

lookback@now

Press Release

Remember when everyone had a mobile phone?

There will come a time when this question gets asked in nostalgic reminiscence. But, we're still too caught up in the mania of our phones to think about that. We are in an in-between time where a significant number of us knew life before mobile devices, while there are just as many who have known no other form of communication device. Gabriela Schutz is exploring this in-betweenness, and more specifically, the absorption we have when we look at our phones in her latest exhibition, *lookback@now*, at ARTHOUSE1 Gallery, curated by Jane Boyer.

Gabriela has been exploring the topic of engaging with mobile phones since 2007, which is represented in the drawing, *Where Are You*, in the exhibition. But in that time, the mobile phone has changed from a transportable communication device to a pocket computer, camera, media player, gaming console, internet browser, and so many other things, with 'phone' being only one of numerous functions.

The portraits in *lookback@now* are of Gabriela's family and friends while engaged with their portable devices. She became very intrigued by this 'absorbed looking' after seeing Richard Diebenkorn's portraits of people reading books, or just being self-possessed in looking. Gabriela looks closely at the intense focus induced by mobile phones. She says, "I am still trying to understand why I am so bothered with people looking at their phones, but not [by] reading a book?"

Gabriela has also questioned what a future telling of this story of an intensely focused attention given to mobile communication devices might look like, and how it might be represented for future generations. Speeding forward in time, centuries into our future, the clay figurines, plaques and other museum-like objects in *lookback@now* present an allegorical telling of our engagement with the light of mobile technology. The isolation, the rapt attention, the tethered connections, and the allegorical cautionary tales are visible in these symbolic works, as is the synthesised view of us, the society who uses this technology. Gabriela has created an artistic record of one aspect of our social activity, not only to question that activity, but also to comment on how it is shaping us, and how the precarious nature of the data generated risks being lost, losing us with it.

What will happen to our attention? Will we become even more deeply absorbed in the light of technology? Is this light hurting us, changing us? What will we become as this technology pervades our psyches? We don't have full answers yet; we can only look back at now.

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For further information, Hi-res images, or to arrange interviews please contact:

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Venue: Arthouse1.

Address: 45 Grange Road, Bermondsey, London SE1 3BH

Private View: Thursday 4th October 2018

Public Dates: 5th - 27th September 2018

Opening Hours: Thursday to Sunday, 3pm - 7pm or by appointment T: 077131 89249

Travel: London Bridge, Borough, Bermondsey tubes

