

The Viewing Room

Curated by Bob Bicknell-Knight

Bob Bicknell-Knight, Johanna Flato, Roxman Gatt and Rosa-Maria Nuutinen

5th – 20th October 2019

Harlesden High Street, 60-70 Shorts Gardens, London, WC2H 9AH, United Kingdom



Harlesden High Street in collaboration with *isthisit?* is pleased to present Viewing Room, a group exhibition of works from artists that Harlesden High Street have previously worked with and will work with in the near future. The show includes work from Bob Bicknell-Knight, Johanna Flato, Roxman Gatt and Rosa-Maria Nuutinen, curated by Bob Bicknell-Knight.

The exhibition features work from four artists, from cattle prods to paintings, concerning broad ideas surrounding digital territories, public vs private personas, macho cultures and future beings. Both conceptual and visual connections connect the artworks, from disconnected car parts to tech CEOs. Primarily the artworks are critiquing and commenting on the consumer culture that we as a Western society have created and contributed to.

Bob Bicknell-Knight's *Mark's Third* (2019) is part of a series of recent paintings looking into the psyche and moral compass of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. Within the works Zuckerberg is portrayed as a trophy hunter, individuals who hunt wild game for recreational purposes. In a recent interview with *Rolling Stone*, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey stated that there was a year when Zuckerberg was only eating what he was killing and had a penchant for goat meat. Supposedly he would stun goats with a taser, cut their throat with a knife and have their bodies sent to a butcher to prepare. Being served goat for dinner whilst attending a dinner party at Zuckerberg's house was Dorsey's most memorable encounter with Zuckerberg. The new paintings imagine that Zuckerberg took this interest in animal killing further, becoming a trophy hunter. At the end of a successful hunt, the hunter will usually pose next to the slain animal for a photograph, to be distributed to friends and family members.

Other paintings in the exhibition, *Empty Machines* (2019) and *Larkspur* (2019), are part of a recent series of paintings that begin as in game photographs within the video game *Horizon Zero Dawn*. The 2017 video game follows Aloy, a hunter in the year 3040, who inhabits a future Earth that has limited

access to technology and has become overrun by animal like machines controlled by a rogue artificial intelligence. The work depicts abandoned, long forgotten cars that have become monuments to virtual users who would have previously inhabited them within the digital space, alongside flowers at various times of the in-game day.

Johanna Flato's X Asset (2019) and .IO Asset (2019) are embedded within a tangle of cables within the viewing room, manifesting as two electric cattle branding irons glowing with emitted heat, depicting an 'X' and a '.IO'. Drawn from a series titled Assets, these tools-as-artworks link logos and symbols back to their physical origin of branding something living as bounded property.

The 'X' symbol was chosen for its associations of spatial claiming: a variable to be solved for, a box checked, coordinates marked. The '.IO', meanwhile, was chosen for its colliding symbolisms in computer science and geopolitics. '.io' is a top-level domain (TLD) popular in the tech startup community for its 'input/output' (I/O) associations. However, as a country-code, TLD, it stands for the British Indian Ocean Territory, a highly restricted site in the Chagos Archipelago that saw thousands of local Chagossians illegally evicted in the late 1960s to make way for a joint UK-US military base still operating today. As a work, '.IO Asset' suggests that these violent, imperialistic exertions of dominion underpin shiny, purportedly neutral web domains.

In a site-specific iteration of this series, one wall has been branded with the X Asset brand. Roxman Gatt's work features throughout the space, You're my Perfiction (2018), Defender/Protector (2018) and CTRL Me (2018) are all made from car body parts. Found objects and carefully constructed duplicates associated with consumerism and car culture are deconstructed, repurposed and reassembled within the works. In the work Defender/Protector expressions such as 'letting go' and 'giving up' are emblazoned onto the straps of a sports car harness. These straps suspend a grey painting, abstracting and undermining these objects of protection and strength. CTRL Me (2018) features a number of wax gear sticks, old and decrepit, placed on the floor in a huddle, becoming stand ins for physical bodies within the gallery space.

