

Bit Rot

Opening 26th February 2020

27th February – 26th April 2020

Broadway Studio & Gallery, 2 The Arcade, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3EW

Broadway Studio and Gallery are delighted to present Bit Rot, a solo exhibition by artist, curator and writer Bob Bicknell-Knight.

Working within various artistic mediums, Bicknell-Knight's work responds to the hyper consumerism of the internet, exploring ideas of surveillance capitalism, utopian and dystopian ideologies and the digitization of the self.

Bit Rot, also known as bit decay, data rot and data decay, is the slow deterioration in the performance and integrity of data stored on storage media. The process occurs over many years, due to imperfect insulation on flash drives, floppy disks losing their magnetic orientation and by storing CDs and DVDs in warm, humid environments, causing them to physically and visually rot.

In Bit Rot, Bicknell-Knight exhibits new paintings, sculptures and videos, depicting relics from the past and the present, set in a near future where nature has overwhelmed various forms of technology in a world not dissimilar to our own. The paintings and video works utilise imagery and footage taken from the video game Horizon Zero Dawn.

The 2017 game follows Aloy, a hunter in the year 3040, who inhabits a future Earth that has limited access to technology and has become overrun by animal like machines controlled by a rogue artificial intelligence. The works began with Bicknell-Knight wandering through this virtual world, using in game photography techniques to document the degradation of technology and modern life in a number of different in game environments. The in-game objects have become monuments to virtual users who would have previously inhabited them within the digital space. The cars, buildings and roads in the paintings and videos are relics from a future world, with these elements frozen in time and space due to unknown interventions.

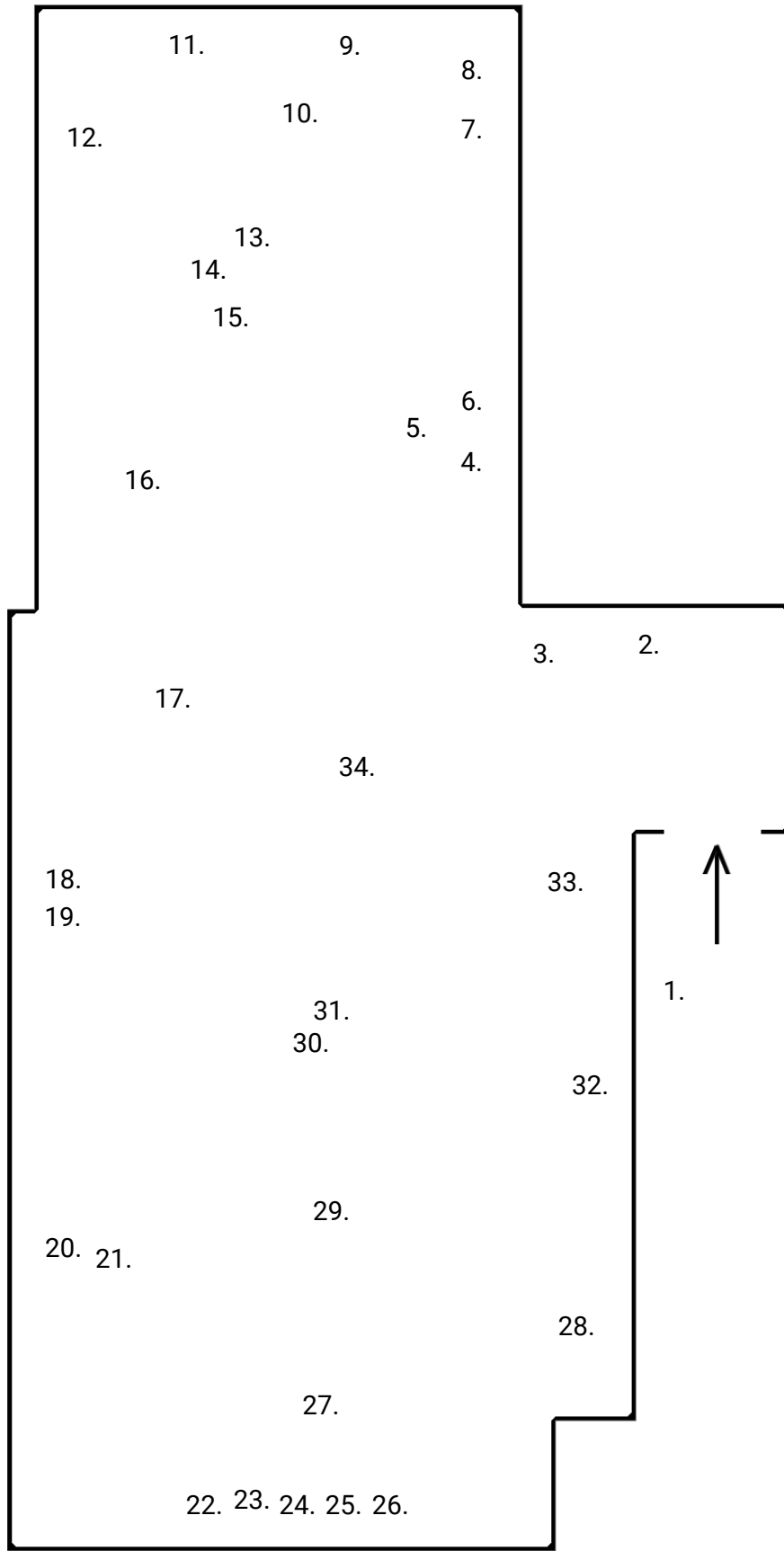
The sculptures within the exhibition are real world objects that have been overwhelmed by artificial interventions, from faux grass to plastic flowers, mimicking the digital nature displayed within the game world, created and crafted over hundreds of hours by a small workforce of video game developers.

