

BIRD TALK

BRONWEN BUCKERIDGE

OPEN CAST, CAST, HELSTON, CORNWALL

Live durational performance 10 & 11 September 2022

BIRD TALK is a live performance that took place over two days at the 2022 Open Studios at CAST in Helston, Cornwall. The work was created in response to the influx of dead and dying seabirds washing up on the beaches in the wake of the bird flu outbreak.

Visitors were invited to talk about any birds they had seen in the previous two weeks. As they spoke I mapped the sightings on a large 3.5 metre chalkboard grouping birds by species, and applying coded symbols to record bird numbers, their whereabouts, and behaviour. Any deaths or illnesses were marked up in red.

Some visitors watched and listened in to stories being told. Some recalled interactions with treasured birds in the garden. A fisherman spoke of gannets that die of starvation, their eyes blinded by decades of plunging hundreds of feet into the sea.

I worked with a ladder as the conversation travelled up and along the board. The chalk marks weaving their own landscape of association, and documenting patterns of loss, absence, and the shortfalls of memory.

Bird Talk is part of an ongoing investigation into conversational exchange and storytelling structured through rules and formal constraint. The work shares a concern with the creation of graphic scores and notation through archiving and live performance.

KEYWORDS Birdwatching | Chalkboards | Bird Flu | Dialogue | Durational Performance | Live Work | Storytelling | Formal Constraint | Graphic Scores | Notation | The Archive | Landscape | Post Human



