

Tris Vonna-Michell **Capitol Complex**

Opening June 25th - 10pm
June 26 - July 23, 2015

Appleton Square
Rua Acácio Paiva 27
1700-004 Lisboa



It may be a cliché to say that a photograph is always incomplete, but it is exactly this failure to tell the whole story that lead Tris Vonna-Michell (1982, Rochford, UK) to search for ways to expand his approach to photography. Thus, it will be hard to find isolated images in his work, but rather ensembles, slide sequences, films, all presented as staged presentations. Pursuing his inquiries into the limits of an image, Vonna-Michell started to include spoken word which was performed live to an audience. For the artist, performance enabled other forms and meanings to evolve in the work and allowed for its own continual reinvention. Most recently, the live actions have slowly been transformed into continuous integrated soundtracks that gradually evolved into installations. Moving away from performance and the subsequent disappearance of the acting/speaking body of the artist is quite a significant turn in his work. Nevertheless, a performative element continues to be present in the construction of the work, now concentrated on the decisions that the artist takes when physically envisioning and placing the work in the space.

Vonna-Michell's works focus on the ways histories are told and simultaneously on the act of disintegrating those same stories (and images) and transforming them into a collage of elements that craft a new history. Joining facts and fiction, coincidences and research, images and words, the artist develops narratives that evolve over time.

For his first solo show in Portugal, Vonna-Michell will present two installations from the series Capitol Complex (2012-ongoing), a work that started in a small town in Punjab, India, and mainly due to an incident which brought the artist to Chandigarh, and to Le Corbusier's Capitol Complex. Built soon after India's independence, these massive buildings embodied the dream of Modern India as well as the new values of democracy. It came to epitomize bureaucracy, the failure of modernist utopia and the post-colonial legacy. Framed by this architectural project: a slide projection, a slanted glass table with a montage of photographic prints and text abstracts and a musical composition attempt to present a concurrently fictional and historical re-reading of modernist architecture and urban planning through the voice of Traveller who navigates and explores the city by night until he is 'entranced' by the Capitol Complex. While the story unfolds sequentially in the soundtrack, the simultaneous perception of the prints framed within the table and projected images create other streams of associations.

project:

On the lower floor, A Watermark: Capitol Complex (2015) is presented, a dual 35mm slide installation synchronized to an instrumental composition and spoken word soundtrack. Based on a four-act script written by the artist, this installation unravels an abstract sequence of images intertwined with an improvised spoken word and instrumental composition.

Filipa Oliveira

project:

