



ELEPHANT

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Photography Is.....

Text by Robert Shore

Generally you expect art fairs to be mixed-media affairs. A bit of painting, a bit of sculpture, a bit of photography, a bit of—sigh, all right, if you really must, but please mop the floor when you’ve finished—performance: the variety keeps things interesting. In the case of Photo London, however, you could say that the lack of variety is what makes it interesting. It’s about photography and nothing else. Exclusivity of medium is its USP.

And yet, and yet... If you look at the public programme for this year’s edition, currently running at Somerset House, you’ll realize that the definition of photography has been expanded to the point where it now incorporates pretty much every other medium. Photography is video; photography is sculpture; you name it, it is photography and photography is it.

Equally installation-y in feel, if in a rather more olde-worlde fashion, is the work of Prof. Phil Shaw. Displayed in the Rebecca Hossack gallery booth (S5), Prof. Shaw’s witty “bookshelf” prints interrogate the changing place of the printed word in the digital (and, if you like, post-truth) world. Colour-coded to suggest lines on the underground network or to hint at the outline of the British Isles, they also make you feel as though you’ve stepped into a hospitably furnished, book-lined room. Which is one of the nicer tricks photography can play on you.



Right: Phil Shaw *Shelf Help* (2017)

Left: Phil Shaw *Shelf Help* (detail)