

LIST OF WORKS

1. *Data Stream Portrait of London*, 2012
Wood, paint, PVA glue,
LaserJet prints
317.5 × 1377 × 20.7 cm
Courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery,
London

2. *In and Out of the Vortex*, 2011
Ink, watercolour, Letraset text
on paper
53.5 × 64 cm
Courtesy Reena Spaulings Fine
Art, New York

3. *The Strange Attractor*, 2010
Ink, pencil, Letraset text on paper
115 × 83cm
Courtesy Reena Spaulings Fine
Art, New York

4. *From the World as Determined
to the World as Imagined*, 2007
Watercolour, pencil, ink, Letraset
text on paper
95 × 101.5cm
Courtesy Galerie Christian Nagel,
Koln

5. *An Endless Sequence of
Perceptual Frameworks*, 2008
Ink, watercolour, Letraset text
on paper
137 × 65 cm
Courtesy Galerie Christian Nagel,
Koln
6. *The Multichannel Messenger*,
2008
Ink, watercolour, Letraset text,
photographic prints,
photographic dye on paper
80 × 129cm
Courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery,
London

7. *A Progression of Signs and
Messages – Peckham Rye Lane*,
March 2012
Super 8 film transferred to DVD
6' 36"
Courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery,
London

8. Original films made by
participants recording their
data streams which form the
basis of their Mosaics presented
in *Changing Everything*, 1998.
Courtesy the South London
Gallery

9. (Screen on floor)
Archive films of *Changing
Everything at the South London
Gallery*, 1997–8, Reel One
Super 8 film transferred to DVD
10' 34"
Courtesy the South London
Gallery
10. Series of 12 photographs
of *Changing Everything*, 1998
at the South London Gallery
Top row: artists working
with participants to develop
their Mosaics. Bottom rows:
Participants administrating
the installation and visitors
participating.
Each 15.6 × 23.6cm

11. *Creating My Own Journey*,
November 1998 / April 1999
Panel 1: 118.5 × 80 cm, panels
2–6 each: 116 × 16.5 cm. Six
panels: photographic prints,
photographic dye, acrylic paint,
laser prints, Letraline on card.
*Creating My Own Journey
(Julie Lewis)*, 1997
Super 8 transferred to DVD
3'14"
Purchased by SLG and the
Contemporary Art Society from
the solo exhibition *Changing
Everything*, 1998.
Courtesy the South London
Gallery

12. *The Information Nomad*, 2011
Ink, pencil, Letraset text on paper
80 × 125cm
Courtesy MOT Gallery, London
13. *The World As It Is And The
World As It Could Be*, 2006
Ink, pencil, Letraset text on paper
125 × 82cm
Courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery,
London

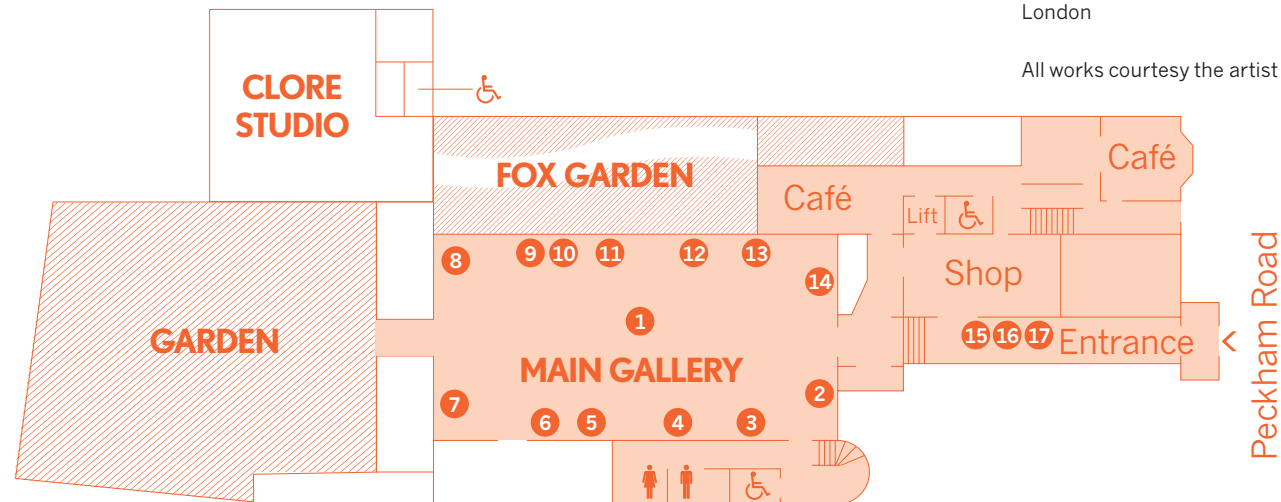
14. *The Strange Attractor Series*,
No 3, 2011
Pencil, gouache on paper
86cm × 112cm
Courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery,
London

