

WHAT
A SLIGHT.
WHAT A SOUND.
WHAT
A UNIVERSAL
SHUDDER.

EVE FOWLER.

Exhibition Notes

Sat 9 June — Sun 26 August 2018

DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts

152 Nethergate
Dundee, DD1 4DY

01382 432444

Scottish Charity No. SCO26631

Open daily 10:00-18:00
Open late Thu 20:00

Admission free

www.dca.org.uk

INTRODUCTION

This is the first major European exhibition of American artist Eve Fowler's work. Having exhibited widely over the past two decades in the US, Fowler is one of the most significant artists of her generation, using art and language to disrupt and unsettle dominant power structures that control much of the world around us.

This exhibition reflects and further expands on the artist's intense feminist engagement with the words of Modernist writer Gertrude Stein over the past eight years. Since 2010, Fowler has created a beautiful body of work centred on Stein's expansive writing practice, taking the form of posters, prints, billboards, paintings, and installations employing materials such as vinyl, neon, collage, print, painting, sound and film. In speaking about the artist and her linguistic obsession, writer Litia Perta has commented that "across a distance of nearly a century, Fowler's work literally commingles with Stein's: gets close to it, pulls strands out, knits phrases back in, asks us to be near it, to think toward it."

Fowler's work is filling our galleries over the summer and also reaching beyond the walls of the building to appear in public spaces across Dundee, punctuating the Scottish landscape with Stein's prescient words.

Gallery 1 has been given over to Fowler's latest film *with it which it as it if it is to be*. This 16mm work is an intimate portrait of some of Fowler's closest friends in the LA and New York art community: the camera focuses on artists working in their studios with an accompanying soundtrack of artists' and writers' voices reading from Stein's 1910 text *Many Many Women*. Writer Yin Ho recently described this film as "a quietly explosive work: a subtle, simple document of female camaraderie and process, and the subdued magic of everyday life."

The use of repetition in Stein's text here creates a rhythmic and cyclical feeling in the gallery. The texture of the 16mm film gives the work a sense of timelessness, allowing it to drift back and forth between the past and present, closer perhaps to when Stein wrote these words.

Across **Gallery 2** is a constellation of new and existing works in painting, print, neon, vinyl and collage. These works further explore some of Stein's most radical writings; bringing them into the 21st century, celebrating the emancipatory power of language, and highlighting hidden narratives alluding to same-sex desire and transgressive politics.

Originally trained as a photographer, Fowler has been working with text for almost a decade, first making early explorations into Stein's writing through the medium of collage:

“When I started making pieces from Stein’s writing, I was taking parts of certain sentences, isolating phrases and making collage pieces. In this respect, I was approaching making these new works in the same way as previous photographic projects. This kind of highlighting of a particular thing, or noticing something and editing it out of the world and into an artwork, is exactly the way I used photography – basically pointing at something to say ‘I think this is important’ or ‘this is relevant to me.’ And those things usually have to do with sexuality, or gender, or queer concerns, but the work is not limited to those interpretations, it’s deliberately open-ended.”

This literary exploration has expanded further in recent years to generate joyful works in print, painting and neon, borrowing certain aesthetic stylings, colouring and typefaces from Colby posters, a LA advertising and design company from the 1960s and 70s. Importantly, these works have never simply been confined to gallery spaces – they can be fluid in form in order to transform into temporary public artworks at any given location. As part of this project, several of these works will be appearing across Dundee over the summer: on a huge billboard on Lochee Road in June, across 14 poster sites throughout the city in July, and at the train station and several bus shelters in August.

These beautiful interventions open up space for poetry and contemplation in urban areas normally reserved for blunt advertising and capitalistic gain. They are a key part of Fowler’s practice of amplification: honing in on a particular subject, whether it be a person, word or sentence, and drawing this out into another isolated form, pushing it from an intimate, private sphere into a very public setting.

The exhibition also premieres key new works by Fowler made for DCA: several paintings, a huge vinyl installation based on Stein’s poem *Patriarchal Poetry*, and a body of new collage work created whilst on residency at Hospitalfield Arts in Arbroath earlier this year.

