





Alan Rankle &
Kirsten Reynolds

On the Edge of Wrong



Il caso e la necessità mi hanno fatto conoscere Alan Rankle e Kirsten Reynolds. E' stato durante un luminoso pomeriggio milanese che preconizzava l'incipiente primavera. Mi trovavo in compagnia di un'amica da poco in Italia e affamata di arte contemporanea (cosa non si fa per realizzare un appuntamento galante) negli spazi espositivi del Palazzo delle Stelline a Milano, dove il giorno prima era stata inaugurata la duplice personale di Alan e Kirsten. Ancora non li conoscevo, ma quel poco che avevo adocchiato nel comunicato stampa giorni addietro era bastato per incuriosirmi: volevo vedere dal vivo le loro opere e approfondirne il retroterra intellettuale. Così, forse anche per questa mia misteriosa inclinazione per l'arte d'oltreManica, avevo già proposto un articolo a una delle testate specializzate con cui collaboro. Non contavo di incontrare gli artisti (la loro mostra era stata inaugurata il giorno prima e, per quanto ne sapessi, potevano esser già tornati a Londra). Pertanto mi ero risolto di guardare l'esposizione con calma, fissando sulle pagine del mio blocchetto per gli appunti le impressioni immediate e le vivide intuizioni che successivamente avrei elaborato in fase di redazione del testo. Eravamo solo io e la mia amica, anche se lei aveva già preso il largo esplorando la mostra per i fatti suoi. Mi ero appena addentrato nella sala che ospitava la retrospettiva di Alan e avevo da poco iniziato a ficcare il mio sguardo sulle opere esposte, quando un lieve tramestio aveva distolto la mia attenzione dai quadri: un uomo e una donna, carichi di borse, stavano guadagnando l'uscita e si dirigevano verso di me. "Excuse me, are you the artists?". Li avevo

bloccati così, nel mezzo della sala, con audacia insospettata e inglese scolastico. Erano Alan Rankle e Kirsten Reynolds, in procinto di rientrare a Londra.

Così volle il caso. Ho conosciuto Alan e Kirsten in una circostanza fortuita e perfetta per un approccio estraneo ai clangori dell'inaugurazione. E così volle la necessità: ero lì per scrivere della loro mostra.

A partire da quell'incontro avremmo approfondito la conoscenza reciproca realizzando una sorta di sinergia professionale e umana.

Se Rankle rinnova la pittura di paesaggio dei van Ruisdael, Constable e Turner con personalissimi accenti all'interno di ampie campiture di colore che azzerano i dettagli di vedute naturali informi e rarefatte, Reynolds esplora il mezzo espressivo della luce per creare sorte di disegni di luce, immagini fotografiche in cui ambientazioni silvane immerse nel buio della notte sono attraversate da perturbanti tracciati luminosi che ammantano questi scenari boschivi di un climax fiabesco e allucinato. Entrambi i percorsi di ricerca prendono la forma di un'antropologia filosofica che parla il linguaggio dell'arte visiva, in cui sono potentemente espresse suggestioni del mondo magico e un modello esplicativo della Natura d'impostazione spirituale. *On the Edge of Wrong* è infatti il risultato di un vero e proprio sodalizio artistico, in cui le rispettive cifre stilistiche si armonizzano in una sorta di continuum nell'opera di Reynolds e Rankle, anche compenetrandosi nella vivida contaminazione, come nel caso dei lavori realizzati a quattro mani:



il risultato è la creazione di rappresentazioni di paesaggio votate all'annessione e al contagio reciproci, in cui le vedute stranianti di Rankle ricevono l'influsso magico delle tavole luminose di Reynolds, dando forma e sostanza a una cifra estetica, quella di Rankle, che è già di per sé un attraversamento di stili e culture diversi "Il mio lavoro esprime il concetto di una tradizione in continua evoluzione che porta dei cambiamenti nel nostro modo di guardare a noi stessi e all'ambiente"¹ e a una ricerca artistica, quella di Reynolds, anch'essa votata alla contaminazione: una sinestesia estetica occasionata dalla stimolazione sensoriale. Il risultato è, appunto, una moltitudine di approcci, intellettuali e di ordine sensibile, che fanno compiere al pensiero incredibili scorribande nella storia dell'arte, dal vedutismo imperfetto d'un Turner a vaghi accenni informali à la Mathieu, soprattutto per quelle linee di luce derivanti dalle tavole luminose di Reynolds pittoricamente annesse alle tele di Rankle, come se ivi nascessero per partenogenesi.

Dicevamo dell'antropologia filosofica che informa di sé il retroterra concettuale di questo sodalizio artistico. Il progetto *On the Edge of Wrong* sembra incline all'influsso romantico, in modo particolare a quella fascinazione per la Natura che ha alimentato la temperie spirituale del Romanticismo inglese e tedesco. Era la riconsiderazione della Natura nel suo concetto originario di Physis, come totalità organizzata e sussistente,

dinamica e vitale, intrinsecamente spirituale e posta in intima connessione con l'essere umano. Una malia che avrebbe ispirato il poeta Holderlin, permettendogli di consegnare alle pagine dell'*Iperione* uno dei passi più celebri della letteratura romantica: "O natura santa! lo non so cosa mi avvenga quando alzo i miei occhi dinnanzi alla tua bellezza, ma tutta la gioia del cielo è nelle lacrime che piango innanzi a te, come l'amante alla presenza dell'amata [...]. Essere uno col tutto, questa è la vita degli dei, questo è il cielo dell'uomo"².

Ma la poetica di Alan Rankle a Kirsten Reynolds rinnova la luce di queste recondite armonie, potenziando il sentimento romantico della Natura di un'intensità che è diretta espressione dei media della contemporaneità, realizzando una cavalcata nei secoli della tradizione paesaggistica e favorendone al contempo una reinvenzione attraverso rappresentazioni proteiformi e metamorfiche.

