

# MESSUMS

YORKSHIRE

LONDON

WILTSHIRE



Sonia Leber & David Chesworth  
What Listening Knows

**12 December 2020 – 28 February 2021**  
MESSUMS WILTSHIRE

*Sonia Leber & David Chesworth are cultural investigators, landing lightly in foreign territory, weighed down only with a mixed bag of pre-entry research, a video camera, some sound equipment and a couple of laptops. The work they are going to make is out there waiting; images and events to be re-interpreted, re-framed, recorded and edited.*

Fiona Gruber

*What Listening Knows* is an immersive 3-channel audio and video installation by Australian artists Sonia Leber & David Chesworth, commissioned for our second Moving Image exhibition at Messums Wiltshire this winter. Currently in development, the research and filming was undertaken here in Wiltshire in the Summer of 2019, when Sonia and David were

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Messums' first artists-in-residence. The resulting video uses unique Wiltshire environments as sites to explore the act of listening.

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*What Listening Knows* creatively interrogates different concepts around the act of listening, particularly the concept of 'the microphone's gaze', which shifts the idea of the ocular gaze, or camera gaze, into an acoustic dimension:

*The project is built up around three individual performers acting as 'field recordists' in the landscape, trailing through cornfields, traversing unfathomable henges and earthworks, and scanning anthills and ancient forests. Each performer, armed with microphones and headphones, was prompted to physically interrogate the landscape from non-typical perspectives, activating their listening to find new ways to capture the acoustic forces of the environment.*

*Following these acoustic cues, we have been developing a camera style detached from its ocular-centric perspective, imbued with an acoustic consciousness, at times tipping and rotating the landscape, levitating rocky masses, and trailing growths in the forest from both macro and micro perspectives.*

Sonia and David's work experiments with how humans reframe and manipulate their experience of the world. They are particularly interested in to how the 'act of listening' can inform us in a very different way to visual perception and their work investigates this disconnect.

## **What Listening Knows**

12 December 2020 – 28 February 2021

Messums Wiltshire, Barn

26 June 2020 – Online Launch and interview with Fiona Gruber

*[Image: What Listening Knows, 2020, 3-channel 4K video, multi-channel audio. Video Still]*

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### Notes to editors:

Sonia Leber & David Chesworth are known for their distinctive installation artworks, using a combination of video, sound, architecture, performance and public participation. Developed through expansive research in places undergoing social change, Leber & Chesworth's works are speculative and archaeological, responding to social and technological settings. Their highly detailed, conceptual video works emerge from real, but exist significantly in the realm of the imaginary.

Leber & Chesworth's works have been shown in key international exhibitions including the 56th Biennale of Venice 'All The World's Futures' (2015); the 19th Biennale of Sydney (2014); and a parallel exhibition as part of the 5th Moscow Biennale (2013).

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M E S S U M S W I L T S H I R E is a leading multi-purpose gallery and arts centre set inside a restored thirteenth-century tithe barn and surrounding buildings with exhibition space, sculpture garden and restaurant.

M E S S U M S L O N D O N is modernist gallery space on Cork Street where the family have had a presence since 1992.

M E S S U M S Y O R K S H I R E opened in early July 2020. The third Messums gallery to open in England, it hosts a rolling programme of exhibitions with a focus on clients and artists in the North of England.

A comprehensive list of past and future exhibitions can be found on our websites.