

TRANSMISSION

TUESDAYS FROM 16.30 TO 18.00. ADSETT-6620, CITY CAMPUS, SHEFFIELD S1 1WB

In collaboration with Site Gallery

THE LECTURES ARE FREE AND OPEN TO ALL



Tuesday 4 October JOHN RUSSELL

Tuesday 11 October RACHEL GARFIELD

Tuesday 18 October MATTHEW BURBIDGE

Tuesday 1 November OLIVIER CASTEL

Tuesday 8 November ANNA CHRYSTAL STEPHENS & GLEN STOKER

Tuesday 15 November DINH Q LÊ

Tuesday 22 November CLAIRE MAKHLOUF CARTER

<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/transmission/index.html>

www.sitegallery.org

TRANSMISSION 2016 7 WHO IS AN ARTIST?

The **Transmission** lecture series takes as its theme the question of who is an artist. This is not a faint echo of Joseph's Beuys's famous statement, reiterated endlessly, that everyone is an artist (by which in any case, Beuys intended to suggest that everyone could apply a bit of creative thinking in whatever field they work, rather than that sort of thinking belonging solely to those who call themselves artists). We ask if it is an act of self-identification to name oneself an artist, or if it is exteriorised, that one is named as such by others. We ask if one learns to call oneself an artist, or if the title precedes the act, even produces it, as though an *autopoiesis*, in response to or as part of an environment or system (or what might occur or be invested beyond this). We ask if to be an artist is more than a business term, one produced by and subject to market forces; if it is more than a job or less than a job or something unlike a job. We ask if it demands a measure of skill, of technical competence, and to what extent this is contingent on cultural determination (and likewise, we suppose, for terms such as beauty). We ask what lies in a name and in a title.

SHARON KIVLAND

It was a long time before I could call myself an artist. Even now I feel a slight hesitation, qualifying it by the addition of writer, editor, but seldom educator (for I know, like Freud, that it is impossible to teach, govern, or psychoanalyse). I have the qualification of art historian, the certificate to prove it, but do not use that either. Sometimes I call myself doctor, though usually when complaining about something. I have my name, and a name is something. Sometimes my name is recognised, and then I achieve a public status of my profession, which is why artists have *curricula vitae*. When I am writing, thinking, making something in my studio, I do not ask myself who I am, nor when I am installing an exhibition, for then I know for sure and what I am *for*.

HESTER REEVE

Perhaps the artist is getting to be a rarer and rarer phenomena. Oh, there is art aplenty in the galleries which multiply as I type despite economic austerity. But is that the measure that artists exist? Fine by me to call yourself an artist, it helps, it musters up some energy to do something that is after all quite hard in today's world. But for me, there are few artists in the deepest implication of the term; an artist is one who against their will is uncomfortable in culture and must raise questions about the space between culture and what lays outside its walls, an un-gettable space which nonetheless can change everything. If only I could safely remove my tongue and send it off to work its way through a chink in that outer wall, then I might merit the title more. Yes, very few artists (but lots of art, much of it quite brilliant): 'An artist is a ghost and needs a medium to transmit itself' [Francesco Finizio].

TC McCORMACK

'I meet artists every day who are only thirty years further removed from the historical past than Ruscha (Ed) and I. They seem centuries more remote from the past, and not because we are old and they are young. Ruscha and I and most of our peers found the past when *we* were their age because *we* were looking for a way out not a way in. We were looking for precedents upon which to found a revolution submerging ourselves in the murky swamp of unfashionable objects, stretching our toes downward to find a new bottom from which we might push off. We wanted things that we could use, things we could steal, borrow, misappropriate, or crosspollinate' [Dave Hickey, 'Orphans in the Storm'].

JULIE WESTERMAN

Good question.

Am I an artist? Yes.

Are you an artist? Definitely potentially possibly.

Can anyone be an artist? Hypothetically.

Is everyone an artist? No.