Emanuele Beluffi

Fondatore di Kritika art book

¹ Brian Sherwin: *Alan Rankle Interview*, Art Space Journal

² Johann Christian Friedrich Holderlin, *Hyperion*, I, 1



I met Alan Rankle and Kirsten Reynolds both by chance and by necessity. During a bright Milanese afternoon that heralded spring, I was with a friend – who had only been in Italy for a short while and who was deeply interested in contemporary art (what a man wouldn't do to get a date!) – and we were at the Palazzo delle Stelline Gallery in Milan, where, the day before, Alan and Kirsten's exhibition had opened.

I had not yet met them, but what I had read in the press earlier had enticed me to see their works and to get to know their cultural background. As I have a particular interest in British art, I had suggested I write an article for one of the specialist magazines I work for. I didn't think I would get to meet the artists (given that their exhibition had opened the day before, as far as I knew they might already be back in London). I had decided to explore the exhibition at leisure, jotting down my immediate impressions and vivid intuitions, which I would subsequently use in the composition of the article. My friend and I were alone in the gallery, although she had already explored the exhibition by herself. I had just started looking at Alan's works when I noticed a man and a woman, laden with bags, who were about to leave and were coming towards me. "Excuse me, are you the artists?". I stopped them – just like that, in the middle of the room, with surprising boldness and in very bad English. It was Alan Rankle and Kirsten Reynolds, just about to return to London.

So, thus I met Alan and Kirsten by chance, away from from the hustle and bustle of the opening, and also by necessity, as I was there to write about their exhibition.

From that moment of encounter where we made our acquaintance, we found ourselves embarking on a deepening professional and human interaction.

If Rankle revitalises the landscape painting tradition of van Ruisdael, Constable and Turner with very personal touches and a broad variety of colours, eliminating unnecessary details of natural vistas, Reynolds explores light as a means to create pictures of luminescence; photographic images in which woods, immersed in the darkness of the night, are crossed by luminous tracks which turn these woodland scenes into fairy-tale views of climactic intensity. Both pathways take the form of philosophical anthropology speaking the language of visual art, expressing visions of a magical world. *On the Edge of the Wrong* is the result of this artistic partnership, in which their respective styles blend harmoniously in their collaborative works. It is the work of four hands. The result is the creation of landscapes in which the vistas by Rankle receive the magical influence of the bright gestures by Reynolds, in an intriguing mixture of different styles and cultures "My work expresses the concept of a tradition which is continually evolving and which brings on changes in our way of looking at ourselves and at the environment"¹. The result is in fact a multitude of approaches: intellectual and sensitive, which lead one to reflect upon the history of art, from Turner to more informal styles à la Mathieu. Ultimately, the lines of light deriving from the luminous movements by Reynolds are directly visually connected to Rankle's canvases, as if they were actually born from them.



We were talking about the philosophical anthropology, which constitutes the conceptual background for this artistic collaboration. The project *On the Edge of Wrong* appears to be influenced by Romanticism and particularly by that fascination with Nature that sustained English and German Romanticism. We can consider Nature using the original concept of Physis; an organised whole, dynamic and vital; intrinsically spiritual and intimately connected with the human being. A magic that would inspire the poet Holderlin, motivating him to write in the *Hyperion*, one of the most famous passages of romantic literature: "O sacred nature! I don't know what happens to me when I lift my eyes in front of your beauty, but all the joy of the sky is in the tears that I cry in front of you, as the lover in the presence of his beloved... To be at one with everything, this is the gods' life, this is the man's sky"².

The poetry of Alan Rankle and Kirsten Reynolds reinvigorates the light in these hidden harmonies, increasing the romantic feeling of Nature with an intensity that manifests itself in the direct expression of contemporary media; running through centuries of landscape tradition and reinventing it at the same time through metamorphic representations.

Emanuele Beluffi

Founder of Kritika art book

1 Brian Sherwin: *Alan Rankle Interview*, Art Space Journal

2 Johann Christian Friedrich Holderlin, *Hyperion*, I, 1



Alan Rankle
Hebden Water 2001
Olio su tela/oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm



Alan Rankle
Aching Longing Painting II 2009
Olio su tela/oil on canvas
80 x 80 cm



