

Holly Davey: *A Script for an Archive*



Holly Davey, *Scene no. 7, A Script for an Archive*, 2020, Original photograph from the Bulwer collection at the British School at Rome, red lighting gel, bulldog clip.

19 September - 17 October 2020

For Holly Davey's first solo exhibition at the gallery, the artist will create an environment out of unusable props, half-made costumes and semi-constructed sets, that will sit alongside a central script: *A Script for an Archive*. Together, these components will explore society's fascination with archiving human existence and the way we perform our stories. The exhibition emerges out of Davey's work and research during her fellowship at the British School of Rome in 2019, where, inspired by a member of Cinecitta Studio staff saying to her that 'It all begins with a page, without the script there is nothing', she made a series of model sets and dysfunctional props, and wrote a script. It is only when the audience inhabits the exhibition that the work becomes complete. The audience become the performers, activating the space with their presence. When the semi-constructed objects are placed together with the audience's movement, a new narrative is formed about the way we live; the way we construct a sense of belonging and the fragmented remnants we leave behind.

A central theme throughout the exhibition is the lone female figure, the outline of an absence. This motif derives from the photographic collection of the work of Agnes and Dora Bulwer, two unmarried sisters, who lived in Rome in the late 19th and early 20th Century. Together they went on field trips, photographing ruins, the landscape and local people. In the photographic trace left, a lone woman is often pictured in the landscape; she is presumed to be one of the sisters. Agnes

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Opening times: Thursday to Saturday 2-6 pm and by appointment

and Dora Bulwer's lives are now almost invisible, yet this lone woman comes to signify their forgotten story. All that is left is an outline, a silhouette, a cut out of a life.

Inspired by and using archival photographs from the Bulwer collection at the British School of Rome, alongside research visits to the city's Cinecitta, to explore the studio of Oscar winning set designer, Dante Ferretti, *A Script for an Archive* was written. It investigates the connections between the constructed reality of a film set; how we create a sense of belonging and what remains of our lives. Excavating our relationship with the world around us, Davey removes the layers of fragmented reality, investigating and exploring the dysfunctionality of these constructed viewpoints that are normally made for the camera lens. During the exhibition, the audience will be able to wander through the stage-ruins experiencing the imagined remnants of these women's lives, our lives. On the last day of the exhibition, *A Script for an Archive* will be inhabited and performed by two actors.

Holly Davey's practice involves working closely with ideas around place, absence and the archive. Her lens-based practice includes sculpture, performance and text. She is interested in the heritage of a location or a collection, especially its lost and largely forgotten social history. Since graduating from Goldsmiths College, London, Davey has exhibited both nationally and internationally. In 2019, she was the Creative Wales Fellow at the British School at Rome. In 2018, she had solo exhibitions at g39, Cardiff and The Hardwick Gallery, Cheltenham Spa. Recent commissions include *Here is Where We Came From* at Plymouth Arts Centre, Plymouth; *There is No There There*, A La Ronde, National Trust, Exeter; *Here Is Where We Meet*, a Situations Commission for Bath & Bristol Weekender and *The Nameless Grace* at The Holburne Museum, Bath, She has taken part in several international residencies and in 2017 was the recipient of a Creative Wales Award. She lives and works in Cardiff.

For more information and images please contact us.

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