Tuesday 4 October **JOHN RUSSELL**

Host: Sharon Kivland

This is a statement I wrote fifteen years ago. I don't necessarily agree with all these statements. 'THE ARTIST = totally fucked, pointless occupation, unsaved by criticality, critical uselessness/autonomy or political/social engagement. CRITICAL = something that used to happen in the 1960/70s, paradoxically affirmative of (and dependent upon) the structures of which it is critical [N.B., various attempts to recuperate all failed now usually played out as knowing decadence which is OK]. NEW = not possible any more. Used to happen in 1920/30s, now only happens as commodified consumer experience. AUDIENCE = mythical concept. Search for (and expansion of) audience is current art world fetish, i.e. someone to engage with art work(s). ART = [see artist]. ART INSTITUTION = expands to include all activities as art [including non-traditional]. Including idea that art is example of what it would be like to live in non-capitalist society and other ridiculous ideas [N.B., see art-is-a-conversation or 'The Good Conversation']. CRITICISM = it is true that criticism completes the artwork [see romantic theory, conceptual art, etc.]. CRITIC = the critic secretly feels they would be a great critic, if only there was a great artist to write about which there isn't chicken and egg situation which deteriorates into downward spiral of self hatred/self loathing. THE GOOD CONVERSATION = idea that art is a forum, or debate moving by unspecified (though vaguely dialectical) means towards a brighter future and finally salvation for all humanity. At which point, all our contributions, never mind how modest (or banal) will have been significant. ART = If you have to choose between life and happiness or art, remember to always choose life and happiness. Art solves nothing either for the artist or for those who receive art. Although as the Bishop of Lincoln writes, "people of faith look to a horizon beyond the limitations of scientific enquiry and secular morality. It is a horizon at the limits of time and space beyond which eternity provides a perspective which might yet make sense of what science can only explain." This is obviously nonsense'.

John Russell studied History of Art at Goldsmith's College of Art and Fine Art at Slade School. He was a co-founder of the artists' group BANK, of which he was a member for ten years participating in over fifty exhibitions and events. Since leaving BANK in January 2000, Russell has worked both independently and collaboratively in producing works, exhibitions, texts, and publications. His work was shown recently in a solo show at Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York (2015), concurrently with the publication of the text 'SQRRL' Rhizome, 2015.