Alan Rankle
En pays Cathare 2006
Olio su tela/oil on canvas
80 x 100cm

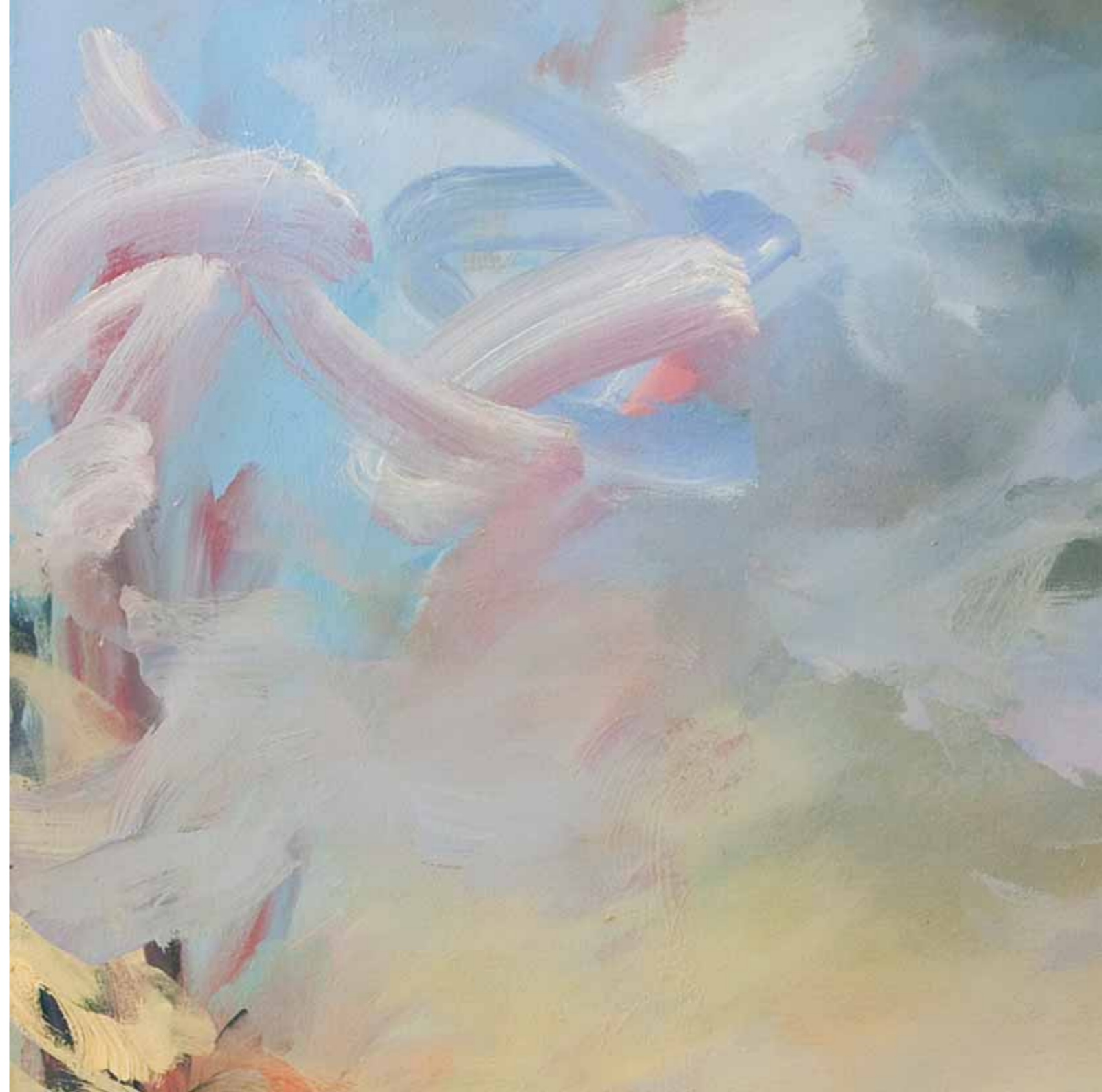




Alan Rankle
Untitled Painting II 2009
Olio su tela / oil on canvas
153 x 213cm



Alan Rankle
Endgame: Queen Fucks Knight 2009
Olio su tela/oil on canvas
120 x 150cm





Alan Rankle
Further tales along the Hudson 2 2001
Olio su tela/oil on canvas
76 x 91 cm



Alan Rankle and Kirsten Reynolds
Lost Evening 2010
Olio e acrilico su tela/oil and acrylic on canvas
80 x 100 cm



Alan Rankle and Kirsten Reynolds
On the Edge of Arcadia 2010
Olio e acrilio su tela/oil and acrylic on canvas
Diptych, each panel 240 x 120cm



Kirsten Reynolds
Following Darkness III 2010
Stampa fotografica/photographic print
60 x 92cm Edition of 6

