

NOVEL



A reproduction of three weeks in May 1970

May 2018 – May 2019

Patricia L Boyd

Helen Cammock

Renée Green

Studio for Propositional Cinema

Steven Warwick

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In May 1970 artist Rita Donagh and a group of students occupied a studio at University of Reading. Staging events, performances and collective actions they wrote and discussed circumstances within and beyond the confines of the university. Didactic conventions and context were replaced in an attempt to diagram a charged collective knowledge. Activated against a backdrop of student protest, in particular the Kent State massacre, the group sounded political images, registered distance and invested in a politics of time, place and bodies. Donagh's own response, the painting *Reflection on Three Weeks in May 1970* uses a social-political cartography to plot distinct events, between image and experience

This historical scenario acts a catalyst for the year-long publishing and curatorial project. NOVEL will present a programme of interdisciplinary projects, commissions and events – with contributions from Patricia L Boyd, Helen Cammock, Renée Green, Studio for Propositional Cinema, Steven Warwick.

Front Image:
Operator
Patricia L. Boyd
2017
video (12.56 min, colour, sound)

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Event: *Redundant as eyelids in absence of light*

6.00 - 9.00 pm, 14 June 2018

OHOS The Keep, 571 Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1HL

The event unveils the inaugural billboard commission from Studio for Propositional Cinema. *Redundant as eyelids in absence of light* is a libretto for five-dimensional dystopian opera set in a society in which all forms of language and interpersonal communication have been mitigated or eliminated. Composed in blank verse but filtered through the jargon of the archive, the screenplay, the legal system and political speech, the libretto is staged in various forms, such as publication, exhibition and concert.

For Reading, the text takes the form of six rules posted across public billboard sites from OHOS to Crown Street and Jackson's Corner, Reading. Each text represents an attempt by the protagonists to relearn various communication tools such as image, sound, movement, textile, writing, and broadcasting, yearning for connections in a world where expressive and dialogic forms have been suppressed to the brink of being forgotten.

The launch at OHOS will also include a display of printed matter from past issues of NOVEL and a video programme featuring films from a.o. Peggy Ahwesh, Tony Cokes and BS Johnson.

NOVEL

All manufacture, manipulation,
Sale, trade, and/or transportation of
“Depictive Images”*, which purport to
Reproduce, double, or reconstitute
The material world in the form of
Surfaces, projections, reenactments,
Or mirrors, static or fluctuating,
(Reifying, by othering, selfhood,
By re-placing the self with its shadow)
And tools for their making, are hereby banned.

* “Depictive Image” defined here as a
Network of visible elements whose
Organisation purports mimesis
Of given quantities within the world,
Constructed, within an understanding
Of optical laws, by human bodies
Or by replicating the natural
Properties of bodily elements
(Whose disembodied effect causes
Uncanny reality estrangement).

All attempts to manufacture items
Related to this form of production
Without explicit authorisation
Is prohibited under penalty
Of forfeiture and enucleation
(Removing eyes and attendant muscles,
Irreversibly negating seeing)
With subsequent errancies met by the
Penalty of conclusive erasure;
For the greater benefit of the all.

Extract from
Redundant as eyelids in absence of light,
Studio for Propositional Cinema,
2018