

They Do Things
Differently There



Prologue

The texts written for this catalogue were produced to convey an understanding of the ways in which the history of time can be delineated.

Introduction (a collaboration by the curators and edited by Louise Thody) is an explanatory overview of the thematic concepts and curatorial progress of the exhibition.

You are entitled to sing your last song and dance your last dance in the special spotlight (written by Laura Edbrook) is a re-appropriation of Federico Fellini's 1963 film *8 1/2*, itself a dismantling universe of autobiographical commentary that explores many different dimensions of existence and the meaningfulness of death and permanence against the passage of time.

Nothing is never there is never nothing. (written by Sarah Morris) is a collection of short stories which poetically engage with the concept that the past, present and future are never static entities. The stories in this collection include:

This is a temporal disaffection

To put a price on these dusty biographies

We see Ken and Mary en route to Alaska

With thanks to New Media Scotland, these three stories have also been adapted into the exhibition's audio tour. In collaboration with Rocca Gutteridge and her idea for the tour's focus on storytelling, they allow for unique interpretations of the relationship between the exhibition's collection and theme.

First cut up. Photographed. Now destroyed. Text saved. (created by Sarah Usher) is an amalgamation of the three short stories using a cut-up technique, a method used to create a non-linear supplement to traditional writing. This piece was envisioned in an attempt to illustrate the idea of time becoming disjointed and constantly evolving.

The authors want to invite you to explore the beautiful enigma of time by immersing yourself in their imageries and by contemplating the connection between the works in this exhibition and the words on these pages.

They Do Things Differently There © 2010

Published June 2010 in an edition of 400 in collaboration with Edinburgh College of Art

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, or by any means, without permission in writing from the artists or writers.

Design by After The News / www.afterthenews.co.uk

The typefaces used in these publications are Folio, Geometric Slabserif 703 and Bookman.

Folio, designed in 1957 by Bauer and Baum, was one of the first popular Swiss sans serifs in this fashion, but has since been overshadowed by Helvetica, which was developed in the same year.

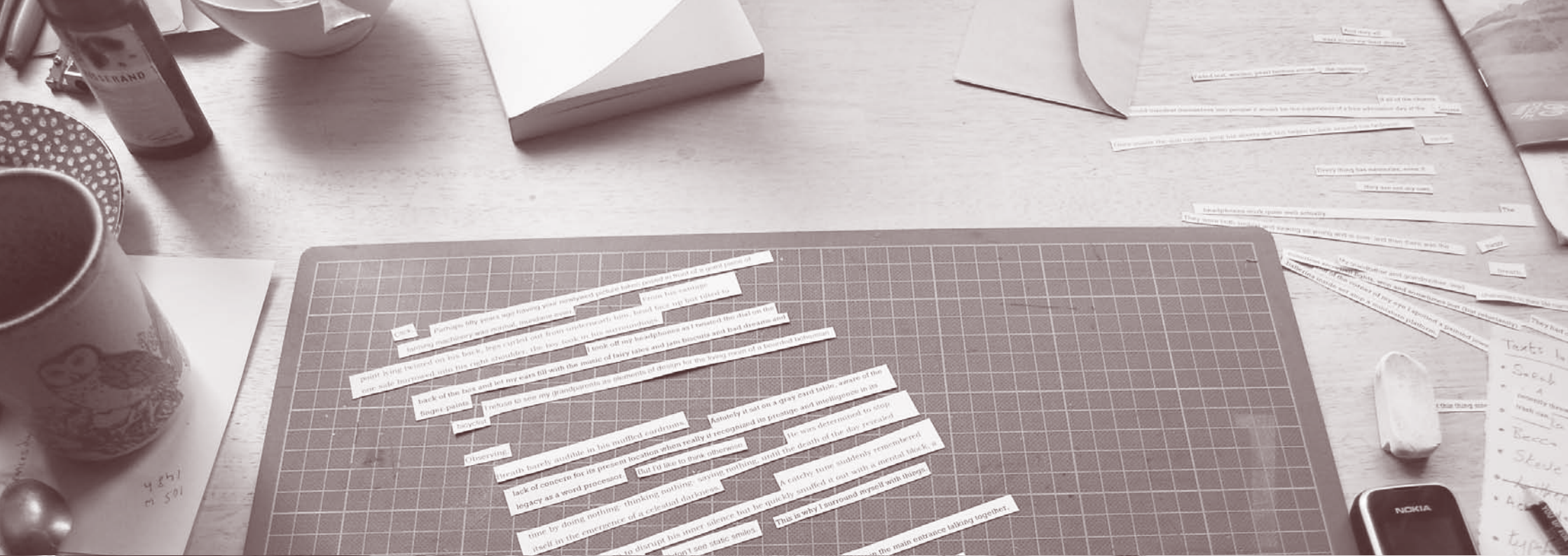
Geometric Slabserif 703 is a precursor to the more popular Memphis typeface, both designed by Rudolph Wolf, Memphis being launched in 1929. Memphis has also been superseded to an extent by more popular slabserifs, such as Lubalin, Rockwell, and Serifa.

