

# Meltwater Channel – Dalziel and Scullion’s Juxtapositionals

At the forefront of contemporary Scottish art practice, **Louise Scullion** and **Matthew Dalziel** have redefined the notion of environmental art, relating it to the signs of the nineties: media, installation, critical theory and technological exploration. In so doing the duo have introduced a new turning in a field hitherto historically ambivalent and ill at ease with current theory-led art orthodoxy.

Visit Scotland from the south of England and the English foreigner could come away with the impression that Scotland is primarily land, worked land in the south of the country to be sure, but a place where city and industry are held in check at the bidding of geography. The presence of mountains, chain after chain, dominates, ensuring urban culture is constrained from spreading beyond the first few footholds. Conurbations of size: Dundee, Perth, Stirling, swiftly recede into fields and mid-range hill-sides. Even from the metropolis of Edinburgh and Glasgow the countryside quickly surrounds. Go north and a deeply rural, spacious and thinly populated Highlands becomes the main human geographical characteristic. This Highlands’ drama and relative remoteness has been an enduring attraction to ecological artists in search of an accessible other, so much so that some end up moving there for the assumed peace of the northern wilds. Composer Peter Maxwell Davies moved to the Shetlands for the quality of silence, and the sculptor Steve Dilworth to the Hebrides for a similar sense of peace and remoteness.

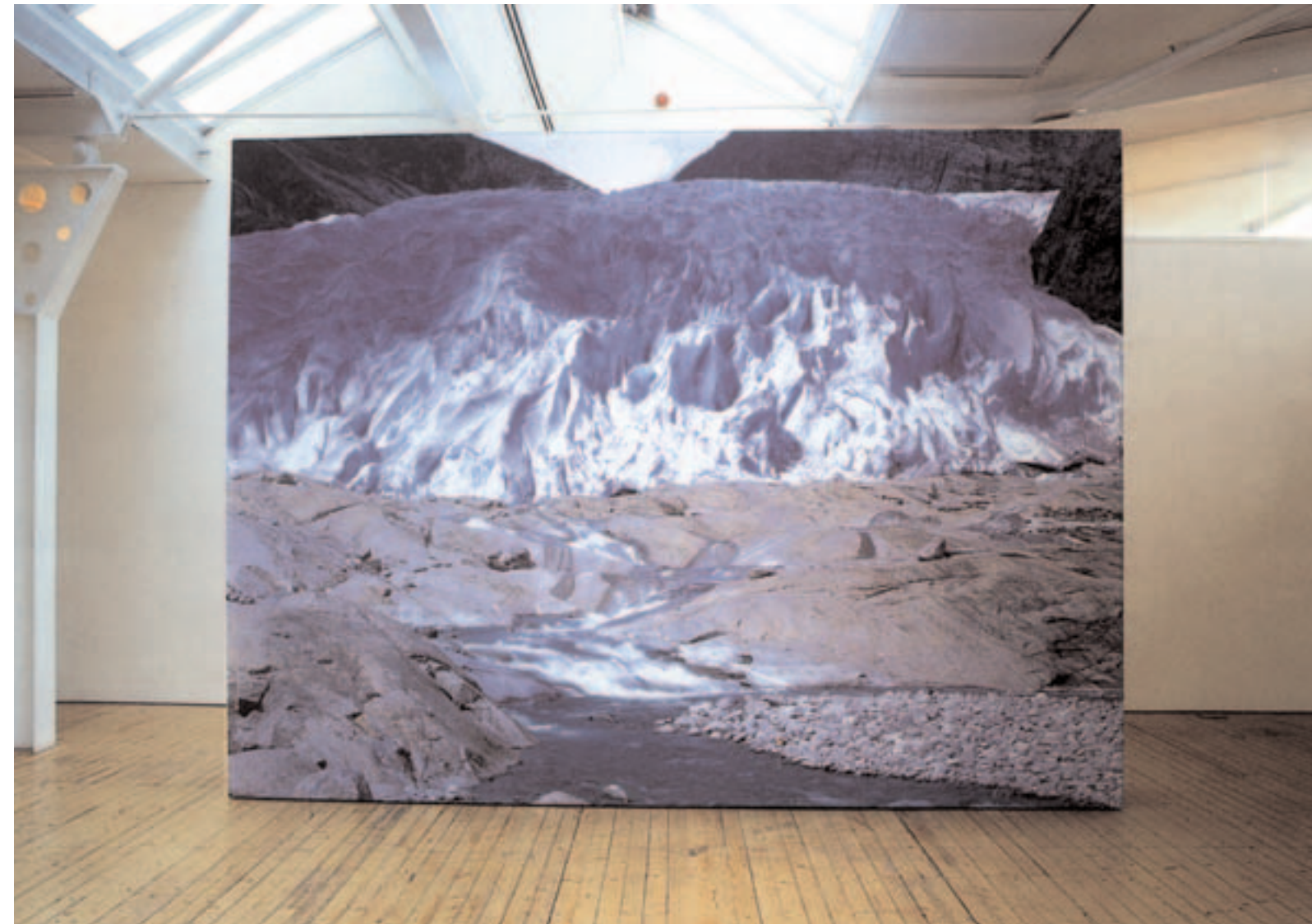
Still, as everywhere, Scotland’s primary population movement has been into the city, towards the urban. What has this meant for contemporary art? It is interesting that the country’s most recent big art movement emerged out of Glasgow School of Art’s department of Environmental Art in the early nineties, yet looks nothing like any environmental art practice before it, but rather a species of nineties’ smart art for north of the border; cross-hybridising conceptual, performance and installation all in one. At the time, what the department also emphasised was grounding in critical and post-theory, an openness to cross fertilisation with other media, and exposure to contextual practice. The result was what is described these days as the ‘Glasgow Miracle’; a generation of Scottish artists who brought a new impetus to redefining environmental art, framing it alongside, or perhaps within, the language of its brasher contemporary Britart, down south. The adherence to critical discourse came from the tutelage of David

