

grid of 24 panels on which Dennis has printed a series of 'world-words': different invocations of what our world(s) are and can be. There are around 480 phrases to absorb, but my eye hovers on those that invoke a destructive unravelling: 'WOUNDED WORLD(S)', 'TRUSTLESS WORLD(S)', 'FUTILE WORLD(S)'. Pinned across the panels are beaded sentences lifted from the work of South African poet Keorapetse Kgositsile. Phrases such as 'you are the dance and the dancer [...] the concrete foundation and the builder' swoop across the work. There is the potential to unhook the end of any beaded sentence and reposition or replace it altogether, as suggested by the dormant chains hung beside the grid. The beads themselves reiterate the collapsible and ever-changing potential of language as a system – any movement could spark a chain reaction in meaning-making.

This fragility is similarly explored in the diagrammatic work *recurse 4 a late planet (lush)*, 2024-. An overwhelming yet energetic floor-to-ceiling rendering, this work displays various journeys that asteroids embark on as they encroach on Earth's orbit. Bewildering lines, flying arrows and multidirectional graphs chart the trajectories, velocities and paths of various space rocks. Stopping myself from attempting to read the work in a singular, linear manner, my vision begins to ricochet across the wall, tracing the visual and rhythmic elements rather than attempting to read the text: upturned world maps, outlines of figures throwing stones, darting lines emerging from their hands. Tiny talismans puncture an overbearing scientific visual lexicon as they mark a spiritual and ritualistic embodiment of time and space. The piercing of a dominating structure reveals how orbiting rocks cause rupture. Each time a person made the radical decision to pick up and throw a stone, the work suggests, the course of linear time has dramatically and often irreversibly changed.

The persistent hum of the printer pulls me back into *isivivane* – it becomes the exhibition's background hum, gently emphasising the continual process of making and unmaking worlds. What does it mean for the work to expedite geologic time? What does it mean to bear witness to the extraction, transportation and transformation of geological matter? While their plastic materiality implies a prop-like nature, Dennis insists on their aliveness. In isiZulu, the installation's title loosely translates as 'working together as a community'. The whirl of the machine becomes part of the installation's voice, while each woven thread constitutes a single contour of the land from which they were seized. In a 2022 interview with writer Zoé Samudzi, Dennis expressed the 'demand to think of the land as something we do (a collective happening) – a process, procedure, and practice rather than a *thing*'. 'throwers' puts forward a series of tangible worldmaking methods that tussle with pre-existing structures. The shelving units, the globes, the grid, the map – all of these colonial instruments through which to interpret and contain the world are collapsing, unable to hold Dennis's provocations for new planetary sensibilities.

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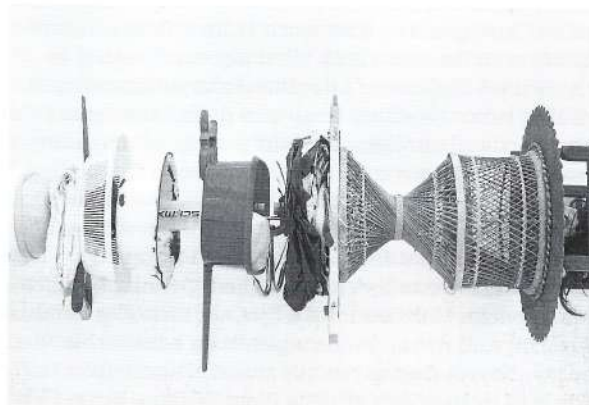
## Fake Barn Country

Raven Row, London, 8 May to 6 July

This large and lively exhibition of around 26 artists 'speculates', so the press release runs, 'on a shared sense of practice between an expanded network of artists', bringing together 'formal and material associations, established conversations, and fledgling connections [that are] local, international and intergenerational'. The key term here is perhaps 'conversations', with the prime zone of interaction built on an overlapping range of interests and themes found along a London–East Anglia axis. A number of the show's contributors are, or were, associated with artist-run galleries, including Josey and Outpost (both in Norwich), while Piper Keys more itinerantly ran in sites in South and East London before being hosted by Raven Row for several years; some of the works included here have previously been presented in these venues.

