

SPORES OF LOVE

Christopher MaInnes

22.09 - 21.10.17

**David Dale Gallery
161 Broad Street
Glasgow G40 2QR**

Prosumer

Ayn Rand interviewed by Alvin Toffler in *Playboy Magazine*, 1964, was one of the earliest wide-circulation publications of Rand's explanation of her philosophy. And although the intervening 53 years have not been kind to either the interpretation or context of this interview, its occurrence appears prophetic. In many ways it seems perfectly appropriate, the outpost of (white hetro) male culture arguing for objectivism has a contemporary ring to it – and indeed a lot of her chat has been co-opted by current isolationist meritocracy politics, also the dominion of adolescent men as within the alt-right. But, the elevation of production, as it's own end, is the pertinent part here:

If they place such things as friendship and family ties above their own productive work, yes, then they are immoral. Friendship, family life and human relationships are not primary in a man's life. A man who places others first, above his own creative work, is an emotional parasite; whereas, if he places his work first, there is no conflict between his work and his enjoyment of human relationships.

Rand's consideration of Capitalism was not at the totality we now enjoy, but the interpretation and extrapolation remain, that humans have one purpose. The purpose can be performed in myriad of ways, but the end point must always remain in service of capital. Presently we have the opportunity that every aspect of our lives can and will be monetised, and we are gradually relinquishing the control we may of once had over this. The emotions and whims that Rand once dismissed have become financially viable, in fact an unreliable character within a contemporary economy is now preferable – the over ambition of a generation a bedrock for future investment return. It is within this context that the *Playboy* interviewer, Alvin Toffler becomes relevant. In his 1980 book *The Third Wave*, Toffler introduced the portmanteau *Prosumer*, initially to articulate the conflation of a person between production and consumption of media – that we now all do both, and gladly. All this content we produce is monetised, only we as producers don't receive any of the financial remuneration, that's expected. Instead we gain immaterial wealth of sociability and connectivity – the transaction is made clear, and expected. Sometimes the investment and return don't always

correlate, though that's also to be expected – all capitalist structures need to include a deficit model for operation. A *Prosumer*, within their proclivity to amateurism is the standard bearer for contemporary capitalism. The talented amateur or enthusiast links prosumer with it's other popular definition, a combination of professional and consumer used to describe primarily high end tech, such as DSLR cameras. There is a tendency within both, and contemporary political narratives, to do without formal training, like the Dunning-Kruger effect, the illusion of ability follows a misplaced confidence. A little learning is a dangerous thing, as the diminutive Alexander Pope said.

The *prosumer* is not a professional, they are semi-professional, and doesn't regulate their production like one – their content is given away, though their consumption is discerning.

Prosumer has an aesthetic, it can't just be coldly utilitarian, simply appear to be, but with a flourish. The aesthetic rules develop in tandem with the predominant aesthetics of the internet, and are therefore co-opted into the visible politics and philosophies present. A democratisation of the image

into extreme politics, memes and accelerationist techno-Orientalist fantasies. One ubiquitous genre of image is Stock Photography, instantly recognisable with a distinctly bland flat style, the images seem to reinforce existing stereotypes and prejudices or at least extend a middling status quo by documenting and exhibiting it. One symptom that is extended through this imagery, and derives from our semi-professional under the Dunning-Kruger effect, is that a certain immediate gratification expected in both knowledge and life. That the struggles of humanity can be dispatched with one weird trick, a life hack stands in the place of where one might have sought answers in a higher power – clickbait articles delivering the absolute truths of our being. The vacuous tautologies that haunt and direct the displayed imagery with Christopher Maclnnes' exhibition are borne from this condition. Both meaningless and infinite, the aphorisms intend to empower you to the limits of your current social and employment status – but no further. It's still you and your life, except you eat better or shed calories while shaving minutes off your commute. You but better. The accomplishment of self-satisfaction within the status

quo, producing the contented consumer, chimes with Rand – and if you surround this philosophy with sexualised images you basically have the internet in a March 1964 issue of *Playboy*. Things change except when they don't.

Spores of Love, the exhibition, is – to personify the technology and objects within it – a *prosumer*, working in a closed loop and speaking to itself. It simply uses a visitor as a method of propulsion, a fuel of sorts. Working to infinite variations of a single task, and composed of necessity – high-end components when required and any old shit when not.

Work List

SPORES OF LOVE 2017

Custom-built computers, disassembled monitors, clingwrap, mineral oil, webcams, motion tracking, web scrapers, animation, audio

Christopher MacInnes lives and works in Glasgow. Recent exhibitions and projects include, *4k Made Me Sick*, ArebyteLASER, London (2017); *ILLOGICAL CORE*, Radiophrenia Festival, CCA (2016); *Retina Gothic*, Intermedia Gallery, CCA (2016); *Small Gate*, *Infinite Field*, Generator Projects, Dundee (2015); and *Boot Signal*, Embassy Gallery, Edinburgh (2015)