Finally, a new sound work recorded on 12” vinyl inhabits the gallery and comes to life four times a day. This piece creates a similarly intimate space to the film work in Gallery 1, but has a different feeling of generosity – Fowler is now allowing a listener to imagine the bodies that might be voicing these words. Speaking about this new work, she explains:

“An artist friend, Matthew Clifford Green, started a record label recently and asked me if I wanted to do a project a few months ago. I immediately told him I wanted to make a recording of Stein’s *miss furr and miss skeene* with about seven or eight readers.

I often think about the degree to which Stein’s work holds up over time, the queerness of her work and how important she still is to queer culture and identity.

There are a lot of subtly coded queer messages coming from Stein's writing in general, and in the case of *miss furr and miss skeene*, that's a text that radically changed the way we use language to describe ourselves. In this short piece Stein uses the word 'gay' 136 times, expanding the definition of this term to not only mean happy and joyful but also, for the first time, to describe same sex love and desire in a positive way."

This project is called *what a slight. what a sound. what a universal shudder.*, a title gleaned from Stein's 1928 book *Useful Knowledge*. In a conversation in our new publication, DCA Head of Exhibitions Eoin Dara asks Fowler what she wants these words to do in 2018. She replies:

"I think those words are open to interpretation. When I started working with that text I was seeing those words as part of the sexual innuendo that appears in so much of Stein's work. Or perhaps they may have hinted at war or some other cataclysmic event during her lifetime. There could be so many interpretations of this phrase. I think her intention though, was to always keep language open enough to allow for new meanings in new contexts. When I started making things with this text it did occur to me that if Clinton lost the election in 2016 these words could become loaded in a very different way. Now I think it's hard not to see them in relation to the current presidency in the US.

So, for me, this text went from being a description of something very personal and sexual to something that inevitably points to the disaster that is our current political situation.

Ultimately, they are 'words doing as they want to do and as they have to do'. Stein's words have their own volition that after over one hundred years, still feels relevant, urgent, political."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Eve Fowler (b. 1964, Philadelphia, USA) lives and works in Los Angeles. She graduated from Temple University (BA, 1986) and Yale University (MFA, 1992), and organises Artist Curated Projects in Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibitions include Participant Inc, New York; Fourteen30 Contemporary, Portland; Mier Gallery, Los Angeles and Artspace, Sydney. Her work was included in Sites of Reason: A Selection of Recent Acquisitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and in the Manifest Destiny billboard project, organized by LAND in 2014. Her book *Anyone Telling Anything Is Telling That Thing* was published by Printed Matter in 2013. Her second book, *Hustlers*, was published in 2014 by Capricious Publishing. Fowler's work is included collections such as The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; and The Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC. Fowler is represented by Mier Gallery, LA.

ABOUT GERTRUDE STEIN

Gertrude Stein (1874–1946) was a queer American writer of avant-garde, experimental poetry and prose. She was born in Pennsylvania and lived most of her life in Paris with her partner Alice B. Toklas. Stein was a key Modernist figure, holding influential salons in her Paris apartment and associating with artists and writers including Picasso, Matisse and Hemingway. Over a century later, her experimental writing continues to influence writers and artists today.

OFF-SITE WORKS

Please see the accompanying insert for information on Fowler's off-site works. There will be a map for each month relating to different sites in the city.

TIME-BASED WORKS IN GALLERY 2

The sound work on vinyl, *words doing as they want to do*, will be played at 10:00, 12:00, 14:00 and 16:00 each day. This limited edition record, with hand-printed sleeves, is available to purchase in DCA Shop.

Fowler also made a bookwork while on residency at Hospitalfield Arts earlier this year. A page of this book will be turned every five days, allowing a series of 16 new collages to unfold over the course of the exhibition.

INFORMATION SPACE & READING AREA

Visit the Information Space next to the galleries to learn more about the exhibition. Here you'll find a video interview with Fowler, alongside a selection of books she has chosen relating to her practice. There is also a reading room at the rear of Gallery 2 containing key Gertrude Stein texts relating to this project.

NEW PUBLICATION, PRINT EDITION & LIMITED EDITION TOTE

An accompanying DCA publication features new commissioned writing by Sophie Collins, Eileen Myles and Litia Perta, a conversation between Eve Fowler and Eoin Dara, and an introduction by DCA Director Beth Bate. It is available to buy in DCA Shop at a special exhibition price of £13.