Harding, the man who originated the Environmental Art course. The students who went on to levels of recognition less present in subsequent classes include Clare Barclay, Ross Sinclair, Douglas Gordon, Christine Borland, Graham Fagan – and Louise Scullion, one half of Dalziel and Scullion. By being thrown together in an apparently chaotic course these artist-students built up a close bond and sense of mutual support, developed an internal aesthetic which enabled them to maintain the momentum once they’d graduated, and to develop a distinctive, recognisable identity. The Environmental Art Course also bequeathed an activist energy which continues to feed the artistic focus of their chosen media, supporting a process of investigation rather than a path to financial riches.

Maybe it is not surprising, but the concerns of this disparate group weren’t explicitly environmental. Rather, both urban and media elements jockeyed in their scheme of things. Unlike the Land Artists, they did not travel light and take off into the Munros (the group of Scottish mountains over 1000 metres in height), but appeared to prefer the metaphysical companionship of a French theoretician or two. What did happen, however, was the sense that a distinctive new territory for environmental art was on the scene, just at a time when the future of environmental art seemed floundering in exhaustion.

An early post-student show was a touring exhibition entitled *Windfall*, in 1991, which at its third venue, after launches in London’s Hyde Park and Barcelona respectively, came home to Glasgow’s artist-run gallery, Transmission. *Windfall 91* garnered international attention, propelling some of the ‘Glasgow miracle’ artists, Barclay and Borland, and particularly Gordon, into the art limelight. Glasgow, far from the art entrepôts of London, Berlin or New York, became a beacon at the periphery, redefining the nature of the edge.

Over twelve years later this is all pretty distant history. Many of these early artists are established figures in Scotland and internationally. What didn’t materialise in



*Drift from the Home* exhibition

the intervening decade as fully as may have been anticipated was an explicit, sharply focused environmental art. The exception here is the partnership-couple, Matthew Dalziel and Louise Scullion, who are today Scotland’s highest profile environmental artists. Although only Scullion was part of the original Glasgow scene (Dalziel studied Fine Art at Dundee Art College before completing an MA at Glasgow, where the artists’ paths first crossed) they can be said to represent most transparently Glasgow School of Art’s environmental impulse. In the mid-nineties, in a literal move away from the centre, the pair transplanted themselves to the village of St Coombs, a north-eastern shore fishing port, bringing with them a host of ideas and approaches picked up from years in higher education seminars. Although times have changed, Dalziel and Scullion continue to co-occupy an unique conjunction between the heady post-eighties days of art theory at its zenith; the application of a variety of mixed media, project by particular project; and the new sensibility of one of the few genuinely environmental

artists’ names which have emerged in national art visibility in the last decade. While Dalziel and Scullion’s identity seems to have drawn closer to a green hue, even though in stark contrast to what is generally perceived as green art, the Glasgow art school contemporaries appear more easily placed within the mainstream art frame, less differentiated from the mainstream conversation of the contemporary British art scenes.