Rosa-Maria Nuutinen's The Bird (2019) is a recent drawing depicting the skeleton of a defeathered cyborg bird, ready to be taxidermied, becoming an artefact of the not so distant future, commenting upon the augmentation and cyborgization of human beings within society.



Viewing Room, 2019
Installation view



Viewing Room, 2019
Installation view



Rosa-Maria Nuutinen
The Bird, 2019
Biro on paper
29.7 x 21 cm
Unique



Bob Bicknell-Knight
Empty Machines, 2019
Ink and acrylic on canvas
100 x 80 cm
Unique



Viewing Room, 2019
Installation view



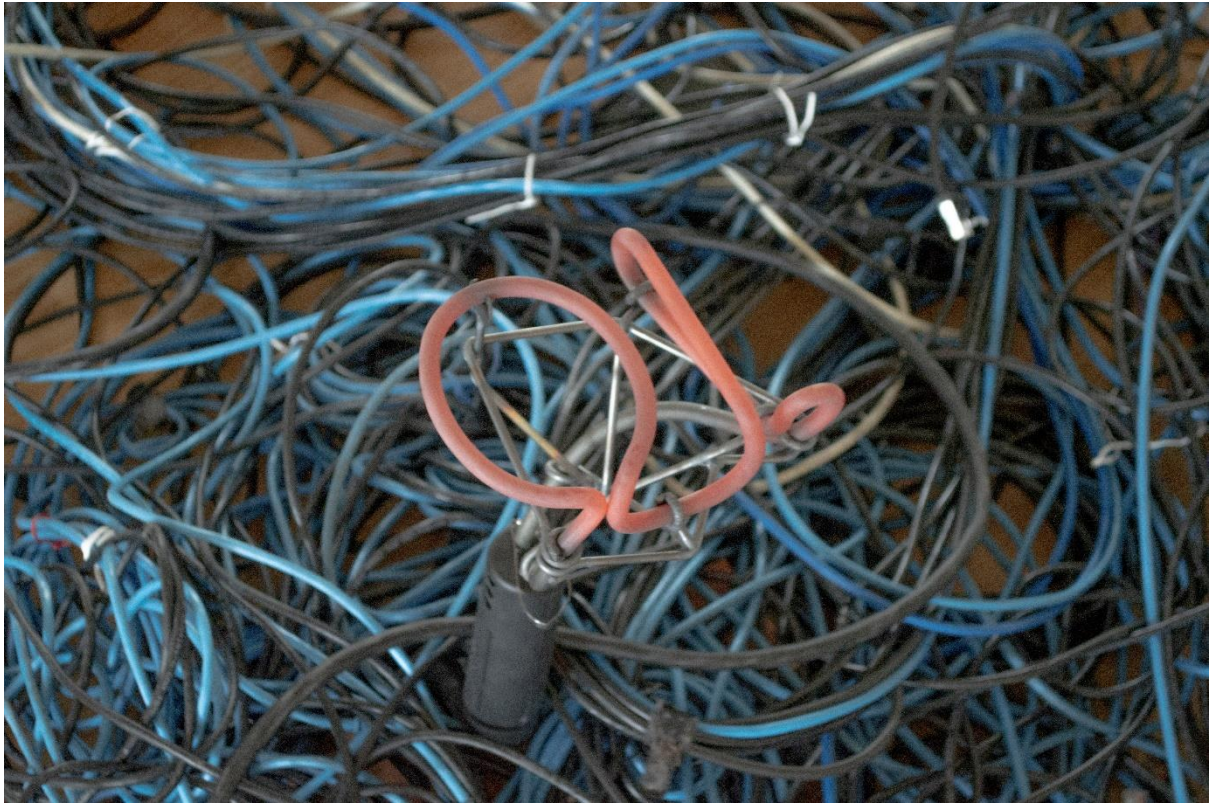
Johanna Flato

X Asset and .IO Asset, 2019

Electric branding irons, plastic handles, assorted cables, voltage transformer, extension lead

