

encounters appear to wear theirs on their sleeves. Alongside the glaziers' bloodthirsty conversation, a woman turns on *The Big Scholar* after he startles her with a shout, attacking him with alkaline batteries and a perfume named *Beyond Paradise For Men*. Social niceties are in short supply.

While bizarre and somewhat farcical, *Writ Stink* contains some astute observations on modern life amid its surreal scenes. The notion of privacy and a fear of exposure in our technological age are addressed (alongside the perceived damage such exposure would wreak), while at the end of the story – spoiler alert! – Williams provides an echo of one of the weirdest and most gruesome news stories of recent times, when *The Big Scholar* inadvertently finds himself finishing his days locked inside the very flight case he hoped would protect him.

At Kate MacGarry, **Marcus Coates** also attempts to tackle some of our deepest questions and fears. Coates has collaborated with dancer Henry Montes to create the film *A Question of Movement*, which sees the duo interview various people, at their homes or at work, inviting the interviewee to pose a question that they have thus far found impossible to answer. Coates then offers up a response, in the medium of dance.

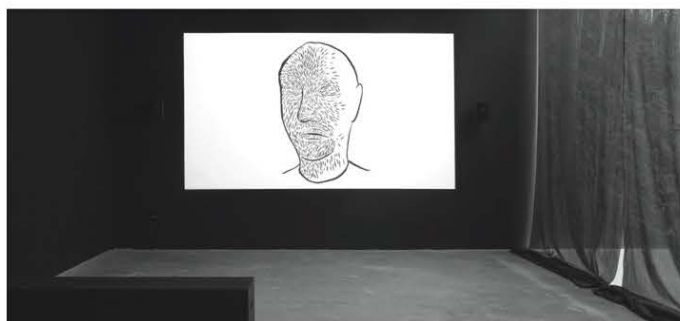
The questions posed range from the personal – 'I'm at a crossroads and how do I proceed?' asks Zoe – to the existential – 'Why does everything in this world go round and round and round without stopping?' enquires Armajit – provoking two different dance responses from Coates, both complex and surprisingly emotional. Coates refines his movements in response to criticism from the enquirers, and viewers of the film are guided by the seriousness with which they take the project. The settings for their interactions with Coates may be mundane – a kitchen, a teenage bedroom and a drab workplace – yet the exchanges are anything but. Bar some nervous giggles from Joseph – who enquires why he is so easily distracted from the important tasks that face him – the dances are evaluated with earnest thoughtfulness. In the case of Zoe, the movement clearly affects her on a visceral level, with Coates apparently accurately reflecting the physical distress her anxiety is causing her.

The film was commissioned by Siobhan Davies Dance and it is easy to see the appeal for a contemporary dance organisation in backing the project. Whereas dance can often be perceived as elitist in a traditional theatrical setting, here it becomes intimate, strange and at times greatly moving. Its concept on the surface seems ripe for mockery, though *A Question of Movement* in fact captures a series of personal and often poignant exchanges between Coates and his questioners, and by the end it is possible to believe that dance, as much as talking, could be therapy for life's sticky problems.

At Beaconsfield in South London, artist Naomi Siderfin acts as both curator and contributor to the thematic group show **Harnessing the Wind**. The metaphor is stretched here (at times tenuously so) to include the process of creation, politics and even the proposal of a new form of arts funding.

For the political works, the press release points out the connection to the theme by reminding visitors of Harold Macmillan's famous 'Winds of Change' speech. This speech related to the decolonisation of British territories in Africa, and in Monika Oechsler's video installation a series of monolithic buildings created to express global and political power are addressed. Oechsler films significant buildings in both Germany and the UK. Recently built structures such as the Shard – a representation of corporate power – appear alongside long-standing London monuments such as the National Gallery and Nelson's Column, and are accompanied by quotations from the likes of Karl Marx and Napoleon Bonaparte.

Undercutting all these exercises in masculine power are moments



of visual sweetness or levity – a pile of papers repeatedly flutters to the ground in slow motion in one film, while another features scenes intercut from a computer driving game. And in the background, beneath a more bombastic musical soundtrack played on repeat, I'm sure I catch the strains of the theme tune to the 1980s game show *Blockbuster*. But there is dramatic disaster here too, with newsreel footage of the Hindenburg airship explosion featured in one video, an event that signalled the end of the era of the airship.

In the upstairs space, a giant ball of barbed wire dominates the entrance. Whether it is intended to signify a threat or the rolling up of such brutal boundary markers is unclear, perhaps it alludes to both. When I visit, a receipt from Tesco has been added to a spike. I'm uncertain whether this is intentional or another visitor being cheeky, but this impaling of another monolith – of commercial life this time – seems oddly appropriate, particularly in the week when the supermarket announced that its yearly profits had halved.

An abstracted depiction of a wind turbine created using paint and lasers, by Siderfin is splayed across the wall opposite the barbed-wire ball and, downstairs in the cafe space, brightly coloured cartoon wind turbines also turn on video screens, this time in a work by Ellie Harrison. These films relate to a Kickstarter fund Harrison has started online, where she proposes a radical new solution to the increasing dearth of available arts funding: a wind turbine whose profits would be channelled into commissioning artworks. Titled the *Radical Renewable Art + Activism Fund*, a video explains that it will provide a 'no strings attached' grant scheme for art-activism projects. An unlikely approach, perhaps, but maybe Harrison is on to something, and, you never know, wind technology may yet turn out to be a saviour not only of the environment but also of the arts. ■

ELIZA WILLIAMS is a writer and critic based in London.

**Marcus Coates & Henry Montes**  
*A Question of Movement* 2015  
video

**Bedwyr Williams**  
*Writ Stink* 2015  
video