We have also worked with Fowler to produce a new print edition. For more information please visit the shop in person or online at shop.dca.org.uk or contact Sandra De Rycker at sandra.derycker@dca.org.uk

Finally, we have created a limited edition tote bag in collaboration with Fowler on the occasion of this exhibition, which is also available in DCA Shop.

TALKS AND EVENTS

For more information visit
www.dca.org.uk

Meet the Artist

Fri 8 June, 18:30 – 19:00

Galleries

Free, but please book in advance

Join Eoin Dara, Head of Exhibitions at DCA, in conversation with Eve Fowler for an introduction to, and discussion about her exhibition.

Exhibition Tours

Daily at 11:00 and 15:00

Gallery Entrance

Free, drop-in

Interested in knowing more about the exhibition? Join our friendly Visitor Assistants for daily guided tours.

In the Evening There is Feeling: A Gertrude Stein Reading Group

Mon 11 June, Mon 9 July,

Mon 13 August, 18:00 – 19:30

Activity Room

Free, but please book in advance

Digital copies of texts will be available

Led by Eoin Dara and Valerie Norris from DCA's Exhibitions team, this reading group will provide an informal and welcoming introduction to some of the key texts by Gertrude Stein that connect to Fowler's works in the galleries.

Join us to read, recite and think about how we might find new meaning in these century-old texts and poems that remain as powerful and potent today as they did when first written.

The Difference is Spreading: A Stroll in the City

Thu 5 July, 18:00 – 19:00

Meet at the Galleries, ending at Galleries

Free, but please book in advance

Join our Head of Exhibitions Eoin Dara for an evening stroll, beginning in our galleries and moving out into the city to see some of Fowler's works beyond the walls of our building.

On the way, Eoin will share insights about Fowler's outdoor projects as a radical form of transient public art, particularly thinking through some ideas about the positioning of queer bodies and queer desire in urban space.

Sophie Collins:

I Want to Tell About Fire

Thu 19 July, 18:00 – 19:00

Galleries

Free, but please book in advance

Join us for readings and a conversation with poet and writer Sophie Collins. She will discuss some of the ideas at play within her poem commissioned in response to Fowler's work, and included in our newly published book accompanying the exhibition.

Collins grew up in Bergen, North Holland, and now lives in Edinburgh. She is co-editor of *tender*, an online art quarterly, and editor of *Currently & Emotion* (Test Centre, 2016), an anthology of contemporary poetry translations. Her work *small white monkeys, a text on self-expression, self-help and shame*, was published by Book Works in 2017 as part of a

commissioned residency at Glasgow Women's Library.

Collins' 2018 Faber collection *Who Is Mary Sue?* exposes the presumptive politics behind writing and readership: the notion that men invent while women reflect; that a man writes of the world outside, while a woman will turn to the interior. It is a work of captivation and correction that will resonate with anyone concerned with identity, shame, gender, trauma, composition and culture: everyone, in other words, who wishes to live openly and think fearlessly in the modern world.

Senior Citizen Kane Gallery Tour and Workshop

Tue 7 August, 10:30 – 12:00

Galleries and Activity Room

Free, but please book in advance

Aged 60+? Come along to our Senior Citizen Kane Gallery Tour in our Activity Room. We will explore the exhibition with one of our friendly Visitor Assistants, then there's the chance to take part in a creative workshop making work inspired by the exhibition. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be on hand to fuel your creativity and chat.

Echo + Lindsay Macgregor

Thu 16 August, 18:00 – 20:00

Galleries

Free, but please book in advance

Echo is our regular evening of multidisciplinary presentations in response to the exhibition. For this installment we have invited Scottish poet Lindsay Macgregor to respond to Fowler's work.

Macgregor lives near Cupar, Fife, and co-hosts Platform, a regular poetry and music night at Ladybank Station. In 2015, she received a Scottish Book Trust New Writer's Award and a Hawthornden Fellowship in 2017. She reviews poetry for Dundee University Review of the Arts (DURA) and her own poems have been published in Dundee Writes, Poetry Review and Poetry Salzburg Review.

Over the course of the evening there will be opportunities for other voices to present ideas. If you would like to share your creative response to the work on show, please submit a short proposal (no more than 300 words) to exhibitions@dca.org.uk by Mon 6 August 2018.

