

Gallery Three and Four

Frances Disley

Pattern Buffer

30 Jul – 01 Nov 2020

Pattern Buffer is an exhibition by Liverpool based artist **Frances Disley** who was working in Bluecoat's artist studios ahead of showing with us. Disley is interested in the things we do to feel better about ourselves and has provided a number of artworks as prompts for relaxation.

The exhibition first launched early March 2020 before closing due to the pandemic. The artist has since adapted *Pattern Buffer* to meet the new requirements of current times, removing some of the more tactile elements, such as handmade textiles and custom printed jigsaws, while restoring the walls and troughs with plants nurtured at home.

Part of the inspiration for Disley's exhibition comes from conversations with psychologists from the University of Salford and their research into how different kinds of architectural spaces make us feel and the calming effect certain colours and plants have on our mood.

This research influenced the artist's decision to transform Gallery Three and Four from stark white spaces with grey concrete floors, to softly painted carpeted environments. Disley has also intervened in the lift and stairwell with coloured lighting and vinyls. The greening of the gallery includes moss and bromeliads which are examples of different kinds of epiphyte, plants that happily live on other plants without causing harm to their host. This sympathetic relationship could be seen as a metaphor for how an art work temporarily exists in a gallery space.

Like **Jonathan Baldock's** *Facecrime* installation, **Frances Disley** also makes playful reference to fiction and fantasy. A grid of squares runs across the walls. The grid makes reference to the Holodeck from the TV series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The Holodeck is a virtual reality environment which allows crew members to step into other worlds without ever leaving their spaceship. 'Pattern Buffer' from which the show takes its title is the machine that re-configures a crew member's molecules after and whilst they are being transported.

In reference to this popular science fiction series, which often transported the crew to lush green environments, plants appear to sprout from walls, nest in multicoloured moulded tree stumps and merge with furniture. The artist also leaves physical space in each room for us to complete the scene in our minds, almost as if the Holodeck was only half on. If you could go anywhere in the world or universe in your mind, where would you travel to?

Other artworks playfully encourage us to stop and slow down. On the ground floor a video of hairstylist (Sheetal Maru) and her friend (Ithalia Forel) enjoying conversation creates a relaxing scene of mutual care and nurture. All of the colours and shapes have been chosen by Disley in conversation with her collaborators and the video operates like a living painting or sculpture. Upstairs two hypnotic videos of burning incense invite us to sit on the painted benches and take time out. Meanwhile an audio work inspired by Guided Visualisations plays intermittently; a calming voice reads out a playful script - a form of mindfulness that asks for us to be intensely present while not taking itself too seriously.

In *Pattern Buffer* **Frances Disley** blends everyday pastimes and art experiences, valuing both equally. The original events programme created by the artist which extended her art/life ethos into talks and activities remains on the gallery wall in order to honour her many collaborators. New events will be added across Autumn 2020 online and via social media.

Pattern Buffer Glossary

Epiphyte

An epiphyte is a plant that grows on another plant, it is an example of a harmonious relationship rather than a parasitic one. Examples include many types of ferns, moss, bromeliads, air plants, and orchids growing on tree trunks in tropical rainforests.

Installation

Installation art often occupies an entire room or gallery space with an audience member entering the space in order to engage fully. It occurs in Western Art as a movement in late 1950s although there are earlier examples in the twentieth century. By 1960s and 1970s it becomes established strand of Modern and Contemporary art. The focus is on how audience members experience the whole environment, rather than individual works.

Holodeck / Virtual Reality / Pattern Buffer

The Holodeck is a device from the science fiction television series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Participants step into an intensely grided environment and can choose to engage with different settings without ever physically travelling from where they stand. It is a fictional example of Virtual Reality - an illusionistic experience which usually involves the wearing of a headset. Virtual reality is commonplace in video games and medical and military training. The Pattern Buffer is an element of the fictional Holodeck. It is a storage area within the transporter where a person's image and information is held.

Guided Visualisation

Guided visualisation involves focusing each of the five senses to trigger positive healing messages throughout the mind and body. It is a term that can be interchanged with self-hypnosis and guided meditation, and it has its own set of techniques.

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