Tuesday 11 October **RACHEL GARFIELD**

Host: Julie Westerman

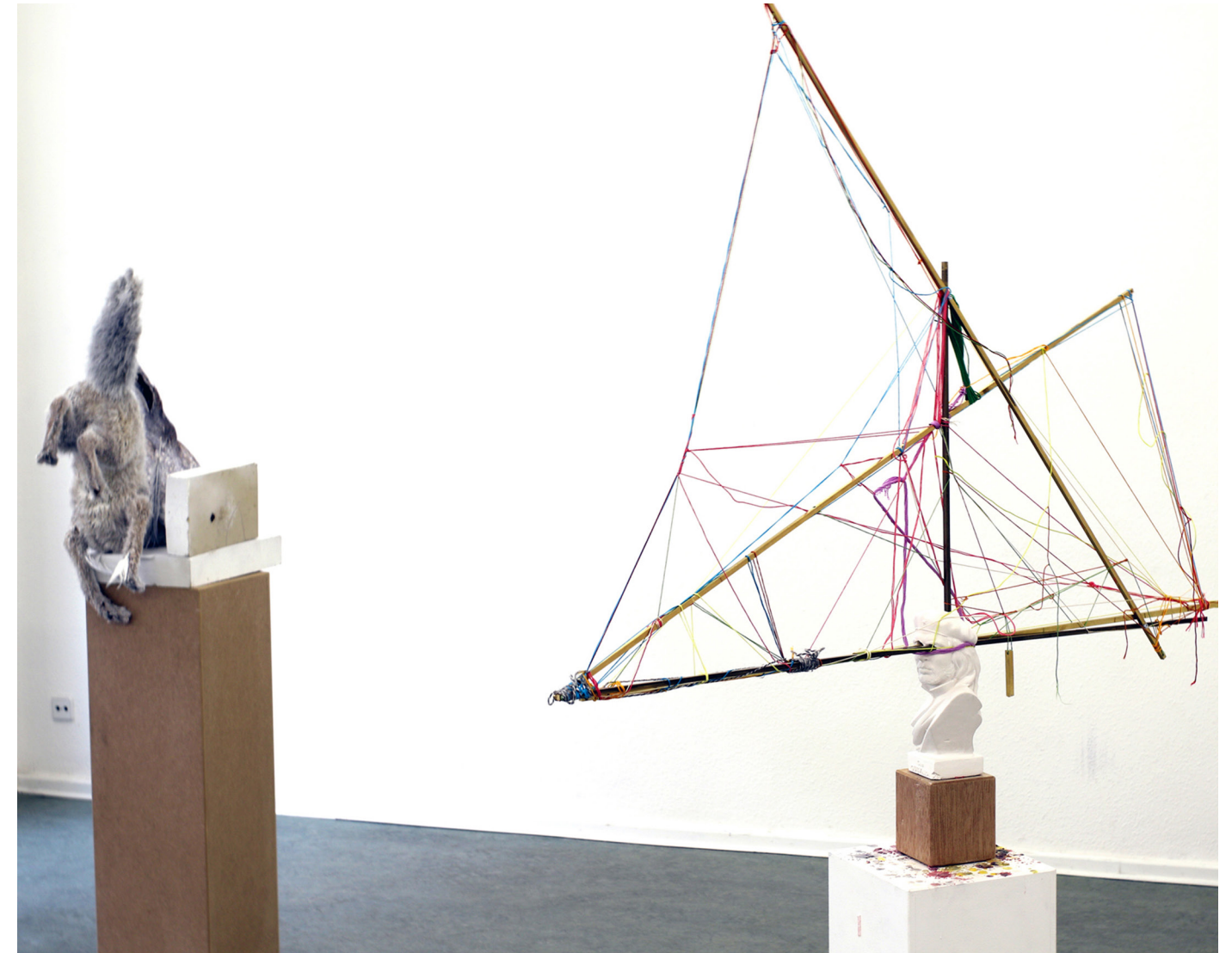
Rachel Garfield is an artist and teaches at the University of Reading. Garfield makes work that explores the lived experience of subjectivity in all its varied forms, currently working on a ten-year trilogy entitled *The Struggle*. The first two parts have been exhibited at: The Hatton Gallery, Newcastle; Beaconsfield Gallery, London; London Short Film Festival, ICA London; and Open City Documentary Festival, London. She also writes on contemporary art and modern painting as well as popular culture. Her forthcoming book *AV Punk: women, experimental film and a punk aesthetic* will be published by IB Taurus in 2017.