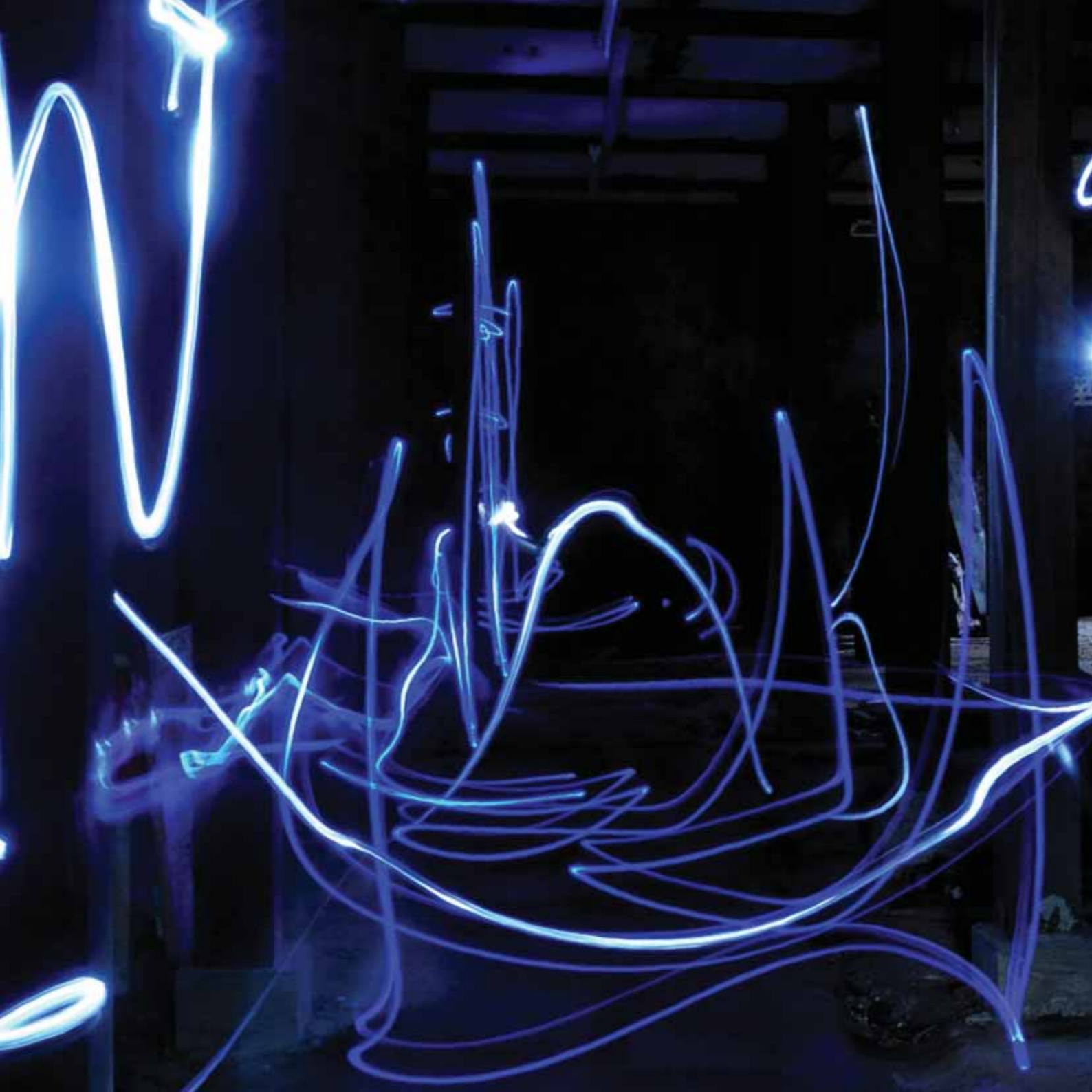




Alan Rankle and Kirsten Reynolds
Future City Past 2010
Olio e acrilio su tela/oil and acrylic on canvas
60 x 80cm



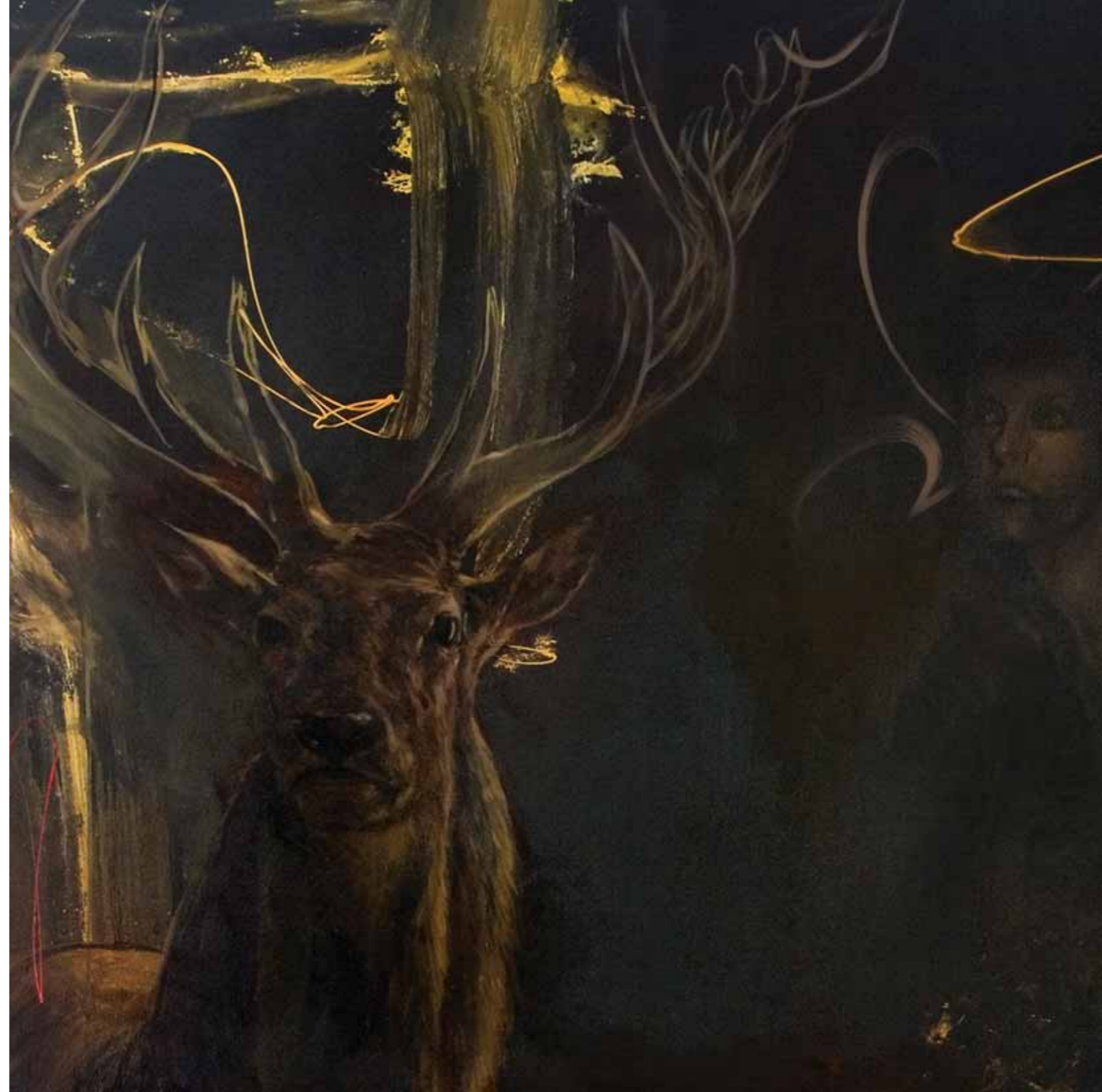
Kirsten Reynolds
Following Darkness IV 2010
Stampa fotografica/photographic print
76 x 50cm Edition of 6



