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Gasworks takes a long look management culture with extensive video-based show

By Mark Sheerin | 18 October 2011

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 Colour photo of a small gallery with a white info-graphics style billboard on the front.

Billboard design on gallery exterior by Luke Gould© Matthew Booth

Exhibition: *All I Can See is the Management, Gasworks, London, until December 11 2011*

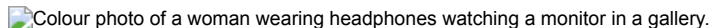
As befits a show about working life, *All I Can See is the Management* is something of an endurance test. There are nearly 100 minutes of largely black and white video to be seen and this visitor clocked off after 76 of those with regret (and commitments elsewhere).

But that's not to say that a shift put in here is without rewards. Just as the daily grind might dull the senses, material here combines to raise awareness: management comes across as a broad topic and extends beyond the office into the home and the very self

The show takes its name from a line in Stuart Marshall's 1979 film *Distinct*. *Gasworks* has installed this by the entrance and it sets a fairly dry and didactic tone for what is to come.

In a prelude to this film we learn about the economic realities of its own production. It is cheaper to film in the studio, rather than on location. So we learn that the rest of the film has been compromised in advance by bureaucracy.

Then, in the central part of the film, a husband and wife struggle to communicate after a day's work. This being the 70s, she has been working in the home, he at an office. But in a depressive way he appears to have brought the management home with him.

 Colour photo of a woman wearing headphones watching a monitor in a gallery.

A gallery visitor watches *Government*

Workers by Amy Feneck© Matthew Booth

Equally dour is the fly-on-the-wall documentary about NLP. For those fortunate enough not to have come across this before, Neuro Linguistic Programming is a form of purposeful therapy often used in the workplace to streamline thinking and increase productivity. That might sound sinister, but Filipa César's 15-minute video also suggests the practice is reassuringly dull.

A more creative bit of criticism comes from Pil and Galia Kollektiv with a video piece comprised of found photographs. From this dated, archive material they build a comic narrative of the history of a fictional computer manufacturer. But this corporate world descends in to a JG Ballard-esque company-wide psychological experiment.

Works on paper throughout the exhibition are well matched with the nearby films. On KP Brehmer's *Soul and Feelings of a Worker* are data-read outs filled with sad blues, angry reds and white emptiness. Meanwhile Eulàlia's gritty photo montages reinforce Marshall's critique of institutionalised sexism.

These were just highlights of a thorough, focussed and thoughtful show, even if it suffers, at times, from the dangers of all work and no play.

Open 12pm-6pm Wednesday-Sunday. Admission free.

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