

# Exhibitions

All exhibitions in the UK and Ireland are currently closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, dates listed are for reference only.

## Anne Tallentire: *As happens*

Hollybush Gardens, London  
26 September to 19 December

'If there will be a revolution it will be a domestic revolution: it will be necessary to get rid of the patriarchal, patrimonial, and architectural definition of our houses and homes and transform them into something different.' So declared environmental philosopher Emanuele Coccia in an essay remarking on the state of effective house arrest to which many of us have been subjected, on and off, for the past year. The conception of the *oikos* as an index of the natural (patriarchal) order is as fallacious as any myth of the natural order itself. In terms similar to those laid out by Coccia, the violence of the home is something Anne Tallentire seeks to resist. Toying with conventional means of spatial processing – floorplans, grids, paragraphs, collage – and emphasising process over product in a manner reminiscent of the Fluxus movement, her work enacts the conflictual relations of destabilisation and oppression between dwelling and its material framework. In so doing, it offers the potential for an alternative cognition of space, one which is open-ended and generative rather than closed, circumscribed and directive.

The work does not announce its presence as much as bring awareness to our own, as we navigate the gallery and the 'in-between' spaces that the exhibition conjures up. Two series of four individually framed floorplans printed on Xerox paper and overlaid with coloured sticky tape, Post-its and rectangular pieces of card could easily be overlooked as part of the building's signage. And yet because of this semblance – and because they are the first works we see – they invite the viewer to consult them, as though they were maps of the gallery and the colours were part of an explanatory code. In fact, the plans are illegible (when read as conventional floorplans), being mostly covered up by paper and tape and deriving from the artist's home and a social housing development in Graz, Austria. In the exhibition's accompanying booklet (*Hollybush Gardens*, issue 8), Tallentire reveals that the seemingly random formation of the overlay stems from the patterns made by paragraphs on pages of typescript. Acknowledging the parallel of architecture and language as regulatory systems hardwired into the practices of daily living, Tallentire confronts assumptions of legibility invested in conventional means of spatial and linguistic articulation by garbling any straightforward relation of the floorplans to a specific site (or text). As the first works we see, the floorplans are not meant to baffle us as



Anne Tallentire, *Area*, 2020, installation view

much as to activate an embodied awareness of the built environment, which includes the other works in the exhibition – of which they are nonetheless indexical.

On the walls of the main room are installed plywood boards laminated in different colours (*Area*, 2020), which are abstractions of the furniture in the communal living area in the above-mentioned Graz social housing complex, while their dimensions also correspond with paragraphs of unspecified text. Body and mind, art, architecture and language team together as we physically pace the room and imaginarily inhabit the in-betweenness suggested by all that is omitted. In the adjacent pocket gallery, *Setting Out 2*, 2020, consists predominantly of several lengths of builder's string normally used to 'set out' architectural plans in real space, except that the artist has arranged the string on the wall. The differing lengths of string, the intervals between them and the sequential positioning of blue tape correspond to the architecture of the artist's home, but in a way that, it would seem, only she can decipher. This is more than an architectural plan; it is a performance of spatial processing adapted to its situation under the stairs of a rehabilitated Victorian-era vault, through which Tallentire reclaims and exhibits a subjective hold of her personal space, opening it up while preserving her privacy. It is fitting that the work's title suggests not only planning but also movement, as the work itself – like *Area* and the floorplans – enlists both mind and body in the act of spatial cognition.

'As happens' effects a subversive shift from the strategic to the tactical (to use Michel de Certeau's apposite terminology, according to which tactics are employed to outmanoeuvre regulatory strategies imposed 'from above'), potentially liberating us from the grid. Even though a palpable sense of site-specificity is retained, the places from which these works derive are codified beyond recognition, leaving us with a kind of raw specificity that is not obviously specific to anywhere in particular. We are neither here nor there, but in-between. Whether this creates freedom or anxiety, or a bit of both, is up to us.

Tom Denman is a writer based in London.

**John  
Hansard  
Gallery**

New online exhibition  
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