



Take Over: Artist Residencies Programme At Pump House Gallery

Address: Battersea Park, SW11 4NJ

Dates: 17 January - 18 February

Times: Wednesday - Sunday 11am - 5pm, Free

MRP

[WEBSITE](#)

Artists need space. Hem them in and they seize up. Set too many parameters - themes, deadlines, budgets - and the creative essences which are the vital ingredient of their work will evaporate.

That's the theory, at any rate. Give an artist unlimited money and an airy loft and they might well end up sitting on their arse for six months. Which is why it is probably a good idea that the Pump House Gallery have given their five residents just a few weeks to get something done.

I drop in on 'Take Over' on that very windy day when people are being killed by falling branches. Perhaps because of this, two out of the five have decided that it's safer at home than at the Pump House, which is, after all, in the middle of a park full of trees. On the ground floor, the geeky, unassuming Jon Ford lays bare his obsession with the Pled Wagtail. This isn't a particularly rare or attractive bird, but it has nevertheless provided Ford with material for a rich archive of drawings, video stills, text and audio. What's fascinating about the project is the way it has developed, using the bird as a starting point, in line with the artist's totally idiosyncratic logic. There's a tangential, Pynchonesque quality to Ford's research, which takes in folklore, poetry and diagrams of obscure mechanisms. U-boats are involved, somehow, as are typewriters. This is a strange journey that combines the esoteric and the technical. Imagine a cross between Borges and Kes and you're in something like the right territory.

Upstairs Pili and Galia Kollektiv are busy cutting costume patterns in green felt. Unlike Ford, who has surrounded himself with every possible source of inspiration for an as yet uncharted adventure, they've decided to focus on preparations for a single work. They're planning a revival of *Asparagus: A Horticultural Ballet*. For those of you not already familiar with this landmark of vegetal art, its first incarnation was as an experimental work by Waw Pierogi of the deeply obscure and no doubt painfully cool New Jersey synth-band xex. The performance will be held at Conway Hall in March.

On the second floor Robert Stone is approaching his five week tenure rather more loosely. He's going to do some paintings, and perhaps a large watercolour, if that's what the programme says (and it does). It seems like he's got the plum space, anyway. Higher up in the building with plenty of light and nice views, it feels like some portion of an Ivory tower - an artistic fantasy come true. I can imagine drinking endless cups of tea and occasionally dabbling on my palette. Very nice. Fiona Jardine, who will be creating a 'site-specific sculpture and performance' based on Diogenes and David Kefford, who 'reconfigures ready-made, found and second-hand objects' are the ones who got scared of the wind. In the end it doesn't matter: that's part of the beauty of a residency. The artists come and go on their own timetables, and you're as likely to happen upon them taking a fag break as putting the finishing touches to some masterpiece.

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