

un.

ISSUE 3.1
JUNE 2009
FREE



PROGRAM

13 June – 12 July

Cryptophilistinism

Stuart Bailey, James Dodd, Sarah Goffman,
Scott Morrison, Justin Trendall
Curator: Amita Kirpalani
Presented in association with Gertrude
Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne

18 July – 9 August

Some Text Missing

Adrienne Kneebone, Callan Morgan,
Cath Robinson, Fiona Lee, Lora Patterson
Curator: Sarah Jones, 2009 CAST Curatorial
Mentorship recipient

15 August – 6 September

3 into 1

Jacob Leary, Tom O'Hern, Rebecca Stevens

12 September – 4 October

About Photography II

Gottfried Jäger, David Martin, Salvatore Panatteri,
Emidio Puglielli, Patricia Todarello

17 October – 8 November

1200cc Mary

The Holy Trinity: Alicia King, Mish Meijers, Tricky Walsh



Image: The Holy Trinity

Situated at 27 Tasma Street, North Hobart, CAST's custom built gallery presents approximately 10 exhibitions per year, with an emphasis on curated group shows. Our exhibition program is dedicated to supporting experimental and critically engaged contemporary art practice from Tasmania, Australia and beyond, with the over-arching goal of stimulating cultural debate, promoting understanding of contemporary art practice and reaching broad cross-sections of the community.

www.castgallery.org



CAST: 27 Tasma Street, North Hobart, Tasmania 7000 Tel: 03 6233 2681 Email: info@castgallery.org Gallery hours: Wed - Sun 12 - 5

un.

un Magazine 3.2 call for proposals

un Magazine – Melbourne's leading independent magazine for writing on contemporary visual art. un Magazine fosters and offers opportunities to promote independent and critical thinking regarding contemporary art in all media. Focused on artists, writers, artist run and independent projects and contemporary art communities, un Magazine is an important platform for the dialogue of ideas extending from the local into national and international contexts.

Guidelines and Application Form available from unmagazine.org

Deadline for proposals: 24 July 2009

www.unmagazine.org

ad.

Un Magazine 3.2 Advertising

Publishing bi-annually, un Magazine is distributed in print via major contemporary art spaces and key artist-run initiatives throughout Australia. The website provides further access and distribution through a downloadable PDF of each issue in which all advertisements are included.

Prices start from as little as \$250 for a half page. For advertising enquiries and bookings contact:

adverts@unmagazine.org

WELCOME TO HELL GO TO
 HELL SEE YOU IN HELL DRIVE
 LIKE HELL A COLD DAY IN HELL
 A SHIT SHOW IN HELL THROUGH
 HELL SWEETER THAN HELL GOING
 HELL HURTS LIKE HELL LAUGH
 LIKE HELL SMELL YOU IN HELL
 HOW THE HELL HOTTER THAN
 HELL DUMBER THAN HELL
 FUNNY AS HELL HELL YEAR
 HELL GALLERY JESS AND JORDY
 SA RAILWAY PLACE RICHMOND
 BEHIND GOLES ON SWAN ST OPEN
 SATURDAYS ONLY OR BY APPOINTMENT
 0431974578 WWW.hellgallery.blogspot.com

UN MAGAZINE 3.1

EDITOR
Zara Stanhope

SUB-EDITOR
Jared Davis

PROJECT MANAGER
Angela Brophy

MAGAZINE COORDINATOR
Kelly Fliedner

DESIGN
Samuel Moffat and Warren Taylor

PRINTING
BPA Print Group

PAPER
Envirocare, Xplore, Tablex Freckles
K.W. Doggett Fine Paper

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
Andrea Bell, Angela Brophy, Jared
Davis, Amelia Douglas, Brad Haylock,
Phip Murray and Zara Stanhope

MENTORS
Ulanda Blair, Rosemary Forde, Andrew
Frost, Din Heagney, Jeff Khan, Melissa
Keys, Phip Murray and Marcus Westbury

BOARD
Martin Foley (Treasurer), Bill Gillies,
Anthony Gardner, Din Heagney, Jeff
Khan, Phip Murray and Zara Stanhope
(Chair), Lily Hibberd (in absentia)

DISTRIBUTION
Download from www.unmagazine.org
Check website for other locations.

Available at:

Melbourne
The Narrows, Conical, West Space,
Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces,
Hell Gallery, Centre for
Contemporary Photography

Sydney
Artspace, ICAN, MOP Projects

Adelaide
Experimental Art Foundation

Hobart
Contemporary Art Services Tasmania,
Inflight

Brisbane
Institute of Modern Art

Perth
Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts

Canberra
Canberra Contemporary Art Space

Darwin
24hrArt

Bendigo
Allan's Walk Artist Run Space

un Magazine is grateful to Arts Victoria and the Australia Council for the Arts, to Platform Artists Group Inc for providing temporary accommodation during the production of this issue; The Builder's Arms and Rod Cooper, Snawklor and Pissypaw for hosting and performing at the magazine launch; Catherine Doggett from K.W. Doggett Fine Paper for paper; and BPA Print Group for printing. A big special thank you to Warren and Sam for their interest in the magazine and bringing to it their exceptional design flair.

Zara and Jared extend a special thanks to all the writers and artists who contributed their ideas, work and time to this issue; to Ange Brophy for her managerial dedication; the Editorial Committee for their discerning judgment and to the mentors for generously assisting selected writers. Zara also personally acknowledges the professionalism and commitment Jared Davis brought to the magazine in his role as Sub-Editor.

UN MAGAZINE 3.1
ISSN 1449-6747

Published by un Projects Inc.

un Projects
PO Box 1611, Collingwood, VIC 3066
contact@unmagazine.org

WWW.UNMAGAZINE.ORG

PENELOPE AITKEN
JESSIE ANGIN
JEREMY BAKKER
BECKY BOLTON
LOUISE CHAPPELL
ROSS J COULTER
RYSZARD DABEK
DALE GORFINKEL
HELEN GROGAN
HAO GUO
ROSALIND HALL
DOUG HESLOP
SOPHIA HEWSON
ANDY HUTSON
BRETT JONES
DONG WOO KANG
JAMES KENYON

MELISSA LAING
ALAN LAMB
ALI McCANN
SIMON McGLINN
SHERRY McLAINE ALEJOS
CHARLES O'LOUGHLIN
SAFARI TEAM
PHILIP SAMARTZIS
SANGEEETA SANDRASEGAR
MATTHEW SHANNON
TAI SNAITH
HANNA TAI
THE WIRED LAB
IEUAN WEINMAN
NICKI WYNNYCHUK

+ MORE

WEST SPACE

2009

1st FLOOR
15-19 ANTHONY ST
MELBOURNE

+61 3 9328 8712

info@westspace.org.au
www.westspace.org.au

WED-FRI 12-6pm
SAT 12-5pm

© Copyright 2009 un Magazine and the authors, artists, designers, photographers and other contributors. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission from the editor and publisher.

The opinions expressed in un Magazine are those of the contributing authors and not necessarily those of the editors or publisher. Every attempt has been made to contact the copyright holders for material quoted in this publication. Any person or organisation that may have been overlooked or misattributed may contact the publisher.

ARTS
VICTORIA

Victoria
The Place to Be

Australian Government

Australia Council
of the Arts

ACCOMMODATING SPACES, MATERIALS, PROJECTS, PEOPLE, VIDEOS, ACTIONS, OBJECTS, THOUGHTS: RELATIVELY



THE NARROWS PUBLICATION 01
BIANCA HESTER

Selected projects (2002-2009)
Texts by Terri Bird, Adrian Parr
Caterina Riva & Bianca Hester
Edition of 400, 108 pages
ISBN 978 0 9805877 6 0
\$45 RRP

Available from:
The Narrows
2/141 Flinders Lane
Melbourne AUS 3000
Tel+ 61 3 9654 1534
www.thenarrows.org



EDITOR'S NOTE

CONTENTS

- 06 With Feeling
Chantal Faust
- 10 Fail More, Fail Better
Amita Kirpalani
- 12 Art as Public Forum: The Art of Blogging
Laura Hindmarsh
- 16 Looking for Art in West Brunswick
Brad Haylock
- 20 Rothko Morley Vowels x 7
Alex Selenitsch
- 24 Site-Specificity
From Permanence to Presence:
The Rise in Performative and Temporal
Strategies within the Gallery in the Global Era.
dimple...
- 30 Accidental Meanings in the Alleyway of Chance:
Musical Performance Art Now
Anna Daly
- 34 The End is The Future: Artist Run Initiatives
and The Global Financial Crisis
Emma Morgan
- 38 Shifting Ground: The development of visual
and cross arts in Central Victoria
Kate Stones
- 42 Centrepiece
Alex Martinis Roe
- 44 Anarchists In The Academy
- 50 What we have here is a failure to communicate:
Aesthetics and Geoff Robinson's *North*. At
*The Junction Of Inwood Hill Park New York And
Jökulsárlón Southeast Iceland, February-May 2008*
Michael Pulsford
- 52 A Talk With Jim Denley:
Improvisation, Ethics and Place
Ben Byrne
- 56 The Thought is Made in the Mouth
Amelia Groom
- 61 Reviews

Cover, centrepiece and special edition project
Alex Martinis Roe

Insert
Matthew Shannon

How are art, sound and performance affecting our visual sensibilities? What ideas and affects are being generated by contemporary art? How might art be written about, or written with? How can text and print foster critical discourse? What might current conditions mean for individual or collective practice, in all its forms?

We welcome our readers to *un Magazine* issue 3.1, and to the thoughts of our many writers who, in their individual ways, allow the reader to address these and other questions of the moment in their engagements with new art, sound and text. The fresh format of this edition signals other innovations, foremost of which is the appointment of Jared Davis as Sub-Editor for the two editions of the Magazine in 2009. This role, and the addition of an expanded Editorial Committee and group of mentors, has enabled a greater breadth of content and range of contributions while also furthering the mentoring philosophy of *un Projects*.

Within this edition are writers who bring their experience of, and reflections on, varied art practices, as well as a sampling of national and international artists' writings selected by invited practitioners as a favourite text or one of significant personal import. Thanks are extended to all the many individuals who have supported 3.1 in various ways, to the issue's fabulous designers Warren Taylor and Sam Moffat, and to key supporters The Australia Council for the Arts and Arts Victoria for enabling this edition of *un Magazine*.

Zara Stanhope
Editor

un Magazine issue 3.1 has seen the journal develop its role in the support of critical discussion, not only by providing a forum for writers to engage in a conversation regarding contemporary art and thought, but in an expansion of the scope in which this exchange could manifest. With *un Magazine* 3.1 a dialogue potentially exists in the spaces from reflective writing to artistic practice (as in the respective page works by Alex Martinis Roe, Alex Selenitsch and Matthew Shannon), or in print form or as an ephemeral performative moment (such as in Alex Martinis Roe's *un Magazine* artist edition, where copies of 3.1 are modified in performance). In addition, criticism and artistic performance merge and share one space of dialogue, as occurs in Chantal Faust's critical text as performance. Through the instigation of the *un Magazine* blog, we hope that the critical engagements seeded by this edition will continue as an ongoing exchange of text and ideas online.

The primary concern of *un Projects* is for the further development of critical thought; as *un Magazine* continues to shed its skin as a print journal, we anticipate that what remains and flourishes are *ideas*.

