

THE SUN FROM YOUR PAST



LOUISE BENNETT

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Essay by Lisa Bryan-Brown

Operating at the intersection of the digital and the physical, Louise Bennett's *The Sun From Your Past* is a complex work that pushes the limits of light as medium. Essentially an exercise in translation, Bennett's understated installation is deceptively simple in its presentation. Comprised of a beam of light thrown to the ground, streaming out from the back of CLUTCH Collective's truck-space, the moody installation relies on the architecture of the truck doors for its form. A site-specific work created in direct response to CLUTCH's unique exhibition space, Bennett is the first artist in CLUTCH's program so far to have utilised the mobile nature of the vehicle, presenting her installation in the very dark surrounds of Norman Buchan Park.

Moving around and through this work, the light source may not be immediately evident to the viewer. Is it simply a light? Is the form of the work merely the beam itself, the sculpture being the illuminated strip of ground and the subsequent shadows of the truck doors? Upon investigation (if you deign to peer into the truck) it is revealed the light source is a data projector. Flooding the internal space of the truck with video footage, the beam that seeps out is a mere fragment of the whole.

The projected footage is of the sun shining brightly in the sky, imperceptible to the viewer but implied through the installation's title. Toying lightly with the notion of time, *The Sun From Your Past* is modestly tongue-in-cheek in so far as all light is from the past, taking time to move through space and arrive at its site of perception. Bennett's practice is overarchingly concerned with the mediation of day-to-day experiences, and *The Sun From Your Past* picks up this thread by reminding viewers this is an instance of sunlight they've each experienced previously, simply captured by Bennett from a different location.

It is in the capture and re-presentation that the works complexity articulates itself. Bennett isolates light as at once both the medium and message of the work. Captured through a device, the light from the sun is translated to a lens flare presented on a screen. Replaying that footage through a projector, again light is translated to a lens flare, the screen footage turned back into physical light. Turning natural sunlight into artificial digital light, Bennett poses questions about authenticity of experience, and the way our contemporary experiences of nature are frequently mediated by screen-based technologies. Appealingly reflexive in its materiality, *The Sun From Your Past* is a conceptually rich work, sublime in its subtlety of form.