Is this exhibition intended as a means of documenting an expanding structure of (partly) geographical relations, or is it collated through what the gallery literature states as 'a kind of realism with ... reconstituted and reiterated forms and images – familiar materials ... household stuff ... the ways and means of making [being] often economical' or 'low-tech'? Perhaps the location and the show's quotidian aesthetic relates at some less-than-obvious level around a 21st-century 'Norwich School' of post-conceptualist practitioners whose work draws on the Duchampian readymade, but also to the curious combination of both handmade and conceptual modes of address.

Assembled following year-long discussions between Ruth Angel Edwards, Lawrence Leaman and Oliver Williams, the C-word is refreshingly absent from the gallery text, wherein the phrase 'organised by' rather than 'curated by' is tellingly deployed, thus giving support to the notion of the display operating as much as a collective presentation of what used to be called a 'scene' as a showcase for monadic individualism. This sense of an almost ethical insistence on discussion, collaboration and (hopefully) egalitarian exchange, in preference to competition and the promotion of art-world stars, can be tracked back to the insistence on dialogue as an integral feature of important collective practices established in the 1960s, the Art & Language group being a case in point. In her 2014 publication *Genuine Conceptualism*, Lynda Morris, for many years an influential educator and exhibition organiser based at Norwich School of Art, draws



Stuart Middleton, *Personal effects and things that are biographical in amongst material that might be understood as generic without clear separation under compression (Kebab)*, 2024

attention to the rise of the artists' group in the 1960s, as well as the radical teaching methods utilised by A&L in the early 1970s when some of its members taught at Coventry Polytechnic. Terry Atkinson, an influential figure at Coventry during this period, is included in 'Fake Barn Country' and also had a solo exhibition at Josey in 2022 (which I reviewed in *AM*453). Various lines of influence between the different generations of artists included in the show are therefore readily apparent.

The quirky but pertinent exhibition title alludes to a 1963 academic paper by Edmund Gettier in which its author considers the difference between belief and knowledge – a building may seem to be, but not actually be a barn. Appearances can be and often are deceptive, as a number of works in this show suggest. A case in point is Samuel Jeffery's trio of small, open boxes placed on plinths from 2017–25. At first sight they look as if they might be storage containers purchased from a high-street stationer, but they are in fact natively constructed from materials such as PVC, insulating tape, acrylic primer, gesso and plaster. Their simplicity and muted coloration imply a miniaturised Minimalism, their emptiness encourages one to speculate on what they might have contained or eventually hold. The foregrounding of allusive geometry is also apparent in the ambiguous objects produced by Leaman: one has the appearance of a small stool, the other that of a lectern, but both, in the end, refuse point blank any actual functionality. Atkinson's large, mostly wooden construction, *Slat-Greaser Trough 3*, 1990/2024, ups the stakes on the repurposing of furniture-like forms, consisting of tightly aligned wooden panels assembled like snazzy bathroom flooring that has been rotated 90 degrees, forming a cross between a Donald Judd and an early Frank Stella relief. Above the plane of the wood runs a long, thin trough containing industrial grease, a material that never completely dries, its unstable state acting as an awkward interrupter of the artist's supposed control of their work. As Atkinson pointed out in his 1988 publication *Mute 1*, 'Grease is a disaffirming material': 'Grease the autonomous surface ... Grease the practice ... Grease the Henry Moore Medallion for proper art behaviour'. It is grease that lubricates the capitalist machinery, but it is also a metaphor of disruption, accident and elision, slowly seeping through the cracks of the facade.