The original version of Bookman was designed in 1858 by Alexander Phemister for the Scottish foundry of Miller & Richard. Phemister's design has been copied and refined over and over again. More Information: <http://bit.ly/9mZ13G>

Copyright© the contributors, 2010

Printed by Forward Graphics

ISBN 978-1-90443-41-4



Introduction

*“The past is malleable and flexible,
changing as our recollection interprets and
re-explains what has happened.”*

Peter Berger

They Do Things Differently There is a collaborative curatorial project by Edinburgh College of Art Contemporary Art Theory and Visual & Material Culture MA students. From diverse backgrounds including; art practice, art history, design, anthropology, conservation, and visual communication, we have come together as part of our assessment to explore the many facets of curating and a common theme of perceptions of time. The culmination of this collective project is an exhibition at Talbot Rice Gallery, which has evolved and developed from our shared interest in the archival process, influenced initially by the historical significance of the gallery itself. Exploring the practice of collecting and exhibiting has become the foundation for this exhibition.

From the outset, it has been our intention to make public the developing stages of our curatorial project. In making this process transparent to our audience, we have created an extensive digital presence in the form of several interlinked social networking sites. We have extended this open practice by organising a series of educational discussion events with invited speakers from creative industries in Scotland to help inform our project. Further additions to the educational programme include a panel discussion, a storytelling gallery tour, and audio tour. Produced in collaboration with New Media Scotland, the audio tour combines a series of short audio stories with a digital overlay creating a conceptual bridge between audience and artwork. It draws upon an experimental understanding of the exhibition's theme centring on the delineation of time and historical collections.

Historical collections are bound up with traditions and memories which repeat and reinvent themselves. When considering how we look at collections today, it is impossible to ignore the chronology of histories and the categorisation of time as a nonlinear process. Exploring histories, the present and unwritten futures, we shuttle back and forth between disparate mythologies, re-evaluating our place within space. Reconciling material ephemera and cherishable

mementos helps define our current identities. Objects narrate our understanding of the world as 'foreign lands', as if allowing us to travel in through time. These ideas formed the basis for the selection of artists and works in this exhibition. *They Do Things Differently There* tackles the malleable nature of historical collections to foster associated memories that are ambiguous and uncertain. Here the past is a period of indeterminate co-ordinates; time is folded and bent, warped and obscured.

The catalogue continues our thought process in both its design and content. In doing so, it has become a wholly integrated part of the exhibition. Influenced by the notion of collecting, archiving, and nonlinear time, the catalogue 'exists' in a place not identifiable to a specific temporal or spatial period. Instead, through personal customisation, it becomes a constantly evolving 'living' archive not constrained by a traditional chronological structure.

As a group of postgraduate student curators, we hope to share with you the many facets of our evolving curatorial practice. Above all, we hope you will enjoy our exhibition, *They Do Things Differently There*, and we welcome your feedback and comments. On behalf of us all, come join us on our curatorial journey and enter the realms of temporality and the delineation of time.

Curators: Steven Cox, Laura Edbrook, Ruta Franke, Rebecca Gilbert, Rocca Gutteridge, Maria Koumianou, Sarah Morris, Robby Ogilvie, Maria Sampredo, Louise Thody, Sarah Usher

Full Artist List: Omar Zingaro Bhatia, Duncan Campbell, Ross Chisholm, Raydale Dower, Tracey Eastham, Stuart David Fallon, S Mark Gubb & Road Kill, Ailsa Lochhead, Lorna Macintyre, The Otolith Group, David Raymond Conroy and Thomson & Craighead.

You are entitled to sing your last song and dance your last dance
in the special spotlight.

Scene 57

Grey evening light.

A circus ring sits on dusty sand.

And a great white curtain hides a towering stairway.

A violin plays.

It is the story of a man who is eighty years old when the film begins. When it ends he is only five. A chain of episodes integrates a reality of past and present, of exterior and interior worlds. His own history as a commotion with a cluttered conclusion that ends nothing. Compelled to confront a guilty past within a regretful present, the validity of remembrance, as apposed to forgetting, is questioned.

