

24 July to 18 September 2010

THE GALLERY
sketch

GRAHAM
PARKER

OPENING RECEPTION
SATURDAY 24 JULY, 2-4PM

THE FLITTER

9 CONDUIT STREET
LONDON W1

OPEN TUESDAY –
SATURDAY 10AM–5PM
FREE ADMISSION

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THE FLITTER

...It's steady work, with few pauses. A repetitive and thankless task just this side of unthinking. Or perhaps an obsessive-compulsive security routine that has to be continuously repeated and updated because you don't trust your doormen (you send for new ones weekly – each set more officious than the last, but seemingly with no more initiative). The more obvious Viagra, Rolex and generic software pitches are dismissed quickly or passed to the filter to be better prepared for the future. Note to self, 'ViiiiiiiGGgra is not on the guest list... '

Graham Parker's "Fair Use (notes from spam)" is a book in five parts, that places the contemporary phenomenon of spam e-mails within historical accounts of language games and con tricks – often finding unexpected intersections between the two. In one part of the book, entitled 'The Wire', the artist writes a commentary on filtering spam, accompanied by an extensive array of spam language sourced from other online texts (19th century novels, newspapers, aphorisms, search term lists etc.) – text used by spammers to fool spam software filters that a message is legitimate.

...the subject being persuaded segues from human to algorithmic filter without warning, prompting chance illusory poetics, harsh disjunctions and an instinctive reach for metaphor to orientate oneself and impose tentative order on these breaks. But in viewing spam each of those resultant metaphors is both exact and inadequate and speaks to that moment alone – so that only a truly digital sequencing of them, in all their disparity, might make sense of the phenomena of encountering spam, at least at a sustained affective level. Casualty wards. Howard Hughes'paranoia. The homeless. Childhood meals. Night club doormen. The drowning: an elusive promise of indexical consistency...

In 'The Flitter' the spam text and the commentary upon it are remixed by indexing software, so that the essay 'dissolves' into the subject it is commenting on. The writer, musician and performer Carl Hancock Rux then delivers the resulting text as a monologue delivered to two cameras and in two apparent modes: direct address and as one part of a conversation with an invisible other – in a mirroring of spam's tendency to mix direct marketing appeals to the reader with language which is 'not for them'. The performer is alternately cast as arbiter of meaning and victim of the text's refusal to cohere. The viewer is

simultaneously seduced and ignored. The language keeps flowing – driven by an urge to persuade...

...It is an infinitesimally small journey that begins again with each press of the delete button, but a journey nonetheless, albeit one that doesn't reward consideration of intent or destination – only the sense that you're repeatedly being thrown back on yourself...

Additional production support and residency provided by the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY.

Performer: Carl Hancock Rux
Camera / Audio: Benjamin Tiven
Camera / Director / Editor / Stills: Graham Parker
Colour correction: H. Spencer Young
Script adapted from 'The Wire' – book four of Graham Parker's "Fair Use (notes from spam)" (Book Works, 2009)

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Curator: Victoria Brooks
Graphic Design: Damien Poulain

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