

Again

Dora Budor

27 January – 5 May 2024

Croatian-born artist Dora Budor's first institutional exhibition in the UK features a series of newly commissioned works concerned with techniques of the built environment and various forms of psychosocial control induced by it.

Inherent to this is the development of 'pastoral power' as an individualising and totalising force that continues to shape the social body. A population's moral character is seen as a result of the vigilant oversight of modern government, drawn from the tradition of the pastorate. Budor locates the present-day pastoral complex in strategies of urban renewal, self-care industries, and sharing economies. Proceeding from the formal language of sculpture, these practices are brought into relation with historical precedents, most famously, the enclosure of the commons, or more curiously, the discouragement of public urination.

Throughout the exhibition, states of intoxication, disobedience and transience are met with states of safety, well-being and protection. These conditions are then re-encoded into works that both index and subvert the forms in which they are found. Again, we see the prioritisation of productivity and value extraction instruct the management of space to reform public behaviour. Again, places of leisure and recreation presume that citizens act firstly as consumers within the incessant palette of market choices. Again, order results as much from what is permissible in space as from how space itself is represented. Through these works, social control appears as a phenomenon that connects art and its conditions of viewership to developments in land management, architecture, pharmaceuticals, psychology and agriculture.

1. *A.U.D. (I – IV)*
2023

Boiled cardboard, polyvinyl acetate, shellac

"In London a man may sometimes walk a mile before he can meet with a suitable corner; for so accommodating are the owners of doorways, passages, and angles, that they seem to have exhausted invention in the ridiculous barricades and shelves, grooves, and one fixed above another, to conduct the stream into the shoes of the luckless wight who shall dare to profane the intrenchments."¹

About halfway along Fleet Street, Clifford's Inn Passage marks a point between the Royal Courts of Justice and what was once the center of the British newspaper industry. In the 19th century, this part of London also acted as a testing ground for the implementation of early hostile architecture. Cast with cardboard from liquor packaging, the works reproduce Victorian-era urine deflectors installed along the east wall of Clifford's Inn Passage. Their material vies between porousness and repellence, reifying the states that they're set against.

2. *Dominoes*
2023

3. *Dominoes*
2023

4. *Dominoes*
2023

Placebo tablets, abrasive cloth, plexiglass case

"According to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, mixed anxiety and depression is Britain's most common mental disorder, with 7.8% of people meeting the criteria for diagnosis.² A report from Deloitte in 2022 shows that the annual costs to UK employers attributed to poor mental health are on a steady rise: "[the annual costs] are estimated as the combined costs of absenteeism, presenteeism and labour turnover. These have increased in total by 25% since the start of the pandemic, up to £53–56 billion in 2020–21, which equates to over 2.6% of the UK's annual Gross Domestic Product."³ While from 2015 to 2021, the revenue derived from the manufacture of basic pharmaceuticals has grown from £12,171 million to £22,448 million."⁴

Following the previous series *Love Streams*, which used a common anti-depressant as a medium, in *Dominoes* the regulation of subjectivity is tested by another type of misapplication.

The word “placebo” entered the medicinal context in the 18th century, defined as “any medicine adapted more to please than to benefit the patient”.⁵ The placebo effect occurs when people’s expectations or beliefs influence or determine their experience in a given situation.

5. *Untitled*
2024
Open airlock door

Nottingham Contemporary’s position between the thoroughfares of Weekday Cross, High Pavement and Garner’s Hill has allowed for the building to become a shortcut for pedestrians trying to get to Nottingham College below, or the city centre above. A door usually only intended for incoming and outgoing freight is set ajar.

6. *Passive Recreation*
2024
HD video, 7 min 48 sec, rotational grazing wheel fencing, electronics

Little Island is a privately funded park cultivated on a jetty on Manhattan’s West Side. Known as part of the Chelsea Piers, a well-documented gay cruising spot in the 1970s and 80s and the former location of artist Gordon Matta-Clark’s *Day’s End*, the area boasts prime views of the city and its surrounding area. In its planning, British designer Thomas Heatherwick aimed to replicate the redevelopment of the nearby High Line, a site marked by the post-industrial abandon transformed into a popular tourist attraction, increasing real-estate values and prices along its route.

The island was imagined as an “entirely new type of public space that would create an immersive experience with nature and art”.⁶ In this context, the attempt to bring nature and art together underscores the fact that both are a type of cultivation – of a pastoral ideal of beauty and the picturesque – intended for the gaze of tourists and content producers. In the work, the camera’s grazing circuit disobeys the anticipated image production of the architectural folly, using the logic of its design as a set, and turning it in on itself.

7. *Always Something to Remind Me*
2023
Rental bicycle

Always Something to Remind Me points to the cycles and circulations of property relations that manifest through simple everyday forms. The work was constituted by smelting one of New York’s ubiquitous Citibikes, using its alloy to make sixteen casts. These multiples were produced using a mould taken from Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven’s readymade *Enduring Ornament* (1913), which has been the subject of art historian’s claims of its foundational place in the history of the readymade. Found on the Manhattan streets by the artist on the way to her

nuptials, the object remains ambiguous as to whether it represents a wedding ring, a weight, or a part of a chain.

Littered across the city of New York, Citibikes are emblematic of Citibank’s private investment in public mobility. Their appropriation is a transgression, an expropriation of the property of a bank involved in financing a slew of public-private partnerships – the Marshall Plan, the Panama Canal, the transatlantic cable and the space shuttle; and a process of transmutation, like alchemical attempts to turn base metal into gold.

