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London Round-up

### Beaconsfield

At Beaconsfield in South London, artist Naomi Siderfin acts as both curator and contributor to the thematic group show *Harnessing the Wind*. The metaphor is stretched here (at times tenuously so) to include the process of creation, politics and even the proposal of a new form of arts funding.

For the political works, the press release points out the connection to the theme by reminding visitors of Harold Macmillan's famous 'Winds of Change' speech. This speech related to the decolonization of British territories in Africa, and in Monika Oechsler's video installation a series of monolithic buildings created to express global and political power are addressed. Oechsler films significant buildings in both Germany and the UK. Recently built structures such as the Shard – a representation of corporate power – appear alongside long-standing London monuments such as the National Gallery and Nelson's Column, and are accompanied by quotations from the likes of Karl Marx and Napoleon Bonaparte.

Undercutting all these exercises in masculine power are moments of visual sweetness or levity – a pile of papers repeatedly flutters to the ground in slow motion in one film, while another features scenes intercut from a computer driving game. And in background beneath a more bombastic musical soundtrack played on repeat, I'm sure I catch the strains of the theme tune to the 1980's game show *Blockbuster*. But there is dramatic disaster here too, with newsreel footage of the Hindenburg airship explosion featured in one video, an event that signaled the end of the era of the airship.

In the upstairs space, a giant ball of barbed wire dominates the entrance. Whether it is intended to signify a threat or the rolling up of such brutal boundary markers is unclear, perhaps it alludes to both. When I visit, a receipt from Tesco has been added to a spike. I'm uncertain whether this is intentional or another visitor being cheeky, but this impaling of another monolith – of commercial life this time – seems oddly appropriate, particularly in the week when the supermarket announced that its yearly profits had halved.

An abstracted depiction of a wind turbine created using paint and laser, by Siderfin is splayed across the wall opposite the barbed-wire ball and, downstairs in the café space, brightly coloured cartoon wind turbines also turn on video screens, this time in a work by Ellie Harrison. These films relate to a Kickstarter fund Harrison has started online, where she proposes a radical new solution to the increasing dearth of available art funding a wind turbine whose profits would be channeled into commissioning artworks. Titled the Radical Renewable Art + Activism Fund, a video explains that it will provide a 'no strings attached' grant scheme for art-activism projects. And unlikely approach, perhaps but maybe Harrison is on to something, and, you never know, wind technology may yet turn out to be a savior not only of the environment but also of the arts.

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