

Warning / Fools Gold.

These interventions were a response to the madness of the proposal for fracking of oil shales in Somerset. The intervention took place on the North Somerset coast at the site of and an earlier failed attempt at producing oil from oil shales that ended in financial collapse in the early twentieth century. In 2014, the new extraction plans were in the same area.

“In 1916 it was discovered that the shale beds of the North Somerset coast were rich in oil. In 1924 Dr Forbes-Leslie founded the Shaline Company to exploit them. This retort house is thought to be the first structure erected here for the conversion of shale to oil but the company was unable to raise sufficient capital and this is now all that remains of the anticipated Somerset oil boom. Listed primarily for historical interest.” (Country Life October 26, 1967)

This is the context of both interventions on display that create a dialogue with each other. This work is part of the Functional Collaborative Futures collective out of a collaboration between Seila Fernández Arconada and Bernard Fairhurst.

Warning (2014)

Engraving on wood. Site-specific installation in old oil retort on the coast of Kilve (Southwest of the UK).

The intervention consisted on replacing a warning sign next to the retort with the created sign using the proverb: *‘Humans are the only animal who trips over the same rock twice’*. This saying represents how human actions do not learn from history, committing same mistakes over and over again.

Fools Gold (2014)

Fools gold; a contemporary fable and cautionary tale for the 21st century. Gold leaf + pebbles of oil shale from the Sinemurian and Hatttangian beds of Blue Lias, of the early Jurassic (195 - 205 million years ago), installed at Kilve Beech, Somerset, UK.

“All that glitters is not gold; Often have you heard that told: Many a man his life has sold But my outside to behold: Gilded tombs do worms enfold Had you been as wise as bold, Your in limbs, in judgment old, Your answer had not been in’scroll’d Fare you well: your suit is cold.’ Cold, indeed, and labour lost: Then, farewell, heat and welcome, frost!”
William Shakespear - The Merchant of Venice