Lisa Stanisbie is an artist whose work crosses the disciplines of film, sculpture, installation, photography and digital practices. She is course leader and Senior Lecturer on the Contemporary Arts BA(Hons) degree.

She has undertaken residencies and shown across Europe and in the USA. Her films have been shown in the Athene Video Art Festival (2007), Siberia International Film in London (2007), The Olympos Project, Greece (2008), Art Tech Media Festival in Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife and Cordoba, Spain (2008), and her film The Emperor of the Moon (2008) was presented as part of Pffeurnow (2008) at The Castlefield Gallery, Manchester.


Stanisbie has contributed to a number of conferences/symposia and publications including: Telling Stories Symposium at Loughborough University, her paper ‘Connecting the Uncoupled’ published as part of Telling Stories, Countering Narrative in Art, Theory and Film (2009). The ‘Film Archive’ (2009) paper was given at the Thinking About Things: Interdisciplinary Future in Material Cultures conference, University College, Dublin. Her work has also been published in three editions of the online contemporary art project www.isthesecurios.org.

Stanisbie co-founded (2009) and co-edited with Deirdre Hartbol the online magazine project Swayway (www.swayway.org.uk).

Lisa’s research draws on the notion of multiplicity as defined by Italo Calvino (1988) “Whatever the starting point the matter spreads out and out, encompassing ever vast horizons, and if ever permitted to go on far enough in every direction, it would eventually embrace the entire universe.”

The research investigates the implications and possibilities of using multiplicity in devising strategies to generate art works. The work uses the internet as an unmediated and chaotic information source to generate a continuing series of associations constructed into an ever-expanding digital archive that functions as a web site. The Archive (2005 onwards) is then used as the basis for the creation of new film and material object based works that stem from individual archive entries. Searching strategies are also used to generate seemingly random associations between images and text and act as way of co-authoring the early stages of the productions. This results in a hybrid approach to digital (film and material) and material visual practices.

Her methodology has evolved and focused on systems of multiplicity for the creation of work, whereby work is created from work, and continually linked and re-presented in different formats with material (gallery) and digital (online) spaces. Lisa’s interest in online practice as a site for presenting work is shown through various recent digital projects. The research has also required an interrogation of ‘how later’ can impact upon the fluid relationship of the audience/user/viewer in the reception of the work. This has been tested extensively for example with the film work Apprehension (2007) which has been shown in differing sites from online projects, film events and festivals, non-traditional space (London Projects Project 2009) in Greece, gallery settings and exists site within The Archive itself. The film is also placed at the central link within the later described installation The Wings (2009).

In 2009 she co-founded swayway.org.uk an online magazine project themed around notions of storytelling www.swayway.org.uk. ‘Swayway is a repository for words, pictures and sound that tell stories. We interpret the idea of a “story” very openly, in relation to fact and fiction, narration or implication, and structure or a lack of it. And we regard most history, theory and critique as stories about stories’.

Swayway is published from artist submissions and currently has 73 international artists contributing to the project, many of whom are internationally renowned. The project reflects an ongoing interest in experimental narrative writing systems. The film works The Emperor of the Moon (2006), The Osaka Collector (2007), Apprehension (2007) and The Messenger (2008) all draw on precedents in literature, such as Borges, Calvino, the Oulipo group, Burroughs and others. These film works are constructed initially from written narratives using a rule-based system, which are then developed into film works.

‘Borges’ nightmare scenario of the Library of Babel (in his 1927 short story ‘The Library of Babel’, where characters live and die in endless libraries, searching in vain for a mythical codex which will give meaning to the babel of the books, resonates with Stanisbie’s suggestion that the attempt to find meaning in a cacophony is an intrinsically human gesture. ‘Repeated reference to written fiction, both as source material and narrative style, alludes to the notion that there is truth to be found within fiction and sense within nonsense. Re-reading fiction and viewers of our approach tends with interpretive intent, proposed to decode, decipher, decode and figure out, they anticipate obfuscation of meaning and underlying truths. Re-viewing information, connecting the jigsaw and senseless, the arbitrary and negated, Stanisbie reveals the human capacity to make sense.” Anna Parlane (2009).

Lisa’s recent solo show (2009) ‘The Wings’ at Vyner Street Gallery, London, consisted of the construction of a fictional bar described in her earlier narrative film Apprehension (2007). This work is sited somewhere between an installation, a stage set and an elaborated frame within which to view the original film. It marks a significant departure in her work into a larger scale manipulation of space and materials as a result of connections from the film works. It also creates a continuing sense of distance from The Archive (2005 onwards) through connective threads that enable work to multiply from earlier works.

**Wings of Apprehension**

Lisa Stanisbie

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