15. A vitrine contains a collection
of announcements for Stephen
Willats' recent exhibitions, several
out-of-print books and a DVD,
which is available on the Control
website.
*A Personal Concept Bag Multiple
Clothing*, 1991
PVC, text cards and mixed media

16. *Untitled Photo Montage*,
Creating Everything, 1998
Photo montage
50 × 40 cm
Courtesy the South London
Gallery

17. *Still Life with Vases and
Diagrams*, 2012
Super 8 transferred to DVD
3'50"
Courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery,
London

All works courtesy the artist



SLG

South London Gallery 65–67 Peckham Road, London SE5 8UH
020 7703 6120 mail@southlondongallery.org www.southlondongallery.org
Twitter: @SLG_artupdates

STEPHEN WILLATS:
SURFING WITH THE
ATTRACTOR

SOUTH LONDON GALLERY
EXHIBITION GUIDE
1 JUN – 15 JUL 2012

STEPHEN WILLATS: SURFING WITH THE ATTRACTOR

1 JUN – 15 JUL 2012

London-based artist Stephen Willats is a pioneer of conceptual art and has made work examining the function and meaning of art in society since the early 1960s. Willats’ first solo exhibition at the South London Gallery was in 1998. Entitled *Changing Everything*, it was the culmination of a two-year project which began with a series of public meetings at various locations including a Women’s Refuge, the Kicking and Punching Club, the Vietnamese Centre, and the Baptist Church, through which Willats started a dialogue with local residents. He then invited those who were interested to go on a walk with him following a pre-determined route through the housing estates next to the gallery, including Sceaux Gardens and the North Peckham Estate, and to use a Super-8 camera to film signs, objects, traces of behaviour, or anything they felt was relevant to life on those estates. Aiming to work with participants to create a cultural model of how art might more closely relate to society, Willats not only made the work for the show with the residents, but also invited them to invigilate the exhibition and to ask visitors to make their own contributions to it.

Fourteen years later, for the current show, *Surfing with the Attractor*, Willats re-presents material from and documentation of *Changing Everything* alongside a huge new ‘data stream’ made with 14 London-based artists, as well as a series of diagrams of the ideas informing its creation, and a video work of unedited sequences of signs filmed by Willats using a Super-8 film camera as he progressed down the two streets on which the central data stream was made. Comprising hundreds of carefully ordered images gathered using diverse media, the data stream documents two contrasting streets in London: Rye Lane in Peckham and Regent Street in the West End. Also extending beyond the gallery space, the show includes films showing on monitors in three shops on Peckham Road and Camberwell Church Street, as well as graphic stickers which are being widely distributed locally and are available to visitors to take away with them.

Willats’ intention for the data stream is to present a dynamic picture of the transient world we live in, or a multiplicity of individual viewpoints on a shared experience, in this case that of walking down two contrasting streets of London. The work relates closely to *Data Stream Portrait of New York*, 2011, for which Willats worked with artists living in New York to create the centrepiece of his exhibition there, *The Strange Attractor*, at Reena Spaulings Fine Art. The data streams both for that show and for *Surfing with the Attractor* were made through a process of allocating each participating artist a medium (such as a disposable camera, digital camera, video camera, audio description, rubbing etc.), and a ‘channel’, such as ‘facial expressions’ or ‘signs of nature’, within which to frame their documentation of the two very different streets. Willats then worked with some of the artists to edit and ‘re-media-ise’ their documentation into the diagrammatic format of the data stream in which the multiple viewpoints and channels are brought together. Cutting across the gallery space, the vast data stream divides it in two, analogous to the separation between the two streets recorded, and invites visitors to

create their own walks, both through the gallery and along the two streets, via whichever channels they choose to focus on. The mass of information presented in the data stream, and visitors’ interaction with it, combine to make a clear and powerful statement about Willats’ understanding of reality as a cultural phenomenon which is shared and present within everybody’s consciousness, albeit through individual and therefore differing registers.

The contributing artists are: Gareth Bell Jones, Laura Bygrave, Reem Charif (Febrik), Lucy Clout, Alex Crocker, Philip Ewe, Luke Kemp, Nicholas Lawrence, Harold Offeh, Paul Pieroni, Philomene Pirecki, Ros Taylor, Edward Thomasson and Laura Wilson.

This exhibition also re-presents a series of graphic works from *Changing Everything* in 1998, made from footage shot in the 1990s around the South London Gallery, alongside film works on 14 monitors.

