

Nothing is Still

Nothing is Still was shown in the exhibition 'Negotiating Values' curated by Ying Kwok and organised by Chinese Arts Centre (Manchester). It explored aspects of the relationship between China and Europe, and the increasing influence that China holds over the West. 'Negotiating Values' was developed to question the value judgments we make, the notion of progress, the human endeavor needed to strive for a better life, and what is lost in a pursuit of progress.

In the work *Nothing is Still* the research enquiry aimed to address and embody notions about dialogue, boundaries, potential conflict, but also action and agency. To realise this proposition the motif of 'the stranger' was used, and the subjects were situated in an inhospitable landscape to signal the difficulty of action in a hostile environment and the potentiality of endeavor.

Central to this outcome was the constructed clothing designed and realised by Sanderson, which was worn for the performative self-portrait photographs. This clothing was then displayed alongside the still images. The clothing's similarity to pyjamas and the decision to wear them outdoors is a transparent reference to the Chinese Mainland custom of wearing nightwear in the street. Conroy/Sanderson's elongated pyjamas are joined in an impractical, awkward way that restricts movement, whilst it also creates a literal and physical connectivity between the two subjects. It suggests an idealism, whilst also foregrounding the difficulty of the endeavor that they are engaged in – to perform, to stand, to achieve an outcome. The landscape and the weather conditions were chosen to enhance notions of futility but also that of striving to act under difficult conditions. The exhibition toured to 501 Artspace in Chongqing, China in 2010.

Negotiable Values appeared in 'The Guardian Exhibition Guide' on Saturday 23 January 2010, using Conroy/Sanderson's image as promotion. In October 2010 AN Magazine published an image of this same work as lead image in an NEWS article, *Commonality across Cultures*, about the Chinese Arts Centre.

Sanderson and Conroy have a long established collaborative practice and supporting work can be accessed on the University website.