Kirsten Reynolds
Electro I 2010
Stampa fotografica/photographic print
50 x 76 cm Edition of 6

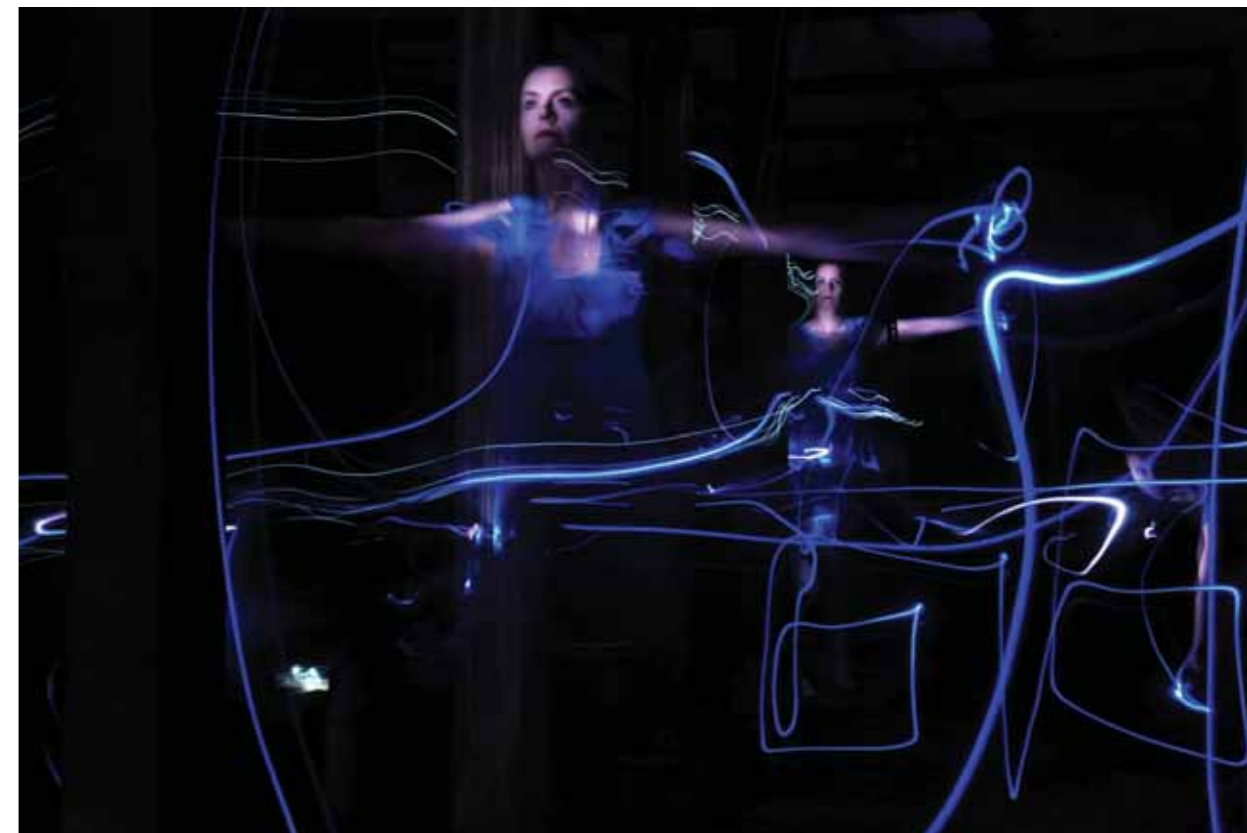


Alan Rankle and Kirsten Reynolds
On the Edge of Wrong 2010
Olio e acrilio su tela/oil and acrylic on canvas
183 x 183 cm