Jared Davis
Sub-Editor

ARTISTS' TEXTS

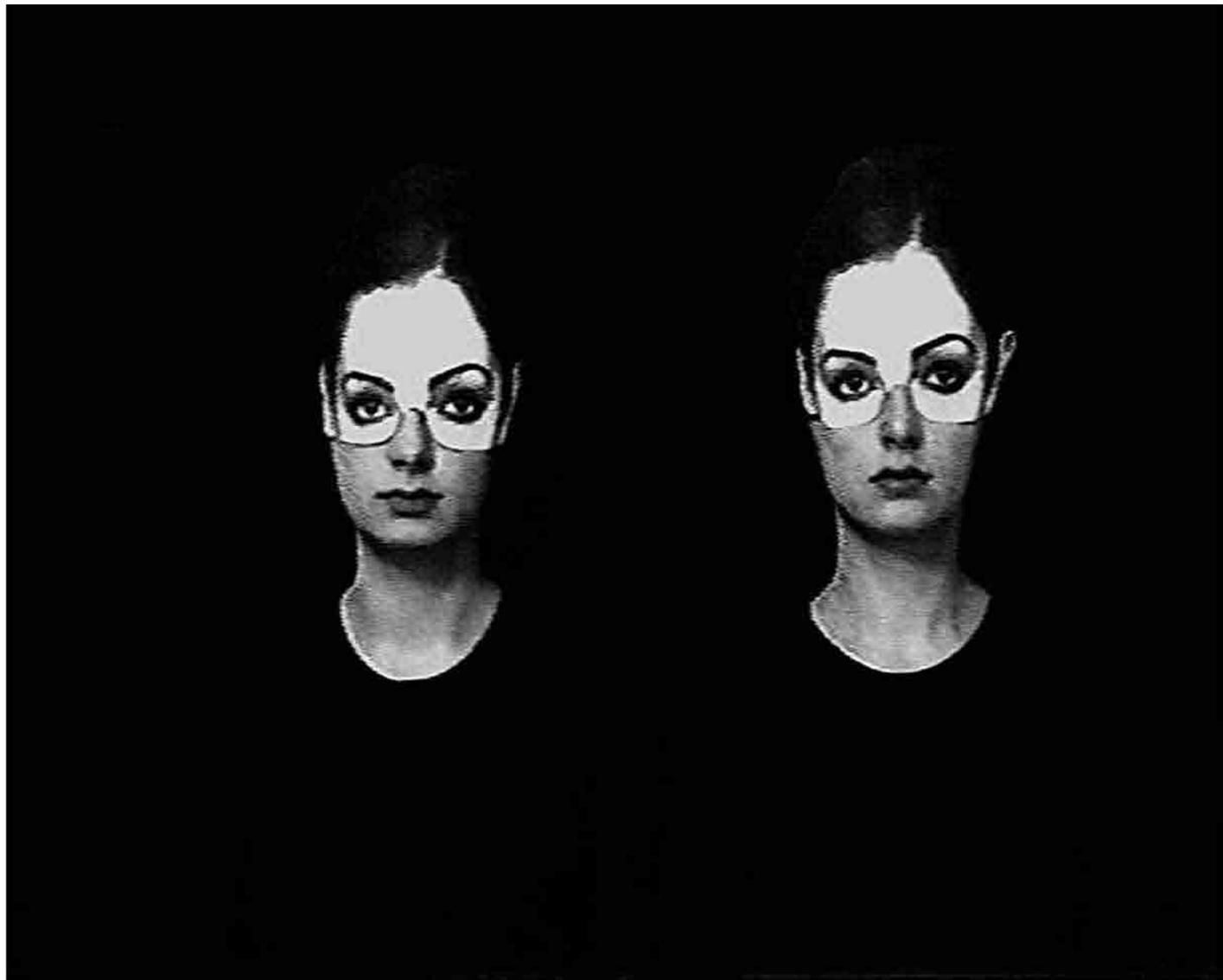
For this edition, eleven artists were invited to nominate texts written by other artists from any time or location that have proven influential or important to the selector in their own practice: 'a quote, a work of 'art as text' or an excerpt of writing by another artist that has served as an inspiration to your thinking and creative practice.' These texts can be found throughout the magazine as grey pages.

The idea was proposed as a means to expand awareness of artists as writers, as well as the potential of writing to offer insights into relationships between ideas, texts and practices.

WITH FEELING

TEXT: CHANTAL FAUST

GABRIELLA MANGANO AND SILVANA MANGANO
DRAWING 2 2001
STILL FROM VIDEO
DURATION 1:53:01
COURTESY THE ARTISTS
AND ANNA SCHWARTZ GALLERY, MELBOURNE



This is a written response to an exhibition I haven't seen, because it hasn't happened yet: the show will open in a fortnight from the time of this writing. My now. In your now, *Once More with Feeling* may be in its final week and you may have already seen it, or maybe it's over and you missed out. What won't change is that the exhibition, curated by Meredith Turnbull at the VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, includes the work of nine local artists who use performance, video and their own bodies in their respective practices. What is particularly interesting about this project is its focus on the mutually parasitic relationship between contemporary performance art and the document. In recognition of the influence of 1960s and 1970s performance art, as experienced through the mediation of surviving video and photography, each artist in *Once More with Feeling* was asked to include a previous project alongside their new work to act as a kind of 'living archive' within the exhibition.

Here and now, the exhibition that has been, is yet to begin. This then, is a document of a show destined to become a document of documentation. In this sense, I would argue that an archive, whether static or growing before our very eyes, is always living. It is the living dead. Alive or dead, an artist can never be an archive or a document. In the same vein, performance art is not born through an opening but at an opening, and is thereafter dependant on the document for its life-support. It is a stillborn immortal.

Whether or not you saw the live performances in this exhibition does not affect their status: in their subsequent documentation they will remain works of performance art. Live or re-lived, if we are watching, we will be their audience. Seen or unseen, the document is ensured its position as performance art. It has been debated elsewhere that all cultural products have, in some way, been mediated and that 'being there' at a live performance is no different from viewing its documentation, in regard to the notion of attaining some kind of elusive 'truth' of the act.¹ Being present at an initial staging may make us feel included and part of a club, especially in the case of interactive performances, but it doesn't really have much of an influence on what the work is about. In addition to this, time itself makes

it impossible to rue the loss of the actual in the foggy screen of memory. Everything has been, has been, has been. The document will perform itself to us upon each and every subsequent viewing. The document is performance.

This writing, as a document, is a performance of a document that is (for now) an unperformed performance. *Once More with Feeling* is to be a document of this performance. It could be understood as a derisive statement, considering the implication of the title. 'Once more with feeling' is a command that demands repetition, a critical pronouncement implying that what came before was not good enough, not quite up to scratch. Who decreed this? Meredith? The artists? Me?

Feeling is of course, suggestive of touch. *Once More with Feeling* could also be inferring that the contemporary staging of performance art already influenced by preceding performance art known only through documentation is a plea for intimacy via repetition. A little like stem cell cloning, or going to see BABBA at the local RSL. Alternatively, it could be a commentary on the recurrent nature of the artistic process itself. Whatever the case, this is a dangerous bargain, for in creating the potential for a new space with more feeling, we are also simultaneously acknowledging the potential for spaces containing less feeling.

It was better last time, wasn't it?

This predicament is reminiscent of that moment in Polanski's film *The Tenant* (1976) when Trelkovsky drags himself, bloody and broken-legged, up the stairs so that he can throw himself out of the apartment window for the second time. It is of course the third jump, for he is imitating the plight of the previous suicidal tenant Simone Choule—who, in his psychosis Trelkovsky believes he is being coerced to mimic. It is agonising to watch the pathetic body that won't die, that falls short even in attempted suicide. It is Roman Polanski, the film's director and screenplay co-writer in drag, performing the double leap. The Polanski that wouldn't die ends his film in a mummified wrap of bandages, and as he gurgles his final scream, his eyes madly turn to stare directly into the camera, as if to imply that we will be the next to jump. What

we see is a performer dressing up to look like another performer who performed an attempt at suicide, performing an attempt at suicide. Twice. We also have a suggestion that the viewer, far from being a passive consumer, is infected with the potential of performing the next document. In the words of Bill Heslop from *Muriel's Wedding*: you can't stop progress.

The most famous suicidal leap never to touch the ground in the history of performance art is of course Yves Klein's *Leap into the Void* (1960). That the photograph has been doctored is not only inconsequential to the artist's expression, it is essential to it. What matters here is the unhindered frozen jump: the performing document. In his image, Klein will forever be leaping in the same way that *Once More with Feeling* will here forever be anticipated. On Thursday 23 April 2009, I will be attending the opening of the exhibition and will view the performances live, recorded and archived. The live performances will be dead on arrival but their documents will live on to perform once more, and this writing will exist as a performance of their ultrasound. With hindsight, we can never return to this time before, where the performances are still preformed. Any recollection, including this text, will be haunted because each successive document becomes a precedent that ghosts its meaning. The living dead archive is a vampire. 'Once more with feeling' is its bite.

Chantal Faust is an artist and lecturer in Critical and Theoretical Studies at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne.

Once More with Feeling
VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery
24 April–23 May 2009

Curator: Meredith Turnbull

Artists: Timothy Kendall Edser, Veronica Kent and Sean Peoples (The Telepathy Project), Bridie Lunney, Sarah Lynch, Gabriella Mangano and Silvana Mangano, Alex Martinis Roe and David Simpkin.

1. See: Amelia Jones, "'Presence' in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation', *Art Journal*, vol. 56, no. 4, College Art Association, New York, 1997, pp. 11–18.

MASATO TAKASAKA

From: Masato Takasaka <[REDACTED]>
Date: Mon, Apr 6, 2009 at 11:57 AM
Subject: FW: Text for Unmagazine
To: jared davis <[REDACTED]>

Hi Jared,

here is the 'artist selecting an artist text written by another artist' for you for Un magazine, (forwarded text below!) also attached is a copy of the text/ poster as it originally appears in PDF format

the text is by Lisa Radford, who wrote something for my exhibition 'Structural Jam' at the Narrows in 2007. The text is over the word limit..but I think it will make more sense if it is re-printed in full? what do you think...anyway here is a bit of background info to the text:

I have known Lisa for about 10 years, we went through art school together back in the late 90's at VCA..I have a painting of hers from art school of Dawson's Creek (remember that tv show) keeping me company in the studio...I remember what Lisa had wrote for Blair's show 'Thanks Mum, Paintings by Anne Kearney' at Uplands when it was in China Town, it was really unlike any essay I had read before :really raw and personal, spoken from the heart no post-s#s%^ structural / deconstructionist references to theory anywhere! (the irony now is I am reading writing this stuff for my thesis) anyway ..when I asked Lisa to write for my show at The Narrows a couple of years ago..she sent me this email..not intended for publication ..but I liked it so much!...which pretty much ended up as what you see on the poster for the show... It worked out really well in the end..the informal nature of the email..I guess it has influenced my reading of my own art practice in addition to being influential in the texts I've been asked to write so far for other artists..

.I think it would be good to have the text as in the pdf of the poster printed as is? kind of like a readymade essay, also Warren thought that was a good idea too.

Please print this in this format for the feature...I think it would be great to have another email as the format?

The form is the structure of the form?

anyways let me know what you think...

best Masato

also if you need a contributor bio line here it is:...

Masato Takasaka is an artist who currently is undertaking a Master of Fine Art (by research) at the Faculty of Art and Design, Monash University, teaches history/theory in Interior Design at the School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University and recently completed a catalogue essay for Arlo Mountford : The Hacienda must be Built, The Art Center, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok.

best Masato

Masato Takasaka
creative director

STUDIO MASATOTECTURES
progressive masatotecture + design
masterplanning the universe

MASATO TAKASAKA

From: Lisa Radford <[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]> >
Subject: What's the difference to you.
Date: Sat, 24 Feb 2007 17:14:50 +1100
To: Masato Takasaka <[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]> >

Hi Masato,

At the moment I'm thinking about the difference between Steve Vai and John Fahey... What's the difference to you?

