
David Cotterrell: Side Effects - 16.06.21 - 30.09.21

Date: 16th June 2021

David has produced a new work in collaboration with Tom Valentine (aka Thomas Vann Alzheimer) for the exhibition, Side Effects // Efectos Secundarios, Volume IV.

Stepling Art Gallery at SDSU-IV, in collaboration with I21 Espacio de Proyectos, Mexicali is pleased to present the composite film, A Yard for Your Thoughts [The Last Huzzah of British Gunboat Diplomacy] by David and Thomas under their moniker, The Big Bend Film Collective. The work is exhibited alongside projects by Enid Baxter Ryce, Andrea Carrillo Iglesias, Obpr - Pierre Aubert, Omar Guerra, Marisa Raygoza, Aldebaran Solares, Mezil Vega Osorno and Lino Vlter.

Gallery Venue:
Stepling Art Gallery, SDSU-IV
720 Heber Ave., Calexico, CA 92231

Online Exhibition:
<https://i21-stepling.com/>

Curated By:
Luis G. Hernandez and Adrian Pereda Vidal

Supported By:
Mexicali Biennial

Additional Information:
For more information please email luis.hernandez@sdsu.edu

Exhibition Text:
Side Effects / Efectos secundarios is a series of exhibitions that is born out of a collaboration between I21 espacio de proyectos in Mexicali, Mexico and Stepling Gallery at San Diego State University in Calexico, CA. Like many others, I21 and Stepling Gallery felt the need to continue doing programming while their brick-and-mortar locations remain closed due to the pandemic, and they decided to join forces to create this binational effort. The series Side Effects / Efectos secundarios consists of four exhibitions each with the subtitles Volume I, II, III and IV and invites artists from both sides of the U.S./Mexico border to participate with work to be presented on this digital platform.

Fifteen months after COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, Side Effects launches Volume IV, the final in the series of exhibitions that began in September 2020 in response to Covid. As restrictions ease and places start to reopen, both in countries that increasingly have Covid under control as well as in some where the coronavirus still remains a threat, this concluding exhibition recapitulates in the form of snippets what many of us experienced in the past years events. It asks one to think about how well we move forward, and to assess and reflect on what we just lived through, endured and lost.

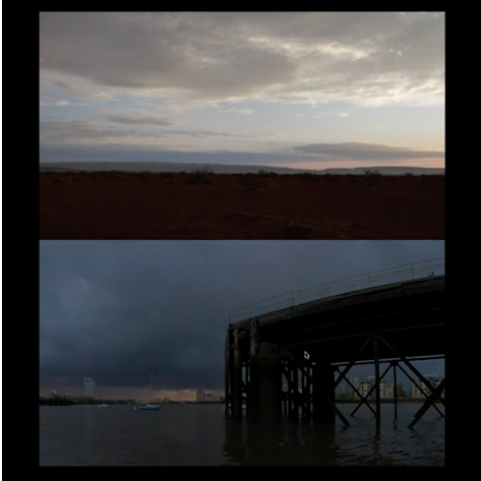
Some of the projects presented in Volume IV take us back to the earlier months of the pandemic, as in the case of Covid Test, 2021 by Pierre Aubert - Obpr, which consists of video clips of people receiving PCR tests for diagnosing Covid. At some point in the pandemic these communication videos were ubiquitous, but seeing them now all compiled in a single place, they create an almost obscene effect that is opposite to that initially intended. The work A Brief History of a Cry was made by Marysa Raygoza as an attempt to cope with uncertainty and to

make sense of the tragic and absurd situation during her early confinement. In it, Raygoza uses a play-on-words to create a story just as nonsensical that is about car tires; both male and female, as well as baby tires and weeping. Two other artists that deal with the absurdity of the last months are Lino Vite with his series *Strange Loop* that consists of gifs that repeat in cycles and that do not seem to have an end, and Aldebarn Solares *What We do for Living*, a video that explores the moving image and the relation between the notions of perceptual coherence and cognitive dissonance that bring to mind the distorted sense of smell and taste that many experience as Covid symptoms.

Whereas Raygoza decided to alter one of the few sites she frequented during confinement and her walks became incidental to the understanding of her work, several other projects in the exhibition make the walk and the stroll as well as the landscape more prominent and become the subject. In *Between Light and Matter*, Omar Guerra creates contemplative spaces by subtly modifying the landscape during his long and lonely walks through the woods. Guerra placed circular mirrors and other reflective and absorbing materials at the bottom of trees that function as sort of bridges between life and death or a passage to eternal life. Enid Baxter Ryces photos, videos and hand painted images in *Ghost Forest* also provide a poetic, yet darker representation of the forest. In Baxter's work, expressive and lyrical qualities are implicitly interwoven with history, personal experience, climate change and nature reclaiming it all back over.

Other projects in the exhibition more explicitly depict human presence in the landscape. In the video *A Yard for your Thoughts [The Last Huzzah of British Gunboat Diplomacy]* by the Big Bend Film Collective, the bottom half of a split-screen never shows people, but in most frames, we see portions of bridges, buildings and other man-made structures - those of the city of London. And in the top half of the screen, a more deserted and arid landscape is presented to us, but a lonely character appears here and there among nature - that of Baja. During the pandemic, those few that had the means left big cities and relocated to rural areas, a privileged mobility that has occurred throughout history, nationally and trans-nationally, just as when Europeans journeyed to America, for among other more powerful reasons, to escape disease. *Diaporama chileno* by Mezli Vega Osorno is a work that rarely leaves the urban landscape. This is a multi-image slide show that recounts the movements of the artist through Valparaiso during the course of a month, and presents the city as a vibrant place despite movement restrictions due to the measures taken because of Covid - restrictions that up to June of 2021, are still in effect in parts of the country. This could be why it is evident that while all the images in *Diaporama chileno* are of outdoor scenes, post-production occurred indoors.

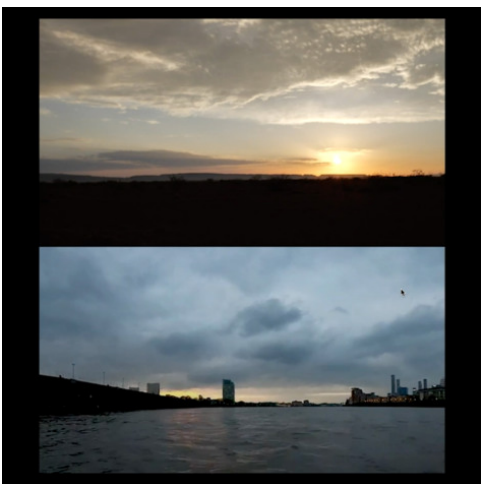
A different type of landscape is the audiopiece *Rise to the Sky* by Andrea Carrillo. This is a soundscape collage of audio documents selected from the CAVS Special Collection at MIT that focuses on space explorations, both scientific and fictional, and that speaks of our desires, dreams, fears and of humans colonialist impulse - if we can conquer space, we should be able to have the pandemic under control. It is no surprise that Biden, in his first primetime address as president, expressed his goal to beat the virus and celebrate COVID Independence by July 4, and more recently, during the G7 meetings, remarked that America will be the arsenal of vaccines in our fight against COVID-19, just as America was the arsenal of democracy during WWII.



Still from 'A Yard for Your Thoughts' Credit: © Big Bend Film Collective (Cotterrell & Valentine) (2021)



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