

Glossolalia Part 1

Room sheet

The exhibition follows a clockwise direction from left to right around the gallery.

Artist: Matt Warren

Curator: Dr Colin Langridge

1.

Üüüüü (2011)

Multi-channel sound installation

Üüüüü (2011) is born out of the affliction Tinnitus (high pitched ringing perceived as an internal sound, usually caused by hearing damage). Originally conceived as an installation with eight mannequin heads, each playing their own pitch of the tinnitus sound, here it has been re-jigged for Glossolalia. Both Warren and myself have tinnitus which is an almost constant companion for many people - one of the sounds in the work I found to be almost identical to my own internal pitch. It is interesting to hear this sound played out loud as an actual sound because the perceived tinnitus sound is more nerve excitement than actual sound wave. This shows a side to Matt's practice where he draws more directly upon his own history, one that is shared by many. In terms of glossolalia this work actually makes common a sound that is unknown to those who do not have tinnitus, thus bringing it into a shared realm which is the basis of language.

2.

Threshold or The Even Keel v2 (2019-22)

Video and sound installation

Duration 30:00 min

We see shifting coloured light beautifully revealed through slowly drifting swirls of smoke evoking intangible disorientation. The sound struck me as a choreographed piece of theatre with evocative background audio (shifting ethereal music and choral voices) over which a woman's (or maybe a man's?) voice softly shares philosophical ideas as she responds to walking through rooms that she once knew - there is a sound that could be the click of shoes slowly pacing on a hard floor. In one room the woman shares her thoughts and memories about birth and death with the sense of something dark and tragic that is unspoken, it gradually becomes clear that she is reminiscing about a dead child. Warren is working through a challenging subject, both emotionally and technically. How does one capture the feeling of such deep and dark memories?

This work reveals a mastery of sound and restrained vision composed in layers that sensitively work with each other to tell a story, create a mood and transport the listener on a journey with a fellow human. We are invited to become a companion with her reminiscence as the act of careful listening draws us empathetically close to the voice.

3.

***The Pull of Gravity* (2017)**

Single channel video and sound

Duration 5:30 mins

The Pull of Gravity (2017) asks the viewer to slow right down and allow natural processes to take their own time as the yellow moon passes slowly over the screen. Well, those processes are not quite natural, as we hear waves against the beach and a second circular image of water flickers over the moon in its next pass. The title says it all in this beautifully restrained work that addresses the theme of the relationship between the moon and our tides but in a second layer raises issues about natural and un-natural romanticized motifs of nature.

4.

***Portal Lux Aterna (after Ligeti) V2* (2008/9)**

Video and sound installation

Portal Lux Aterna (after Ligeti) V2 (2008/9) refers to György Ligeti's *Lux Aeterna* (1966) musical composition, a hauntingly beautiful atmospheric choral piece that appeared in Stanley Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). This work references Warren's deep interest in alternative culture, especially music and film. Warren's work is reminiscent of Ligeti's in ethereal sound but is visually presented through a black circular frame that suggests we are seeing a small part of something much grander. The white dots tauntingly suggest something specific but then quickly fade before we can discern them.

'The white dots are taken from an old analogue television and I see them as 'entities' existing "out there", in fact evidence of the big bang, eternal light. The portal is allowing us to see them.' Matt Warren

5.

***TWOOT* (2008)**

Single channel video and sound

Duration: 4:26 mins

TWOOT (2008) references the theme of glossolalia both through sound and vision, with murmuring voices, perhaps reversed, played against an abstracted visual that gives the sense of a limited and fragmented transitory view through an unsteady hand-held camera. A kind of momentary view through someone else's eyes whilst hearing 'mind-chatter'. Warren made this work in reference to the painting by Gustave Courbet (*The Origin of the World*, 1866) and through imagining what birth might look and sound like for a child – thus flipping Courbet's perspective on the subject.

6.

***Sönaris - A Liminal Place* (2012)**

Single channel video and sound

Duration 6:11 mins

Sönaris - A Liminal Place (2012) is visually stark with gently moving vertical lines of soft light against a dark ground punctuated with occasional images of the road and car tail lights fading in and out. The sound of a sonar echo provides a recurring background that gently links us to the work's title - it threw me into remembering movie scenes of submarine crews listening carefully as they blindly tried to locate objects in the ocean outside. It appears to be a fragment of a story told by both a female and a male narrator, the person telling the story thus slips between genders, however they both only present bits of the story, not quite enough information. I felt as if I were alone at night, lights off in a cheap motel, on the edge of understanding but not quite.

7.

***Project Blue Book* (2010)**

Video and sound

Project Blue Book (2010) employs simple visual illusions to suggest UFOs in the night sky. The voices heard in this piece are computer synthesised read transcriptions of UFO reports and some of Warren's own text based on Guglielmo Marconi's idea of never-ending sound waves. The low-fi nature of the video suggests it is historically linked to the 1950s or 60s, particularly b-grade sci-fi movies and tv. It plays with our desire to encounter the unknown and our willingness to suspend disbelief in the hope of an encounter.

Glossology Part 2

Artists: Sean Bacon, Abbie Calvert, Gail Priest
Curator: Dr Matt Warren

Abbie Calvert

Sonorous Bodies (2022)

Immersive soundscape, field recordings, speakers

Calvert has produced an immersive and partly interactive sound environment that invites the participant to focus in on the field recordings and decipher them, decode them and interact with them via the microphone. Abbie's immersive work does not aim to fully define what is being said, but rather presents possibilities for interpretation based on one's own sensitivity. It is both a revealing of what might be there to hear and a means to reply, a feedback loop of communication.

Sean Bacon

Moment To Moment (2022)

kinetic sculpture

With this duo of works, housed in industrial material, we are witness to movement in real-time, but also mediated through the lens of a camera. We see animation in a zoetrope, we journey across a globe. But we question what truth we are seeing within these points of view. Sean has created these two small assemblages of playfulness and illusion. The constructions, simultaneously DIY-looking and poetically elegant, present an artifice, an exposure to what makes the image, but may not be fully factual. Can we believe our eyes?

Gail Priest

Songs with Oscillators (2014-present)

Sound installation and drawing

Singing with Sines 1

Duration 11:30 mins

Singing with Squares

Duration 7:50 mins

Priest's expanded explorations into voice combined with synthetic tones comes to fruition here with an installation that incorporates two works *Singing with Sines I* (11:30) (2011/2022) & *Singing with Squares* (7:50) (2014/2022) made up of sound for headphones and wall etchings. With this piece, Gail shows the viewer the visualised constitution of the sound you are about to hear. The sounds (the artist's voice and the tones created by oscillators) communicate with each other, creating something unique, opening the way for the listener to question what is human, what is machine and what do they say together?