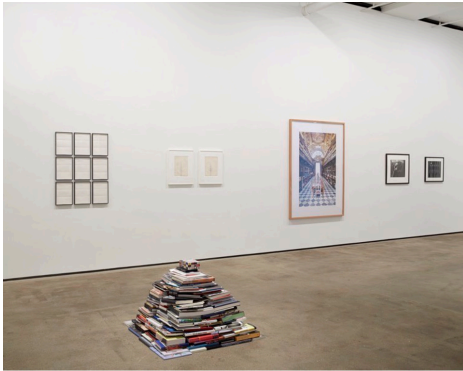


SEANKELLY

"Interview with Peter Liversidge, *By the Book*, Sean Kelly Gallery, New York," *Aesthetica*, July 22, 2015.

Aesthetica



Sean Kelly Gallery

British artist Peter Liversidge reflects on the idea of the 'proposal' in his conceptually-based practice, using analogue and antiquated technology to both initiate and document his artistic activities. This summer, the artist is participating in group show *By the Book* at Sean Kelly Gallery, New York. On view until 31 July, the exhibition embraces a range of work in diverse media and forms, many of which employ metaphor, allusion and allegory as structures to evoke powerfully symbolic visual language. On the opening night in June, the gallery presented Liversidge's *Gin Performance* — a bespoke gin stand offering gin and tonics in limited edition 'GIN' glasses, hand etched by the artist. Following this, Liversidge has organised a pyramid book giveaway, where visitors can take art books home to add to their own library, as well as a proposal for the gallery staff to take turns reading short stories by Raymond Carver aloud. We speak to Liversidge about his interests in performance and the theme of the 'proposal' in art making.

A: Living and working in London, what attracts you to exhibiting in New York?

PL: New York, like London, has so much to offer: new audiences, possibilities, light and materials. My work is shaped by many things: travel, over heard conversations, coincidence, almost as much as it is influenced by research. New York has always had a magnetic pull, the sense of endless possibilities, architecture and friends.

A: Your latest series uses Polaroid / Fuji FP-100c. What influenced the use of this technology? Do you see a revival of an analogue recording of imagery?

PL: The series has developed over the past eight to nine years. It started at a point when both Polaroid and the Fuji equivalent was still very much available and in production (Fuji are still producing FP-100c). The technology gives you an immediate appraisal of work, the imperfections of the film and of your own technique. I don't think my use of antiquated technology (typewriter, instant photography) is because of its timeline, but more to do with how I can interact with it. There is an immediate, irreversible permanence to the work which is impossible through editing and third party control of digital images (equally writing on a laptop there is a disconnect between the user and the written word). The analogue technology I choose to use has as much control of me, as I do of it.

A: Following your participation in Sean Kelly Gallery's *By the Book* show, do you see your work evolving more towards performance?

PL: Performance has always been an integral part of my approach to my way of working. I have looked to present work and performance, in the context of the 'proposals', in a way to move from the artist or performer as a single focus, to involving the audience in a direct way. That is the intention with the framed proposals and *Gin Performance*; presenting food and inviting musicians, choreographers, dancers and actors to perform within the gallery context. It is also an interest in the space between the audience and performer; what brings them together and equally what keeps them in their pre-assigned roles, the essence of an event / performance, which without an audience is just a rehearsal.

A: Your most recent Whitechapel Gallery exhibition *Notes on Protesting* explored the power that the collective voice can hold. Do you feel that art has a duty to reflect this communal spirit?

PL: It was vitally important that the piece *Notes on Protesting* was written with, and for a group of 60 six to eight year old primary school children. It took time working with them to get to the point where they were able to share with me what they liked, disliked, and wanted to change. From those conversations the piece was written and then rehearsed. It was very much about what they wanted to say and not what I might think, as an adult, they might want to say. I don't necessarily think that art has a duty to reflect communal spirit, as such, a performed work such as *Notes on Protesting* exists at the point where or when it is given context, framed, and performed. As you can imagine it was very different when it was performed at the school for the whole school and the children's parents, to when it was in front of 150 strangers at the Whitechapel.

A: You have an extensive body of 'proposals'. How do you decide which you would like to execute?

PL: Each project is unique, and for each project I write a new set of proposals. The proposals are written in response to the experience of a place, aligned with any historical information and research, be that for a museum, public space, private collection, solo or group show. The framed proposals in each show are the work, and the physical work itself is my interpretation of those proposals. There are some reoccurring themes and works (for example, *The Gin Stand*) that become re-contextualised by their new host. The work for each show is agreed on in many ways; there will always be key works within a group of proposals that I would want to see realised, and within the group there will be a number where the hosting institution, gallery or collection would like to realise, mostly we agree on these works. It becomes much more about the exchange in interpretation and how an individual reads a proposal then imagines the work. My interpretation is just my version of the work, which may not necessarily be the final, or right one.