

Espacio Gallery, 159 Bethnal Green Road, London, E2 7DG, Open Tuesday – Saturday 13:00 – 19:00, Sundays 13:00 – 17:00, 27<sup>th</sup> April – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015.  
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## EDGE OF LANGUAGE

We all use language; and many of us enjoy art. Both language and art have edges. If that seems odd, consider translation. Ludwig Wittgenstein took aim at the notion of a 'proposition'. These logical entities would be derived from the following thought. If the French sentence, '*Il pleut*' has the *same meaning* as the English sentence, 'It's raining', then that common meaning must *exist* in a form which is neutral between French and English. 'Propositions' or 'the sense of sentences' were placed at the heart of the predominant theory of language meaning. At a stroke Wittgenstein decluttered the world of these uncanny entities. For Wittgenstein argued that when Pierre hands Véronique an umbrella, simultaneously telling her, '*Il pleut*', he is doing what Frank does when he hands Dorothy an umbrella and tells her, 'It's raining'. It gives us a more anthropological view of language as a set of tools to be put to our *uses*. Wittgenstein incorporated the world into language at its edge and thereby provided the conditions under which we interpret linguistic *actions*. At the fringes of language is the ordinary human life it supports. No need for queer entities produced *ad hoc* to allay our philosophical embarrassment.

## EDGE OF ART

In a recent book, *Beyond Art*, (O.U.P., 2014), Dominic McIver Lopes has argued that Duchamp's *Fountain*, along with other 'hard cases', should be treated by the 'Is it Art?' question, only if the theory of art addressed, 'passes the buck' to a treatment of the individual arts. In a novel treatment of conceptual art, he argues that the 'hard cases' are better treated by asking 'To what art kind does this belong?' He argues forcibly that 'First, any item is a work of art if it is a work in an art kind – if it is a work of music, architecture, dance or the like... Second, there is nothing that is a work of art and yet does not belong to an art [kind].' New art kinds, film, computer games, digital art, installation etc., attach to older forms or are emergent from non-art forms. But their understanding (and hence, appreciation) relies upon their integration within a medium. Media need not be physical – as is the case with conceptual art. Yet, whilst conceptual art emerges from visual art, it has now come to fulfil its potential as an art kind in itself. But each art in itself has edges; and can learn from what lies just beyond those edges. So that ice-dance (a non-art) can have features that are called upon by ballet. Installation art can learn from – and even situate itself inside – the window displays of department stores. *Arte Povera* can appropriate its collage material from the city's junk-yards and trash cans.

## EDGE OF ORDINARY

Lopes' looking beyond art provides a counterpart to Wittgenstein's looking beyond language. Artists are foragers. They notoriously borrow and steal. We are used to them borrowing from other artists in the same art kind, but less used to them stealing from the street or borrowing from non-artistic sources. Additional to Lopes' account is an interest that has taken hold of contemporary visual artists – Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project. This introduced 'the art of display' into fine art – and it is with such an art (if Lopes would countenance display as a 'medium') that we can make sense of Tracy Emin's *My Bed*, Ed and Nancy Kienholz' various tableau, Claes Oldenberg's *Ray Guns*, Joseph Cornell's assemblages, and, indeed, Duchamp's readymades. Nothing in the 'art of display' discounts other work in established individual arts and Lopes' 'buck-passing' theory of art accommodates this.

The work of the artists who contribute to this show, curated by Gail Olding, is diverse in its nature and calls upon different strands of connection to art kinds and to their non-art relatives. However, each is committed to the fineness of art and the combination of work in this 'arcade' is a celebration of that diversity.

**On Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May, 19:00 – 21:00, Dr Edward Winters will speak on Lopes' Beyond Art with relevance to the current exhibition.**

**Exhibiting artists are: Dom Chastney, Olivia Davis, Charlie Dillon, Pamela Gerrie, Graeme Messer,**

**Gail Olding, Gianluca Pisano, Jane Price, Bettina Stuurman, Edward Winters .**