

Nooshin Farhid - Artist Statement

The work is engaged with the making of videos, photoworks and video installations using essentially the process of critical assemblage, a form of 'acute' collage and a radical juxtaposition of linear narrative. It locks onto a sense of the cinematic in an appropriation of the intense 'visuality' of cinematic constructions, in doing so it consciously exploits our recognition of visual strategies and narrative scenarios each of which triggers our memory banks into a false sense of security. The viewer is placed in a position of control for what appears to be a familiar plot line allowing them to be passive receivers, undisturbed and settled within the limits of their experience. However with the videos in particular this is very short lived, complacency is comprehensively challenged, and jolted out of this state of comfortability. The tactic is one of disruption whereby entering into a kind of game, one of the recognisable and the unrecognisable finding ourselves on varying levels of spatial and psychological narrative awareness. Elements are derived from different unrelated sources; in recent pieces there is documentary footage as dispersed as political events, mainstream movies, scientific and medical material to the tracking of hurricanes and other natural disasters. Added to which is the use of found and original animation and real time material shot under direction and on location. There is always a possibility of an interruption instead of a conclusion and thereby it fulfils what has to be taken on board as being our own fragmented experience one which is not ordered and regimented but in which our state of consciousness flits and darts as it receives and processes stimuli and information and as Weber puts it missing the target can be more significant than hitting it. It is as if these video works operate between the reception point and the rationalisation point in our brains, the space between the raw and the filtered.

The making of the work stems from a kind restless, intensive desire to collect in an age of information overload, a state of excess. But to acquire and collect suggests power, previous knowledge and an expertise. Instead this process of acquisition is informed by marginalisation rather than any system of knowledge based on control or order. The practice works towards, 'creating or tracing a broader, possibly more fertile environment through close looking, rather than tracking a logical conclusion from the clues given', to quote Mario Fusco. The video work is also about complexity, it is not about reduction but deliberately seeks to overwhelm, to suggest many possibilities and interpretations and as such avoids the notion of 'oneness' and singularity, no message is intended to be delivered, no fixed meanings intended to create a state of knowingness and stability. What is intended is that relations are constructed and developed that initially might seem unconnected, random selections of material that have their own particular histories and discourses but through concept and the practical activity of editing new relationships are established, other ways of thinking, connecting and acting are made visible. The photowork, whilst also engaging with these ideas and strategies, also involves a critique of the hegemony of photography, the information aspect of the photograph is often absent, a blurred and transient image which lacks complete information appears as though taken from a single frame from a moving images. The technical proficiencies of 'good' photography are set aside, opening up the specificity of the subject in process, in the act of becoming.

Politically the work reflects upon Theodore Adorno's comment on the capitalist system as being one which maintains its power by continually deflecting our focus away from the important and towards the comparatively trivial, in so doing, it does the reverse often employing humorous and playful images, bringing together a wide range of image types. It makes, initially, a vehicle for alienating us from our habitual reception of mainstream media imagery, for threading its way through is a more disturbing and disruptive set of concerns that explore the fragility of the human psyche within a system that seeks to portray the individual as robotic and target led. The work refuses the label of 'political art' a term that limits and corrals a practice defining its limitations, the work instead is made politically in the sense of the process itself is a political one in its choice of aesthetic, technical decision making, subject matter, editing and distribution.