

PRESS RELEASE

Subjects for Melancholy Retrospection

New work by Anna Chapman at Newhailes

5 August – 6 September 2010

private view 4 August, 6–8pm

additional late opening 26 August, 6–8pm

Subjects for Melancholy Retrospection presents new work by Anna Chapman made in response to Newhailes, a 17th century house near Musselburgh, and its collection of manuscripts now housed in the National Library of Scotland. For one month principal rooms in the house will host an exhibition of drawings, three-dimensional objects and sound work related to language and memory.

Anna's working process is research-based and often site-specific, involving the collection of material information from particular sources, which is then transferred across different media. In a recent essay James Cahill has written 'for Anna Chapman, the shifting of information from one medium to another involves "inherent noise and grain" that is analogous to the broader transmission of an artwork from conception to final realisation.' This sense of transference and the loss or gains entailed forms a central characteristic of the works in this exhibition.

Newhailes' magnificent library, once described by Dr Johnson as 'the most learned drawing-room in Europe', will be the setting for a sound installation made in collaboration with composer/sound artist Martin Parker. Titled *Searching sound with sound*, the work reflects on the room's history as a site of enlightenment debate and knowledge exchange, using sounds sourced from today's forms of information storage and collection including scanning processes and computer hard drives.

In the Dining Room, a unique rococo interior is the context for an installation of copper objects, some of which recall fragments of letterforms. The room's series of portraits by Ramsay and others look down on a litter of conversational remnants or abandoned remarks.

Drawing-based works in subsequent rooms again involve elements of writing found in the margins of Newhailes manuscripts. These include marginalia by Dr Johnson and others in a manuscript of Lord Hailes' 'Annals of Scotland', now housed in the National Library of Scotland. The exhibition takes its title from a line in the more private annals of Miss Christian Dalrymple, former resident of Newhailes.

Anna Chapman was born in York (1978) and graduated from the University of Edinburgh and Edinburgh College of Art (2003) obtaining a Masters in Fine Art: Drawing from Wimbledon College of Art (2008). Recent projects include *He do the Police in Different Voices* (Blyth Gallery, London); *100 Seel Street*, an installation in an abandoned house in Liverpool (Liverpool Independents' biennial); and *Soundmarks*, a mixed media installation at the Centre for Drawing, London.

For information and images, please contact Anna Chapman:
07815 851026 / hello@annachapman.co.uk / www.annachapman.co.uk

For visiting information, please contact the National Trust for Scotland at Newhailes:
0844 493 2125 / www.nts.org.uk

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