

## CARROLL / FLETCHER AT FRIEZE NEW YORK 2017



### Thomson & Craighead

5 – 7 May 2017

Booth B20

Over the last two decades, Thomson & Craighead (b. 1969 and 1971, both UK) have developed a pioneering body of work, using technology as a means to explore one of the fundamental questions of our times: what does it mean to be human in the digital era? For Frame, Carroll / Fletcher presents a selection of artworks that tackle subjects as varied as meme politics, the self-help industry, and the ever-more relevant notion of an impending apocalypse.

The fragrance *Apocalypse* (2016) combines the scents of olfactory elements described in the Book of Revelation, including burnt flesh, incense and blood. It turns a central tenet of the Western imaginary into a luxury, limited-edition item. "Within entertainment, the commodification of end times becomes a meme in some respects, or a trope, or a series of symbols that we consume as entertainment," says Jon Thomson. "Perhaps this 'post-truth' climate harks back to a more medieval mind-set, when everyone in Europe believed that the end of the world was actually taking place around them."

The dry humour and global purview underlining *Apocalypse* can be found throughout the duo's practice. *Stutterer* (2014), a video installation the artists describe as a "poetry machine", is inspired by one of the most significant scientific advances to date. The work pairs each letter of the first human genome to have been mapped (A, C G or T), with a word beginning with the same letter, spoken through clips from television footage of the period 1990-2003, the time it took to complete the Human Genome Project. The result is a televisual portrait of an era which encompassed not only the First and the Second Gulf

Wars, but also the collapse of the Soviet Union, the deaths of Yitzhak Rabin and Princess Diana, the first cloned sheep Dolly and the launch of Viagra.

In *The First Person* (2014) an endless stream of first person statements taken from American self-help websites is randomly intercut with a found video of a burning house. Meanwhile, *Help Yourself* (2016) combines found digital video material, originally designed to prevent the on-screen accumulation of dead pixels, and a series of self-improvement tapes. Viewers can navigate them – going from, say, “how to attract money” to “weight loss” or, “sales motivation” by plugging headphones into different sockets.

The artists often find beauty in unusual forms, through unique presentations of technological imagery. In *Horizon* (2009), live-refreshing webcams, showing JPEG landscapes from every time zone across the globe are displayed vertically on a screen. The result is a constantly updating array of images that read like a series of movie storyboards, but also as an idiosyncratic, electronic sundial.

Going from the macro to the micro, Thomson & Craighead’s work unpicks the contemporary condition, informed by personal angst and political fallacies that reverberate across the web.

////////

## **Thomson & Craighead**

Thomson & Craighead (b. 1969, London, UK and 1971, Aberdeen, UK) have shown extensively at galleries, film festivals and for site-specific commissions in the UK and internationally. Solo shows include *Wake Me Up When It's Over*, Young Projects, Los Angeles (2017); *Party Booby Trap*, Carroll / Fletcher, London, UK (2016); *Maps DNA and Spam*, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee, UK (2014); *Not Even the Sky*, MEWO Kunsthalle, Memmingen, Germany; and *Never Odd or Even*, Carroll / Fletcher, London, UK (both 2013). Recent group exhibitions include *Monsters of the Machine: Frankenstein in the 21st Century*, LABoral, Gijón, Spain; *Perpetual Uncertainty*, Bildmuseet, Umeå, Sweden; *Electronic Superhighway*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2016); *Big Bang Data*, Somerset House, London, UK; *Right Here, Right Now*, The Lowry, Manchester, UK; *Art In The Age Of...Asymmetrical Warfare*, Witte de With, Rotterdam, Netherlands; *How to Construct a Time Machine*, MK Gallery, Milton Keynes, UK (all 2015) and the Nam June Paik Award, Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany (2014). They live and work between London and the Scottish Highlands.

Image: Thomson & Craighead, *The First Person* (2014), generative video  
*Stutterer* was supported by the Wellcome Trust

For further information, please contact:

**Asya Bachelis**

asya@carrollfletcher.com