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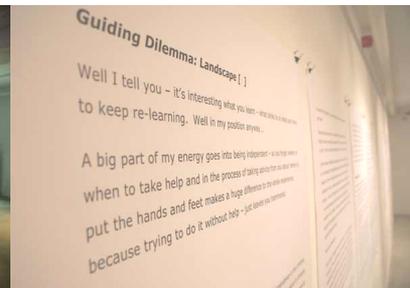
Touchstone test piece - Echo Valley / A Guiding Dilemma

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Touchtone test piece is an exploratory art project based around climbing with a blind person.

Artworks; *Echo Valley*, *A Guiding Dilemma*, *Dolerite Solarized Pigmatisis* and *Blind Landscape Texts* made through this activity have been exhibited and screened widely in Belfast, Derry, London and New York.

Echo Valley / A Guiding Dilemma

These artworks have been shown in various venues in differing formats:

Various selected sources are linked below:



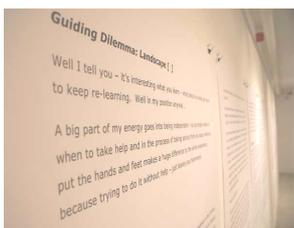
Exhibition at the Gt Gallery (*The Munter Hitch*)



Exhibition at Void gallery (*Echo Valley / A Guiding Dilemma*)



Research information - (archived research as it progressed)



PDF review by Victoria Walters (Circa)

Outline information:

"I have no sight at all - so I didn't have any fear climbing - it probably helps not to have any idea of what

20metres looks like from above. As long as it feels safe I enjoy the climbing and I don't have any fear - it doesn't come into my mind. The only time I'm scared of heights is in my dreams."

Background

Over the last fifteen years I have developed an art practice which uses climbing to think creatively about the spaces around us - in particular landscape spaces and ideas about what landscape is or could be.

The project belongs to an area of art practice that operates as a kind of research - in an inquisitive, inquiring sense. As art it's free to ask questions or develop creative ways of exploring ideas which aren't rooted in specific fields of thinking.

This particular project was based at the University of Ulster Art & Design Research Institute and funded by the AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council) under its Landscape and Environment programme which seeks to explore pertinent ideas around landscape and environment.

For this project over the last few years I've been taking John, a blind man from Derry, climbing regularly. Within this activity we've been thinking how to capture or describe something of this landscape experience. One way we developed this was to attach a range of tiny micro cameras to John's fingers, backpack and feet so that we could record "finger tip" footage of the climbing.

The approach is based on the idea that, whilst sight is crucial to making it easier, climbing isn't primarily about sight. It's as much about movement and physicality.

It's also about our ideas of landscape. Landscape as a cultural idea is very visually based. Images of landscape are rooted in painting and are usually ordered around narrow sets of framing principals, view points or perspectives relating to ideologies such as nature, beauty, ownership, control or identity. Whilst these are important issues this project aims to deal differently with landscape by trying to negotiate a landscape which is less sight based.

Funded by the AHRC Landscape and Environment programme and supported by the University of Ulster School of Art and Design Research Institute.

AHRC website <http://www.landscape.ac.uk/>

This project has been shown at:

Dan Shipsides screenings: Abrons Art Center New York,

The Munter Hitch. Two person show with Seamus Harahan. GTgallery, Belfast.

Embedded. Group show. Gimpel Fils. London. Curated by David Waterworth.

Echo Valley / A Guiding Dilemma Solo exhibition. Void Gallery. Derry.

Art Rocks (Hillsborough Mountain Film Festival). Hillsborough, N.Ireland