In the Tim Bavington essay you were reading, by Dave Hickey, he writes about the difference between a rock palette and a folk palette. I think you've got rock colours, but with a folk - hand touch...

I saw Robert Hunter's exhibition today and thought about the time I met him when I was working at the Adelphi. He left his card behind the bar and I ran after him to return it. I asked him to write on a piece of paper saying... Dear Lane, White is better than red, Love Robert... (Remember when Lane used to use a lot of red in his work...) Robert looked at me in a perplexed way and said...But I like red too.

And then there's that Record Cover Show curated by John Nixon... it's like the in-between of his EPW and a folk-tale or cultural history of sorts... if you think about it, the collection of pottery at Tarra Warra, the record covers and his work are the same, made by the same people, who wanted to make something, because they felt like it, because they could.

I think your drawings are like ad-hoc market stalls and street sellers... Regardless of how much order is imposed by architecture, humans always seem to subvert it and make use of it how they want... Maybe that's why you could never figure out the maths to make those buildings. Maybe you're too human?

Your drawings aren't imposing, nor are they grandiose or attempting to pass on some profound knowledge to the world. They're Texta Domestic - little meanderings through time and life.

Sometimes I imagine you as a teenage boy in his room - trying to emulate Steve Vai and making posters for the music. I looked up his website and an image of his Ibanez JEM 2KDNA came up. It was uncanny, the similarity between the design on the guitar and your drawings - except Vai put some of his DNA in the paint...which is funny because it reminds me of conservators who have to try and prove that a painting is a Rembrandt. In 200 years what will Steve Vai's DNA prove? That he sold 300 really expensive guitars?

Micheal Hanake is a filmmaker I really like. He makes these beautifully aesthetic films - perfect photography, drawn out social narratives... But they are incredibly human because of their sentiment... Their ability to question the structures of social orders and the logic of film making... I guess it's like the guitar stuff - classical structures subverted by excessive electric guitar...

Maybe your drawings question the logic of picture making. They are like the folk version of Miami Vice, the TV show, not the movie. You might listen to Malmsteen and Vai, but your drawings are more Sonic Youth...Same indulgent guitar noise, but less like a sound track to a soapie.

On that Steve Vai CD someone yells out between the songs - 'Shut up! We know you can play!' That's kinda funny.

Remember when you got me to buy a T-shirt for the Sonic Youth gig you didn't go to. So you looked like you went, so you looked like a fan. Your drawings look like you're a fan of modernism, but maybe not a die-hard fan, more like you've got other things on your mind - a fan that wants to know what happens when it's not quite right.

Lisa x

FAIL MORE, FAIL BETTER

TEXT: AMITA KIRPALANI / IMAGE: PAUL PHILIPSON

I can't remember the exact details but the story goes that in the early 1970s, in a crowded pub in Port Melbourne, Lane Cormick's uncle got talking—and drinking—with a young, aspiring politician. After the man slurred his allegiance to working class values, Cormick's uncle declared that his drinking partner was destined to be the nation's leader. The man, equal parts academic and booze-hound, was Bob Hawke, who went on to become Australia's third longest serving Prime Minister.

Today, Hawke's legacy is found in his emotional and stirring speeches, and such fables about how a drunk can become Prime Minister. In addition, the narrative of Hawke's political successes unearths a raft of clichéd working class Australian male archetypes. In them Hawke represents both the stoic and the gambler, the outlaw and the hero, amongst others.

Lane Cormick's performance practice draws on and challenges the gamut of archetypal male behaviours, showing his audience that identities are not fixed and in fact, once tested, can very easily become unhinged. The great Aussie battler, the underdog and the aspirational middle classes are sites of critical investigation in Cormick's work. He challenges the entrenchment of classism in Australia, offering an escape route that reeks of the easy money dreams of the petty thief. Cormick observes his social position from the outside looking in, critiquing it whilst also paradoxically enacting its very essence.

In his 2003 video work entitled *Mahgninnuc Antoinette Cunningham*, Cormick, dressed in a full dinner suit, methodically attempts to build a tower of Antoinette champagne glasses. The stack grows and eventually collapses under its own weight, by which time Cormick has undressed to a singlet and is shaking up the champagne in defiant celebration. In this one transgressive act Cormick transforms from refined snob to reckless slob, and flips from affected emulation of classist signifiers to satirical irreverence.

In Cormick's work there is also a sense of the Gambler's Fallacy, that is, the mistaken belief that the odds for something with a fixed probability increase or decrease depending upon its recent occurrences. So if you flip a coin several times and 'heads' is the most

frequent outcome, then the gambler's fallacy is the expectation that 'tails' are 'due'. With regards to Cormick's practice, the gambler's fallacy operates as a metaphor—for the false hope that tenacity and endurance will produce results. It is through the laboured act of methodically stacking champagne glasses that Cormick satirises his own attention to craft and skill acquisition in order to expose the desire that he may, by osmosis, acquire the kudos, status and wealth implied by his good fortune with gravity.

This reference to gambling is certainly not an isolated occurrence in Cormick's work. In fact, the concepts of risk, the odds of the gamble and the character of the gambler lie at the guts of many of his performances. Gambling offers the possibility of making it big and escaping from (class) struggle: opting for an easy route from aspirational to flush. Cormick also draws on gambling's phoney professionalism; the poker-faced performer, the pressure of high stakes, the dress code, or the 'front' or bravado adopted even when confronted with a loss. Wagering on the uncertain outcomes, Cormick's performances are also embedded with an uneasy sense of the unexpected and indeterminate.

In *Cook Mustard Beale Swan* (2007) at Neon Parc gallery, Cormick's less than specific instructions to the horde of balaclava-ed blokes employed for his performance resulted in a frenzy of masculine *jouissance*. Beer cans were hurled from the second floor gallery window at the opening goes below, and some members of his troupe urinated out the window whilst others unfurled two banners down the sides of the building. As a discussion about masculine stereotypes, where the audience was literally locked out of the (commercial) gallery space, the work proved a disappointing reality; that with concealed identities, boys (placed in the position of exhibitionists), with little instruction (other than psyching each other up), will inevitably mark their territory.

Cormick's most recent performance work at Hell Gallery, *Unearthing the Hawke* (2008) continued to explore similar themes. Beginning with the artist spray painting the gallery wall with the text 'Union of Bad Luck', *Unearthing the Hawke* culminated with Cormick being doused with several litres of his own urine and red wine, whilst reading from speeches made by Bob Hawke. With Cormick

cast in Hawke's role of performer, orator and storyteller, he embodied the political skill of giving nothing of the self, but charismatically holding the attention of a crowd. Chekhov's 1886 short story, *The Orator*, captures many features of Cormick's performance: 'His words flow smoothly and evenly, like water out of a pipe, and in abundance ... He always speaks eloquently and at great length, so much so that on some occasions ... they have to resort to assistance from the police to stop him ...' and later the orator 'continued while his listeners began whispering together. His speech pleased everyone and drew some tears, but a good many things in it seemed strange.'¹

Cormick's relentless delivery in this performance also ultimately failed to rouse his crowd. For spectators, the sensation of strangeness evoked by the work was a consequence of feeling alienated and somehow locked-out despite anticipation and interest in the spectacle. Cormick recruits his audience in order to disconnect and exclude them. The audience is implicated but ineffectual, and participation is prohibited. In this way, Cormick's performances succeed at failing and prove the phallacy of the gambler's fallacy.

Failure is a necessary feature of Cormick's practice, just as it is inherent in gambling. The obligatory collapse of each of Cormick's performances can be seen, in part, as a protest against the wager on the possibility of enacting the role of the professional artist (phoney professionalism being another possible reading of the 'union of bad luck') and, in part, reaction against the audience and their expectations. Employing a similar strategy to that of 1970s feminist performance artists, Cormick engages the audience in the objectification of the performer, only to vilify them for it. This is Cormick's sleight of hand, he feels for the parameters of his own codes and contorts them into situations made deeply uncomfortable. It is through the corruption of these moments that Cormick completes his failure, defeating the viewer's trust, revealing the hopeless superstitiousness of the gambler, and the futility of any attempts to contain or classify our innately unruly mob.

Amita Kirpalani is a writer and curator.

1. Anton Chekhov, *The Schoolmaster and Other Stories*, (1886) BiblioBazaar, 2008, p. 166.

LANE CORMICK
UNEARTHING THE HAWKE 2008
PERFORMANCE
COURTESY THE ARTIST
AND NEON PARC, MELBOURNE



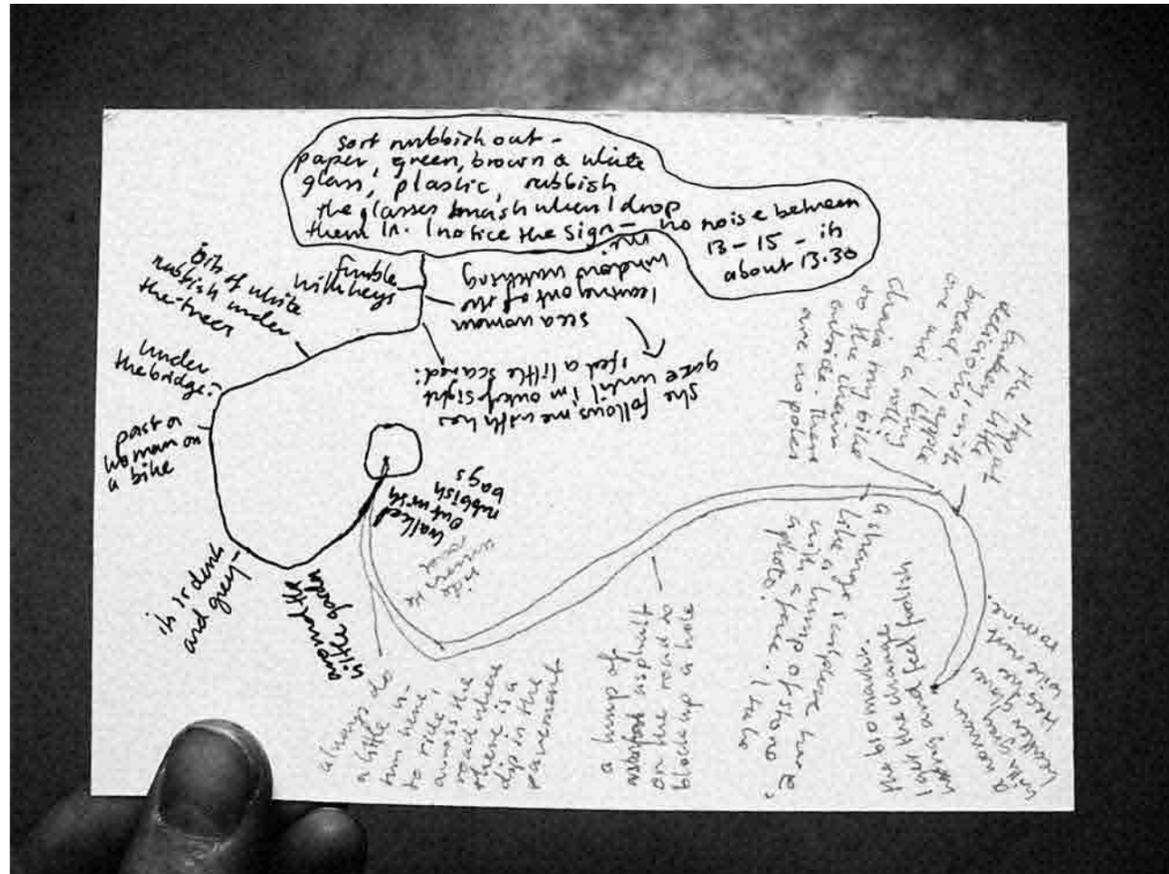
ART AS PUBLIC FORUM: THE ART OF BLOGGING

TEXT: LAURA HINDMARSH



LEFT:
SCREEN CAPTURE FROM
[HTTP://STUDIO-BERLIN.BLOGSPOT.COM/](http://studio-berlin.blogspot.com/)

BELOW:
THEA RECHNER
YESTERDAY (TAKING OUT THE RUBBISH
AND GETTING BREAD) 2008
INK ON POSTCARD
COURTESY THE ARTIST



Globalisation, new network technologies and the dynamically intercultural nature of the contemporary world are transforming the social space we call art. This is perhaps best observed through the phenomenon of the nomadic artist-in-residence, who is producing work that is often furthest from object-related activity and closer to forms of experimentation with communication. Frequently adopting the condition of tourist—an outsider with a time constraint, limited contacts and resources—artists away from home seek new formats of work that will reflect their temporary position, often hoping to simultaneously establish an instant engagement with both a local context and a wider audience. This impulse, whether it is to overcome feelings of isolation, or as a way of interconnecting individual practices with established communities, has increasingly seen itinerant artists turn to the art of blogging. Or is that blogging-as-art?