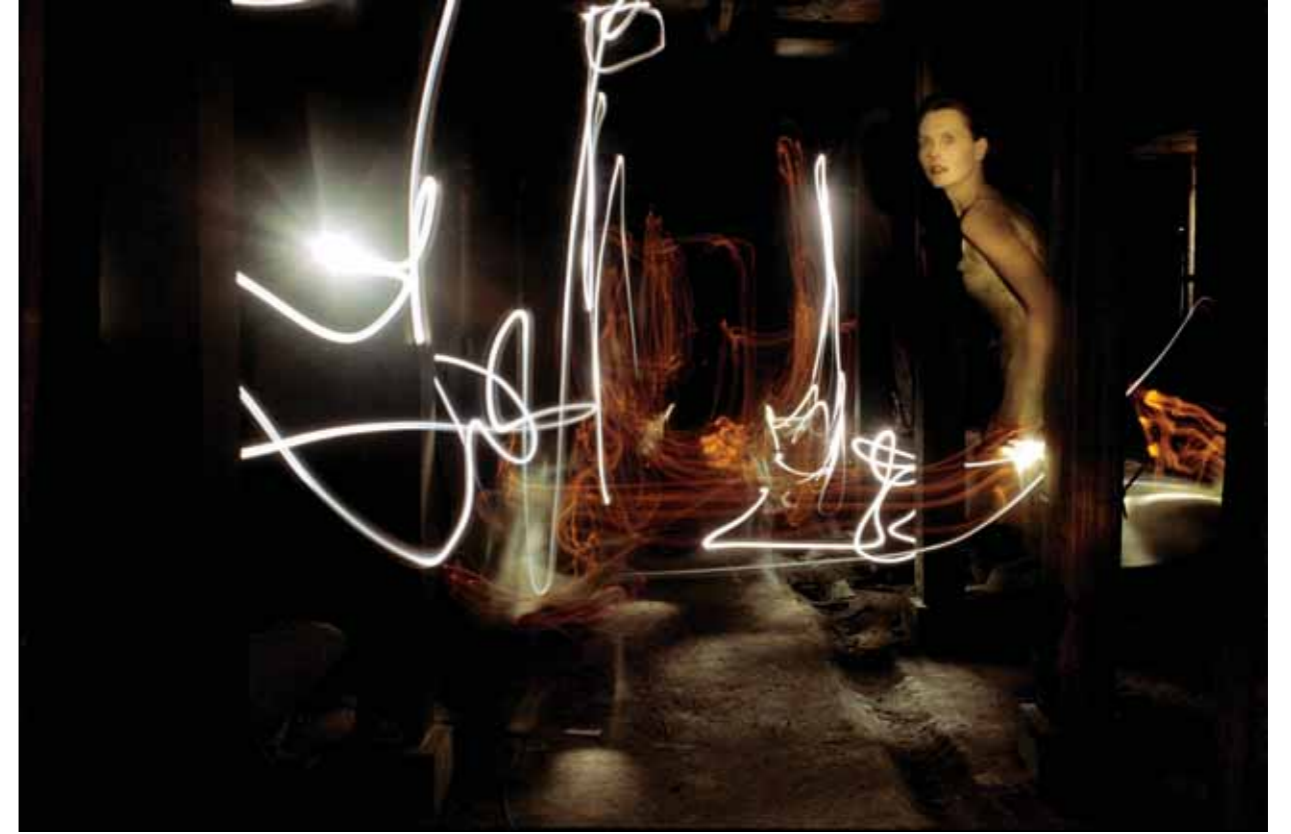




Alan Rankle and Kirsten Reynolds
Electro Rising 2010
Olio e acrilico su tela/oil and acrylic on canvas
80 x 100cm



Kirsten Reynolds
Electro XIII 2010
Stampa fotografica/photographic print
50 x 76 cm Edition of 6

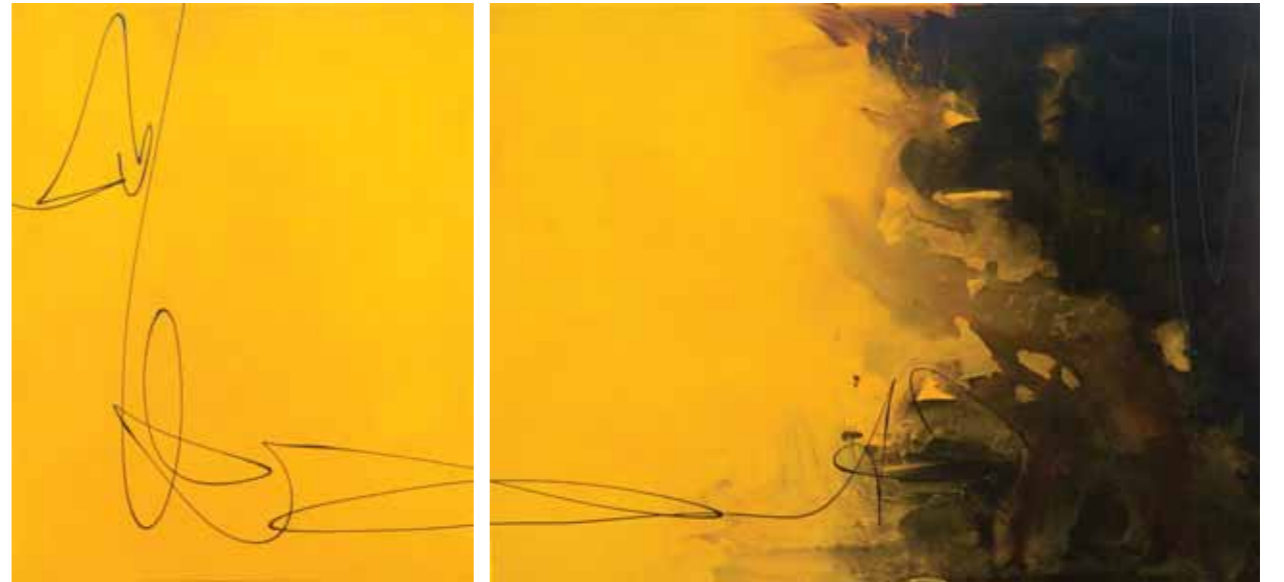


Kirsten Reynolds
Electro III 2010
Stampa fotografica/photographic print
50 x 76 cm Edition of 6



Kirsten Reynolds
Following Darkness X 2010
Stampa fotografica/photographic print
76 x 50cm Edition of 6