An Epilogue with Dr Monica Pearl

23 August, 18:00 – 19:00

Galleries

Free, but please book in advance

During the final week of the exhibition, Dr Monica Pearl, Lecturer in 20th Century American Literature at the University of Manchester, will give a talk in response to some of the ideas at play in Fowler's work, weaving in some of her own research interests considering aspects of sexuality, life-writing, and visual and written self-representation.

ARTIST'S CHOICE SCREENINGS

Eve Fowler has selected a programme of four films to accompany this exhibition:

"I'm drawn to these films because of the way they explore certain feelings of alienation, of being 'other' in some way.

Imitation of Life is a remarkable film, visually, and Douglas Sirk's own closeted identity as a gay man can be glimpsed throughout this beautiful melodrama that looks at race, class and gender in 1950s America.

Sirk's visual style and content influenced many of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's films in the 1970s. *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, much like some of Sirk's best work, explores issues of intolerance and social oppression, and intensifies these studies of 'other' across racial and national divides.

My Own Private Idaho is simply a favourite film of mine from the 90s that I think is a perfect expression of the unrequited love that most young queer people experience when they are coming out.

Finally, when I started making work using Gertrude Stein's texts a friend suggested that I watch Greta Schiller's documentary *Paris Was A Woman*. This film tells the story of women writers and artists (mostly lesbians) in the early 1900s in Paris, who created vital spaces for art and literature to flourish in spite of so much systematic oppression around them. I always find this film inspiring."

Imitation of Life

Sun 17 June, 13:00

Cinema

For his last Hollywood film, Douglas Sirk unleashed a melodramatic torrent of rage at the corrupt core of American life — the unholy trinity of racism, commercialism, and puritanism.

The story starts in 1948, when two widowed mothers of young daughters meet at Coney Island: Lora Meredith (Lana Turner), an aspiring actress, who is white, and Annie Johnson (Juanita Moore), a homeless and unemployed woman, who is black. The Johnsons move in with the Merediths; Annie keeps house while Lora auditions. A decade later, Lora is the toast of Broadway and Annie (who still calls her Miss Lora) continues to maintain the house.

For Sirk, this grand finale was a funeral for the prevailing order, a trumpet blast against social façades and walls of silence.

Dir: Douglas Sirk

USA 1959 / 2h04m / 12

Ali: Fear Eats the Soul

Tue 26 June, 20:30

Cinema

In Rainer Werner Fassbinder's remarkably prolific career, in which he made 40 feature films before his death at 37, *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* marked a significant turning point. It was the film for which the director first received widespread international praise, winning two awards at Cannes including the coveted Critics' Prize.

All the more impressive then that the film was made on a meagre budget in 15 days, intended as an exercise for Fassbinder to test ideas between the making of *Martha and Effi Briest* (both also 1974).

Inspired by German-born director Douglas Sirk's Hollywood melodramas, *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* depicts the tender but much derided relationship that develops between Emmi, an elderly German cleaning lady (Brigitte Mira) and Ali, a considerably younger Moroccan 'guest worker' (El Hedi ben Salem) whom she meets at a rundown Munich bar one rainy night.

Dir: Rainer Werner Fassbinder
Germany 1974 / 1h33m / German with English subtitles / 12A

My Own Private Idaho

Wed 11 July, 20:30
Cinema

A key film in the New Queer Cinema movement of the early '90s, Gus Van Sant's dreamtime riff on Shakespeare's *Henry IV: Parts I and II* features River Phoenix as Mike Waters, a narcoleptic male hustler who is first seen drifting on a stretch of highway in Idaho.

Mike shifts from Seattle to Portland, where he has taken up with Scott Favor (Keanu Reeves), who is also a hustler. The difference between them is that Mike's sleepy state betrays an uncertain future, while Scott is ready to inherit a fortune from his father within a week. Mike feels a real affection for Scott, but Scott does not believe men can really love each

other. Besides, Scott is mostly hustling as a means of slumming and killing time before he inherits his money. Mike, however, delusionally thinks Scott will continue with his life as a drifter after receiving his inheritance. Mike's belief is shared by the dregs of Portland, who live out of an abandoned hotel with their spiritual leader Bob (film director William Richert). They're convinced Scott's fortune will benefit them all, when in reality Scott has other plans.