Melbourne artist Thea Rechner took up the framework of a blog (<http://studio-berlin.blogspot.com/>) during her 2008 Takt Kunstprojektraum residency in Berlin. Functioning as a virtual journal, Rechner's blog offered regularly posted research notes, reviews of exhibitions, comments on her new surroundings and details regarding her ongoing work and its processes. With no obvious start or end, Rechner's blog flowed like an intimate conversation, acting as a stream of consciousness where a reader enters into her private realm without requiring a previous introduction to her practice or her context as an artist-out-of-context. Blogs like Rechner's possess a sense of the utmost immediacy. The public forum of blog publishing can act to motivate the writer to think, communicate and make on the spur, in mind of the ever-present potential audience out there, even for the solitary artist.

Rechner's posts attest to her interest in the experience of duration and the structural employment of temporality. Her research and experiments explore growth, movement and change as perceptible markers of time. In her blog, everyday exercises are poetically recorded. They include observations on plant growth and the formation of condensation, with other refined mappings and drawings. Each dated post forms an accumulated observation, a regular action that in turn enters the process of timekeeping. The nature and method of blogging provides a structure that frames, and becomes integral to, Rechner's research.

While Rechner's blog initially operates alongside her art, blogging can also offer an art medium, a project rather than a process. An example is Lucas Ihlein's blogging work which encourages dialogue and social exchange in the form of correspondence. The communication between Ihlein and his audience becomes the work, or as he defines it, blog-as-art. Ihlein has been working with blogs since their inception, often using the format, like Rechner, as a framework within a residency. In these collaborations, each post is directly affected by Ihlein's contact with the local community, and a reciprocal relationship emerges as commentary is exchanged between author and audience. Blogging offers the artist the possibility to engage and involve a local community rather than merely make detached reflections on their environment.

The idea of participatory dialogue is central to Ihlein's online work, which incorporates a form of authorship aiming to be democratic and egalitarian in providing audiences with a platform to interact with, respond to and participate in the art making process. There is a sense of the avant-garde in intentions to create an active, empowered subject through direct experience of physical or symbolic participation. In this sense, the communal and political nature of a blog can be related to antecedents such as Joseph Beuys' notion of 'Soziale Plastik', in which art acted as a site of participatory process where thought, speech and discussion become core 'materials'. In its reliance on a form of democratic participation, Ihlein's work holds potential to construct a social organism as a work of art.

The blog's capacity to foster new levels of public discussion and interaction includes offering a forum for criticism. Particularly relevant here is the ability of a viewer to comment on an artist's work while remaining anonymous. Ihlein's blog, *Bilateral* (<http://www.lucazoid.com/bilateral/>), explores and investigates a discussion of the open nature of the work blogging allows. The character and conventions of such blogs encourage articulate and intellectual conversation, while being sufficiently informal to avoid intimidating potential users. Blog criticism offers a direct, immediate reaction to work, and hence responses can be subjective and impertinent. Unlike criticism in art journals, here anonymity allows every viewer to take the place of critic, resulting in feedback that is closer to the comments one would make to friends but never publish or pass on to the artist. Although blogs risk the development of brazen and emotive responses, generally any reaction from a viewer is exciting for, and beneficial to, an artist. A forum that encourages public and open discussion about art can only be encouraged.

One advantage of blogs for artists is that they work interstitially, in that they operate within the prevailing system of social relations yet suggest possibilities for alternate exchanges. Readily accessible, these spaces offer opportunities for viewing and exchange distinct from the standard art experience. As 'blog art' is not secreted into a collection for temporary representation in traditional exhibition environments, the work is open to further reflection and discussion on the web, long after the project may have concluded.

Perhaps it is in this interstice of art and exhibition that the blog offers the potential for navigation and negotiation of the compartmentalised and delimited sphere of art in general. *VVORK* (<http://www.vvork.com/>) is an online pseudo-exhibition space. Updated daily, this blog claims to offer a carefully curated collection of contemporary art. Scrolling down the page is not dissimilar to flicking through current art journals, yet, being web-based, it takes the labour out of research, by providing direct links to artists' websites and allowing a forum for critical comment.

Simultaneously private and public, the blog exists in an intermediate social inter-zone. Despite the risk of further isolating and potentially separating artist, audience and work, blog spaces offer a dynamic alternative to contemporary practices of relational art, being unreliant on the institution or formal exhibition space. Blog spaces generate an art that is centred on the social context of human interaction. This expanded approach to art is entirely dependant upon the level of the audience interaction with the art-as-process, and it is idealistic to believe that networked environments create an equally accessible platform for all. If we believe in art as a site that produces a specific sociability, then the non-site of a blog allows a viewer to see and respond without direct physical connection with an art object. Available to act variously as a form of exhibition space, a virtual journal, or an interactive artwork-in-process, the enticement of a blog is self-evident for an artist out-of-place.

Laura Hindmarsh is a Perth-based artist and writer.

HELEN JOHNSON

It's St Petersburg under perestroika, and the company Aufon is bootlegging Western vinyl. Unlike the legit Melodia in Moscow, who published original recordings, Aufon was purely for bypassing the tricky importation laws to supply records to Russian ears. The sound is usually just a marginally poorer version of the original, though occasionally double lps are edited down to a single disk.

The proxy sleeves are not straight copies. Instead, there are imaginative approximations of people like David Bowie in pen and ink or coloured pencil. They look curious more than shabby, and often they are very nicely executed. Just because you have to 'make do' does not mean you have to do so without grace. Take the Glasgow painter Ronnie Heeps and his beautifully made CV dossier for example. In the section relating to his years as a light show and projections artist, there are gaps where he does not have an accompanying image for a particular concert or rave. He makes do with suggestion, a scan of the back of a prog rock lp.

Excerpt from:
'Semi-precious Records' by Lucy McKenzie in *Global Joy*, artist's monograph, published by Daniel Buchholz and Christopher Müller in cooperation with Lucy McKenzie, Revolver, Frankfurt/Main, Germany, 2002, p. 52.

MARCO FUSINATO

"...You are late, children. And it doesn't matter at all if then you weren't born ...Now the journalists of all the world (including those of television) kiss (as I believe one still says in the language of the Universities) your ass. Not me, friends. You have the faces of spoiled children. Good blood doesn't lie. You have the same bad eye. You are scared, uncertain, desperate (very good!) but you also know how to be bullies, blackmailers, and sure of yourselves; petit bourgeois prerogatives, friends. When yesterday at Valle Giulia you fought with policemen, I sympathized with the policemen! Because policemen are children of the poor. They come from the outskirts, be they rustic or urban. As for me, I know very well the way they were as children and youths, the precious dollar, the father still a youth himself, because of the misery, which doesn't give authority. The mother, calloused like a porter, or tender, like a bird, because of some illness; the many brothers; like a hovel among the meadows with the red sage (on the subdivided land of others); the slums overlooking the sewers; or the apartments in the big lower class tenements, etc., etc. And then, look how they dress them: like clowns, with that rough cloth that stinks of rations, the orderly room, and people. Worst of all, naturally, is the psychological state to which they are reduced (for roughly sixty dollars a month); with a smile no longer, with friends in the world no longer, separated, excluded (in an exclusion which is without equal); humiliated by the loss of qualities of men for those of policemen (being hated generates hatred). They are twenty years old, your age, dear boys and girls. We obviously agree against the police as institution. But get mad at the Legal System and you will see! The boy policemen which you, out of the sacred hooliganism [...] of spoiled children, have beaten up, belong to the other social class. At Valle Giulia, yesterday, we have thus had a fragment of class conflict; and you my friends (even though on the side of reason), were the rich, while the policemen (who were in the wrong) were poor. A nice victory, then, yours!..."

Excerpt from:
Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'THE PCI TO THE YOUNG!!', (Translated from Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Empirismo eretico*, Aldo Garzanti Editore, 1972), in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Heretical empiricism*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1988.

GEOFF ROBINSON

[...] a sound environment is the consequence not only of all its sound-producing components, but also of all its sound-transmitting and sound-modifying elements. The birdsong we hear in the forest is as much a consequence of the trees or the forest floor as it is of the bird. If we listen attentively, the topography, the degree of humidity of the air, or the type of materials in the topsoil become as essential and defining of the sound environment as the sound-producing animals that inhabit a certain space.

[...] this environmental perspective [...] encourages a perceptual shift from the recognition and differentiation of sound sources to the appreciation of the resulting sound matter. As soon as the call is in the air, it no longer belongs to the frog that produced it.

Francisco López
Profound Listening and Environmental Sound Matter

Originally published in the liner notes of the CD *La Selva. Sound environments from a Neotropical rain forest* (released in 1998 by V2, The Netherlands). This extract from Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, (eds.), *Audio Culture, Readings in Modern Music*, Continuum, New York, 2007.

PHILIP SAMARTZIS

One day in 1948 while riding a crowded subway I came up with the idea of mixing random noise with composed music. More precisely, it was then that I became aware that composing is giving meaning to that stream of sounds that penetrate the world we live in.

The music I composed at that time certainly had nothing to do with people. We were all in our own little worlds, isolated from one another. But I found it increasingly intolerable to work as a composer in such isolation. I craved some kind of relationship to those around me.

Music was born in primal utterance and action. But in our long history we have come to understand sounds only within the limitations of conventional function. That rich world of sound around me... Those are the sounds that I should have the courage to let live within my music. To reconcile those diverse, sometimes contradictory, sounds around us, that is the exercise we need in order to walk that magical and miraculous road we call life.

I recorded various sounds and frequencies on tape. Surrounded by these random sounds I found they triggered emotional responses in me, which, in turn, I preserved as sound on tape. I conceived of my approach as something akin to action rather than expression.

In 1948 the French composer Pierre Schaeffer first composed musique concrete, based on the same ideas as mine. This was a happy coincidence for me. Music was changing, slightly perhaps, but nevertheless changing.

Toru Takemitsu

Excerpt from:
Oto Chinmoku to Hakariaeruhondoni [Sound: *Confronting the Silence*], Shinchosha, Tokyo, 1971, reprinted in *Confronting Silence: Selected Writings*, Scarecrow Press, Inc., Lanham, Maryland, 1995, pp. 79-82.