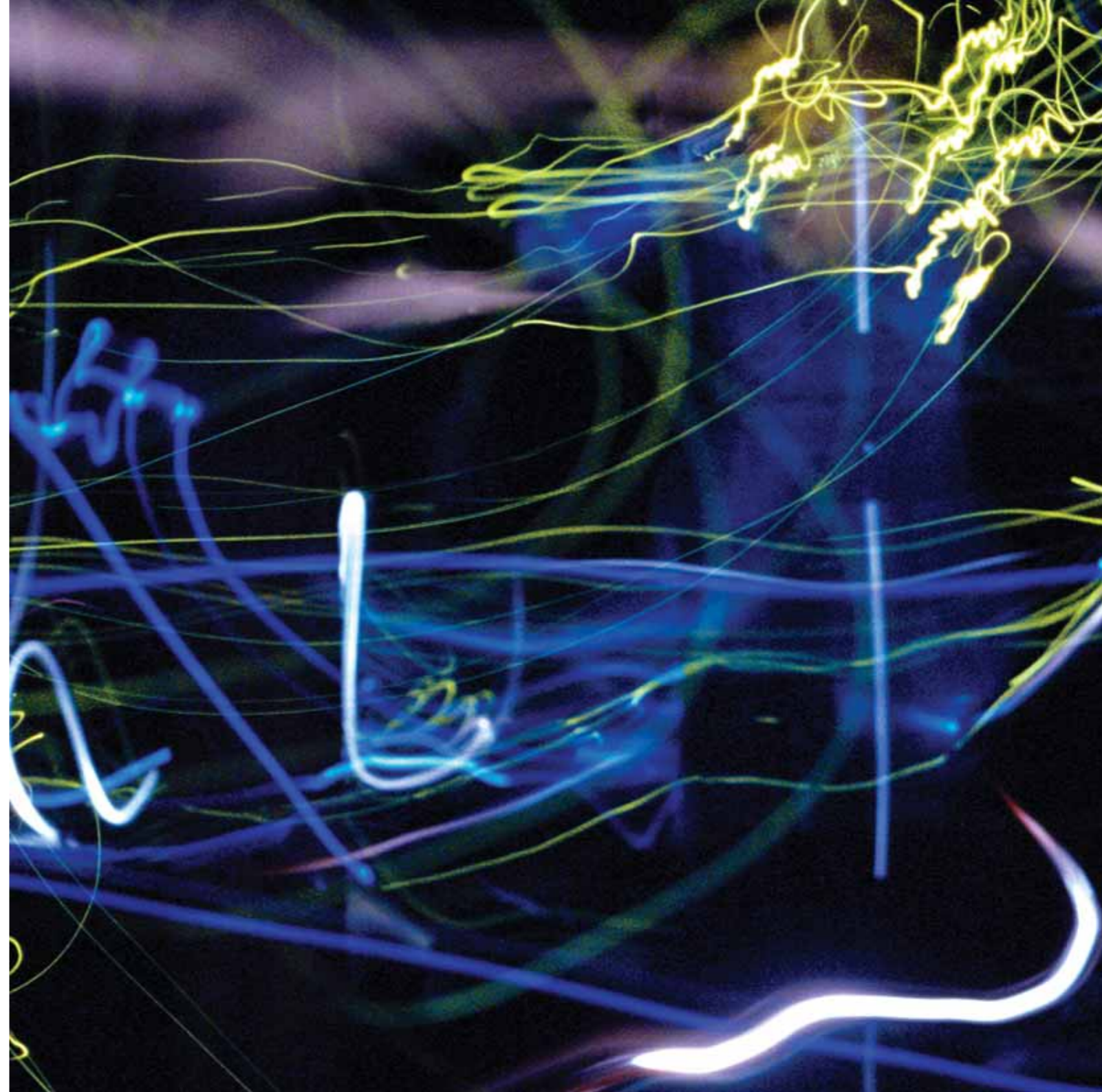




Alan Rankle and Kirsten Reynolds
Electro Attached 2010
Olio e acrilio su tela/oil and acrylic on canvas
Diptych, left panel 80 x 60cm, right panel 80 x 100cm



Kirsten Reynolds
Electro V 2010
Stampa fotografica/photographic print
122 x 158cm Edition of 3



Alan Rankle

Born: Oldham, Lancashire, 1952

Education

Rochdale College of Art, 1968–70

Goldsmiths' College School of Art, BA (Hons) London, 1970–73

Solo museum exhibitions

Recent Paintings & Drawings, Bankfield Museum, Halifax, 1981

Endless River Landscapes, Paintings Drawings Prints, Oldham Art Gallery & Museum, 1982

Landscape & Romance, Hastings Art Gallery & Museum, 1987

Riverfall & Other Works, City Art Gallery Southampton, 1993

Landscapes for the North, Maidstone Art Gallery & Museum; Radicev Museum, Saratov, Russia; Tunbridge Wells Art Gallery & Museum, 1996

Studio Notes & Field Studies, Folkestone Art Gallery & Museum, 1999

Landscapes for the Turning Earth, Gallery Oldham, 2007

Selected works, Fondazione Stelline, 2010

On the Edge of Wrong, collaboration with Kirsten Reynolds, Fondazione Stelline, 2010

Selected museum exhibitions

Chateaux d'Ariege, Musée de Montsegur, France; Musée de Foix, France; Musée de Parmiers, France, 1988

Travel: Real & Imagined Journeys, Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne, 1990

Arcade, Brighton University Gallery, 1995

Inspirit, Maidstone Museum & Art Gallery, 1995

The Best of British, Musée de Prieure, Honfleur, France, 1997

Downs & Marsh, Folkestone Art Gallery & Museums, 1998

Landscapes for the Turning Earth, Gallery Oldham, Greater Manchester, 2006/7

On the Edge of Arcadia, Installation with Tom Burke, Tim Nathan, Colin Gibson, Kent Barker, Gallery Oldham, 2006/7