Tuesday 18 October **MATTHEW BURBIDGE**

Host: TC McCormack

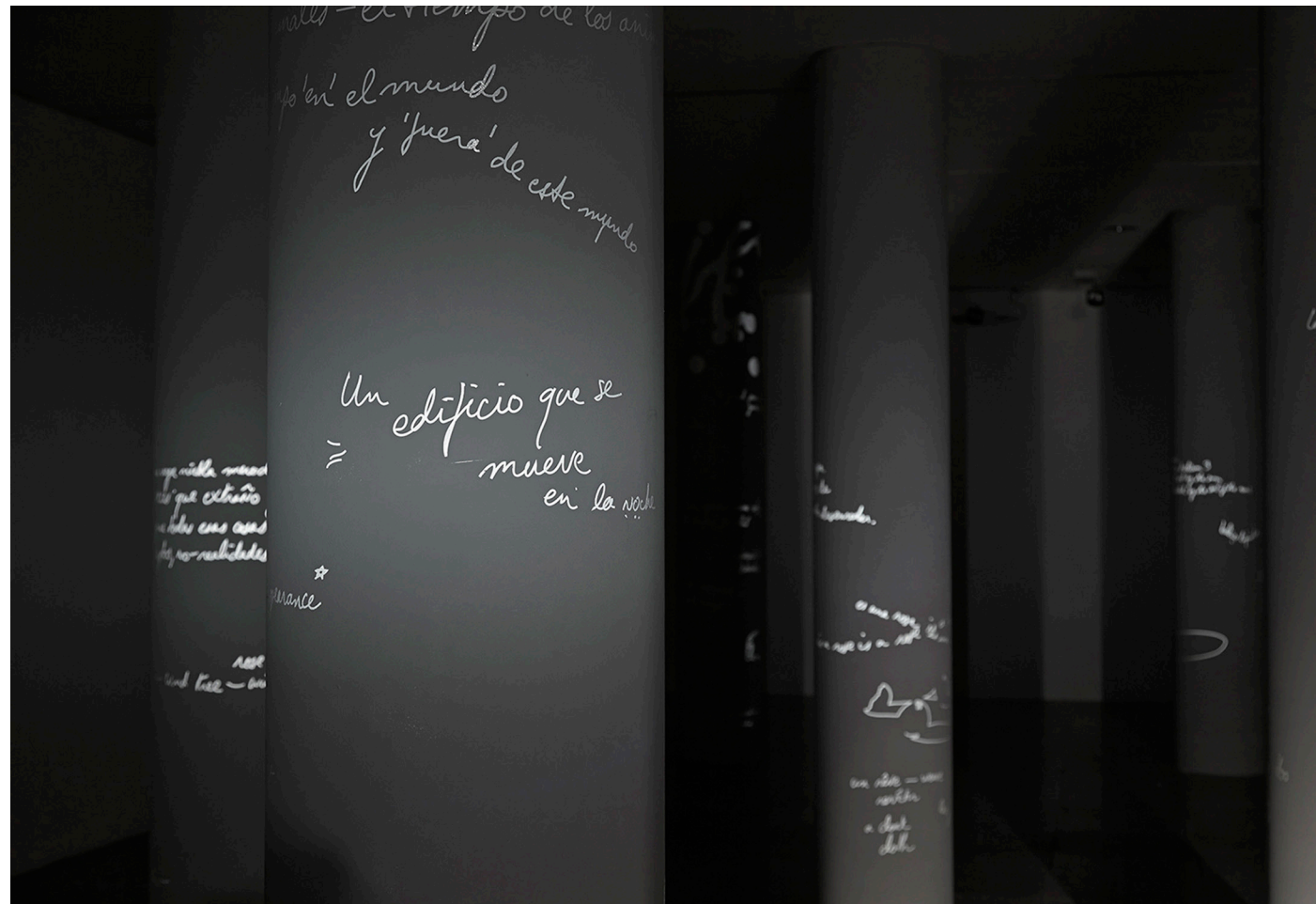
Matthew Burbidge is an artist based in Berlin since 2002. Having enjoyed traditional contemporary art context success until 2008, he then turned his back on collectors, museums, and commercial galleries. In 2010, he opened *Essays and Observations* in Berlin's Wedding district, which experienced unparalleled success until its closure two years later. In August 2015, Burbidge inaugurated a new project, *Radical Praxes*, which had its first iteration in August 2016. *Radical Praxes* is an attempt to completely redefine the contemporary art context from top to bottom, and thus is inevitably destined to fail. Despite this, Burbidge's artistic work has always continued, and is currently focused on video work and sculptures that chiefly involve plaster, brass, and concrete.