Dimensions variable

Unique



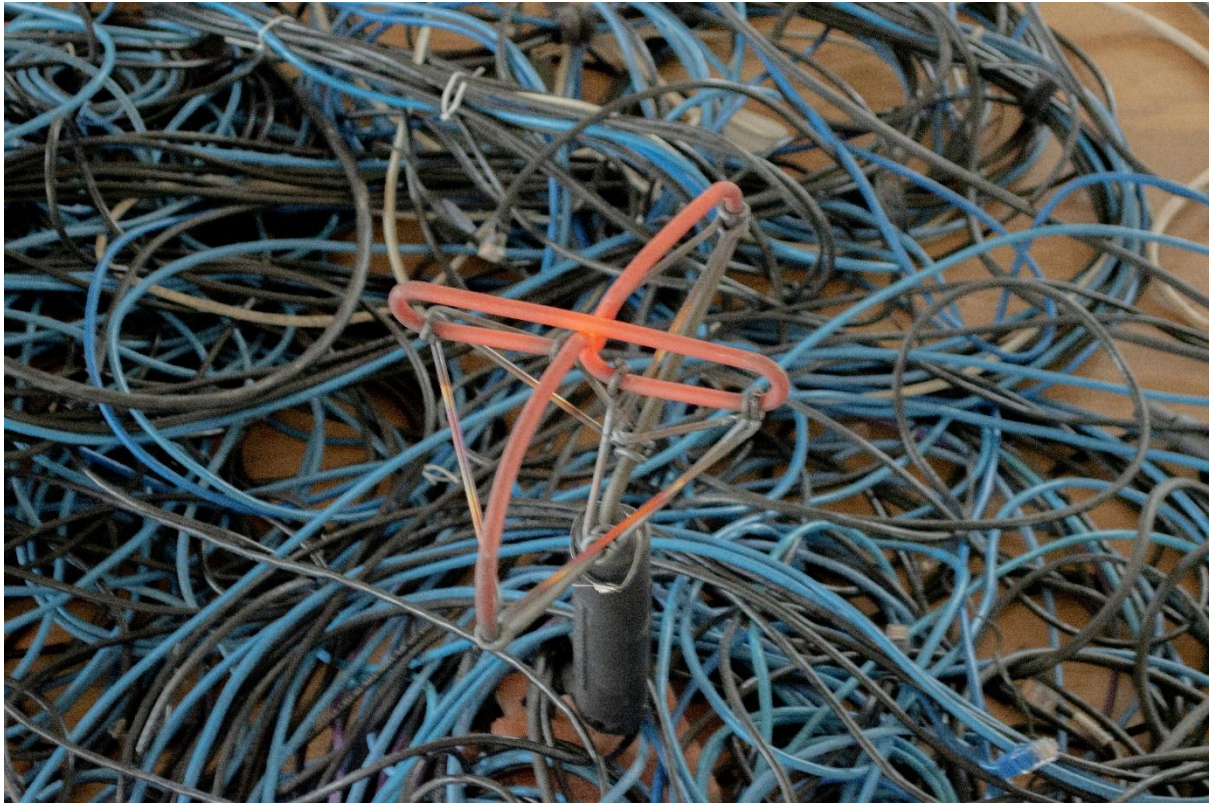
Johanna Flato

.IO Asset, 2019

Electric branding iron, plastic handle, assorted cables, voltage transformer, extension lead