**LOOKING FOR ART IN WEST BRUNSWICK
EXCERPTS FROM A CONVERSATION WITH
(BUT MOSTLY BETWEEN) THE MEMBERS
OF THE OPEN SPATIAL WORKSHOP
COLLECTIVE, ON AND AROUND THE TOPIC
OF THE WEST BRUNSWICK SCULPTURE
TRIENNIAL.**

TEXT: BRAD HAYLOCK / IMAGES: BIANCA HESTER

WEST BRUNSWICK SCULPTURE TRIENNIAL 2009
HEAD OFFICE AT 135 UNION STREET, BRUNSWICK



The *west Brunswick Sculpture Triennial* (wBST) was staged over the weekends of 21 March–12 April 2009. Coordinated by the Open Spatial Workshop (OSW) collective—comprised of Terri Bird, Bianca Hester and Scott Mitchell—the wBST presented projects across five sites by twenty-seven local and interstate artists, along with film and sound contributions by many more, through a series of exhibitions, installations, performances, screenings and participatory events. What follows are excerpts of a conversation with the OSW collective, held in the kitchen at 135 Union Street, Brunswick, on the morning of Sunday 5 April 2009.

BH: There were a couple of things that I thought we might discuss, and one was the question of context: the context of the Triennial in Brunswick, and the context of the work within the different spaces, that is, the differences between the spaces as contexts for art.

OSW: Well, that's the experiment really. We started off, I think, looking at the backyard. That's what I remember.

— Well, no, it starts in many places, because it starts as a group, and it starts as individuals, and then as pairings.

— But I remember when you moved in here, we looked at the backyard and it was like this framed space ...

— Vacant and waiting.

— ... and we thought 'Oh, perfect for sculpture' and then the whole thing expanded. There is the position of this house, being close to Ocular Lab, and so there was an organic nature to the way the different sites came to be attached to the Triennial. [...] and Alex [Rizkalla] suggested Tom's [Anstey and Ashton site], because he knew about that, and he offered his place, because he was working on his [*Souvenirs from the Last Century*] project. And Nikos [Pantazis] talked about opening up his space [Nikos' Rear Entrance], and there were actually potentially others, but at that point we thought that we had enough to deal with.

— Probably just as well.

[Murmurs of agreement]

— And west Brunswick is quite large, but the relationship between having such a local name—'west Brunswick'—and a Triennial was always quite appealing to us, so there were points at which we thought, 'Well, you

know, Michael Graff has run a lounge room project for many years in North Carlton, maybe we could include that' ...

— ... but in the end we decided there was something nice about keeping it very local.

— And maybe that's a good point to talk about: it's referencing past projects [exhibitions in lounge rooms], and it's connecting to those, but we didn't want to just have an exhibition in a house. We wanted to give it a whole series of layers, and that, in some sense, is how the other sites become relevant: by opening up the dialogue ...

— ... the differences between a backyard, a lounge room, a garage, an open block, a house and an artist-run space.

BH: I found that really significant. Some of the most revealing moments of the Triennial, for me, have been snippets of overheard conversations or experiences of standing in laneways. Walking through the house yesterday, some other visitors remarked on the lack of distinction between the works and the living room itself, and so I thought going from here to Ocular Lab retrospectively made clear which of the objects in your living room were works.

[Murmurs of agreement]

— Ah, that's interesting.

— Yes, that's kind of what we wanted.

— That's good viewing!

[Laughter]

— How to deal with Ocular Lab was a question from the start, really. How do you deal with the difference between Ocular Lab and the house? And so Terri and Fiona Abicare took that on board; they curated Ocular Lab in response to the works that were being exhibited in this house.

— And that's kind of an extension of a photo Fiona had previously made.

— The one in the VCA Gallery?

— Yes. It's like expanding her image into something larger, into a larger project, as well as trying to make Ocular Lab more domestic, to blur that relationship, without really knowing what it would do, just to see what would happen. And I'm not sure how successful it is.

[To Brad:] I think your response is very good ...

— Yes, because Ocular Lab becomes a framework for re-viewing, or repositioning, what's going on here.

BH: The other thing that I found striking was the experience of us standing in the laneway yesterday, watching the performance [at Nikos' Rear Entrance], and the equally open minds with which we seemed to approach that experience—'us' being myself and couple of other audience members who weren't otherwise involved with the Triennial, plus one participating artist [Ardi Gunawan] and one OSW member ...

OSW: Oh, watching the exercise performance.

BH: ... yes, standing around chatting, waiting for Spiros to arrive and then to ...

OSW: ... pump some iron!

[Laughter]

— I think that's one of the things that the Triennial has surprised me with: the way that it's made art familiar, or put it into this other familiar context, so that you do experience it in that very casual way ...

— ... a peripheral way.

— Yes, well, I've spent so much time hanging around chatting, in social contexts that are also these constructed art contexts, that I wonder 'Where's the art?' or 'What's the work?' quite often.

— Well, maybe it's about the issue of foreground and background? The gallery's function is largely to produce a space in which art becomes autonomous and foregrounded, there's no question about the foregrounding and the object that you're engaging with, on the whole—obviously, installation undoes that somewhat—but I guess the Triennial reveals that there is a heavy or broad background in every context. You know, the background in this house is the decorative, the lived space, the other art objects, and then the works of the Triennial are knitted into that. And the same is true of all of the sites, I think, maybe except for Ocular Lab, but especially for Nikos' Rear Entrance, Anstey and Ashton and Union Street. So I think it's about a *focussing in* on the background, and what that brings to reformulating an experience, and that's largely within a social space, isn't it? But all of those social spaces have different flavours.

“Maybe with a gallery structure there’s a code of practice that people are familiar with, but when it’s in a backyard it’s more relaxed.”

— Does that then become the work, do you think? And all these other things are just accoutrements?

— The art is the accoutrement?

— Yes, to that experience.

— Maybe. Maybe if we pick up on Brad’s idea of Ocular Lab becoming a perceptual filter that focuses this project—the curated project in the lounge room—if you take that and enlarge it, each of the art projects is a filter to focus upon the context in which it is embedded.

— And in which art is made. And so the work becomes that, maybe?

— Maybe, but I think the idea that Ocular Lab doesn’t have the social attached is perhaps not true, and I think that you’re comfortable being social in the other sites, whereas you may be thinking ‘Oh, I should be focussing on the work’ at Ocular Lab. So perhaps the social is always there, but it’s just that you try to ignore it at Ocular Lab.

OSW: For me, this is about *life*, this project, you know? Integrating into life, life being the site from which work is drawn, produced, displayed, experienced. I mean, it always is, obviously.

— There’s still the question of ‘What’s the work?’

— Yeah, I know, but that’s what it’s grappling with. And it’s never a clearly ...

— ... it’s all of these things that we’re talking about.

— Yes. It’s never something that can be clearly held in one place. It’s shifting all the time.

— And with a project of this scale, it’s lots of things.

— Maybe with a gallery structure there’s a code of practice that people are familiar with, but when it’s in a backyard it’s more relaxed.

— I guess that’s what I’m observing in some of the audience: they come with that code of practice from the gallery, and that’s what they’re looking for. And they kind of get a bit agitated in places like Nikos’s ...

— ... and at Union Street too, you know? I think the audience would appreciate a sticker on the wall next to the work, or at least something they could carry around with them ...

— A room sheet.

— ... to make sure that they didn’t miss anything, or to make sure that they were standing there looking at the right thing, because they could have been standing there looking a pot plant when, in actual fact, it wasn’t the work.

OSW: I guess [the Triennial] extends the work we have done in other artist-run projects, this idea that you do what you can within arm’s reach, because what’s good about doing all of it—the administration, the interfacing, the hosting, the installation—is that it’s a practice. You’re involved, and it’s engaging and enjoyable.

— So the ethos is about the local, about what you practice within your embodied sphere with your fellow human beings, and it proposes that as a way of living, I guess, and of making. I feel quite strongly about that, actually. It’s like cottage industry art.

Brad Haylock is an artist, designer and writer, and a Lecturer in Visual Communication at Monash University.

west Brunswick Sculpture Triennial

Curated by the Open Spatial Workshop
(Terri Bird, Bianca Hester, Scott Mitchell)

Artists:

Fiona Abicare, Marcus Bergner, Terri Bird with Fiona Abicare, Stephen Bram, Matthew Brown, Mick Douglas with Cultural Transports Collective, Mikala Dwyer, Ardi Gunawan, Bianca Hester with Saskia Schut, Christopher LG Hill, Lucas Ihlein, Raafat Ishak & Tom Nicholson, Susan Jacobs, Lisa Kelly, Nick Mangan, Sally Marsland, Spiros Panigirakis, Nikos Pantazis, Alex Rizkalla, Geoff Robinson & Jennie Lang, Saskia Schut, Helen Walter, Jude Walton with Phoebe Robinson.

Venues:

wBST base camp (135 Union Street, Brunswick)
Anstey and Ashton
(Rear 209 Albion Street, Brunswick)
Ocular Lab (31 Pearson Street, Brunswick)
Nikos’ Rear Entrance
(access via laneway, off Orient Grove Brunswick)
461 Albert Street, Brunswick

PERIODICITY: ‘GOD BREATHES PERIODICALLY.’

C: I gather you’re against periodicity in music (the repeated cyclic patterns one finds in, for example, ‘primitive’ trance music, Terry Riley, the bass riffs of rock, Donovan’s ‘The Trip’).

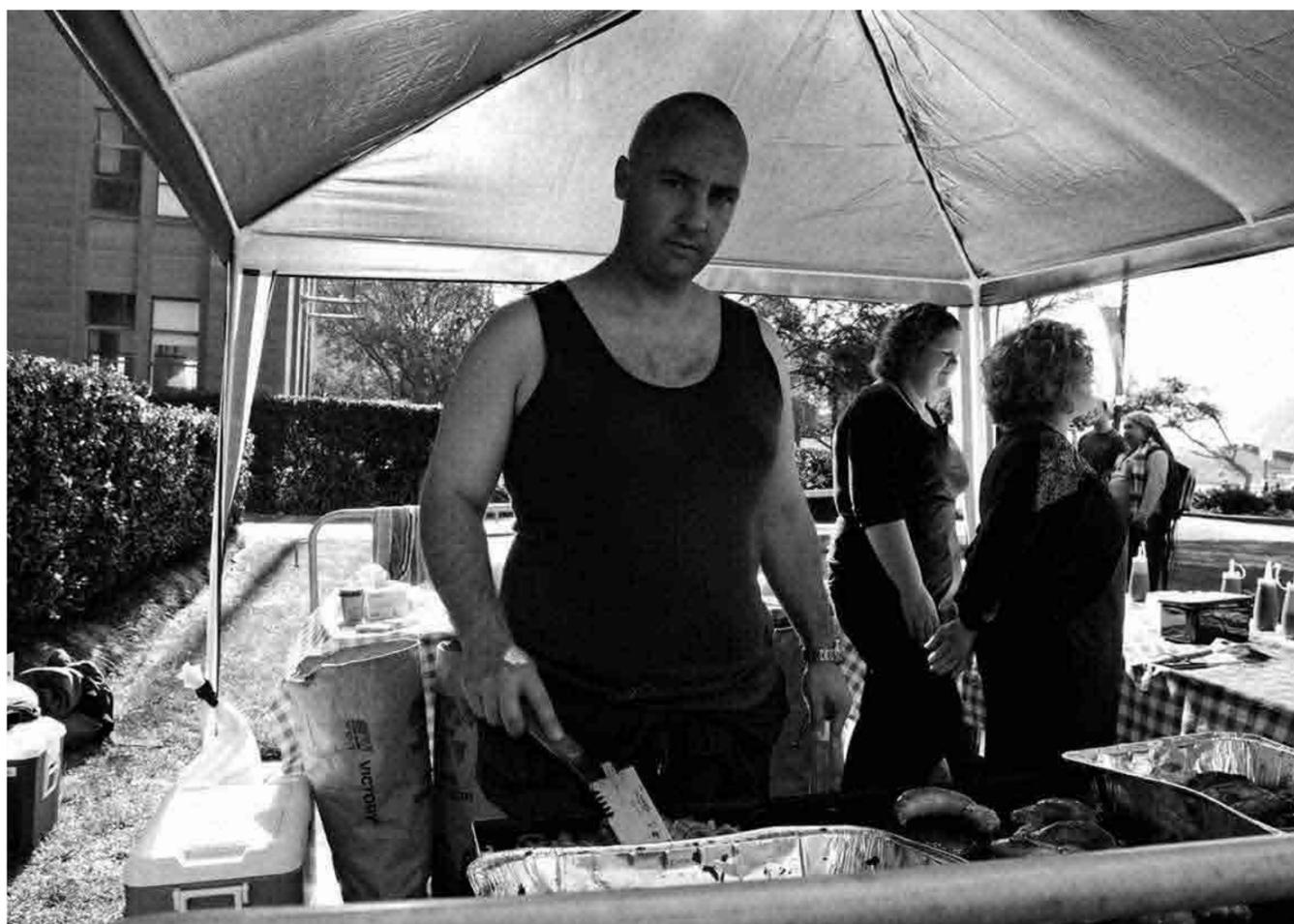
S: No, I’m not against it at all. All I think is that periodicity is one aspect, of the very large and the very small. And it should always be shown in a musical activity as being just one aspect of the universe. As you know, we have the large periodicities of the year, of the month or the moon, of the day, and also of the cosmic year. There is a fundamental periodicity of the whole cosmos when it explodes and contracts – it *breathes*, God *breathes* all the time, naturally, periodically, as far as we can think. This is the fundamental of the universe, and all other things are partials of this fundamental – the galactic years and the years of the sun systems, etc. And going down to the atoms and even the particles of the atoms, there is always periodicity. Nevertheless, periodicity is, as I say, like the abstract year, but what changes within the year? Sometimes the snow comes earlier, or later.