Texts by Nicholas Tammens

- 1 “To the Conductor of The Farmer’s Magazine: On Human Exuviae and Soil-Holes” in *The Farmer’s Magazine*, Vol 10 Issue 40, Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co, 1809-12, p500
- 2 NICE, “Common mental health disorders | Guidance and guidelines”, <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg123> [Accessed 22 Jan 2023]
- 3 Deloitte UK, *Mental health and employers: The case for investment – pandemic and beyond*, London: Deloitte, March 2022
- 4 “Pharmaceuticals Manufacturing Turnover in the UK by Subdivision 2008-2019.” n.d. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/328204/turnover-of-pharmaceuticals-manufacturing-by-subdivision/>
- 5 *Quincy’s Lexicon medicum. A new medical dictionary: containing an explanation of the terms in anatomy, physiology (...) and the various branches of natural philosophy connected with medicine/selected, arranged, and compiled, from the best authors by Robert Hooper*, London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, 1811
- 6 Quote from Barry Diller, philanthropist and main investor of Little Island, <https://littleisland.org/design-construction/>

Related Events

Dora Budor Screens: Peter Gidal, Jiajia Zhang, Asta Lynge, Nikhil Vettukattil, Jean-Marie Straub and Noah Barker & Paul Levack
Saturday 27 Jan, 1 – 2pm

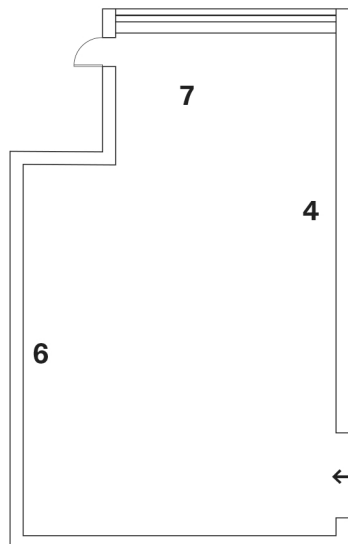
For this screening program, Budor presents a selection of structuralist and neo-structuralist films and videos by Peter Gidal, Jiajia Zhang, Jean-Marie Straub, Asta Lynge, Nikhil Vettukattil, and Noah Barker & Paul Levack.

The films show us things we can sometimes recognise, but they are likely not about any of those recognisable things. They are not about description, but about process. They are about something being produced, and not reproduced. Instead, these films examine the undercuts of consumable images and probe deep into their libidinal slickness.

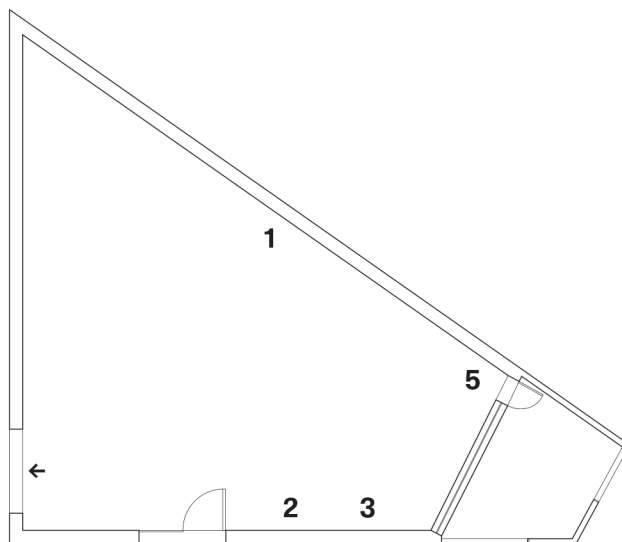
Presented on 16mm film, HD video, and dual-projector passive 3D video.

In collaboration with Giorno Poetry Systems, New York.

Gallery 4



Gallery 3



List of Works

1. *A.U.D. (I – IV)*, 2023
Boiled cardboard, polyvinyl acetate, shellac
2. *Dominoes*, 2023
Placebo tablets, abrasive cloth, plexiglass case
3. *Dominoes*, 2023
Placebo tablets, abrasive cloth, plexiglass case
4. *Dominoes*, 2023
Placebo tablets, abrasive cloth, plexiglass case
5. *Untitled*, 2024
Open airlock door
6. *Passive Recreation*, 2024
HD video, 7 min 48 sec, rotational grazing
wheel fencing, electronics
7. *Always Something to Remind Me*, 2023
Rental bicycle

Exhibition Credits

The exhibition is curated by Nicole Yip, Chief Curator at Nottingham Contemporary, with independent curator Nicholas Tammens and produced by Niall Farrelly, Assistant Curator at Nottingham Contemporary.

Dora Budor: *Again* is commissioned by Nottingham Contemporary, and generously supported by the Dora Budor Exhibition Circle: Antenna Space & those who wish to remain anonymous.

Dora Budor's production residency in Nottingham was made possible through the support of Primary.

Exhibition graphics by Studio Marie Lusa.

Exhibition Acknowledgements

Thanks to the whole team of Primary, Chloe Willis, Lucy Nelson, Sam Petz, Richard Petz, Progetto, Antenna Space, Galerie Molitor, Franklin Melendez, Noah Barker, Michele Graf, Rachel Faeth, Eli Coplan, Giorno Poetry Systems and all the artists in the screening programme.

Nottingham
Contemporary



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