Dir: Gus Van Sant
USA 1991 / 1h49m / 15

Paris Was a Woman

Sat 28 July, 18:00
Cinema

A portrait of the creative community of women writers, artists, photographers and editors who flocked to the Left Bank of Paris in the early decades of the 20th century, when Paris was the undisputed cultural capital of the world.

From Gertrude Stein with her writing experiments and literary salon, to Sylvia Beach running Shakespeare & Company, and Natalie Barney's decadent parties, women flocked to the city because Paris was "the only city in the world where one can live exactly as one pleases."

Using archival footage, music, paintings, literature, and interviews with people who were there, Greta Schiller's 1996 film explores the lives of some of the key female figures of this time and place.

Dir: Greta Schiller
UK 1996 / 1h16m / 15

FOR YOUNGER VISITORS AND FAMILIES

Art Cart Adventures

Sat 9 and Sat 30 June, Sat 14 July,
Sat 11 August, 13:00 – 15:00

Level 4

Free, drop in activity

Create your own mini poem-poster and sound badge. Fun for all ages, Art Cart offers creative, active ways of connecting with themes in our exhibitions and methods used by the artists on show. Join our Art Cart to explore how artists have made art using text and words, print and sound.

Family Art Lab:

A word is a word is a word is art

Sat 7 July, Sat 18 August

13:00 – 15:00

Activity Room

Suitable for ages 5+. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Free, drop in activity

Join our artists to explore Fowler's work in the gallery. There's time to chat about what you see and then to create your own art together. For inspiration we will be looking at Gertrude Stein's children's book *The World Is Round* and sound poems like Marinetti's *Zang Tumb Tuum*. We will be making stamp prints, using neon colours, making stories and creating art with words. It will be word-tastic! Sessions last two hours. Please arrive for 1pm, but you don't have to stay the whole time.

Activity Room

Open daily unless being used for a workshop – do phone ahead to check if you are making a special trip.

Children MUST be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Free, drop in.

DCA Activity Room is a wee gem; a comfortable and imaginative space right next to the gallery designed for younger visitors and family groups to pop in and enjoy on a visit. You can have a go at DIY art activities, browse our excellent children's art library and make connections with the artist's work in the exhibition. New activities will be all about words and creating your own collage poem or poster. Take your artwork home, leave it on display or photograph and share it online using #hellodca or #dcamakes – we love seeing what you've made!

JUST ASK

Our friendly Visitor Assistants are always happy to help with your questions.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Keep up to date with the very latest from DCA by visiting www.dca.org.uk or by following us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Tweet us your thoughts on the exhibition using **#helloDCA**.

Interested to know what's coming up in DCA Galleries? Pick up one of our Exhibitions brochures to find out what's happening in our future programme.

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

Santiago Sierra

Black Flag

Sat 8 September – Sun 25 November
2018

Gallery 1

For the past two decades, Spanish artist Santiago Sierra (b. 1966, Madrid) has carried out provocative actions around the world. Influenced by the formal language of the minimal and conceptual art movements of the 1960s and 70s, Sierra's work addresses the hierarchies of power and class that operate in our modern society and everyday existence.

This exhibition is the UK premiere of one of the artist's most ambitious undertakings to date. It takes the form of an immersive photographic and sound installation documenting the process and performance of planting the universal symbol of the anarchist movement – the black flag – at the two most extreme points on earth: the North and South Poles.

Marking Sierra's first solo exhibition of work in Scotland, this project makes an acute critique of concepts of territory and the practices of nationalism imbued in the deceptively simple act of planting a flag.

