

Ghost Weight Experience

Andrea G Artz (with Isa Suarez, Veronica B and Alejandro Escobar)

Exhibition: 21.05.21-13.06.21

Times: Friday Saturday Sunday 12-6 & by appointment (details to come)

Coleman Project Space is pleased to present 'Ghost Weight Experience', an immersive gallery installation and interactive virtual-reality (VR) experience devised by Andrea G Artz and supported by an Arts Council England Lottery Grant.

Exploring ideas around death, memorialization and photography, this solo exhibition has been created in collaboration with composer Isa Suarez, writer Veronica B and digital artist/developer Alejandro Escobar. As the title implies, Artz' focus is on the poetic aspects of our human rituals for remembering and the old- and new-world processes that allow us to retain, or even foster, connections with the departed.

Artz is intrigued by the fact there is still something of the old belief 'the camera steals your soul' about portrait practices; the sense of having been 'captured'. From Victorian memento mori, to the aspirational family studio portrait and the endless proliferation of smart-phone selfies, images of people continue to exist, long after they're gone. Developed from a previous 2018 installation 'Ghost Weight', this ambitious multi-work references a range of photographic settings through history, offering new perspectives on and details of its protagonists – a motley vintage group originally immortalised in found photos.

For 'Ghost Weight Experience', CPS becomes a site for investigation into the fictionalised lives of these characters and the power of photography to shape our personal and collective stories. The gallery's Shed Space serves as the photo-studio home of a narrated, sound-scaped VR experience using Oculus technology. Meanwhile, the main gallery operates as a showroom of imagery and sculptural curios relating to the installation, including a model of the Soulgrapher Animator chair – the main physical component of this fictional 'travel machine'.

Once through the main gallery and into the Shed Space, the viewer is invited to participate in a playful interactive process, designed as if to enable the possibility of entering a 'bardo' or afterlife state as a living person, and thereby achieving what Artz calls 'ghost weight'. As operator of the Soulgrapher Animator, which also incorporates a Graflex camera and flash, one is able to engage with the artist's digitally altered portraits in a three-room, contemporary virtual setting, freed from the cold, dead stasis of the still photograph.

Andrea G Artz is a London-based visual artist, photographer and virtual reality director, who holds an MFA from the University of Leeds. Recent awards include: a commission for Grain Projects, 2020; a 2018 MacDowell Colony Fellowship Award, Peterborough/NH, USA; as well as ACE and ECCE grants. Artz has had recent solo exhibitions at Foyer Galley, School of Design, University of Leeds, 2019, and Rottstr5 Kunsthallen in Bochum, Germany, 2017. Group exhibitions include the forthcoming Format Festival 2021, as well as recent projects at Thameside Gallery, London, 2018, and East Sussex Open 2016, Towner Gallery, Eastbourne. Her work is held in the collections of: the Museum of London; Charles Dickens Museum, London; Museum of Kunst & Gewerbe, Hamburg and; MFAH Houston, USA. <https://www.andreagartz.co.uk/>

Writer Verónica B, who has written the scripts for the two VR experiences for Andrea G Artz, has been combining journalism with social activism for more than 15 years.

Alejandro Escobar is an audio-visual artist and VR/AR developer who uses a broad array of approaches: from traditional media to digital techniques such as 3D modelling/animation and photogrammetry. <https://alejandroescobar.com>

Isa Suarez is an eclectic composer who works in film, public art, performance and sound-art, who has exhibited at Tate Britain, Whitechapel Art Gallery and Berlin Art Biennale. <http://isasuarez.com/>

Andrea G Artz would like to acknowledge actors, Elaine Green, Salia Samai-Chow, Jon Lane, and Nathan Osgood, who kindly lent their voices to the stories of the virtual characters.

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