Their coastal community life changed when, three years ago, Dalziel and Scullion were offered a deal from the University of Dundee that was probably impossible to refuse; they were invited to work separately within the University, and to be supported in exchange for teaching responsibilities and garnering kudos for the University. For Dalziel and Scullion this has meant a move south to the comparatively fast life and urban amenities of living a short journey from Dundee. However, asked today whether he considers himself urban or rural, Matthew Dalziel says, ‘I’m probably more rural. I miss the sea and the solitude of the country.’

'In St Coombs,' he continues, 'we were trying to do something different. We were working with a very local situation and habitat that we were familiar with, which we had the time to get to know. And also you could be there when situations were interesting. If a storm came across the sea, that could be interesting. When things happened which were extraordinary or even very ordinary, you were there. Here our surroundings are not of great interest to us. It's an academic situation. But what it does provide us with is expertise and knowledge, which is our new habitat. There are people, things we've been able to tap into, and that was absent in St Coombs. Now we make a lot more field trips; rather than exploiting our local situation, we're actually going to places, which in a way has been quite good for us, as it's expanded our vision. We can speak about international things from a very local situation and this is a new challenge for us but one that we find very stimulating.'

From their St Coombs village base out on the edge of northeast Scotland, Dalziel and Scullion spent ten years developing an environmental art practice, both at odds with popular perceptions of ecoart and, at the same time, dragging it into a nineties context. In fact, theirs is essentially not an environmental art process, but a sociology of environmental art, examining our human relationship to the environment and habitat, and exploring, exposing and questioning the assumptions, consequences and oddities of that fractured connection. Theirs is a step back, a detaching into observation, rather than applying observation to connect with nature. Since much environmental art implies celebration of the environment, and placing humankind in nature's whole, such separation is at odds with this orthodoxy. Dalziel returns to the quote from the infamous nature demythologiser, evolutionary theorist and arch-antihumanist Richard Dawkins, 'the anaesthetic of familiarity.'

Take two of the technology dependent works, *The Horn*, and *Modern Nature*, large sculptural technology amalgams. 1997's *The Horn* is a long steel pipe placed just off the side of the Edinburgh-Glasgow motorway, the M8. From its innards a random series of taped messages are broadcast, some containing speech or music, but also words about land use, wildlife and ecology. The point is often made that these narratives suggest the world has been surrendered to cars and the modern life the car services, from home to workplace, door to door, the tarmacked shopping malls, industrial estates and business parks. When first installed *The Horn* proved controversial, while at the same time others rued the fact that the car drivers whizzing by were unlikely to hear the incantatory voices listing the dispersals of ecospecies. Of *The Horn*, Dalziel says, 'You have this quite silly looking thing next to the motor cars but it's asking questions, as if, "Is there anybody out there with any answers?" and the cars are going past so fast and

nobody's stopping to listen to anything. It was sort of a self-portrait in the struggle to find things. In one way *The Horn*'s stuck between these two leitmotifs of our period of time. There's a golf course on one side and on the other you've got this frenetic activity of the motorway, with cars passing and all this transport and movement. In the middle stands *The Horn*, neither in one camp or the other, but offering a commentary of sorts. You could say it is the artist's role to be on the fringes of things, to observe and question.'

*Modern Nature* in 2000 repeated this scenario six times over. That is, six twenty-foot aluminium poles reached into the sky on Elrick Hill outside Aberdeen. The poles look uncannily similar to cellphone boosters. Powered at their tops by solar panels, the poles transmit energy to a series of speakers which sporadically play field recordings of the Capercaillie, the rare Scottish grouse. This may not sound like environmental art, for those of a purist conviction. It may even sound hollow to be playing artificial recordings of natural creatures, from Martian radio mast substitutes. The point, however, is more subtle, *Modern Nature* is a nature where humans have intervened radically; the Capercaillie became extinct in 1784 and were reintroduced again halfway through the following century. If natural nature had run its course there would be no bird so entwined in modern Scotland's picture of itself. Dalziel and Scullion are drawing human activity into the frame of the nature we perceive as natural, and pointing this out to us fair and square.

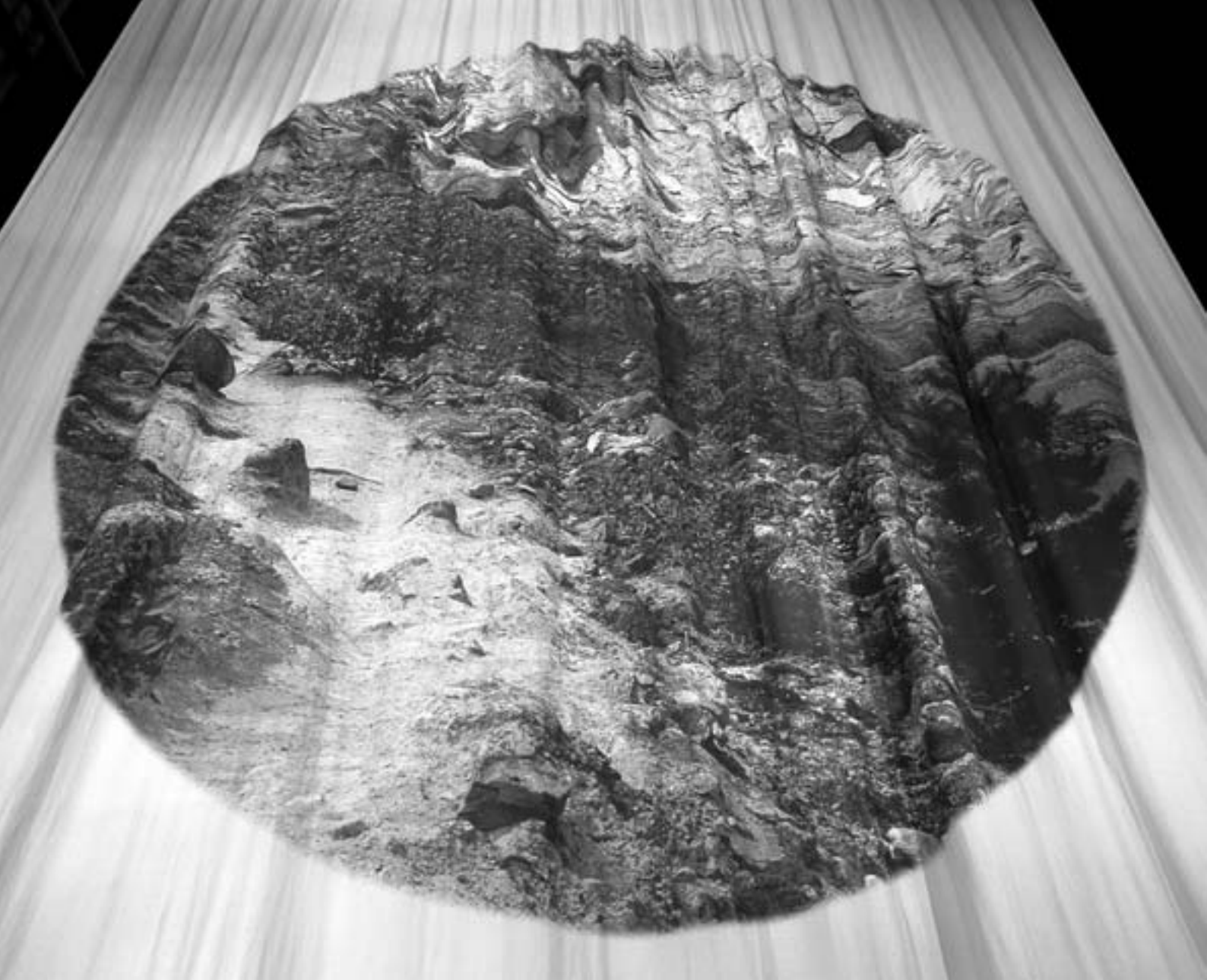
'I can't imagine it is appreciated by straightforward contemporary environmentalists,' Dalziel muses. 'What surprised me was how enlightened the client was in what they allowed us to do with it. At the same time it was reality, because all round that place there were telephone masts, and all sorts of things. It would have been total denial to say another four poles would be some sort of sacrilegious activity, because the whole of the environment was manipulated.'

'That's why I'm a bit critical of the type of purist conservation that seeks to reinstall some bygone version of how things were; they are often not dealing with reality. I'm not saying human narrative should be at the centre of things, but I am saying that it is the nature of our environment on earth that things are in a constant state of change, and human beings are part of this process. We all have a responsibility to deal with this reality. As an artist I find it more interesting to try to use that, and deal with it. Of course as a species we have to be much more questioning of how we use our environment, but there is a great opportunity for us to use our technology and expertise wisely to assist us in this pursuit.'

Each of these pieces were large and site specific. By contrast their major 2002 touring exhibition *Home*, featured a series of both mid-size and gallery space



*Modern Nature*



Path

pieces, including the video work *Water Falls Down*, and *Habitat*, a fifteen-minute film of penguins filmed in the concrete confines of Bergen Zoo, Norway. The artists were attracted to the scene's assimilation of the birds' once natural environment: a steep gradient to a source of water and food, cast stone nesting rings and concrete overhangs beneath which to shelter. Despite the obvious synthetic qualities of this environment, the birds vigorously fought for territory and the right to occupy the nesting ring. 'The film was shown as a twin video projection with chairs placed in the space, and the domesticity that these imbued informed the work, in that many of the basic comforts we strive for in our society were represented in this odd depiction. That the birds seemed oblivious to the falseness of this setting seemed also to mirror something of our domestic lives.'

I visited *Home* in Milton Keynes, which felt gleefully ironic: visiting an urban planners' eulogy to the rationalisation of everyday life, the Corbusian city machine grid come to middle England, a place where

nature had absconded. Here, in fact, was a pre-prepared backdrop for Dalziel and Scullion of what humankind is doing for itself in its long divorce from the wild and the primal. But also in *Home* were four, ready-made timber stands, three to four metres tall and holding remarkable stretched digital colour images of glacial valleys in Jostedalbreen, near Bergen. As a group of pieces these works, entitled *Drift*, were the most dramatic and commanding in the show. The couple had been invited to Bergen Art Conservatoire to do a short spate of teaching, and while there experienced the raw power of the elemental landscape of glaciers and moraines. This, as they commented during the period *Home* was touring, was the first time they had encountered unmediated nature, which was neither managed nor manipulated through man-made agency. They were experiencing a nature as it had been for thousands of years, rather than their familiar Scottish homeland, which, although loved for its rugged sense of wildness, was and is a landscape which contains thousands of years of man's imprint, as it was worked for man's own,

essentially cultural, ends. To find this representation of nature in the raw in a citadel of twentieth-century cultural engineering, was a tantalising juxtaposition writ large.

The glacial driftworks also turned up within a separate project, *Meltwater*, where the same elemental far-north landscapes, comprising four lozenge shaped canvases entitled *Valley*, hung the length of a floor in London's Sadler's Wells theatre foyer; second, a complementing circular image this time printed onto a long hanging curtain material, *Path*, and finally *Meltwater* itself, a video piece. While the themes are interrelated – from the sheer walls of the valley of the padded lozenges to the wilder rockier outcrop of *Path*, and lastly the source of the water, the craggy rivulet – *Meltwater* also demonstrated how the pair experiment with video work, though it is only a part of their repertoire, and can be complemented by craft practice. In this work where the digital image has been screen printed onto the fabric of the long flowing curtain, *Path* adds a textural, tacit quality to this piece, part of Scullion's side of the work, which as Dalziel acknowledges, draws in the human element. Yet at the same time the piece, with its large-scale photograph spanning all three floors of the theatre's wall, digitally readied to print onto the canvas, is the progeny of some of the most up-to-the-minute technology.

Quite a bit has been written of Dalziel and Scullion's relation to technology and to the man-made. The Dalziel and Scullion palette extends across the whole modernist canon, as essayist Keith Hartley says in the accompanying catalogue to *Home*. But this ties the balance too far to the human side. Modernity turns out to be only another part of the repertoire of sources readied for juxtaposition. The source Dalziel and Scullion repeatedly return to are animals, to remind and haunt us about our 'creatureliness': Capercaillie, Penguins, and in *Raptor*, a Falcon, another video piece shown during the winter of 2002/3 in a London Gallery. For it is with animals – in these instances, birds – that the closest part of the more than human natural world comes nearest to reminding us from where, out of the animal world, we have come.

In *Raptor*, a camera ranges over an anonymous computer-bedecked office space. At the far end the camera spies a bird of prey. The bird takes off and flies in slow motion, its wings alternately spreading and closing towards the camera. It is an emotionally powerful moment, looking into the eyes of this wild creature as it swoops in, inches from the camera, seen against the ubiquitous office landscape. This is what the pair do so well, framing the juxtaposition between the creaturely wild and the domesticated human; the art is in the juxtaposition.

Whether animal activists would see as politically okay such witness to the invisible thread between our

species, both in the wild and in the domestic agricultural environment, is another matter. But the work has repeatedly returned to this species-driven nexus of questions. 'I feel somehow that the more we move away from rural life styles the more dangerous it is for animals, and the more dangerous it is for us because we don't have a stake in preserving any of this world any longer.' Dalziel says he is not an advocate of fox hunting, although he feels that if fox hunting stopped, foxes would be controlled by other means anyway. 'It feels that we live in a society that delegates everything, including delegating looking after animals.' He talks about factory farms, and the apparently mundane example of chickens. 'The delegation becomes very plain and very hidden away. What would you rather be, a fox or a broiler chicken? I think we eat a hundred and fifty million chickens a year and most of them can't move. But nobody says a word about that because, politically, we're all at it, we're all eating chickens.' If there was a choice, he says that between the two he'd rather 'be a fox every day of the week.' Which leads on to him questioning the anthropomorphic hierarchies between animals, 'If you kept dogs in broiler chicken barns, or cats, there'd be a total uproar about it. But not with chickens. There are all these strange hypocrisies and hierarchies originating from how we anthropomorphise animals.'

This sounds almost like the wrong kind of ecological correctness, the right-on version claiming solidarity with all animals, or at least mammals, but Dalziel shrugs and says he's never been environmentally correct.

'It's what's curious about us as a species.' He turns to some recent work in the Cairngorms where it seemed as if 'in certain places you can't bring a stone in, because it might be the wrong type of stone. And it gets down to being so precise and precious, so you can't move that or you can't remove this. On the other hand we can go to war with a nation where all the information seems so imprecise. So on the one hand we pride ourselves on the precision of things, and how clever and how adapted we are to the precise habitats. You can't do this and you can't do that. And yet we can do momentous events with a total lack of precision when it's expedient to do so. And we are quite strange, and paradoxical things happen – even within the environmental movement. Once you get round the table, people love exercising power. They seem to make things difficult, just like with the church. Nobody is immune to how they are affected by power. And once you start setting up organisations to do things then there is an innate duty to protect and perpetuate oneself.'

One of Dalziel and Scullion's most recent projects, for Bradford's National Film and Photography Museum, completes the anthropomorphic cycle. Sifting through some of the museum's 5-million-strong photographic

archive, the couple chose two thousand images to represent what we are as a species. Rather than other animals, Dalziel and Scullion turned the camera on ourselves, and made us into their species of investigative choice. The piece, maintaining Charles Darwin's hand in their work, is called *Genus*. The work comprises a continuous stream of images travelling continually along seven screens in front of a twenty-five metre long wall in a darkened gallery room of the Museum, the photographs looping round like a stream of time.

'We kind of took the Richard Attenborough approach. We asked: if you look at a species what areas do you need to cover? What do we look like? So there were portraits from all over the world of what the human family looks like. And then: what do we do, how do we occupy ourselves? So there's industry, art and entertainment. And how we make nests, which is looking at pieces of architecture.

'Amongst the archive were the Mount Rushmore images of humans making monuments to their leaders. It looks like these little ants carving away at this face. There's something really peculiar about it. If you think

about it as a species, not what it was originally intended for, it becomes quite extraordinary how we're making this giant idol of ourselves; there aren't any other species on earth that do this, make huge images of themselves. In the way we're presenting the work it comes back to Dawkins again, trying to get a look at ourselves from another perspective.'

There is also a whole section devoted to how humans treat animals, their species kin, with experimentation. This includes a dog with two heads sewn on, and whole rows of rabbits with their eyes injected. 'We came across drawers of images, so there's a whole raft of images about what we do on earth, from the banality of coping with weather to the terrible atrocities of war. We seem to be a species capable of being incredibly imaginative and creating great beauty, yet with the ability to create mind-numbing ugliness and horror.'

Bradford's Museum is a multi-storey monster of a building, with floor upon floor of rooms devoted to different aspects and chapters of the interweaving stories of photography, film and television. Talk of atrocity, the mind-numbing horror, is permanently

present in the BBC gallery, which features the indelible news item from the Vietnam war of the Vietnamese child, Kim, running down the country lane past the camera with her back on fire, wounded with napalm. When I saw this before I went into *Genus* the images of children napalmed had put me into an agitated, upset state of mind. But this was as nothing compared to the solemn, sombre march of images jumping along the array of seven screens, moving inexorably from one side of the gallery room to the other. The images were haunting, the war pictures and many others harrowing, as if Dalziel and Scullion were intent on pushing home the message of humanity's inhumanity. Most were black and white, just occasionally, after several hundred, a few faded colour pictures slipped past, though these gave scant relief to the intensity of the pictures. Accompanied by an equally solemn ambient soundscape by Gerald Mair, the seriousness of the message seemed to be at quite another pitch compared to previous installations I'd seen of their work. I thought that this must be post September 11, so unremitting was the bleak portrayal of the human condition. At moments a picture of light relief crossed the screens, but these seemed far and few between, amidst the animal experimentation, the warfare, the destruction and human reconstruction of lands and landscapes. There was little in the way of joy, humour or exuberance to these moving pictures, yet at the same time there was something mesmerically disturbing about being pulled through this particular mill.

Technically it also seemed a departure for the two. The use of multiple screens of photographic stills from the *Daily Herald's* 1950s' photo-archive in this way would surely have shocked those originally involved in the archive. Yet, at the same time, it seemed an alternative nightmare to the kind of wall-to-wall advertising imagined as semi-imminent for the Post-Industrial near future, in Stephen Spielberg's dystopian film *Minority Report*. *Genus's* screen displays could easily slide into a ghostly mall wall public space, even if in reality such heavy subject matter would never get near any consumer emporium. What is possible to imagine is this sort of image circuitry, independent of the content, as happening in any number of built environments, both internal and external. And perhaps with viewer control integrated into the ordering, so that – as on a CD player – the sequencing could be randomised. Aside from this, for Dalziel and Scullion *Genus* seemed completely different in technological terms from what they have experimented with before. It will be interesting to see whether they explore this path further. In terms of content, with *Genus* Dalziel and Scullion make clear their real subject is the human subject. Unlike Humanists or post-Humanists though, their concern is expanded to encompass the realm of non-human nature as well.

The other work of Dalziel and Scullion which appeared over the 2003/4 winter is for the Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow, which is integrated within a large neoclassical public library. The piece, entitled *Storm*, was commissioned around an idea which incorporated the library/museum's decorated classical columns. 'Contained within the columns is the idea of classical education and learning, they created an interesting frame to juxtapose huge images of organic matter' says Dalziel. The project title is from a quote by the Scottish American environmentalist, John Muir, which the couple found particularly evocative. 'He wrote of the universe as a storm of energy that moves through, between and connects things. The word "storm" of course is normally related to weather, and bad weather at that, whereas Muir uses it to describe a power that is benign and life-giving. That was the beginning of the process, when we called the project *Storm*. The work had this duality: we used photography and this incredible video slide projector that projects medium format slides. So there's the idea of revelation through scientific equipment and process, and then there's also the idea of revelation through knowledge imparted to us, guiding what this equipment should be looking at.

'That knowledge was achieved through the input of the botanist and plant ecologist, Dr Hugh Ingram,' continues Dalziel. 'We discussed the project at length with Hugh and allowed him to lead on the selection of a number of locations (all Scottish) that he felt were of significant botanical interest. This process was extremely enlightening, as through Hugh's eyes a whole other narrative unfolded.

'What we attempted to do with the work was to encourage people to keep thinking about the environment we inhabit. Again the Richard Dawkins quote of 'the anaesthetic of familiarity' is relevant, because our task as artists is to find new ways for people to look at the world. But we have to apply that to ourselves as well. If we're continually working in the middle of things, that anaesthetic of familiarity covers our eyes as well. Working with Hugh brought in a stimulus to make us think and see things differently, which is absolutely crucial. In this project you realise nature's out there doing things, getting on with it, regardless.