Tuesday 1 November **OLIVIER CASTEL**

Host: Julie Westerman

Olivier Castel lives and works in London. He usually presents work under heteronyms and has created over thirty different identities since 2001. Often using ephemeral or temporal forms he works primarily with projections. His solo exhibitions include: *Des distances dans l'âme*, Praxis Programme, Artium, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain (2015); *Once across the bridge, phantoms came to meet them*, And/Or, London, and *Fountain*, Ibid., London, as Raymond Roussel (2014); *The back of an image*, Rowing, London, as Louise Weiss, and *Imaginary Lives/ Eight Hearts*, Concrete Café, Hayward Gallery, London, as Olivier Castel and Louise Weiss (2013); *Vive l'Amour*, Schneeeule, Berlin, as François Morice (2012); *Variety*, Dalston Superstore, London, as Edwy Plenel (2011); and *RIBBONS! (The Shape of an Exhibition)*, Auto Italia, London, as Breer Lazidj Nahr (2010).



Tuesday 8 November **ANNA CHRYSTAL STEPHENS & GLEN STOKER**

Host: Laura Sillars

Anna Chrystal Stephens works with photography, sculpture, installation, and participatory happenings linked by an interest in living strategies, communities, collectivism, and societies' relation to the natural environment. Recent investigation of basic living processes and survival skills consists of learning to identify and safely consume wild plants, spin yarn, and preserve food, followed by exchange and diffusion of these skills through walks, discussions, and workshops.

Glen Stoker works in various media, with an emphasis on photography and film, installation and assemblage, performance and text. The site and location specific practice centres on acts of walk and response, carried out largely in the public realm. Themes of urban place and space focus on urban land use and the post-industrial human living condition, alongside ideas of absence and presence, longing and belonging in the contemporary city.

Through a practice-based presentation of a series of case studies covering some of their individual and collaborative projects, in both a gallery context and the public and community realm, including their current project *A Sick Logic*, the artists will invite discussion around the role of the artist in contemporary cultural discourse.



Tuesday 15 November DINH Q LÊ

Host: Laura Sillars

Dinh Q Lê was born in Hà Tiên in 1968, in what was then South Vietnam. In the late 1970s, his family escaped by boat before eventually settling in the USA where he completed his education. He is the co-founder of Sàn Art in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, where he has been based for the past decade. In 2010 he was awarded the Prince Claus Award for his outstanding contribution to cultural exchange. Lê's work has been included in many international group shows including Documenta 13, Kassel, Germany (2012), the 2nd Singapore Biennale (2008), the Gwangju Biennial (2006), and the Venice Biennale (2003). He is the first Vietnamese artist to have a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010).

Lê's film *The Colony* is currently showing at Site Gallery.

Please join the artist and the Transmission team for drinks in the gallery following the lecture.



Tuesday 22 November CLAIRE MAKHLOUF CARTER

Host: Sharon Kivland

Claire Makhoulf Carter's performative, time-based events, which highlight power dynamics in social situations, have employed temporary workers such as sniffer dogs, cloakroom attendants, military mercenaries, fairground workers, mafrish owners, forensic psycho-physiologists, and carpet pickers. She generates a space where art and non-art users participate in generating a performative event. These situations trigger the problematics of economics, labour, and social relations. Using an interruptive form which she terms 'organised gatecrashing', she draws out the internalised and embodied complexities of institutional relations, questioning perpetuated myths. She has been described as a truant, self-saboteur, heretic, an old child, and a bitter witch. Carter has performed in a range of sites from art openings, cross-channel ferries, seminars, conferences, and a welding tent in a chili festival. Methods are performed and made transparent in her post-event scripts.



