



# Rachel Maclean

I'm Terribly Sorry, 2018  
Single-user VR experience  
Duration: 6 mins approx.

Newcastle University REF 2021

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# I'M TERRIBLY SORRY (300-word statement)

I'm Terribly Sorry is a digital virtual-reality video created by multimedia artist Rachel Maclean. The video was commissioned by Zabludowicz Collection in partnership with Arsenal Contemporary, and produced by the artist in collaboration with Werkflow.

I'm Terribly Sorry is an interactive virtual-reality video, which the audience experiences through VR headsets.

In working with virtual reality, Maclean was keen to explore the experiential nature of the medium and how the audience can participate in the artwork, and play a role in the narrative.

The video places the viewer into an apocalyptic world familiar from movies and video games, one drenched in Brexit-era social tension where mistrust and misunderstanding are rife. Within this dystopian British urban landscape, filled with oversized Union Jack-emblazoned tourist merchandise such as Big Ben keyrings and London bus teapots, several characters approach the user, each of whom has a large smartphone for a head. These characters – stereotypes of privileged city dwellers – are played by the artist and voiced by actors. Initially benign and apologetic, they tell convoluted stories and attempt to elicit money, with their protestations soon becoming more sinister.

In developing I'm Terribly Sorry Maclean investigated how the audience could become active participants in the story; exploring the relationship between virtual-reality artworks and popular video games.

I'm Terribly Sorry was first exhibited at the Zabludowicz Collection in London from 20 September to 16 December 2018, and subsequently toured to seven other venues around the world between 2018 and 2020.

# VIDEO OUTLINE

See below for a video that addresses the research context of the project and the methodology and process behind it.



*Note: A written transcription of this video is provided on page 13*



# OUTPUT AND VIEWING COPY (VR-CAPTURE)



*I'm Terribly Sorry, 2018*  
Single-user VR experience  
Duration: 6 mins approx

The output was originally commissioned by Zabludowicz Collection and was made in collaboration with Workflow. It was disseminated via a solo exhibition at the Zabludowicz Collection in London in 2018, and subsequently via a series of exhibitions around the world in 2018, 2019 and 2020. Details of the dissemination and impact of the project are covered in the information provided below.

*Note: The work is intended to be experienced through a VR headset, this is a video capture to give an impression. Duration: 5 mins*

















Above is documentation of 'I'm Terribly Sorry' installed at Zabludowicz Collection, London, England, 2018. The viewer was asked to stand on a circular Union Flag rug when using the VR.



# EXHIBITION LIST

- 2020 [Rachel Maclean: I'm Terribly Sorry](#), Casino Luxembourg, Luxembourg
- 2020 [Rachel Maclean: Solo Exhibition](#), Kunsthalle zu Kiel, Germany
- 2019 [Rachel Maclean: Solo Exhibition](#), Arsenal Contemporary, New York, USA
- 2019 [Rachel Maclean: Tales of Disunion](#), Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden, Germany
- 2019 XR Festival, British Council, Madrid, Spain
- 2019 [UnRealities: VR Experiential](#), Glasgow Short Film Festival, UWS Immersive and ISO Design
- 2018 [Rachel Maclean: Solo Exhibition](#), KWM Artcenter, Beijing, China
- 2018 [Rachel Maclean: Solo Exhibition](#), Zabłudowicz Collection, London, England

'I'm Terribly Sorry' was originally commissioned by Zabłudowicz Collection and was made in collaboration with Workflow.

# PRESS AND PUBLIC RESPONSE

“It’s a witty, grotesque portrait of ‘Brexit Britain’, a post-apocalyptic landscape of building-sized Big Ben keyrings and giant teapots... Stylistically and politically, Maclean’s time has come.”

– *Griselda Murray Brown, Financial Times*

[Rachel Maclean, Satire for the age of Snapchat](#)

“[Rachel Maclean] presents an elaborate and engrossing imagined world, populated by characters both enticing and grotesque... exploring the dark underpinnings of our contemporary politics and culture through satire, humor and horror.”

– *Christina Ruiz, The Art Newspaper*

[Rachel Maclean: Brexit wrapped up in cotton candy](#)

“A sardonic post-apocalyptic nightmare of post-Brexit London”

– *Ben Luke, Evening Standard*

[The show must go on: How Brexit is dominating the British arts world](#)

“Maclean’s artwork is terrifying and profoundly chilling – as much as its computer-simulated graphics are deliberately surreal, it holds on to the horror of the violence, rather than try to glamorise or romanticise it. The VR experience is about Brexit: when I saw it, I took it as a metaphor about the divisions opening up in British society.”

– *Edwin Coomasaru, The Irish Times*

[Could Brexit spark an English civil war?](#)