National Association for Fine Art Education
Proposal for artwork for the exhibition/conference Artist as Superconnector
Superconductor 2017

Carousel: Ruination and Reconnection

Carousel is an ongoing socially engaged, translocal art project exploring the notion of repetition and redundance through art practice. It brings into relation two very different communities in the damaged cities of Gyumri, Armenia and Coventry, UK. The project was initiated by the author while undertaking an artists' residency in the city of Gyumri, Armenia during the research and relationship-building phase of an OIL (online international learning) project for Fine Art BA students. The creative project *Carousel* developed in response to this context.

 Through a series of participatory interventions mirroring one another across geographically disparate communities '*Carousel'* references faulty, and disrupted technological systems of communication to critique the interrupted and disrupted aspects of social relationships. Drawing on Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory, the artwork investigates notions of the self-preserving system and examines the potential for translocal, dialogic art practices to create new forms of conversation and stimulate meaningful (art)work. Through generative intervention, the project aims to question in what ways art can respond to historical narratives, current experiences and envisage alternate futures.

Since Carousel was initiated alongside the OIL project, this critique of the limitations and possibilities of digital communication refers also to institutional commitments to providing intercultural competencies via digital platforms and the implications of this for developing innovative pedagogical models of Fine Art education. The project makes apparent the symbiotic relationship of the dual facets of an artist-educator's practice. It has subsequently informed curriculum design and created pedagogical opportunities for students.

For the NAFAE conference *Artist as Superconnector Superconductor*, I propose to exhibit a small series of photographs from the project (6xA3, mounted on polyboard). The images depict the intimate moment of exchange between speakers and listeners during a game of 'broken telephone', the moment when new possibilities emerge. The game was played by local residents in Gyumri Armenia and subsequently by participants during the Reclaim the Night Festival in Coventry. The photographs are stills taken from a video created from these events.

Carousel is an ongoing project and the intention is to develop it further as a video installation for exhibition in a gallery to engage a broader audience. Research relating to the project has been previously delivered as a conference paper in a colloquium session at The 10th International Arts in Society Conference titled The Work of Art in the Age of Networked Society at Imperial College London in July 2015.

This project was conducted in collaboration with ACOSS a cultural NGO in Yerevan, Armenia (www.acoss.org), the residents of a tenement estate in Aragats, Gyumri, participants at the Reclaim the Night Festival in Coventry, March 2015 (https://reclaimthenightcoventry.wordpress.com/) and made with assistance from students and alumni of the Fine Art BA course.