'A typical example of our time with Hugh was the experience of being on Rannoch Moor with him. At first this seemed a bleak and empty place. Occasionally you could hear skylarks somewhere high up in the skies, then the next minute two military jets slashed through the landscape, completely changing the scene. We walked over heathery marsh lands and cleared a little hill and there was this little lochin, which was just a thing of incredible beauty. The water was really black and there were white lilies, with white petals and yellow centres, completely in flower, and out in the middle of nowhere. Then Hugh pointed out these electric blue



*Genus*

damsel dragonflies; once your eye became accustomed to one you could see hundreds of them. Here was an incredible oasis of beauty just getting on with it. It wasn't for our benefit. It was just there doing its thing. There was something really wonderful about that, and it jolted us back into realising human beings are not the centre of the universe. Not everything's there for us.

'I do feel that there is something innate in us that enjoys beauty. There's sure to be a scientific reason for it, but I feel that anybody, no matter what their background or culture, who experienced that pool would find it difficult not to be moved by its beauty. And from an artistic point of view that's a powerful tool to use.'

*Storm* also extended Dalziel and Scullion's reach into science, or at least the biological life sciences of plant ecology and ecosystems. Where before their commentary has been on the influence of technology within the human side of the species divide, this now extends their reach into the sciences proper. One of their next projects, *Breathe*, extends this a step further. The aim is to relay, through technological midwifery, the soundworld of a leaf. The appliance of technology is of course the main midwife to scientific research, so the jump across the boundary isn't so large. In the *Home* catalogue Hartley writes of their vision of the synthesis between technology and nature as inevitable. And although Dalziel hesitates from a perspective as definite as this, the realism which comes through when talking about the aesthetics of their work doesn't lie conversationally low for long.

'I feel, as I said earlier, that in this period of time we're in a continual state of flux – that is reality. We are totally surrounded with this stuff. We seem to rather like it. Personally I'm quite prepared for anything. If we could find a nice way of living which is more compatible with living on the earth and we seem to want to do it, then that's great. But just now we are in love with technology, and if we can use this thing to help that situation, then that's better than ignoring it. In the same way that for a scientist, a lens or microscope can open your mind to new worlds, so too can snowboards for a different type of individual. The science and the technology behind that particular object has introduced a whole new generation to a wilder aspect of our environment. Its of course often connected to fashion, and this carries its own baggage. But at the same time I think that recently, technology and design have brought a lot of people back to looking anew at the natural world even if it is in quite a disparate fashion; the result is that more people are aware of different habitats. They have a stake in it, whereas before they didn't, and that makes them more interested in protecting it. And modern design has played a part in it. Within our practice we would like to think that our own use of modern technology contributes to this. So I don't blame technology, it's the philosophy behind the

technology that can ultimately become a dangerous factor. The technology itself is just a tool.'

That technology is merely a neutral tool is a moot point in the philosophy of technology circles. But, again in our time's particularly receptivity to the technological sublime, Dalziel and Scullion have gone further within the environmental camp than many to work across categories, mixing their technologies. Indeed, they repeatedly say the way they work is not unlike an architect's or design studio. Last year there were initial discussions about designing office furniture which would integrate nature into the offices. 'We were really interested in working on it,' says Dalziel. Unfortunately the man who was setting this up went out of business. However, Dalziel believes it's up to people like himself, who are interested in natural environments, to bring the crossovers into mass urban contexts. But, he acknowledges that this sort of project is harder to create because the issues raised by durability, production and budgets make a gallery piece feel comparatively straightforward.

Dalziel and Scullion cover the gamut of the spectrum running from culture to nature. If they are in some ways essentially nineties' technologists then their awareness is also acutely sensitive to the permeable crossings and boundaries between the cultural and raw nature. If much of their work emphasises our human responses and relations to the natural world around us, then they are also saying, look! we are also a part of this nature phenomenon. If they call on us to look again at our 'speciesness', it is to highlight what we do as one species among many to the nature we all exist within. This is a perspective, and message, which although voiced in many an ivory tower, from biologists to critical discourse academicians, is complicated to convey through the surface of artistic practice. By utilising the art of juxtaposition Dalziel and Scullion have been able to effectively and provocatively give our kind's place in the spectrum of species an enlarged 'nature-aware' attention and artistic voice. *OL*

#### FURTHER

Up and coming Dalziel and Scullion projects:

Artworks on billboards with Deveron Arts to be launched in May in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

A new video work in collaboration with composer Craig Armstrong and the National Orchestra for Perth's new concert hall, to be premiered on June 1.

[www.dalzielscullion.com](http://www.dalzielscullion.com)



*Drift from the Home exhibition*