

KATE MACGARRY

IAIN FORSYTH & JANE POLLARD: ROMEO ECHO DELTA

10 November – 17 December 2011

ROMEO ECHO DELTA (Version A) is a new 33 minute sound work. It plays with the tradition of radio hoaxes and fake UFO scares, most famously, Orson Welles' 1938 radio play of H.G. Well's sci-fi classic War of the Worlds and the BBC's groundbreaking 1926 Broadcasting the Barricades by Father Ronald Knox.

Plugging into an enduring fascination with Mars, the red planet, ROMEO ECHO DELTA simulates current-day live breaking news. Forsyth & Pollard unpick the nature of our saturated media, where stories become caught in a suspended limbo, important enough to demand immediate airtime, but lacking sufficient information to justify constant reporting. ROMEO ECHO DELTA occupies this space, this contemporary phenomenon, and offers an alternate take on reality.

Version B of the work was broadcast by BBC Radio Merseyside on Halloween, as a simulated live broadcast. The station presenter is in the throes of interviewing X-Factor finalist Maria Lawson when reports come in of a bright light piercing the night sky over Birkenhead. The transmission grows dense with speculation, confusion and repetition. A reporter is dispatched to the scene, local callers contact the station to attempt to make sense of what they're witnessing and a hastily sourced inappropriate expert is dialled in to help, in the form of parapsychologist Dr. Ciarán O'Keefe.

To accompany the broadcast the artists projected an ominous beam of bright red light into the night sky from a ventilation shaft on the banks of the river Mersey.

There are two versions of the work because Version A was rejected by the BBC editorial policy board, who deemed it too realistic and likely to induce panic in their listeners. Following edits and re-recording, Version B was produced and aired, with BBC Radio presenter Lee Bennion replaced by actor Matthew Crompton.

The project was commissioned by Abandon Normal Devices 2011. AND is a new festival of arts and cultural debate for the Northwest presented by Cornerhouse (Manchester), FACT (Liverpool) and Folly (Lancaster).

Recent Forsyth & Pollard solo exhibitions include Publicsfear, South London Gallery, 2011; Soon, Toronto Nuit Blanche, 2011; Silent Sound, AV Festival, 2010 and Radio Mania: An Abandoned Work, BFI Southbank Gallery, 2009.

Iain Forsyth born in Manchester 1973, Jane Pollard born in Newcastle 1972. They live and work in London. For more information: www.iainandjane.com

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CAST

Lee Bennion as himself
(Version A)
Matthew Crompton as Lee
(Version B)
Maria Lawson as herself
Saira Choudhry as Sadia
Roger Phillips as himself
Ciarán O'Keefe as himself
Pauline Daniels as Christie
Kenny Thompson as Karim
Carla Morris as JoJo
Francesca Dolan as Courtney
Derek Hicks as Policeman
Malcolm Freeman as Andy
Dan Armour as Damon
Charlie Dickinson as Darren

Script by Ben Moor

Project managed by
Vivienne Gaskin
and co-ordinated by
Kerenza McClarnan

Recorded by David Ellis
and Colin Robinson at LJMU

Red beam by ER Productions
with thanks to Mersey Tunnels

Images by Soup Collective
Design by Chris Bigg, v23

Commissioned by
Abandon Normal Devices 2011



RED

ROMEO ECHO DELTA