

Highland Institute for Contemporary Art

Esther Polak and Ivar van Bekkum

<AbstractView>

18 September – 10 October

<AbstractView>, an exhibition by Dutch artists Esther Polak and Ivar van Bekkum will open at the HICA art-space on Saturday 18 September, 2-5pm. The opening coincides with the Great Glen Artists' Airshow a major collaborative event presented by The Arts Catalyst and HICA.

For further details on The Great Glen Airshow please visit:
http://www.artscatalyst.org/projects/detail/great_glen_airshow/

Esther Polak's work examines how technology determines perception. She was one of the first artists to make large-scale art explorations using GPS (Global Positioning System) mapping. In her 2004 MILK project, Polak used GPS to trace European dairy transportation from a (Latvian) cow to a (Dutch) consumer. In Nigeria, she tracked nomadic herdsman, translating their journeys into drawings by means of a small robot tracing lines of sand. Collaborating with van Bekkum since 2004 their work continues to find new ways to explore the visualization of landscape and experience of space, by means of GPS technology.

During a short residency at HICA in 2009 Polak and van Bekkum developed their work for this exhibition, focusing on two basic forces that mould and interact with the landscape in very different ways: the grazing of sheep and the movements and rhythms of the wind. Working with a local farmer, they traced the interaction between a flock of sheep and a sheepdog using GPS devices. The results have then been interpreted and processed to produce an animated projection. The title of the exhibition, <AbstractView>, refers to a type of computer code (.kml) that the artists use to generate images, but also reflects on the images themselves and their relation to the original source of information.

Their projects demonstrate the forces that shape an environment. They provide insight into processes that occur over such long periods of time that they are otherwise difficult to experience, but the patterns created by the use of the latest technology also make comprehensible visualisations and tell human stories.

The artists will also contribute a free performance to The Great Glen Airshow, on Saturday 18 September, 2-5pm, where they will map air currents around Loch Ruthven by way of GPS tracking of large balloons.

Serendipitously, especially given the nature of their work, the artists were included in Google Streetview while engaged in their research at HICA. (Dalcrombie, IV2 6UA, UK)

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It runs from 18 September – 10 October 2010, and is open on Sundays 2 - 5pm, or by appointment.

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