



Polly Gould: Antarctic Archive

14 December 2012 - 13 January 2013



The Gallery @ Idea Store Whitechapel presents a new installation by Polly Gould.

'Antarctic Archive' uses archival methods to present an encounter with the real yet mythologised continent of Antarctica. Made from a collection of found and original images and texts, the work taps into our fascination with the apparently exotic and unknown, as well as highlighting how knowledge is constructed and subject to interpretation.

The explorer Edward Wilson (1872-1912) died with Scott on their failed attempt to be the first to reach the South Pole. Wilson was a prolific watercolour painter and left many works depicting the Antarctic landscape. Gould combines found material with her drawn copies of works by Wilson as well as other related hand-made material, together with images and texts relating to the explorer from the media and internet. These are pinned or stuck on the wall, which becomes a pinboard offering incidental cross-readings and associations.

The fragmented and fragile nature of an archive, requiring controlled climatic conditions, is also a succinct metaphor for a fragile, fiercely contested continent. The installation refers to the pioneering era of Antarctic exploration, but it also alludes to current corporate interests in the continent. It also refers to the imminent future disappearance of the melting icecaps and to a time when evidence of their existence will be preserved in archives.

Gould has used the pinboard format in previous works. 'Pinboard' (2008) features photographs of sections of a household notice board. The accumulation of objects, always subject to change, acts as a form of vanitas, a reminder of our mortality and the passage of time. The promise of an insight into a private life is enticing, yet remains elusive.

Polly Gould (born 1971, London) lives and works in London. Recent group exhibitions include 'Topophobia', co-curated by Gould and Anne Eggebert, touring to Danielle Arnaud Gallery, London; Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool and Spacex, Exeter (2012); 'Obituary', Project Gallery, Queensland College of Arts, Brisbane, Australia (2009). Recent writing includes chapters in the following publications: 'Deathscapes: Spaces for Death, Dying and Bereavement', published by Ashgate (2010); 'TellingStories: Countering Narrative in Art, Theory and Film', edited by Tormey and Whiteley, published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing (2009).