The industrial theme is also evident in Stuart Middleton's vast *Kebab*, 2024, to use the work's abbreviated title, which also describes it well, since it is a long metal rod extending through several rooms in the gallery, upon which is threaded numerous objects, both personal and generic. The work is, in effect, a complete exhibition in its own right. Sharply contrasting in scale, Stuart McKenzie's doctored shopping receipts, all 2023, turn the ephemeral into dense amalgams of beeswax and thread, a sort of parody of museum preservation gone wrong, a trivial scrap of paper being reworked to the point at which a new object is produced.

There are quite a few drawings and paintings in 'Fake Barn Country', among them pencil sketches made between 1996 and 2013 by Carol Rhodes combine industrial and urban landscapes from across the country, Nicola Gunnarsson's small oil-on-velvet renditions of her own initials from 2023, a large abstract work by Andrea Buttner from 2019 that looms from the ceiling and oil paintings by Lise Soskolne entitled *Humour Now*, 2005 and *Humour Then*, 2006.

Judith Goddard is represented by her 1983 video *you may break*, Yuki Kimura by *Three Cognac Glasses*, 2019, and an untitled work from 2024 comprises differently sized steel trays stacked one into the other on the floor. The arrangement of these objects, as normally found in a department store, returns us to the way in which 'the everyday' is typically encountered. For all its fictions and false colours, 'Fake Barn Country' is provocatively, indeed perversely, 'real'.

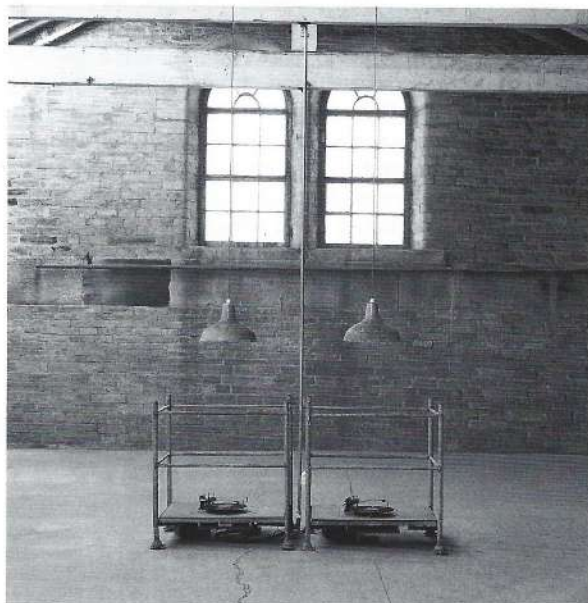
Peter Suchin is an artist, critic and curator.

## Ann Hamilton: We Will Sing

Salts Mill, Bradford, to 3 May to 2 November

Housed on the top floor of Salts Mill, Ann Hamilton's *We Will Sing* reconfigures the fittings and materials of the site into a series of distinct but texturally linked installations. In this huge open space, previously the weaving room, several old industrial loudspeakers are positioned at eye level. Clamped to rotating scaffold poles they emit the sounds of Hamilton's collaborator Emily Eagan whistling, humming and singing. Spread over three exhibition spaces, these soundworks created by Hamilton with Eagan bookend a space densely packed with numerous thick woollen blankets that are suspended from the room's wooden beams. Hamilton's work is presented as part of Bradford 2025, a project that has commissioned several contemporary artists to respond to the post-industrial context of West Yorkshire and its textiles heritage. While this approach is perhaps nothing particularly new, it is intriguing to observe how the American artist has responded to this invitation from experienced local textile curators June Hill and Jennifer Hallam. It is evident that Hamilton has researched both the site's recent history as a woollen textile mill and as a prototype for heritage asset regeneration.

In the weaving room, the three siren-like speakers each play different elements of Eagan's improvised vocal composition. These include extracts from a 13th-century folk song that is sequenced so that sounds only occasionally overlap. The poles rotate slowly enough that they can be closely observed,



Ann Hamilton, *Song of the Future*, 2025–, installation detail