

October 2009
PRESS RELEASE

Pretty Eyed Pirate Smile
works by ELLIE REES
Gallery 1 Aberystwyth Arts Centre
10 – 31 October 2009

Ellie Rees was one of the first Artists in Residence in Aberystwyth Arts Centre's Creative Units. Ellie Rees now returns to the Arts Centre to exhibit her work in Gallery 1 as part of an Aberystwyth Arts Centre Touring Exhibition. Ellie Rees's work will be on display in Gallery 1 from the 10th – 31st October.

Ellie Rees' video works are visually lush, and draw the viewer in quickly with their good looks and clear references. Her subject matter is art, being an artist, and being a female human in 21st century Britain. So far, so relatively standard, but Ellie Rees uses her skills and her brain to tread the fine line between broad populism and obscure in-references to produce good looking entertaining films with a needle sharp point. She frequently uses humour or irony as a sub-text and some pieces play cleverly with ideas about the nature of performance, whether live or recorded.

The artist climbs up a steep ladder, blue sunny sky behind her. Hampered and displayed by tight dress and heels, she settles at the top and recites from Charlotte Bronte's seminal work, 'Jane Eyre', a novel which famously questioned the patriarchy of the time.

*From **You didn't call so I read Jane Eyre 2009***

Many of her works explore the contradictory attractions of emancipated female roles and the romantic dreams postulated by popular and traditional culture; simultaneously questioning how to be an artist in such a situation.

Reader I Married Him 2008 is inspired by the suicide of Virginia Woolf: here, a woman dressed as a traditional heroine/princess contemplates a sylvan scene for some time before choosing to walk gracefully beneath the waters. The viewer's knowledge of the reality – of clinically depressed Woolf filling her utilitarian overcoat pockets with stones before drowning in the River Ouse – serves to heighten the effect.





On screen, female film icons of popular imagination are scooped into the hero's arms – scooped and re-scooped in a variety of ways, over and over again . Clips of these 'scoops' from many films are shown, on a loop. Initially charming and exhilarating, the scooping action quickly becomes both bizarre and sinister.

*From **Scoop 2009***

In ***Pretty Eyed Pirate Smile 2008***, the artist dances alone, absorbed, in a spotlight. Projected beneath this is a cupped male hand, large enough to encompass that spotlight.

Ellie Rees' concerns and interests are widely shared, which makes her multi layered elegant films so immediately compelling, yet with the content to linger in the mind.

'There aren't many artists who are both contemporary and crowd pleasers... Rees is that rarity in art: someone producing quality, unconventional work that nonetheless has broad appeal...' Tim Birch

Ellie Rees studied at Central St Martins College of Arts and Design and Winchester School of Art. She currently teaches at Chelsea College of Art and Design and is also a visiting tutor at art colleges across the UK, including the School of Art in Aberystwyth. To view samples of Ellie Rees' work please go to her website:

www.ellierees.co.uk

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A 16 page catalogue will be available for this exhibition. To request this, or for more information or images please email cdw@aber.ac.uk or etr@aber.ac.uk Or tel +44(0) 1970 621634/ 622887

Notes to editors:

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