



Drifting Observatories

Curated by Margot Didsbury and Fiona Connor

Participants: Adrian Carnegie, Jane Coy, Regan Doody, Dorota Goetzen, Sutita Jeensag, Angus Kerr, Colin Kerr, Atsushi Koyama, Mike Mahon, Musa Naroro, Jim Selway, Ying Shao, Brita Urstad-Toft, Siru Valleala, Tatti Vilorino

The Drifting observatories project, is an investigation on a global scale at an individual level. 15 disposable cameras were sent to a mix of people in America, Antarctica, Australia, Brazil, China, England, Finland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Poland, Russia, Tanzania and Thailand. Each participant was given complete creative control over the 27 exposures, with the only confines being to use them over the same designated week of the 7th to 14th of November 2005. On return, every frame has been printed in a large format to be exhibited on a national tour.

In this project photography is explored as a democratic medium. It forces people to form image-making decisions, showing a range of processes when taking photos in one's environment. Therefore it is a collection of various environs, revealing the different approaches to framing them; illustrating what people personally value and what they think the audience, wants to see. In its inclusive nature, it validifies everybody's views through the standardised format of a 27 exposure disposable camera.

The project is more about setting up a system, rather than dictating a view, although this inclusive approach is a view in itself. There is a possibility for the cameras function as a direct feed from each person. The choice to use film rather than the digital format, allows for an unedited document. Unlike the common digital editing within the camera, the approach enables the entire process to be transparent.

In deciding where to send the cameras there were various contributing factors, primarily getting a relatively even geographical spread, covering all the continents. Secondly sending them to people the curators knew or the people they knew i.e. keeping the participants within 1 or 2 degrees of separation. The third factor when choosing participants who would lead to a broad range of people and landscapes. The result, an illustration of people that the organisers, two young New Zealanders, are connected and have access to around the globe.

In its entirety, Drifting Observatories is an alternative offering to the current influx of global and mass media that constantly enhances our perception of mankind.

A comprehensive catalogue is being released, including every image in the show and writing by Stephen Cleland and Sally McIntire.

The national tour has secured dates in Dunedin and Auckland, with Wellington and Christchurch dates pending.