Actually, within this periodicity, no day is the same. We shouldn’t forget this, that’s all. There has been a lot of music where this periodicity becomes so absolute and dominating that there’s little left for what is happening within the periods. And there is not enough polyphonic periodicity, as there is in the universe or in our body. There should always be several layers of different periodicities which then produce a very intricate, seemingly aperiodic total result. But when you follow the individual layers, you again find periodicity. Or in very large cycles you sometimes find periodicity, but within these there is a lot of aperiodic movement, and this should never be forgotten. You see, marching music is periodic, and it seems in most marching music as if there’s nothing but that collective synchronization, and this has a very dangerous aspect. For example, when I was a boy the radio in Germany was always playing typical brassy marching music from morning to midnight, and it really conditioned the people.

Jonathan Cott, *Stockhausen: Conversations with the composer*, Picador/Pan Books, London, 1974 p. 27.

SITE-SPECIFICITY **FROM PERMANENCE TO PRESENCE: THE RISE IN PERFORMATIVE AND TEMPORAL STRATEGIES WITHIN THE GALLERY IN THE GLOBAL ERA.**

TEXT: DIMPLE...



As site-specific practice has evolved, the concept of site has simultaneously shifted with the progress of communicative technologies and our broadening global perspective. Site is no longer a purely physical construct. We are flooded by global possibilities of the geographic, intellectual, conceptual and the social kind, pushing towards states of flux, temporality, and the virtual. Often, we are not able to depend on the physical or rely on stability. With this shifting paradigm, the strategic use of performance and temporality within site-specific practice has increased, and become further contextualised by the gallery, the transitory nature of exhibition cycles and the use of space to harbour new, ephemeral constructs.

The recent utilisation of performative strategies in site-specific practice moves away from certain modern approaches, such as Richard Serra's assertions of permanence and immobility, defined in the context of his monumental public sculptures (in particular the controversial destruction of the *Tilted Arc* in 1989, a site-specific sculpture installed in Federal Plaza, New York), to a contemporary sense of presence and temporality within the gallery.¹ Three Australian artists offer new perspectives on site-specific practice in their employment of temporal and performative strategies, in drawing and undrawing, video projection and performance.

On a street in Fitzroy, red and black tape leads into and out from a gallery. The tape fills the gallery with its own language of measurement, movement, negotiation and space; offering the viewer many paths to navigate through the site. Tape pours out of the wall, falling onto itself and into its own entanglement, lining and surveying its own activities inside and outside the frames of the gallery. It is mark making. A drawing in space. It adheres to the gallery as a site, framed by the architecture and spatial and temporal limitations. Briony Barr's *Drawing & Undrawing (movement residue)* shown at Seventh Gallery, Melbourne (4–15 November 2008), is as much about the mark as it is the unmark. Barr works within the site over the exhibition period, drawing and undrawing, negotiating between positive and negative space in the form of performance and absence. The act of making (drawing) is as important as the erasure, the unmaking or the undoing of the mark (undrawing).

Barr's drawings are causal equations, each mark responds to the previous mark or action, and is governed by propositions of bifurcation, accumulation and movement. In a sense the black tape on the gallery floor traces the artist's movements through the gallery and its vicinities. The red tape, however, literally marks the artist's movement during the drawing process, including ladder positions and any pauses taken. The drawing is actively conscious and responsive to its environment, made within the site over time—as in the wall drawings of Sol LeWitt. A ball of used tape and empty tape rolls are the accumulated residues of drawing performances and inevitably become part of the next evolution of the work. The drawings are complexly steeped in the idea of growth, whether it is progressive or regressive, they are tied to the organic movement of the artist and her action. As arbitrary as the marks may first appear, they are considered; a measure and result of the performative relationship the artist has to the space as a living site. There is no permanence found in Barr's work; her drawings are organic, felt and temporal, in a state of flux, always growing and shifting, even when they are being undrawn. They are a performative response to the gallery as a site.

The importance of time is also apparent in Utako Shindo's *Platform for Performance* at the George Paton Gallery, Melbourne (31 March–9 April 2009). For an artist, a gallery is a familiar proposition. As a symbolic site, the exhibition space holds a transitory relationship with itself as it is replicated and re-formed in new places throughout the world while remaining conceptually the same. Shindo considers this transitory nature of the gallery in addressing her own relationship to place and space as a Japanese-born artist practicing in Australia. The gallery is her 'platform to perform' and Shindo videos her performances in the site and re-presents them projected in the same space. This doubling of action reinforces the specifics of the site within its self-relations, highlighted by the layering of time, action and events. Shindo's projections retain the phenomenological, architectural and historical aspects of the gallery, never marking the site but staining its cavity with light for a short time.

Reinforcing the site within the site, the artist's hand plays with the idea of presence. In *Platform for Performance: Backward* (2009)—Shindo's video projection cast across the entire depth of the gallery—the viewer inescapably becomes the performer and an integral part of the work when their silhouette casts a shadow on the projection. This live element transforms a simple video projection into a site-specific work that creates a relation between the site, the performance, and its representation. It instills the idea that the viewer's presence is an elementary aspect of both the work and the site.

Since the 1960s, artists including Dan Graham and Nam June Paik have used strategies of interaction and progressive technologies in their practice, often drawing attention to site by essentially ephemeral and intangible means. The growing interest in site-specific work in contemporary art practice is directly linked to the increased global accessibility, mediation of interpersonal relations and other changes brought about by technology. This shift reflects a declining dependence on tangible and haptic modes toward a preference for more temporal, performative and intangible actions and outcomes in contemporary art practice.

TONY SCHWENSEN
 FUNDRAZOR (FUCK YOU PAY ME) OR WHO GETS TO SIT
 AT THE POINTY END OF THE PLANE? (DETAIL) 2008
 PERFORMANCE OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, SYDNEY
 DURING THE 16TH BIENNALE OF SYDNEY 2008
 COURTESY THE ARTIST AND UPLANDS GALLERY, MELBOURNE
 PHOTOGRAPHER: GREG WEIGHT



ABOVE:
BRIONY BARR
DRAWING & UNDRAWING
(*MOVEMENT RESIDUE*) 2008
INSTALLATION DETAIL
SEVENTH GALLERY, MELBOURNE
COURTESY THE ARTIST

UTAKO SHINDO
PLATFORM FOR PERFORMANCE:
BACKWARD 2009
INSTALLATION VIEW
GEORGE PATON GALLERY, MELBOURNE
COURTESY THE ARTIST



OPPOSITE:
TONY SCHWENSEN
DIFFICULT PLEASURES (ALCHEMY #1)
(DETAIL) JUNE 2008
PERFORMANCE
COURTESY UPLANDS GALLERY, MELBOURNE





While Shindo increasingly utilises performative strategies to address the transitory relationship she holds with place—that of her homeland, Japan, and of her current home, Australia—and how this state is increasingly shared by many with the rise of globalisation and migration, Tony Schwensen makes use of performance to attend to the gallery as a cultural and symbolic site. His endurance performances raise concerns about art; its institutions and the life of artists. He engages with the gallery as the white cube, as art history, as a unit within commerce, art theory and a conceptual manifestation of art and its institutions. His performances are often driven by disillusionment with the art world, and what better place to perform than in the trophy room of art: the gallery. The aspect of endurance in Schwensen's performances is as much a test of his contempt for the art world as it is a sophisticated, artful and satirical method of persistently questioning the site, which symbolically accommodates everything that is wrong with and complacent in the art world. Schwensen uses performance to tie action allegorically to site, and his work is reminiscent of early conceptual performance artists of the 1960–70s, such as Joseph Beuys, whom he directly referenced in the *Fat Corner (Bouys/Beuys)* exhibition at Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney (20 June–19 July 2008), and more subtly in *Difficult Pleasures* at Uplands Gallery, Melbourne (26 June–19 July 2008), while his deferral to everyday events in performance is reminiscent of Allan Kaprow's actions.

Fundrazor (fuck you pay me) or *Who gets to sit at the pointy end of the plane* (a two day sausage sizzle held outside the Museum of Contemporary Art as part of the Biennale of Sydney 2008) was a fundraiser designed to address the Biennale committee's inability to fund Schwensen's original proposal. Schwensen positioned himself strategically outside the MCA—a key Biennale venue—in one of Sydney's most scenic and high-density tourist locations. He appeared to be a humble yob battling to make a buck by utilising the traditional and ever-reliable Aussie sausage sizzle to combat hard times. But his performance was less concerned with the goodwill nature of his activity and token gesture of \$703.12 raised to fund future Biennale artists' projects, and more a public show of the artist's discontent and frustration at having to support his participation as a contemporary artist in an international event in his own country. In Schwensen's words, 'The Biennale is a micro within the macro of the global inability to effectively fund contemporary art. Art institutions are administration-heavy. The industry doesn't exist without artists but artists are at the bottom of the food-chain.'² In works such as *Fundrazor*, Schwensen consciously uses the gallery and its context as a site to perform because it is the most effective platform from which to address such issues.

Each of these contemporary translations of site-specific practice involves elements of performance and temporality. These artists' works and their strategies are reflective of our contemporary times, which are lived within globalisation, and the fast-paced changes brought about by advancing communication technologies. In these conditions, site-specific art is moving away from the need for permanence and stability toward ideas of presence and temporality; as seen in the time-based and spatial drawings of Briony Barr, the ephemeral and intangible video projections of Utako Shindo or the endurance-based critical commentaries performed by Tony Schwensen.

“[Schwensen] appeared to be a humble yob battling to make a buck by utilising the traditional and ever-reliable Aussie sausage sizzle to combat hard times.”

1. According to Richard Serra there are three defining qualities of site-specific art 1) non-repeatability, 2) immobility, and 3) permanence. Cited in Richard Serra, 'Letter to Donald Thalacker Dated January 1, 1985', *The Destruction of Tilted Arc: Documents*, Clara Weyergraf-Serra and Marth Buskirk, (eds.), MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1991, p. 38.

