



From the Lounge

David Steans

The output is a book of short horror fiction commissioned by Deptford X Contemporary Art Festival 2018. Steans was nominated for the commission by a panel of experts.

Research Process

Steans writes fiction as part of an intermedia and interdisciplinary art practice, and his ambition for *From the Lounge* was threefold: (i) collect some of his writing from the last few years in an accessible package that would outlive the festival; (ii) directly represent his interest in genre horror; and (iii) explore the blurring of fiction and reality as artistic method, by writing around the conditions and context of Deptford, the festival, and the commission itself.

Research Insights

From the Lounge embodies conceptual themes and artistic methods that underpin Steans' practice-led research. Firstly, the book is an expression of 'realist horror' (Freeland 1995); a definition originally derived from film studies that is a key reference in Steans' doctoral research. Secondly, a blurring of fiction and reality is enacted by the book's folding of real-world referents into its fiction, and its fictionalisation of real-world contexts and locations; a strategy consonant with Burrows and O'Sullivan's concept of 'fictioning' (2017; 2019). Thirdly, it is simultaneously a work of contemporary art and of literature, a dual designation Steans attributes to the author-function (Foucault 1977) of the contemporary artist. Finally, the book typifies Steans' approach to genre by playfully evoking generalized reader expectations of experimental literature and horror, thus engaging in Frow's 'relational economy' (2015) of genres.

Dissemination

Several stories collected in *From the Lounge* were adapted from prior public presentations/works at exhibitions/events, including: Mantel, Copperfield Gallery, London, 2018; MAMO 3: The Middle Ages in the Modern World, University of Manchester, 2017; Library Interventions: Moving Knowledge, Leeds Arts University, 2018; Radiophrenia Festival, Glasgow, 2016; Gruesome FX, Triangle Arts Association, Brooklyn, 2018.

From the Lounge



Steans, David. 2018. *From the Lounge* (Hastings: Deptford X)

From the Lounge is a book of short horror fiction, published by Deptford X Contemporary Art Festival, London. I was commissioned to produce a new body of work as part of the PLATFORM strand of the Festival. My project was situated in a library, Deptford Lounge, and also consisted of daily readings from the book by library staff, and a performance, *Foul Shot* (see below).

A number of the stories collected in *From the Lounge* were adapted from prior public presentations/works: an earlier version of 'Good News' was presented in the exhibition *Mantel*, Copperfield Gallery, London, February – March 2018 and published in the accompanying catalogue by Snöar Press; 'Saint Stone' was presented at the conference *MAMO 3: The Middle Ages in the Modern World*, University of Manchester, June – July 2017 and in the exhibition *Library Interventions: Moving Knowledge*, Leeds Arts University, April 2018; 'House Spider' was adapted from a script for the audio work *Champagne Murders*, broadcast by Radiophrenia Festival, Glasgow, September 2016; and 'Showreel' was adapted from a script for the performance *Gruesome FX*, Triangle Arts Association, Brooklyn, May 2018.

FOUL SHOT



Steans, David. 2018. *Foul Shot*, performance, bespoke basketball kits, dimensions variable

Performed by Rosie Ridgway and Lauren Rigby

Performance Stills



Photo credit: Marcia Chandra; Liv Preston



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Photo credit: Liv Preston



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