A catalogue accompanies the exhibition and includes an interview with the artist and texts by John Kelsey and Tom Morton. This catalogue is available online and from the SLG shop for £12.

www.southlondongallery.org/stephenwillats

Text taken from CHANGING EVERYTHING, Stephen Willats’ 1998 exhibition at the SLG

The Mosaics presented on the walls of the South London Gallery were the outcomes of a workshop conducted by the artist with a group of local residents who had participated in the work during 1998.

Individual residents were asked to accompany the artist on a walk through the North Peckham Estate, taking Super 8 and Snappy Snap 35mm cameras, looking for signs, objects, textures etc., that they felt had another meaning and that through their perceptual transformation they could see as having a new association with their life on the Estate. All participants in the workshop had made the same walk, to show the relativity of personal perception.

In a second workshop, participants edited their documentaries into a series of images and texts that reflected a question or problem situation that they wanted to ask the viewer about how life on the Estate could be changed.

The resulting set of fourteen mosaics were viewed with the aid of a Guide Book which presented these questions and, at the back, contained a set of Response Sheets on which the viewer’s own response to the Mosaics could be expressed in whatever way they wanted. Pens and pencils, tables and chairs were provided in the Gallery so people could create their own conceptualisations on the Response Sheets. There were no right or wrong answers to the questions, and all the responses were made anonymously.

Completed Response Sheets were given to an administrator of the installation who was one of the local residents that had made the Mosaics, and then in turn these were displayed on Response Mosaics, situated as free standing open grids in the centre of the Gallery. Each Wall Mosaic had its own dedicated Response Mosaic so that visitors to the Gallery could compare responses to each of the questions.

The displays of the Mosaics were records of the personal journeys of the participants, and the Response Mosaics were a wider statement showing the diversity of people’s differing social perceptions and creative imagination for possibilities of change in the world around them.

Biography

Stephen Willats was born in 1943 in London where he currently works and lives. His previous exhibitions include: *COUNTERCONSCIOUSNESS*, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany (2010) & publication, *Art Society Feedback. The World As It Is and The World As It Could Be*, Victoria Miro Gallery, London (2010); *Assumptions and Presumptions*, Art on the Underground, London (2007); *From My Mind to Your Mind*, Milton Keynes Gallery (2007); *How The World Is And How It Could Be*, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Siegen (2006); *Changing Everything*, South London Art Gallery (1998); *Museum Mosaic*, Tate Gallery, Liverpool (1994); *Buildings & People*, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin (1993); *Contemporary Living*, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Gent (1987); *Between Objects And People*, Leeds City Art Gallery (1987); *Grusse vom Medernen Lebe*, Stadtische Galerie, Regensburg, West Germany (1986); *Meta Filter and Related Works*, Tate Gallery London (1982); *Aperto 82*, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, 1982; *4 Inseln, in Berlin*, National Gallery, Berlin (1980), *Concerning Our Present Way of Living*, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (1980), *Concerning our Present Way of Living*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (1979), *Living Within Contained Conditions*, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (1978). Further information: www.stephenwillats.com

EVENTS

Stephen Willats Book Launch

Wed 20 Jun, 7pm, free

RGAP publishers invite you to the launch of Stephen Willats’ new book, *Artwork as Social Model: A Manual of Questions and Propositions*, which includes texts, interviews and artwork from the last five decades of his career. *Artwork as Social Model* describes Willats’ radical approach to making art that challenges the overt determinism of our surrounding social infrastructure, from the remote architecture of so many of the buildings that form our daily environment to the nature of the art museum and gallery.

The Influence of Stephen Willats on Younger Artists

Thu 19 Jul, 7pm, £5/£3 conc

Emily Pethick, director of The Showroom, chairs a discussion with artists Kathrin Böhm, Jacob Jacobson and Nina Pope exploring the influence of Stephen Willats’ work and ideas on a younger generation of artists.

Book online: www.southlondongallery.org/tickets
Or call 020 7703 6120

Current exhibition

Febrik: *Play, I Follow You*

17 May – 22 Jul 2012

First floor galleries

Forthcoming exhibition

Rashid Johnson

28 Sept – 26 Nov 2012

Main gallery

Off-site works can be found at:

18. Persepolis, 28–30 Peckham High Street SE15 5DT
People and Diagrams, Oxford Street – Film Two, 2010
Super 8 transferred to DVD 4’2”. Courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery, London

19. Payless, 95–96 Peckham Road, SE15 5LG
People and Diagrams, Rye Lane, Peckham, 2012
Super 8 transferred to DVD, 3’24”. Courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery, London

20. Camberwell Superstore, 32–34 Camberwell Church Street SE5 8QZ
People in Pairs with Diagrams, Regent Street, 2012
Super 8 transferred to DVD 3’ 52”. Courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery, London

