

The mud formed a finger, pointed

The ARKA Group

07/02 – 02/03/14

The mud formed a finger, pointed is a new film installation by the ARKA Group (Ben Jeans Houghton & Matthew de Kersaint Giraudeau) created in collaboration with dancer and choreographer Nicole Vivien Watson. *The mud formed a finger, pointed* is a study of the human body as an uncanny object that oscillates between figuration and abstraction, body and material, depicting an object becoming human, a human becoming an object and the protean states between.

The mud formed a finger, pointed merges the aesthetics of "Messyplay" with movements informed by the Japanese dance form, Butoh. A slime covered human form dances in a barely dressed set in a basement room. Black plastic tarpaulin covers the floor and slime is spattered across the bucket from which the figure rises. Waves of feedback flood the soundtrack, responding to the movements of the figure even as the figure seems to respond to the sound. Slime here is presented as a primordial subject, a pre-animal structure that somehow produces consciousness without identity.

The mud formed a finger, pointed is a contemporary creation myth that melds object and subject, non-human and human. By invoking the narrative imagery of creation myths where humans are formed from the earth, the film installation links our understandings of the contemporary body and our imaginings of a primordial past.

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The ARKA group is a collaboration between Ben Jeans Houghton & Matthew de Kersaint Giraudeau, producing films, sculptures and sound works about the stranger fringes of scientific and philosophical thought. The ARKA group collaborates with emphatic individuals from various disciplines and institutions relevant to the subject of each new work.

The ARKA group have exhibited throughout the UK, creating new works to commission for a variety of organisations including Space in Between, IdeasTap, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, MIND and Cornerhouse. Recent exhibitions include *(REM) Paradoxical Sleep*, commissioned by BALTIC as part of the exhibition series FIGURE ONE at Baltic 39, and screenings of their films *The Ocelli* and *EXTRAMISSION* as part of the Art Projects Film Programme at London Art Fair 2014.

Matthew de Kersaint Giraudeau lives and works in London. He is currently an Associate at Open School East. Ben Jeans Houghton lives and works in Newcastle upon Tyne where he is currently studying on a MFA Scholarship at Newcastle University with AHRC Research funding.

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