



Simon Ward, *Ghost in the Machine Series* (2013).



Simon Ward, *Signs* (2018).

Still Life: Things Devouring Time

Symposium

Thursday 24 January 2019, 13.00-16.00

The Education Room, The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery



Dawn Woolley, *Memorials (Foot, Banana and Strawberry)* (2017).



Dawn Woolley, *Relics* (2017).



Caroline McCarthy, *Humbrol series* (detail), 2009.



Nicole Keeley, *Tide Mark* (2017).



Caroline McCarthy, *Vanitas* (2007).

This symposium brings together artists, art researchers/curators and sustainability scholars to explore themes from the exhibition, *Still Life: Things Devouring Time*, particularly consumer culture and sustainability.

The artworks in *Still Life: Things Devouring Time* draw attention to urgent contemporary concerns, relating to consumption and sustainability. By raising awareness and provoking thought they seek to critically intervene in these issues.

Papers will be presented by speakers, including the exhibition's co-curator, artist and research fellow Dr Dawn Woolley (Leeds Arts University), Sharon Hooper (Leeds Arts University), a film maker and senior lecturer, and Dr Costas Velis (School of Civil Engineering, UoL), a lecturer in Resource Efficiency Systems. At the end of the afternoon, the speakers will be joined in a roundtable discussion by the Gallery's Curator Dr Katie JT Herrington and artist Caroline McCarthy, whose work features in the exhibition. The participants will tease out the key ideas and issues raised by the exhibition.

Schedule

- 13.00 — 13.15 **‘Introduction’ by Dr Katie J T Herrington**
- 13.15 — 13.35 **‘After-use plastic items: a global pollution challenge’ by Dr Costas Velis**
 Love or hate them, plastic items have transformed modern everyday life, from iconic disposable plastic water bottles to medical implants. Designed without sufficient consideration of an after-use life, being durable and lightweight, plastics items discharged by two billion people remain uncollected, thrown in the environment, burned in the open polluting the air, dispersed through our rivers and seas and often ingested by animals. Our relationship with objects is at the very heart of what has emerged as a new global crisis. The perception of ‘value’ embedded in the waste plastic items is a core aspect in identifying and implementing solutions; as are waste pickers- the urban poor who recycle them for a living, thus delivering a circular economy.
- 13.35 — 13.55 **‘Things Devouring Time’ by Dr Dawn Woolley**
 In *vanitas* still-life paintings objects express symbolic messages of immoral pleasures; they warn us that judgment is coming. The *vanitas* message would be different today. Commodities are presented to us as objects that can save time and are easily discarded. We are trained to be wasteful. Dr Woolley will briefly introduce the exhibition *Still Life: Things Devouring Time*, explaining how 17th-century Dutch still-life paintings form an appropriate backdrop to discussions about the social and environmental impact of consumer culture today. She will also talk about the value of public art interventions in advertising spaces and on social media.
- 13.55 — 14.15 **‘Sustainability & Arts Education’ by Sharon Hooper**
 This talk will look at different methods of embedding sustainability, particularly social sustainability, on an Arts degree course. It will showcase various examples of students’ independent and collaborative work at Leeds Arts University, including large-scale community projects. We will also show student work that has won our own sustainability awards.
- 14.15 — 14.45 Question time
- 14.45 — 15.00 * Break *
- 15.00 — 15.30 **In Conversation:** Dr Herrington will interview Dr Woolley and Caroline McCarthy about their artistic practice and the still life genre. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions.
- 15.30 — 16.00 **Round table:** Addressing the Wider Issues (All speakers)

Speakers’ Biographies

Dr Costas Velis

Dr Costas Velis conducts research at the School of Civil Engineering, University of Leeds, UK, coordinating a cross-disciplinary network on *Circular Economy & Resource Recovery* (CERRY), and managing a solid waste characterization laboratory. Dr Velis leads the ISWA Marine Litter Task Force, working to establish how sound waste and resource management practices can prevent marine litter, solving this global challenge. A Chartered Waste Manager by CIWM and registered with the Institute of Physics (MInstP), with over 15 years of work and research experience in innovation for waste and resources management, he serves in many international committees and initiatives addressing global scale challenges, including the prestigious seminal UNEP Global Waste Management Outlook. Dr Velis’ expertise includes informal sector recycling in the Global South (waste picking), production and quality assurance of solid recovered fuels (SRF) from unrecyclable plastics, and holistic assessment of plastics circular economy systems. His academic research papers have been honored with many prestigious Awards, including those from ICE, CIWM and ISWA.

Dr Dawn Woolley

Dr Woolley (b 1980), co-curator of the *Still Life: Things Devouring Time* exhibition, is also a visual artist and Research Fellow based at Leeds Arts University. She uses photography, video, installation, performance and sound to question issues of artificiality and idealisation. Woolley has exhibited at numerous venues nationally and internationally, most recently in group shows: *Self/Selfie* (Ballarat International Foto Biennale, Australia, 2017) and *Le Féminin Circulation(s)* (Arles, 2017) and her solo *Consumed: Stilled Lives* (Blyth Gallery, London, 2018).

Sharon Hooper

Hooper is a filmmaker and Senior Lecturer at Leeds Arts University, teaching on the BA Visual Communication and MA Creative Practice. She has previously worked in television and as an independent filmmaker. Her work is mainly in documentary, often with community, third and voluntary sectors. Her research interests are feminist approaches to filmmaking and the impact of digital technologies on feminist practice and activism. Sustainability features strongly throughout all these aspects, in terms of equipment,