2. Tony Schwensen cited in Anne Loxley, 'Tony Schwensen: Exhibition Review', *Art World*, 4, (Aug/Sep 2008), pp. 198–9.

*dimple... is an artist and writer.
She would like to thank Rosemary Forde,
Jarrod Rawlins of Uplands Gallery,
Leah Thomson at Biennale of Sydney, Sary Zananiri,
Virginia Mawer, Briony Barr and Utako Shindo.*

BRIONY BARR
DRAWING & UNDRAWING
(MOVEMENT RESIDUE) 2008
INSTALLATION DETAIL
SEVENTH GALLERY, MELBOURNE
COURTESY THE ARTIST

ACCIDENTAL MEANINGS IN
THE ALLEYWAY OF CHANCE:
MUSICAL PERFORMANCE ART NOW

TEXT: ANNA DALY / IMAGES: HI GOD PEOPLE

HI GOD PEOPLE PERFORMANCE, 2004
COURTESY HI GOD PEOPLE





HI GOD PEOPLE PERFORMANCE, 2007
ABC TV STUDIOS, MELBOURNE
COURTESY HI GOD PEOPLE

1. In that recollection is the presence of the self, and thus representation is not just a re-presentation of that which is being depicted but reveals the self to the self.

2. Though admittedly a greater diversity of performance/spaces emerged in the 1990s and different audiences were routinely figured into the equation.

3. The performance and costume focus is a more recent development initiated around 2001. Regular guests include musicians, like Justin Fuller and Marney from Zond, artists including Nathan Gray and performers such as Marcus 'Butcher' (Das Butcher) and Jason Hood.

4. Michel Bakhtin, *Towards a Philosophy of the Act*, Vadim Liapunov and Michael Holquist (eds.), Vadim Liapunov (trans.), University of Texas Press, Austin, 1993.

5. Thanks to Greg Wadley for general helpfulness, friendliness and the provision of background materials and images of Hi God People used in this article.

Three years ago I was mesmerised by Jason Hood's performance of *Heath Ledger in 'Brokeback Mountain'* at a Trough Faggot Party. Dressed in Blundstones, shorts and a checked shirt, Hood read his poem whilst shaving away all facial and cranial hair. Pressing a wig to his newly bald pate, he then thrust a red scarf about his shoulders before launching into an *a capella* rendition of Kate Bush's *Wuthering Heights*. He sang beautifully and in tune and managed to impersonate a woman without leaning on drag mannerisms. The only props Hood needed to present himself as an entity oscillating from one moment to the next between the figures of Jason Hood and Kate Bush was a wig and a red scarf. Writing this now, it seems clear that it was the staging—or the lack thereof—that made the performance so effective. Hood's approach to performance reiterates some of the issues raised by American performance artists in the 1960s and 1970s, and also resonates with contemporary acts like the Hi God People (HGP) with whom he has performed regularly since 2005.

An explanation for the liveliness generated by such loosely structured performances can be found in phenomenologist Edmund Husserl's formulation 'being-in-the-moment'. Challenged by the need to explain how representation/representation operates, Husserl focussed on the experience, rather than the artefact embodied by representation. He proposed that we comprehend representation not just through resemblance but also in the way that resemblance recalls to the viewer his/her experience of the original phenomena.¹

An attempt to capture the phenomenologically configured moment has been an ongoing feature of the performance art that grew out of certain conceptual and body art practices of the 1960s. This was a period when many artists were uneasy about the division between audience and performer, believing this separation compromised the genuine dialogue that should be the proper goal of performance art. Since highly staged/structured performances rely for effect on the suspension of disbelief, an experiential abyss opens up between performer and audience and deprives the engagement of its live potential. Hence, artists like Vito Acconci and William Wegman tended towards performances that required little in the way of costumes or scripts. The trajectory of performance art from the 1980s onwards has been one of increasing 'professionalism' resulting in events requiring scripts, costuming and rehearsals.² Yet artists have rarely questioned their own roles as autonomous provocateurs and thus the performer/audience divide has

almost been coded into the increasingly institutionalised form that is the performance art of today. It is hardly surprising, then, that the phenomenological possibilities evoked by performance have been instigated through different routes.

Comprising four core members, Dylan Martorell, Dion Nania, Greg Wadley and Julian Williams, Hi God People has been around since 1999 and has featured numerous regular guests.³ While HGP draws on tropes commonly linked with performance art, it is squarely located within the Melbourne indie music scene, from where its members all derived. As examples of their events, HGP performances have entailed:

1. **Planet Cafe, Fitzroy.** (November/December, 2004) Six guys wearing yucky shirts and sunglasses or body paint on stage playing instruments including keyboards and trombone. The sound is relatively structure-less; as soon as anything resembling a song or tonal convention emerges, it is veered toward discordance and rhythmic uncertainty. A guest performer launches into a thirteen-minute trombone solo;
2. **Bus Gallery, City.** (February/March, 2007) Twelve performers dressed in white smocks, one of whom is wearing a teddy bear mask, file into the gallery, each holding a Federation Bell. They kneel and set about making sounds with the bells, sometimes interfering with another's bell playing, sometimes engaging with the audience;
3. **Tram Stop, Cnr Flinders and Swanston Streets.** (March/April 2007) In a sudden storm you wait for the Bollywood tram requisitioned by HGP. When this warm tram with bright interiors and resident musicians arrives, it's full. With others who couldn't board you go to the pub instead and get drunk, grab dinner, see a band. One of the band members is in HGP, the rest of the HGP are in the audience.

Despite the semi-spontaneity and deliberately unstructured nature of HGP sets, certain themes recur. You always feel like you're watching a jam session that never quite takes off. There are always costumes—even a non-costume becomes a costume—and, of course, sound. And it seems that, as with Hood, the electricity generated by a HGP performance circulates around the divide between performer and audience.

Notorious performances from the 1960s and 1970s critiqued the passivity of audiences by enacting violence, self-mutilation and verbal abuse to provoke reaction and interaction. But HGP don't demand that we experience awareness of the art/life duality through embarrassment or discomfort. The confrontation is of a gentler kind and works off the tension between the staged and un-staged elements of performance, a strategy that places audience members on the same

"...the electricity generated by a Hi God People performance circulates around the divide between performer and audience."

experiential plane as the performers whilst respecting the integrity of the different positions. The significance of a performance, then, lies not in the division between roles but in the experience of the work; the audience at a HGP gig has only slightly less inkling about what will unfold than the performers making possible the dialogue that is integral to the ongoing construction of the work.

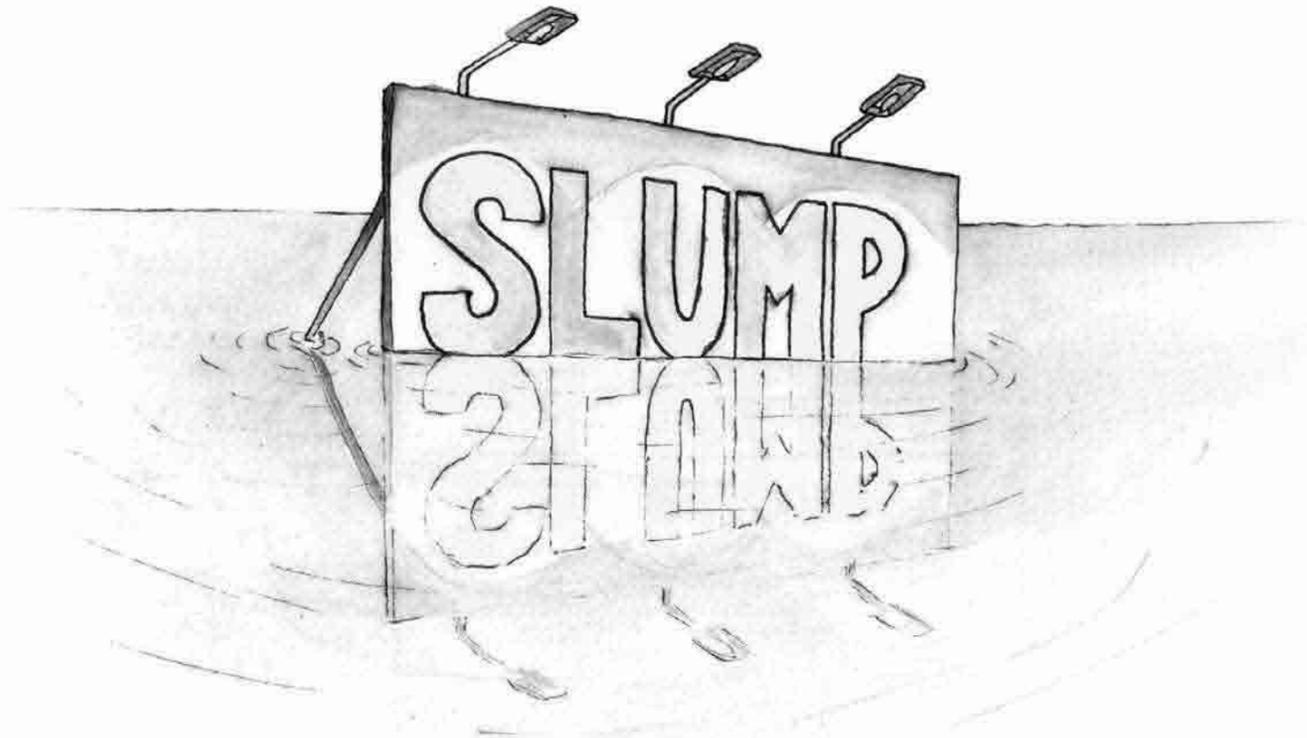
A critique of Husserl's phenomenological position is the impossibility of being simultaneously 'in the moment' and able to recognise it; recognition can only occur once 'the moment' has passed and thus 'the self' can only be reconstructed in terms that make sense to another moment.⁴ Performance broadens the conceptual framework of the art experience and, in this movement beyond the fixed subject/object relationship of art as artefact, Husserl's formulation may yet stand. The music scene has provided a background against which fresh responses to continuing issues in the performance/art/life trichotomy can be formulated, as is summed up by HGP founder Greg Wadley when he says:

HGP makes the flimsy boundary between performers and audience even more porous. Half the people in the room are in the band, were last time or will be next time ... For ten people in the venue, their number is up and they have to be HGP that night. The audience is HGP.⁵

Anna Daly teaches in the Department of Theory of Art and Design at Monash University, Melbourne.

THE END IS THE FUTURE: ARTIST RUN INITIATIVES AND THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS

TEXT: EMMA MORGAN / IMAGES: ANDY HUTSON



Things are not looking good. The front page of the 27 March edition of *The Guardian Weekly* reads:

All governments accept that the world has changed irrevocably as a result of the financial crisis that began in the summer of 2007, came to a climax in the autumn of 2008 and will probably result in 2009 being the first year the global economy has contracted since World War II.¹

The contraction of an economy usually results in less money for artists. The Reserve Bank of Australia has recently confirmed that Australia is now heading into recession.² We are in an economic situation that will surely compound the financial strain already faced by Melbourne artists and Artist Run Initiatives (ARIs). As an artist and member of the ARI *Seventh Gallery*, I have begun to speculate how Melbourne ARIs might change or develop as they are confronted with the probability of funding cuts, as well as the rising rents and higher unemployment rates usually associated with recession. As part of my research I wrote to some other ARIs in Melbourne to seek their thoughts about our future in a more challenging economic climate.

