement for an unremembered past. Tom Stoppard, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, 1967

A pre-cursor to Cotterrells investigations into computer programming, Nobody Loves Everybody is a game played on a modified fruit machine. The machines three spinning reels, previously bearing four leaf clovers, double cherries and dollar signs, are replaced with words arranged from left to right as noun, verb and noun. The mathematics of probability come into effect, and players, like the eponymous characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, who toss a coin ninety times, only to find each toss resulting in a call of heads, are left to consider what is random process and what is fate. Cotterrell began building the work after passing through Las Vegas, where the mass desperation of the citys gamblers, coupled with a growing distaste for the ease of pillow talk, gave him the impetus to create a game of word chance. Each play costs its participant ten pence and returns range from 1.50 for the too easily uttered I love you to 4.00 for the more realistic (if nihilistic) appraisal, nobody loves everybody. Key to this work is Cotterrells interest in controlled experiment: the artist is aware of the number of possible outcomes available and the statistical probability of certain combinations. In essence, there is no real difference between this fruit machine, with its primitive computer chip, and the latest version of Tomb Raider. For both, there will always be a finite number of options.



Modified Fruit Machine Credit: David Cotterrell (1997)



A 'no-win' line Credit: David Cotterrell (1997)