

KATE MACGARRY

Notes on Protesting

Marcus Coates, Peter Liversidge and Goshka Macuga

21 January – 26 February 2022

Notes on Protesting features works by Marcus Coates, Peter Liversidge and Goshka Macuga that explore ideas around demonstration and protest.

Marcus Coates' installation *Conference for the Birds*, (2019) celebrates the lives of the birds depicted by Thomas Bewick in his wood engravings. His book *A History of British Birds*, first published in 1797, was a comprehensive guide to the appearance and behaviour of birds. *Conference for the Birds* was originally commissioned by the National Trust and installed in Thomas Bewick's birthplace - a small cottage at Cherryburn in Northumberland. Seven papier-mâché bird heads, painted with the woodcut markings of Bewick's depictions form a larger than life group. An audio recording, a discussion between several species including a blackbird, heron and cuckoo, is played by wildlife experts and enthusiasts. Their improvised conversation was recorded during a single round table discussion and explores the birds' challenges, preoccupations and their relationships with each other as well as with humans.

The title of the exhibition comes from Peter Liversidge's installation *Notes on Protesting* shown at the Whitechapel Gallery in 2015 – the result of a collaboration with primary school children who worked with the artist to compose and write lyrics for protest songs, and design banners and placards. Workshops held over a four month period encouraged the children to express their views on community and the power of a collective voice. One large banner reads 'Make the people calm, make the city calm', others protest against homework and a dislike of tight-fitting shoes. A film of the performances at the Whitechapel Gallery on May Day 2014 and on London's South Bank by the artist and sixty four children aged 8 and 9 from Marion Richardson Primary School in Tower Hamlets is included in the exhibition.

Goshka Macuga's smaller-scale tapestries feature fragmented images from her recent tapestry *Make Tofu Not War*. A human protestor dressed up as a polar bear appears in the woven photographic scene, holding a protest banner 'It's Hot In Here'. Set in a clearing of a forest of conifers the image is rich with associations, including allusions to George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, 19th-century landscape painting and satirical art that features anthropomorphised animals. A third work, a large-scale drawing made in biro using a machine designed and programmed by Macuga was initially produced in conjunction with her Fourth Plinth Proposal: *GONOGO*. The image combines two events: the launch of the Delta 4 Rocket in August 2018 and the California River Fires, which spread in August 2018.

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Marcus Coates born 1968 in London where he lives and works. Recent exhibitions and events include *Planet Love; Climate Care in the Digital Age*, Vienna Biennial for Change, Austria, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, OCAT Institute Beijing (2020), *Ask The Birds*, Whitechapel Gallery London, (2018), *Doug Aitken's Station to Station*, Barbican Centre, (2016) *Dawn Chorus*, Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, Spain (2015). Coates was nominated for the 4th Plinth Commission in 2014 and was the recipient of a Paul Hamlyn Award in 2008.

Peter Liversidge born Lincoln 1973. Lives and works in London. Recent exhibitions and events include *Sign Paintings for Belfast*, The Mac, Belfast (2021) *Out/Exit, Sign Painting Studio (for Allan Kaprow)* and *Flags for Edinburgh*, all at Jupiter Artland, Edinburgh, (2020), *Proposals*, Lancaster Arts: Peter Scott Gallery, Lancaster, UK (2019), *Notes on Protesting*, Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, (2019), *As Sculpture*, Southwark Park Gallery, London, (2017), *The Bridge: A Choral Piece for Tate Modern*, Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London (2016) *Proposals for the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, USA (2016).

Goshka Macuga born 1967 in Warsaw Poland. Lives and works in London. In 2019 Macuga was commissioned to make a large-scale tapestry for the Museum of Modern Art, New York. In the same year she conceived *What Was I?* a post-apocalyptic exhibition at Prada Rong Zhai, Shanghai. Solo exhibitions include *In Flux*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Castilla y León, Spain, 2021, Kestnergesselchaft, Hannover, Germany (2019); Neues Museum, Nürnberg, Germany (2018); Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy (2016); Schinkel Pavilion, Berlin, Germany (2016); New Museum, New York, USA (2016). Macuga was included in DOCUMENTA 13(2012) and nominated for The Fourth Plinth in 2021 and the Turner Prize in 2008.

Marcus Coates, *Conference for the Birds*, 2019, Recorded and Edited by David de la Haye, Culture Lab, Newcastle University. Commissioned for Thomas Bewick's birthplace - Cherryburn NT by National Trust and Mapping Art in the Heritage Experience (MCAHE) Newcastle University

Peter Liversidge, *Notes on Protesting*, 2014, was supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. The 2014 performances were commissioned by the Emdash Foundation and realised in collaboration with the Whitechapel Gallery