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Audio Description script for The Photographers' Gallery 2020, Sat 30 May

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Clare Strand, *The Discrete Channel with Noise installation* at The Photographers' Gallery

My first description will be of the installation of this artwork at the gallery. As we enter the exhibition space and stand in the doorway ... to our right is one of the shorter walls of this rectangular shaped room. The two longer walls of the room are to our left, and directly in front of us.

The walls are painted a light grey ... the colour of an early evening cloud. There are four strips of track lighting on the ceiling. The tracks echo the shape of the room ... a rectangle. On each of the tracks there are three spot lights pointing in different directions ... illuminating the artworks on display. The floor is a dark wood.

Still standing in the doorway ... on our right side is the exhibition text for the room. Next to this ... further into the room, there are five small artworks. Three of them are clustered together further away from us. The two closest to us are together in a pair. Each of the five of the artworks are the same size, and they are all installed to be at standing eye-line height of an average-sized person.

On the adjacent wall to the one I have just described ... opposite to where we are standing in the door ... three large artworks hang on the wall ... evenly spaced from each other.

On the shorter wall, adjoining the one I've just described ... to our left, two more of these large artworks are hung.

Attached to the final wall, on our left, there are two floating shelves alongside each other ... at standing hip height. Each shelf measures 200cm in length, and 25cm in width. Which is around the same length of an internal domestic

door ... if you imagine it horizontally. ... The width of the shelf would fit an open paperback book, from the front of the shelf to the back. They both have rectangular transparent cases over them which are of two different depths.

The shelf closest to where we stand holds around 40 carefully placed paint brushes, spaced evenly side by side, and each made of wood and bristle. The bristles of the brushes point to the wall. ... Each of the brushes are well used ... the bristles are clean, and the wooden handles are covered in grey, white and black paint. They further emphasise the handmade construction of the project.

The shelf furthest away displays a line of 10 evenly-spaced white plastic pots of acrylic paint ... identical in size. The outside of each pot is splattered with paint in the same colour of the paint inside the pot. The inside of each pot is thick with paint. The dab marks of the brush are still visible as imprints on the dense acrylic paint. On the left, pot number 1 is filled with white paint. The one next to that .. pot number two, is filled with a very light grey paint. The next one is filled with an ever so slightly darker grey paint, and so on until the final pot in the line-up is filled with black paint.

Strand used these exact paints and brushes to create the large artworks I mentioned earlier ... these paintings are translations of the smaller artworks initially described.

The exhibition at The Photographers' Gallery presents work that the artist created during her residency in Paris and that were shown in Madrid. The Photographer's Gallery is showing 5 paintings and 5 photographs ... #1, #2, #4, #5 and #10, from an original 10 pairs of photographs and paintings. The photographs used were selected Strand's archive of 36 tabloid photographs.

Overall, the exhibition is quite different to the one in Madrid, where the artworks were shown on white walls as opposed to grey at The Photographers' Gallery. Also presented in Madrid were the painters overalls that Strand wore whilst completing the work. The space and configuration is different ... as is the order and number of the images shown.

At The Photographers' Gallery, a number of lines have been made with white tape on the dark wooden floorboard. From the corner of the room where we entered, four lines cross across the room ... two running to either corner on the opposite wall of the room, and two to the middle of the room, finishing on the floor either side of the central painting on that wall.

From the other corner of the wall on our left side as we enter the room, four more tape lines run across the room to join the final points of the first set of tape that I described. These lines represent a model of "the discrete channel with noise" – the name of the work and also of a concept developed by the American Mathematician and information theorist Claude Shannon. The lines and their various configurations are also printed in the catalogue which accompanies the exhibition.

As I mentioned in my introduction, this exhibition displays some elements of the process, and some of the outcomes of Strand's translation of pre-existing photographs that were 'read' to her over the phone. The artist and her husband followed an existing model, as described in George H. Eckhardt's book *Electronic Television* from 1936, in which he outlined how an image can be transmitted via code using telegraphic communication.

In Clare Strand's transmission system, a photograph is divided by a grid on a sheet of transparent plastic, with every square being given a value corresponding to the tonality of the underlying image from 1 to 10. 1 is white, 2 has a tinge of grey, 3 is greyer, 4 darker and so on until 10, which is black. The numbers on the paint pots correspond to the numbers on the grid. Strand's husband then recited the assigned numbers line by line over the phone. Without knowing which photograph her husband was describing, Strand traced the tone of paint corresponding to each number to a larger scale on a sheet of paper which hung on the wall of her studio and painted each square in tonality of grey communicated by her husband.