Mike Kelley

Mobile Homestead

Sat 8 September – Sun 25 November
2018

Gallery 2

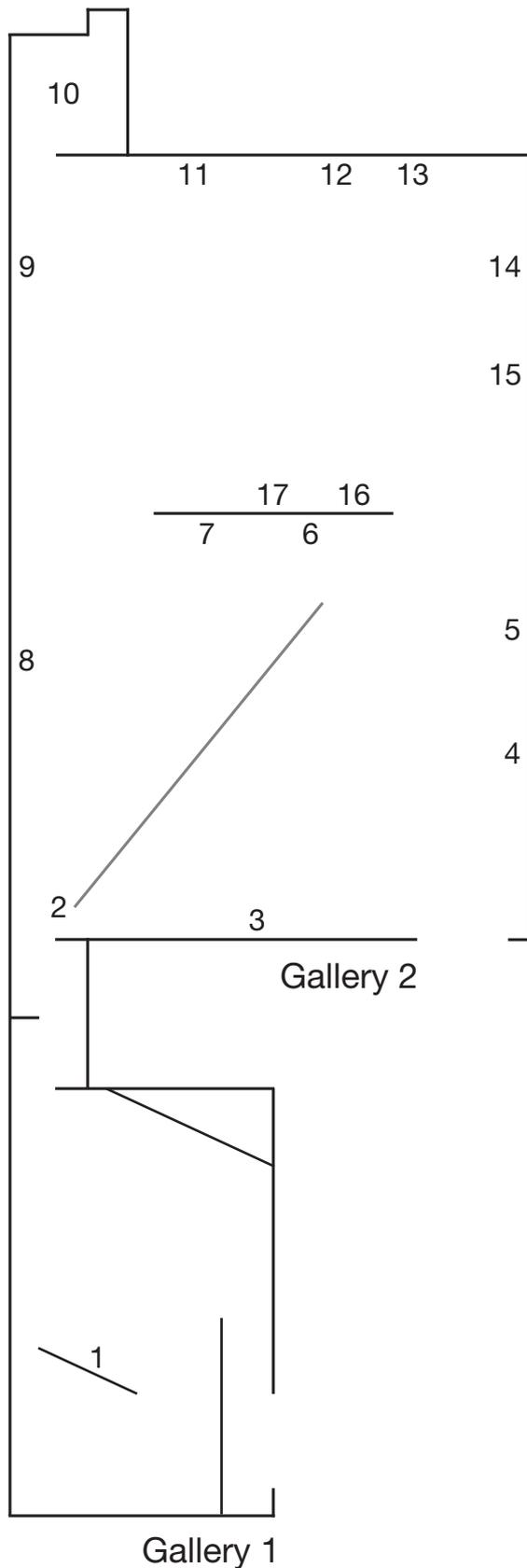
This exhibition marks the Scottish premiere of Mike Kelley's remarkable *Mobile Homestead* film trilogy, made between 2010 and 2011 in the artist's hometown of Detroit.

Mike Kelley (b. 1954, Detroit, d. 2012, Los Angeles) is widely considered one of the most influential artists of our time.

On 25 September 2010, Kelley's *Mobile Homestead* – a facsimile of his childhood home constructed on the back of a trailer – made its maiden voyage from the grounds of The Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit to the 'mother ship', his original home in the suburbs of the city.

We are pleased to be presenting this work at DCA in partnership with Artangel and the Mike Kelley Foundation, at a time when we as citizens of Dundee are looking to the future of our own city and the promise it holds.

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION



1. *with it which it as it if it is to be*
16mm film, 31 minutes, 2016

2. *any one she is kissing*
vinyl, 2018

3. *Bibliography*
collage on paper (series of 24), 2015

4. *Having Had It*
screenprinted acrylic and car paint on canvas, 2018

5. *what a slight. what a sound. what a universal shudder.*
screenprinted acrylic on canvas, 2016

6. *one is the same as any two halves*
vinyl, 2018

7. *any one she is kissing*
screenprinted acrylic and car paint on canvas, 2018

8. *Patriarchal Poetry*
vinyl, 2018

9. *with it which it as it if it is to be (neon)*
neon, 2016

10. Reading room: texts by Gertrude Stein

11. *words doing as they want to do*
sound work on 12" vinyl, 28 minutes 38 seconds, 2018

12. *How Can You Distress Me. You Can't. You Can Please Me.*
screenprinted acrylic on canvas, 2015

13. *How Can You Sleep So Sweetly. How Can You Be So Very Well. Very Well.*
screenprinted acrylic on canvas, 2017

14. *a narrative means that larks skylarks come to settle at a distance*
collage bookwork, 2018

15. *i want to tell about fire*
screenprinted acrylic on canvas, 2015

16. *By That Time. Drenched. By That Time.*
screenprinted acrylic on canvas, 2015

17. *All. The. Time. Me. Extra. My. Baby.*
screenprinted acrylic on canvas, 2015

Installed across the galleries and concourse:
A Spectacle and Nothing Strange
Colby letterpress poster series, 2010–2012