

ROB TUFNELL

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**47 BEDFORD STREET
LONDON WC2E 9HA**

**PATRICIA L. BOYD
'A SORT OF CARBON PAPER'
16 MARCH – 6 APRIL 2024**

Photogravure prints are arrayed across a pair of improvised horse-hair surfaces. The engravings, derived from original and found photographs variously present intimate still lives and found aerial photographs taken from the internet. They present the world in macro and microcosm.

Drax power station in North Yorkshire is the largest power station in Britain and produces 6% of the country's electricity. Although burning biomass and thus classified as producing 'renewable energy' it has recently been revealed to be exploiting wood sourced from ancient, unrenewable forestry in British Columbia, Canada. In 2022 55,000 cubic metres of prime timber was extracted from the wilderness, converted into wood pellets and shipped (with another significant carbon release) across the North Atlantic to Drax. In 2023 a further 40,000 tonnes of wood followed. As such fuel is sourced outside the UK associated carbon emissions are not included in official national data. Drax has been at the forefront of successive British government industrial policies since its development was announced in 1964: from the opening of the Selby coal field to create industrial jobs in the 1960s to contemporary plans for carbon capture today. It is now privately owned and yet heavily subsidised by the UK government. Somewhat appropriately Rayner Banham described its architecture when it opened in 1974 as 'less a brick cathedral than a concrete bunker'.

Boyd presents images of six of Drax's twelve cooling towers alongside satellite images of some of the land deforested to feed them. These are accompanied by sexually suggestive, fecund arrangements of raw foods. Boyd's etchings are loosely inspired by Edgar Degas' 'Fumées d'usines' (factory smoke) (1877-79). Like Degas' print there is an element of self-reflexion in the images of Drax in that they are conceived knowing that the printing plate and its ink are products of heavy industry (being respectively steel and carbon-based). Conversely, Boyd's use of horse-hair (an extremely durable, recycled, upholstery fabric) harks back to an age in which the Scottish engineer James Watt quantified the power of steam engines with that of draft horses. Boyd's use of still life draws at once from 17th century arrangements filled with suggestion and more direct iconic Feminist art of the 20th century. The prints both refer to and are the result of a reproductive act.

Boyd (b. 1980) lives and works in London. She studied English Literature at Oxford University and Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art and Design. Current and forthcoming presentations of her work include the 13th Taipei Biennial; 'A Reflection on the Sublime' at Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art and 'Live Stream' at Fluentum, Berlin. Solo exhibitions of her work have previously been held at Secession, Vienna (2022); Kunstverein München (2021); Front Desk Apparatus, New York (2020); 1856, Victorian Trades Hall, Melbourne and 80WSE, New York University (2017) and Modern Art Oxford (2014). Her work has also been presented at White Columns, New York (2023); Braunsfelder, Cologne (2022); Kunstverein Braunschweig (2021); Stadtgalerie Bern (2020); Bonner Kunstverein (2019); CCS Bard Hessel Museum, New York (2018); The Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco (2017) and the 12th Lyon Biennale (2013).

Opening reception Saturday 16 March, 18.00 – 20.00
Exhibition open Saturdays 12.00 – 17.00, and by appointment
for further information: mail@robtufnell.com