Selected solo exhibitions

The Pardoner's Tale, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1973

Landskip Reflections, University of Manchester, 1976

Endless River Landscapes, Arts Centre, York, 1981

Recent Work, Patrick Boyd-Carpenter, London, 1984

Paintings & Drawings, Patrick Boyd-Carpenter, London, 1985

Landscape & Romance, Patrick Boyd-Carpenter, London, 1986

Dance to the Music of Time, Photogallery, St Leonards-on-Sea, 1986

Paintings & Watercolours, Janus Avivson, London, 1988

Recent Paintings, Casson Gallery, Eastbourne College, 1996

Terre Verte, Danielle Arnaud/Clink Wharf Gallery, London, 1998

Further Tales, Charles Everitt Fine Art/The Air Gallery, London, 2002

Gates to the Garden, Galleri Sult, Stavanger, Norway, 2003

On the Edge of Arcadia, Waterhouse & Dodd, London, 2004

Cave of the Sea, Rock-a-Nore Art Gallery, Hastings, 2005

Light + Meaning, Galleria Seriola, 2006

Strange Territory, Galleri Nordlys, 2006

Formal Concerns, Galleri København, 2007

Running from the House, Hans Alf Gallery, 2009

Warp Factor, video installation with Kirsten Reynolds, Hans Alf Gallery, 2009

Selected collections

Southampton City Art Gallery

Gallery Oldham

Hastings Museum and Art Gallery

Rochdale Art Gallery and Museum

Kirsten Reynolds

Born: Macclesfield, England, 1968

Education

Mid-Cheshire College of FE, 1986–87

Kingston Polytechnic, BA (Hons) Fine Art Sculpture, 1987–90

Selected solo exhibitions

Singles Bar, Galerie Berlin Tokyo, Berlin, Germany, 1996

Singles Club, The Metro London, England, 1997

Single and Browsing, Rastatte Gallery, Aachen, Germany, 1997

Excited by Gramophones, exhibition, live performance and residency, De Fabriek, Eindhoven, Netherlands, 1998

The History of Recorded Sound as We Know It, Intoxica Gallery, London, England, 2005

Klimakunst på Bestilling, Hans Alf Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2009

On the Edge of Wrong (with Alan Rankle), Fondazione Stelline, Milan, Italy, 2010

Selected group exhibitions

Sonic Boom, Hayward Gallery, London, England, 2000

Groove, Huddersfield Art Gallery, England, 2003

Curious and Curiouser, Galleri Rebecca Kormind, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2008

Selected live events

Music in the Anchorage, Brooklyn Bridge, New York, USA, 1997

John Peel's Meltdown 98, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, England, 1998

Excited by Gramophones, ISEA Festival, Liverpool, 1998

Sensations, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany, 1999

Sonic Boom Live, South Bank Centre, London, England, 2000

Fakes and Forgeries, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, England, 2000

Re-Stylus, British School at Rome, Italy, 2005

The Photophonic Experiment, UK tour with Pram and Blissbody, 2006

The London Dirthole Company, US tour, New York, Memphis, Nashville, Providence, 2007

A Taste of Gramophotism, European Centre for the Arts, Dresden, Germany, 2008

Selected large-scale collaborative events

The Bow Gamelan, Steierischer Herbst Festival, Graz, Austria, 1993

Hydronorts, Kolding Harbour, Denmark, 1996

Hydronorts & Bow Gamelan, Copenhagen Harbour, European Capital of Culture 96, Denmark, 1996

The Bow Gamelan, British School at Rome, Italy, 1997,

Charge, West Park, Wolverhampton, 2000

Lightshift, Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust, 2001

Power Plant, Botanic Garden, Oxford, 2005

Blast, Artsfest, City Centre, Birmingham, 2007

Power Plant, Calderstones Park, Liverpool European Capital of Culture 08, 2008

Power Plant, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh International Festival, 2009

Power Plant, Botanic Garden, Durham, 2009

Selected press

Project Dark, Louise Gray, The Wire, April 1997

Blow-up guys and dolls, Fiona Sturges, The Independent, June 1998

The Photophonic Experiment, Maddy Costa, The Guardian, October 2006

Beware the Spark-o-phone, Ivan Hewitt, The Telegraph, October 2006

Power Plant, Robert Sandell, The Sunday Times, October 2008

Artists create a greenhouse of horrors, Charlotte Higgins, The Guardian, August 2009

Power Plant – A sound and light experience, Joyce Macmillan, The Scotsman, August 2009

Power Plant, Joyce Gardner, The Guardian, August 2009

I have seen the darkness, Harry Eyres, Financial Times, November 2009

Selected TV / radio

Sounds of the Suburbs, performance and interview with John Peel, Channel 4, 1999

Kopspijkers interview and live performance, VARA Dutch TV, April 2000

The Photophonic Experiment, PM, Radio 4, 2006

The London Dirthole Company, Live session WFMU, New Jersey, USA, 2007

Power Plant, The Culture Show, BBC2, 2009

Power Plant, Sky Arts documentary, 2009

Published by inc. editions, 2010
to accompany the exhibition
Alan Rankle & Kirsten Reynolds
16 April – 29 May 2010

first
GALLERY

via Margutta 14
00187 Roma
Tel: +39 06 3230673
info@firstgallery.it
www.firstgallery.it

In collaborazione con/
in collaboration with:

Italian Factory
www.italianfactory.net

via Tertulliano 35/37
20137 Milano
Tel: +39 02 36517480
info@italianfactory.net
www.italianfactory.net

Essay © Emanuele Beluffi 2010

Images © the artists 2010

Photography credits:

Neil Fraser
Julia Humphreys
Thomas Jervis
Tim Nathan
Kim Nilsson
Godfrey Past

Translation:
Susy Fra

Designed by Iben Marx Holmes, illix design
www.illixdesign.com

Printed and bound by Quentin Press
www.quentinpress.co.uk

ISBN: 978-0-9553068-2-2

Uno speciale ringraziamento/
Special thanks to:

Deborah Anné
Silvia Berselli
Micaela Bonetti
Laurence Bristow-Smith
Jeremy Brook
Robert Cross
Silvia Fabbri
Neil Fraser
Patricia Holmberg
Julia Humphreys
Mike Hirst
Sarah Lloyd
Raymond McCrystal
Robert Sample
Chris Sayers
Erica Smith
Andrea Vento
Gavin Walker
Mark Warner

inc editions

Front cover:

On the Edge of Wrong, 2010
Alan Rankle & Kirsten Reynolds

Inside front cover:

Following Darkness, 2010 (detail)
Alan Rankle & Kirsten Reynolds

Back cover:

Following Darkness III, 2010
Kirsten Reynolds

Inside back cover:

Electro V, 2010 (detail)
Kirsten Reynolds



