

## **New works premiere in Kathryn Elkin's Television exhibition at CCA Glasgow this summer**

For her CCA solo exhibition, *Television*, Kathryn Elkin presents three new works alongside an overview of some of her recent films. Documentary interviews, proto pop videos and talk shows are reworked into new and less stable forms to explore what constitutes the televisual.

Elkin explains: "I wanted to call the show *Television* early on in the process. My works have often had a televisual reference and it's something I've been very interested in for a long time as a cultural document. I participated in a residency at BBC Scotland in 2014 which allowed for a lot of reflection on what television might mean within my work."

Elkin's performance and video works concern role-playing and improvising, alongside an ongoing interest in the outtake and clowning on set. The videos often resemble simplified versions of music videos and TV talk shows. Elkin's works typically manifest through citing a referent – such as an artist, a song, a writer, or performer – upon which she applies personal methods of translation, transcription and representation. She has an ongoing interest in shared cultural memory (as produced by popular music, television and cinema) and the melding of this information to biographical memory.

Elkin comments: "For the exhibition at CCA, I've produced three brand new works that I think move my practice into a new stage. I've been able to let go of some of the architecture I would have used as support for the work earlier in my career and now I'm using formal logics that are intuited in the shooting and editing process. I think the word *television* can be used quite esoterically. Maybe it could describe an inner world - maybe my own - that has been profoundly influenced by watching television. I think 'television', which means far seeing, is a kind of collective memory, but it also pervades our singular imaginary worlds and the works I do are trying to dig in to that."

The three news works in *Television* individually make reference to pop videos, talk shows and BBC's long-running film review programme.

*Your Voice* is a proto pop video centred on *Those Were the Days*, a Russian song which became popular in the west after Paul McCartney produced an English-language version with Mary Hopkin. This 1968 hit was accompanied by a studio video prior to the era of music videos. Elkin's interest lies in the act of miming in pop recordings and questions what it mean to be a woman performing voiceless in this context.

*Dame, 2* recreates an interview with Helen Mirren from 1975 performed as a song by Elkin, backed by a choir of associates and friends she corrals into chanting in loose

harmony. The work points to the difference between Mirren's cultural status then and now, as well as gender issues.

Film 2016 is a sensory exploration of the improvised interview process as Elkin meets piano-tuner Ben Treuhaft. A portrait of the piano-tuner, his work, musical scoring and the trappings of labour, the work includes the melancholic 1963 Billy Taylor song I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free which was made famous by Nina Simone and was an important musical part of the civil rights movement in 1960s America. Taylor's 1967 instrumental version also became the theme tune for BBC's film programme.

In Why La Bamba (2014), the musician John McKeown is fed lines by Elkin on-set from a 1975 Parkinson interview with Dustin Hoffman. The result is an improv-style chat show featuring a new take on the original Spanish song (a pick of Hoffman's on Desert Island Discs). Parkinson appears again in another Elkin work, Michael's Theme, which uses previously unseen fragments from the opening and closing sections of the 1970s talk show, interspersing Parkinson's original house band with a new recording created by Elkin at BBC Scotland in 2014, to explore the conventions of a talk show and the notion of improvisation within the recorded-as-live TV format.

CCA Curator Remco de Blaaij said: "To call Elkin's work primarily funny might be awkward but it is exactly what is seemingly effortlessly and informally mobilised to start the conversations on screen within her works. In fact, these works create serious situations that both show and undermine attributed roles, gender representation, and characterisation. Television, as a screen, is not only part of British cultural memory, but also gives us valuable hints on how (far) we look."

On Saturday 23 July at 3pm there will be an artist tour of the exhibition with Kathryn Elkin. On Friday 26 August at 7pm, an evening with Kathryn Elkin brings together invited guests, including Irene Revel, to map out 'televisual' properties within artist and experimental film, with a particular focus on female filmmakers. At the end of the exhibition, a new e-publication will be produced which will capture responses on the works, a short reflection on television as a medium and speculation on future research.

## **Kathryn Elkin Television**

Saturday 23 July – Sunday 4 September 2016

Preview: Friday 22 July, 7pm – 9pm

Tue – Sat: 11am – 6pm / Sun: 12noon – 6pm

Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA), 350 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3JD

For full details, please see [www.cca-glasgow.com](http://www.cca-glasgow.com)

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For more information, images or interviews, please contact Julie Cathcart, Communications Manager, CCA – [julie@cca-glasgow.com](mailto:julie@cca-glasgow.com) / 0141 352 4911.

## **Notes to Editors**

### **About CCA:**

The Centre for Contemporary Arts is Glasgow's hub for the arts. The building is steeped in history and the organisation has played a key role in the cultural life of the city for decades. CCA's year-round programme includes cutting-edge exhibitions, film, music, literature, spoken word, festivals, Gaelic language events and performance. CCA also provides residencies for artists in the on-site Creative Lab space, as well as working internationally on residencies with Palestine, the Caribbean and Quebec. CCA curates six major exhibitions a year, presenting national and international contemporary artists, and is home to Intermedia Gallery showcasing emerging artists. [www.cca-glasgow.com](http://www.cca-glasgow.com)

### **About Kathryn Elkin:**

Kathryn Elkin (1983, Belfast) graduated from Glasgow School of Art's Environmental Art course (2005) and received a Post Graduate Diploma in Art Writing from Goldsmiths College, London (2012). She was a LUX Associate Artist (2012-2013) and Artist in Residence as part of the BBC's Artists in the Archive project (2014). She is a part time lecturer in Fine Art at Liverpool John Moore's University. Recent exhibitions include Why La Bamba, CCA Derry with Seamus Harahan, Fig-2 at ICA, London and screenings at London Film Festival and Tate Modern. She will present work with Alia Sayed at Tate Britain in August as part of a year-long series of events celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the London Filmmakers Co-Op.