: "What good does it do to piece together
the shreds of your life ... vague memories
... shadows?"

: "The world abounds with superfluous
things. Why add disorder to disorder? It
is always better to destroy than to create
what is unessential. How many things are
really important enough to survive? In
these times we desperately need to clean,
to disinfect."

: "We are being suffocated by words,
images, sounds that have no reason to
exist at all. That emerge from the void,
only to return to the void."

~

: "I have come to stay. I want to set
things in order, I want to clean up."

Behind the curtain are all the people who have figured in the

man's life, laughing and talking together. This is the image of his unknown future, a void into which his efforts in the present will no doubt fall. What if he could reinvent himself as someone else? To be who he had wished to be.

This is an exercise of editing and reinventing - a decision; what of the past is still knowable and deserves to be written, to be re-written. A resurrection of a past that casts shadow on our present; a battle between forgetting and surviving. The archaeology of memory is a process of interpretation to stave off the passage of time, temporality itself. Add to the world and a legacy is left, death can be resisted. Be seen and you are alive.

: "And you'd like to leave behind you a
whole film, no less ...?"

A ticking clock sounds.

The carousel.

Now listening less and less attentively, all the people in the man's life, the dead and the living, appear in the field before him, in rapid succession. The voice blurs, he can hardly hear the monologue now. Overcoming his paralysis he knows he will make his film. The future he wants is already here. He sees himself in the centre of the arena, under the towers, with his megaphone, directing the parade of people led by the five-year-old boy. On the verge of disappearance is a futile act of making his life meaningful. He doesn't have much time! Things have to be said and night is closing round. The past is not allowed to be the past, it exists with him.

"This way.

Right, now.
Walk towards the curtain.

Open it!"

[extracts from the film *8½*, written and directed by Federico Fellini, 1963]

Laura Edbrook

This is a Temporal Disaffection

by Sarah Morris

On a sun-soaked Saturday morning when everyone else his age had set off hours ago for long bike rides and spontaneous swimming pool excursions, a small slightly smelly little boy clad in an oversized aqua blue t-shirt awoke to the indiscernible murmurs of the living room television. He blinked, letting his eyelids blanket his vision for more than a few seconds. Gently picked brown deposits of sleep from the inside corner of his eyes.

One half of the curtains were drawn open already, evidence of last night's expedition into the empire of ancient constellations. From this open slit a small area on the boy's bed had become a cocoon of warmth due to late morning sun, a cocoon just the right size for the boy to nestle into for the remainder of the day.

The boy had become determined this day to fight the passage of time. He had decided upon waking to battle the fleeting minutes by resolving to stay in this exact position, in this exact spot in the cocoon of sunlight on his bed for the entire day. He was determined to stop time by doing nothing- thinking nothing- saying nothing, until the death of the day revealed itself in the emergence of a celestial darkness.

Once inside the sun cocoon atop his sheets the boy began to look around his bedroom niche. Observing. Slowly as an explorer encountering unknown territory. From his vantage point lying twisted on his back, legs curled out from underneath him, head face up but tilted to one side burrowed into his right shoulder, the boy took in his surroundings.

From this point he could see a blue sky from the portion of open window behind his headboard- not the entire sky- but a fraction of it framed by his undrawn curtains. And from this point, he absorbed himself in the moment.

He had already turned his clock around, careful not to accidentally glimpse concrete evidence of the name of the hour. His right ear pressed into his shoulder and his left ear covered meticulously with the corner of a woolen blanket, he blocked out all sound. Armed with a stubborn resolution the little boy thus commenced his journey into his own static realm and immersed himself in a private viewing of the world outside his window.

Clouds.

Crawling at an unfathomable slowness.

A bird.

Carried effortlessly on a wind current.

A tiny transparent lizard.

Wiggling spastically down the pane.

He was aware the afternoon was passing but he fought it with all his mental strength, shutting off oxygen to the thoughts attempting to escape from his mind he focused on his breath. Breath barely audible in his muffled eardrums. A catchy tune suddenly remembered would threaten to disrupt his inner silence but he quickly snuffed it out with a mental block, a toilet flush of mind. He would not acknowledge the passing hours, passing seconds. He would not gratify the dissolution of these moments but instead he held onto each moment as if each moment was a helpless creature being attacked by time's passing, and so he hugged these moments tight and shielded them. If he kept his mind blank, if he crawled into himself and made a home in the very depths of his being he could hide from the disappearance of the day.

It was when the sun cocoon started to shrink that the boy realized he could not elude it anymore and no matter how hard he fought now, it would be of no use. The sunlight faded, his body becoming cold in the exposed desert of bed sheets. Faster and faster now the room retreated into darkness and as if to further mock the boy's futile attempts the dusk died a quick and painless death.

And night came.

To put a price on these dusty biographies

by Sarah Morris

When I throw things away I have kept for so long I feel I am throwing away a living being. Like I am discarding a breathing life like a moldy orange peel. Every thing has memories, even if they are not my own. This is why I surround myself with things. This is why whenever I go antiquing that I have to wear headphones and put on Beethoven or Tchaikovsky to drown out the laughs and screams and singing coming from all the objects in the store. They are living beings. And they all want to tell me their stories. If I try to listen to all of them at once, I get exhausted and disheartened because I don't want make it seem as if I think any of them is more important than the other. The headphones work quite well actually.

Can you even fathom how pregnant the air is with history in these shops? If all of the objects could manifest themselves into people it would be the equivalent of a free admission day at the Louvre. All ages, all genders, all races packed tightly together in the main entrance talking together, their voices forming an all encompassing bellow.

On one occasion I was drawn to a typewriter. Astutely it sat on a gray card table, aware of the lack of concern for its present location when really it recognized its prestige and intelligence in its legacy as a word processor. Saga illustrator. Record chronicler.

A few feet away I noticed a pair of ragged mittens. Faded teal, woolen, pearl buttons across the openings. The left index finger torn. The right thumb caked with something brown and crusty. They knew they were not perfect, but they were proud of themselves. They had character from countless snowball fights, won and sometimes lost (but reluctantly). From gripping gate handles and handle bars. From stroking bearded cheeks and pony manes.

Out of the corner of my eye I spotted a painted jewelry box, one of those with the tiny ballerina inside set atop a miniature platform. I took off my headphones as I twisted the dial on the back of the box and let my ears fill with the music of fairy tales and jam biscuits and bad dreams and finger-paints. I let this thing sing to me, it drowned out the requests from the other objects in the store. This one sang to me from the depths of its life as a secret keeper, a dream catcher. Once it held clip-on earrings. It held diamond rings and plastic friendship bracelets. It held love notes and forbidden cigarette packs. I had to take this one home because it didn't shout at me as the others did. It sang.

I don't often throw things away, but when I do I think about them as people. How can I throw a person away who has a story to tell me? The things I do end up throwing away I am sure have no life left in them. Maybe I don't remember who they are and so they've ceased trying to remind me. I recently threw away a pill box I couldn't even recall buying. It didn't say anything as I tossed it in the trash can. It had ceased to be alive anymore and I justified myself by saying I was laying it to rest.

We see Ken and Mary en route to Alaska

by Sarah Morris

Of all the photographs of the two of them, the one that struck me as the most captivating was the one with the tractor. They were both smiling and looking so young and in love- and then there was the tractor. Perhaps fifty years ago having your newlywed picture taken posed in front of a giant piece of farming machinery was normal, mundane even. But I'd like to think otherwise. That in the succeeding moments after the instant that picture was taken, my grandfather looked at my grandmother and nonchalantly said, Could we possibly look any more back-woods than we do right now?

And my grandmother would answer him, Perhaps if you've got a toothpick to stick between your teeth, then you'd be dressed to a tea!

Then they would have such a laugh at the thought of it until tears squeezed from their ducts and my grandma would sigh with conclusion, Oh Lord-ee...

I look at this photo now, long after they're both gone from this world, and what I see is the silent play in the stage wings. The moments not caught on camera. For anyone else it is a photo like any other, akin to those found discarded for resale in antique shops as 'archaic souvenirs' of a nostalgic time. To be collaged into art pieces or stuck in picture frames in other peoples' homes to act as vintage bric-a-brac.

I hate the phrase 'bric-a-brac'.

I refuse to see my grandparents as elements of design for the living room of a bearded bohemian bicyclist. Listening to Johnny Cash on an antiquated record player while the photo of my grandparents sits awkwardly on the mantle next to the oil lamp he bought at a flea market.

This photo captured time. It froze it for all eternity so that at any moment one can imagine what occurred in the spaces surrounding this time. It's funny but when you think about it, when someone takes a picture of you, for a few seconds before their finger pushes down on the button and the shutter snaps, you are forced to freeze yourself in time.

You stop.

You smile.

You hold whatever thoughts are in your head and allow them to hover in retracted suspension so that the photographer can capture this moment, this exact moment...

Click.

Time then immediately speeds up again, hurrying to make up for the seconds lost in the limbo.

In my mind, photos such as the one of my grandparents in front of the tractor are not documentations of a forgotten era. They are glimpses of past 'presents', private viewings of tangible lives.

I don't see static smiles.

I don't see meticulously staged poses.

I see the suspended thoughts.

I see the stifled giggles.

I see the recovered time in the aftermath of the snapshot and the continuum of events from there on.

For me, this one with the tractor is a performance. My grandfather and grandmother, lead characters in their life narrative. It is a play set in the past, but taking place in this day- today- right now, as real as the gentle heaving of my breath.

To put a price on a temporal disaffection en route to Alaska

by Sarah Usher

Click.

Perhaps fifty years ago having your newlywed picture taken posed in front of a giant piece of farming machinery was normal, mundane even. From his vantage point lying twisted on his back, legs curled out from underneath him, head face up but tilted to one side burrowed into his right shoulder, the boy took in his surroundings. I took off my headphones as I twisted the dial on the back of the box and let my ears fill with the music of fairy tales and jam biscuits and bad dreams and finger-paints. I refuse to see my grandparents as elements of design for the living room of a bearded bohemian bicyclist.

Observing.

Breath barely audible in his muffled eardrums. Astutely it sat on a gray card table, aware of the lack of concern for its present location when really it recognized its prestige and intelligence in its legacy as a word processor. But I'd like to think otherwise. He was determined to stop time by doing nothing- thinking nothing- saying nothing, until the death of the day revealed itself in the emergence of a celestial darkness. A catchy tune suddenly remembered would threaten to disrupt his inner silence but he quickly snuffed it out with a mental block, a toilet flush of mind. I don't see static smiles. This is why I surround myself with things.

You smile.

All ages, all genders, all races packed tightly together in the main entrance talking together, their voices forming an all encompassing bellow. Gently picked brown deposits of sleep from the inside corner of his eyes. It held diamond rings and plastic friendship bracelets. They are glimpses of past 'presents', private viewings of tangible lives. If I try to listen to all of them at once, I get exhausted and disheartened because I don't want make it seem as if I think any of them is more important than the other. Time then immediately speeds up again, hurrying to make up for the seconds lost in the limbo.

I don't see meticulously staged poses.

They are living beings.

It sang.

You stop.

I see the recovered time in the aftermath of the snapshot and the continuum of events from there on.

Acknowledgements

Our joint thanks first and foremost are to the artists for participating in the exhibition. We would like to thank all of the Talbot Rice staff; Pat Fisher, Hazel Norcross, Zoe Fothergill, James Clegg, Shawn Coulman, Gary Peacock and Matthew Inglis for all their assistance, advice and support throughout. Thanks also go to Neil Mulholland, Director of CVCS and Susannah Thompson, Angela McClanahan, Andrew Patrizio and John Beagles for their support. We would also like to thank Margaret Milner, CVCS Administrator and Neil McGuire at After The News for design and website. Thanks also to LUX and its staff for securing the works of Duncan Campbell and The Otolith Group. Thanks also to Mark Daniels of New Media Scotland for his input with the audio tour and generous equipment supply. Dee Access Scaffolder Ltd, The Galloway Group Ltd, Dundee and Scott Laverie for their support with install and Emlyn Firth and Francesca Nobilucci for their projector hire. Additional thanks to Central Station, The Changing Room, Stirling, DCA Printroom, Dundee, Edinburgh College of Art Computing Services Embassy, Edinburgh, IBID Projects, London, Market Gallery, Glasgow, and Mary Mary, Glasgow.

Thank you to the speakers- (Panel Discussion) Anne Marie Kramer, Nicholas Oddy and Dan Watt. (Show Me The Money) John Beagles, Angela Beck, Richard Demarco. (Spread The Word) Louise Anderson, Emlyn Firth, Alex Hinton, Sandy Smith, Janine Sproule and Jim Wolff. And extended thanks to Mara Menzies for her storytelling gallery tour.

Further thanks go to; environmentally friendly removal company Little Moves, Elder York Guest House, Roxy Art House and Doctor Gramophone for hosting the after party and photographer John McGregor for documenting the exhibition.

Design by After The News / www.afterthenews.co.uk

Copyright © the contributors, 2010

Published June 2010 in an edition of 400 in collaboration with Edinburgh College of Art

Printed by Forward Graphics

ISBN 978-1-904443-41-4



Talbot Rice
Gallery



eca
edinburgh college of art



GALLOWAY
GROUP



Omar Zingaro Bhatia
Duncan Campbell
Ross Chisholm
David Raymond Conroy
Raydale Dower
Tracey Eastham
Stuart David Fallon
S Mark Gubb & Road Kill
Ailsa Lochhead
Lorna Macintyre
The Otolith Group
Thomson & Craighead