Within the exhibition the two videos are displayed on and around an aluminium modular extrusion system, used in office partitions and within forms of autonomous production. The films contain manipulated footage captured from within the video game, presenting a number of the digital landscapes over a 24-hour period, complete with digital birdsong and running water. The original footage has been altered, transforming the once hyper real landscapes into moving paintings, presented in the same aesthetic style as the physical paintings. The videos are housed within 3D printed USB drives, digitally sculpted to resemble copper minerals, a material commonly used in CPUs and computer chips.

Another series of paintings in the show feature individual flower varieties, captured at different times of day within the in-game world. A series of 24 paintings, each depicting the intricacies of the same digital flower at a different hour in a given day, are available to purchase and view at the gallery's reception desk.

Bicknell-Knight lives and works in London, UK.

Bicknell-Knight has spoken on panel discussions and given artist talks at Tate Modern, London (2019), University of Cambridge, Cambridge (2019), Camberwell College of Arts, London (2019) and Goldsmiths, University of London, London (2018).



1. Empty Machines, 2019
Ink and acrylic on canvas
2. Pedagogical Ruins, 2020
Ink and acrylic on canvas
3. Relic XVIII, 2020
Found shoe, 3D printed PLA plastic, silk flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
4. Data Dump IV, 2020
Ink and acrylic on canvas
5. Relic VIII, 2020
Found phone, plastic flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
6. Data Dump III, 2020
Ink and acrylic on canvas
7. Data Dump II, 2020
Ink and acrylic on canvas
8. Data Dump I, 2020
Ink and acrylic on canvas
9. Sunken Relic, 2019
Ink and acrylic on canvas
10. Relic V, 2020
Canon DS6041, 3D printed PLA plastic, silk flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
11. Forgotten Remains, 2020
Ink and acrylic on canvas
12. Relic VII, 2020
3D printed polyamide, silk flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
13. Copper Mineral II, 2020
3D printed PLA plastic, USB drive
14. Phase Change II, 2020
HD video with sound
15. Relic IX, 2020
Found phone, silk flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
16. Relic IV, 2019
Hi-Tec Jaguar trainer, 3D printed PLA plastic, silk flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
17. Relic X, 2020
3D printed polyamide, silk flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
18. Relic XI, 2020
Found phone, plastic flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
19. Relic XII, 2020
Found phone, plastic flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
20. Relic XIII, 2020
Found phone, plastic flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
21. Relic XIV, 2020
Found shoe, 3D printed PLA plastic, plastic flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
22. Chamomile, 2019
Ink and acrylic on canvas
23. Poppy, 2019
Ink and acrylic on canvas
24. White Lupine, 2019
Ink and acrylic on canvas
25. Purple Columbine, 2019
Ink and acrylic on canvas
26. Larkspur, 2019
Ink and acrylic on canvas
27. Relic XV, 2020
Found shoe, 3D printed PLA plastic, plastic flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
28. Relic XVI, 2020
Found shoe, 3D printed PLA plastic, silk flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
29. Relic VI, 2020
Samsung E1230, plastic flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
30. Phase Change I, 2020
HD video with sound
31. Copper Mineral I, 2020
3D printed PLA plastic, USB drive
32. Economic Collapse, 2020
Ink and acrylic on canvas
33. Relic XVII, 2020
Olympus E-PL2, 3D printed PLA plastic, plastic flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue
34. Relic XIX, 2020
Found shoe, 3D printed PLA plastic, plastic flowers, floral wire, artificial grass, spray mount, glue