SELECTED READING

AUSTER, Paul, *Leviathan*, London: Faber & Faber, 1992

BEUYS, Joseph & Volker Harlen, *What is Art. A Conversation with Joseph Beuys*, 2007, Clairview Books

BOURGEOIS, Louise, *Destruction of the Father Reconstruction of the Father: Writings and Interviews, 1923–1997*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998

CALLE, Sophie, *Double Game*, London: Violette, 2007

CORK, Richard, *Face to Face: Interviews with Artists*, London: Tate, 2015

CRAIG-MARTIN, Michael, *On Being an Artist*, London: Art/Books, 2015

DE CERTEAU, Michel [1990], *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven F. Rendall, Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2011

GAINES, Charles, *et al.*, *Akademie X: Lessons + Tutors in Art*, London: Phaidon, 2015

GUSTON, Philip, *Philip Guston: Collected Writings, Lectures, and Conversations* (Documents of Twentieth-Century Art), Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2010

HOUELLEBECQ, Michel [2010], *The Map and the Territory*, trans. by Gavin Bowd, New York : Vintage, 2012

HUDEK, Anthony, *The Object*, London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2015

HUSTVEDT, Siri, *What I Loved*, London: Sceptre, 2003

KESTER, Grant, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2103

KIPPENBERGER, Susanne, *Kippenberger: The Artist and His Families*, trans. by Damion Searls, Atlanta/ New York: J&L Books, 2013

KRAUS, Chris, *Where Art Belongs*, Semiotext(e), Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011

NELSON. Maggie, *The Argonauts*, London: Melville House, 2016

LANGE-BERNDT, Petra, *Materiality*, London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2015

MORRIS, Robert, *Have I Reasons: Work and Writings, 1993-2007*, ed. by Nina Tsouti-Schillinger, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008

PANKHURST, Richard, *Sylvia Pankhurst Artist and Crusader: An Intimate Portrait*, London: Paddington Press, 1979

RANCIÈRE, Jacques [1987], *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Emancipation*, trans. by Kristin Ross, Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999

RICHARDS, Judith (ed.), *Inside the Studio – Talks with New York Artists*, New York: Independent Curators, 2003

WEST, Nathanael, *The Day of the Locust* [1939], Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2006

WITTKOWER, Rudolf, *Born Under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists–A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution*, New York: WW Norton, 1969

See also the books in the series **TRANSMISSION. SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

Transmission is an annual series of lectures and symposia, now in its fourteenth year, and is a collaboration between Fine Art, the Art & Design Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, and Site Gallery. Convened by Sharon Kivland in 2001, Transmission was developed collaboratively with Lesley Sanderson from 2001 to 2007 and with Jasper Joseph-Lester from 2004 to 2012. The series is now convened by Sharon Kivland, TC McCormack, Hester Reeve, and Julie Westerman, in association with Site Gallery, Sheffield. The lecture series has an annual theme, and involves students from Fine Art, from undergraduates to Ph.Ds.

Transmission is the passing of information *via* a channel, and this is the intention of the Transmission project. We enquire about the aesthetic and discursive forms required by practices in the field of contemporary art and theory that address sociality and subjectivity. It has encompassed a lecture programme, seminar discussions, an annual symposium, a print portfolio, four series of books: *Transmission Annual*, *The Rules of Engagement*, Transmission chapbooks, and five volumes of discussions/interviews, entitled *Transmission: Speaking and Listening*. These are published by Artwords Press, London.

Site Gallery is Sheffield’s leading international contemporary art space, supporting artists specialising in moving image, new media, and performance. Pioneering emerging art practices and ideas, Site works in partnership with local, regional, and international collaborators to nurture artistic talent and support the development of contemporary art. At the heart of what Site does is the connectiion of people to artists and to art, inspiring new thinking and debate through its public programmes and participatory activity.

Site Gallery’s exhibition programme is led by artistic director Laura Sillars. Site works with emergent and established artists to realise their ideas and produce new work for solo and group exhibitions. The gallery specialises in artistic development, investing in artists at critical stages of their careers. In 2012 3, three of Site’s recent alumni won the most prestigious awards in the art-world: The Turner Prize, Venice Silver Lion, and the Frieze Emdash Award. Through diverse programming, Site reveals the process of making art to invite its audience to engage, explore, and connect.