15 x 10 x 42 cm

Unique



Johanna Flato

X Asset, 2019

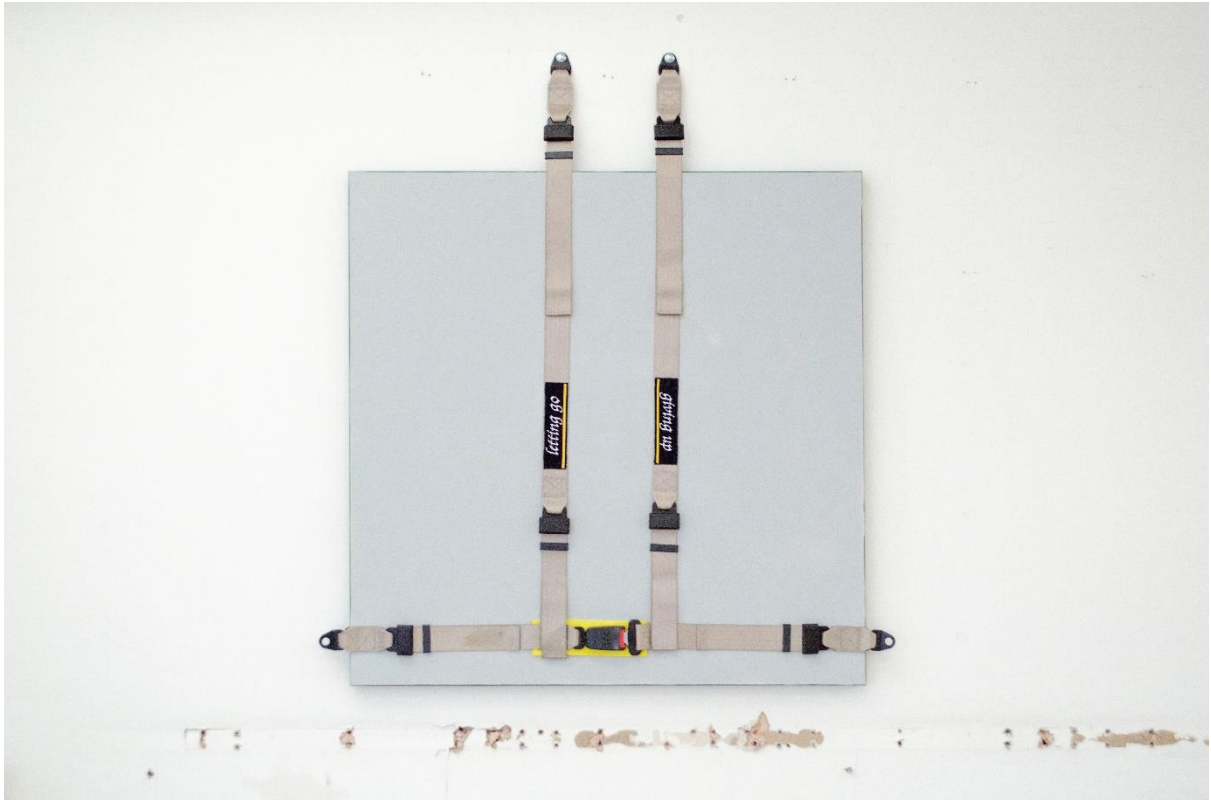
Electric branding iron, plastic handle, assorted cables, voltage transformer, extension lead

17.5 x 19 x 42 cm

Unique



Viewing Room, 2019
Installation view



Roxman Gatt
Defender/Protector, 2018
Spray paint and acrylic on canvas, embroidery, 3 point seat belt
101.6 x 101.6 x 3.8 cm
Unique



Bob Bicknell-Knight
Larkspur, 2019
Ink and acrylic on canvas
30 x 20 cm
Unique



Viewing Room, 2019
Installation view



Roxman Gatt
You're my perfection, 2018
Glass Engraving, car wrapping
35 x 40 x 10 cm
Unique



Roxman Gatt
You're my perfection, 2018
Glass Engraving, car wrapping
35 x 40 x 10 cm
Unique



Viewing Room, 2019
Installation view



Johanna Flato
X Asset, Imprint, 2019
Brand
17.5 x 19 cm
Unique, site-specific



Viewing Room, 2019
Installation view



Roxman Gatt
CTRL me, 2018
Cast wax
Dimensions variable
Edition of 5, 1AP



Roxman Gatt
CTRL me, 2018
Cast wax
Dimensions variable
Edition of 5, 1AP



Viewing Room, 2019
Installation view



Bob Bicknell-Knight
Mark's Third, 2019
Ink and acrylic on canvas
60 x 100 cm
Unique



Viewing Room, 2019
Installation view