The foremost question is will the Global Financial Crisis affect ARIs at all? Very few artist run spaces receive government funding, therefore most are designed to operate with no external funding other than the rent paid by exhibiting artists. Jon Butt of *C3 Contemporary Art Space* reflected:

These models traditionally work outside the 'normal' economic structure in that they rely on the appropriation of marginal commercial real estate and the tireless work ethics of committed individuals who generally work for nothing. The GFC is almost the natural habitat of the emerging artist.³

However, the pragmatic parameters for Melbourne ARIs are shifting. The rental market in Melbourne has been in crisis for some time; in the twelve months between early 2007 and 2008 rental prices across Melbourne rose by up to 12.7%, with vacancies dropping to 1.4% from 3.4% in the 2000–2005 period.⁴ Inner city ARIs clearly felt the impact of the diminishing ability to rent cheap and accessible space toward the end of 2008: *Kings ARI* was threatened with closure when a massive rent hike was proposed; the lease on *Bus* has expired and the owner of its building wants to redevelop the site, and the rent at *West Space* increased substantially, leading to staff cuts and the re-introduction of gallery hire fees; a situation *Seventh* will eventually

face when our ten year lease expires at the end of 2010.

Moreover, with ARIs predominantly funded by the artists in their programs, revenues will surely be depleted as unemployment increases and disposable income declines. Of course, living in poverty is not a new phenomenon for Australian artists. The Australia Council funded report *Don't Give Up Your Day Job* (2004) concluded that the art income of the vast majority of artists surveyed was well below the poverty line.⁵ With unemployment expected to rise above 7% within the next twelve months, the Rudd Government has returned from the G20 Summit with warnings of deep budget cuts to welfare, health, education and other social programs.⁶ Improving the plight of Australian artists is unlikely to be high on the Government's agenda.



This is hardly new. While the Howard years did see a massive increase in Commonwealth funding of the arts it is argued that the Howard Government's arts funding policy was defined by a drive to fund large, established institutions and companies, with little consideration given to emerging artists, experimental practices or independent organisations.⁷ Moreover, while Commonwealth funding increased, State Government funding across Australia either decreased or remained relatively static in recent years. In Victoria during this period, arts funding rose by a mere 3%, barely keeping up with inflation.

The dominant model for artist run spaces in Melbourne is that of an organisation, peopled by a crew of volunteers, usually artists, who facilitate an exhibition program comprising artists who hire or pay fees for gallery space. These spaces also act as art community hubs where artists come together, often helping and mentoring one another. This has been my

experience as a Board member of *Seventh* and I feel a great satisfaction in having this wider outlet for my ideas about art. That said, the weekly reality of collectively running a space without reliable cash flow is often exhausting, overwhelming and stressful.

Perhaps what will change with the GFC is not the existence of ARIs but the way in which they are operated. This is not necessarily a bad thing according to Jess Johnson of *Hell Gallery*: 'People will just have to be more innovative in creating exhibition opportunities and gallery models that are more sustainable.'⁸

To alleviate the financial pressures of the rent-a-space ARI model, most spaces vie for the same limited pool of local, state and federal government monies offered by funding bodies who view ARIs as training grounds for emerging artists. In order to attract funding, many ARIs adapt to meet the criteria of funders, including the conventional requirements of professionalism. In some respects the pressure to emulate fully funded public or commercial galleries is counterproductive to their aims, and adds further financial pressure in the costs of maintaining clean, white spaces, while at the same time limiting the capacity to challenge or be other to officially sanctioned modes of presenting and experiencing contemporary art. It is a double bind, as Ang Connor from *Seventh* points out:

If an artist run space is going to survive and be sustainable over a long period of time, then some funding is going to be crucial, if only for the administrative aspects of the space. However, if funding is received from government organisations the gallery is then accountable for the spending of that money and is expected to become professionalised.⁹

Obviously a level of good management and continuity is necessary to garner interest and develop the qualities required of a successful, dynamic space—i.e. visibility, accessibility and hospitality, consistent and convenient opening hours, and meeting the expectations of the artists utilising the space. But should this be constrained to occurring in the white cube? I agree with Johnson when she says:

ARIs should stop trying to replicate those commercially slick, concrete white cubes which are so cold, insular and socially stagnant. They epitomise everything that is repressive about the art world. Why try to be like them?¹⁰

The notion of the ARI being a stepping-stone for artists on the way to bigger things is problematic. As Suzie Attiwill points out in the publication *Making Space: artist-run initiatives in Victoria*, providing a space for emerging artists is not the same as providing a space for emerging practices and critical dialogue. Most ARIs endeavour to create an environment from which experimentation and discussion emerge. While new artists do surface, an industry pathway is certainly not the apogee of the ARIs achievements. In the view of *West Space's* Phip Murray:

... ARIs are communities of practice in their own right—they don't require validation from any other source. I much prefer a lateral model, which is made up of many different clusters of wildly diverse creative people doing different things, rather than some meta-model of a giant hierarchical art ladder with God-knows-what at the top.¹¹

The rent-a-space model comes with inherent restrictions that curb the ARI's ability to fully harness their potential as "communities of practice". More energy is spent on administration than interactions with artists and sustaining a critical dialogue. Spaces also have their own limitation, determining the work and artists who access them. Daine Singer from *Blindside* comments that:

Only early career artists are likely to want to pay for an exhibition when it would be better to also have a dialogue with artists across the spectrum. There are very few curated exhibitions proposed and exhibition rather than performance or event-based work is favored.¹²

So where does that leave us? Din Heagney from *Platform* foresees: 'No longer being space-based. Removing ourselves from the earlier models established at a time when rental, production and general living costs were much more affordable.'¹³

Singer adds:

I expect (and hope) to see more idiosyncratic ARIs rise up that are not based on the gallery model and also more curator-driven collectives and ARIs. Hopefully more people creating spaces for art regardless of whether they are funded ... and using those spaces to experiment instead of treating them as stepping stones to something greater.¹⁴

Perhaps this will lead to more *ad hoc* or experimental models of exhibition making in temporary and provisional spaces, as Johnson forecasts: 'I think the future of Melbourne ARIs will proliferate in bedrooms, backyards, empty lots, music venues, suitcases, closets, kitchens, balconies and footpaths.'¹⁵

In the past ten years there has been a proliferation of Melbourne ARIs working in

new modes. *The Geelong Artist Alliance* and the now disbanded *CLUBS* project are examples of ARIs that operate without the constraints of a permanent gallery space, placing more emphasis on the critical dialogue that emerges from working collectively. *Ocular Lab* and *Hell Gallery* are spaces paid for by the artists who run the initiatives. *Tape Projects* and the recent *Open Spatial Workshop* are further examples of ARIs that don't operate from a fixed space and who place emphasis on specific projects or events. These new models tend to focus on dialogues arising from the work of the artists involved in, or invited, by the initiative.

What the rent-a-space model provides that perhaps these new models cannot, is the egalitarian open calls that allow artists unfamiliar to the ARI an opportunity to be considered for the program. How can ARIs evolve so as to retain this inclusive capacity while developing more flexible financial structures? This is one of the questions artist run spaces must now address.

The way I see it, there are two ways to go. We can persist with the existing ARI model operating in Melbourne and just batten down the hatches until the storm blows over (fingers crossed!). Or we can use this moment to completely re-evaluate the way ARIs operate, doing away with the traditional costs of running a space, and freeing ourselves from irrelevant rules and conventions endorsed by funding bodies that fail to recognise the enriching and vital role ARIs play.

An ideal solution would provide the artist with greater opportunities to participate in and develop new exhibition models that can adequately facilitate collectivity, cooperation and critical dialogue, while still supporting individual practices. Open calls for artists to submit exhibition/event proposals could extend beyond providing opportunities to exhibit in a space, to also include the opportunity to be selected for collaborative events or critical forums. Furthermore, this could all occur in spaces that do not conform to the conventional gallery model: temporary, colourful and idiosyncratic.

One thing is certain: the world has changed and to remain vital and sustainable we must also adjust, facing the challenges for the Melbourne ARI community by using this moment to bring about new possibilities. The future starts now.

Emma Morgan is a Melbourne-based artist and has been a committee member of Seventh Gallery for twelve months.

1. Larry Elliott, 'G20 To Seek Solutions For A Grave New World', in Natalie Bennett (ed.), *The Guardian Weekly*, Guardian News and Media Ltd, Manchester, 27 March–2 April 2009, p. 1.

2. Tim Colebatch, 'Reserve Relents, Admits Recession Is Here', in Paul Ramadge (ed.), *The Age*, 22 April 2009, viewed 25 April 2009, <<http://www.theage.com.au/national/reserve-relents-admits-recession-is-here-20090421-ae36.html>>

3. Jon Butt in email correspondence with the author, April 2009.

4. Jason Dowling, 'Rent Crisis Forces Urgent Action', in Paula Ramadge (ed.), *The Age*, 17 February 2008, viewed 2 May 2009 <<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2008/02/16/1202760669052.html>>

5. Jennifer Bott, 'Commentary on Don't Give Up Your Day Job', viewed 2 May 2009 <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/32518/commentary.pdf>

6. Mike Head, 'Australian Government Prepares Deep Budget Cuts', in David North (ed.), *World Socialist Website*, International Committee of The Fourth International, 9 April 2009, viewed 2 May 2009 <<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2009/apr2009/budg-a09.shtml>>

7. In the twelve years between the last Keating Government budget in 1995 and the last Howard Government budget in 2007, Commonwealth support of the arts rose in nominal terms from \$410 million to \$680 million or an increase of 65.8%, more than twice the rate of inflation. Cited in the *Department for the Arts and Sport*, speech by Senator the Hon. George Brandis S.C., viewed 2 May 2009 <http://www.minister.dcita.gov.au/brandis/media/speeches/2007/address_to_the_national_press_club>

8. Jess Johnson in email correspondence with the author, April 2009.

9. Ang Connor in email correspondence with the author, April 2009.

10. Jess Johnson, loc. cit.

11. Phip Murray in email correspondence with the author, April 2009.

12. Daine Singer in email correspondence with the author, April 2009.

13. Din Heagney in email correspondence with the author, April 2009.

14. Singer, loc. cit.

15. Johnson, loc. cit.

BIANCA HESTER

matter: a reconfiguration of material relations

Matter as it is conventionally understood is the stuff, things other than matter, are made from. This understanding implies it receives information, content, form and meaning from elsewhere. The ways in which matter is understood is at the core of conceptual categories that structure hierarchies and determine relations. An examination of these understandings, and the work of materiality, is linked to their importance in relation to a broader context that includes social, cultural and epistemological practices. Re-thinking the relations of matter, otherwise than within the customary binaries of form, meaning and content, necessarily entails an extensive re-examination of relations in general between what is habitually regarded as intelligent activity and passive receptivity.

Terri Bird, *Matter's Medium: re-thinking the relations of matter through the work of Joëlle Tuerlinckx*, limited edition booklet, Melbourne, 2006.

LOU HUBBARD

Left or Standing

His precision and accuracy suggesting clean cuts, leaving a vacancy, a slight physical depression as though I had been in a vaguely uncomfortable place for a not long but undeterminable period; not waiting.

Bruce Nauman poster, 1971

Standing or Left Standing

His preciseness and acuity left small cuts on the tips of my fingers or across the backs of my hands without any need to sit or otherwise withdraw.

KIRON ROBINSON

I ♥ Real Life

Ross Sinclair, *I Love Real Life*, various locations, Bremen, Germany
6 x neon each approx 150 x 25 cm, 1998
Installed in a church, school, hospital, police station, office and fast food bar as part of the project 'Do All Oceans Have Walls?' in Bremen, Germany, 1998.

SHIFTING GROUND: THE DEVELOPMENT OF VISUAL AND CROSS ARTS IN CENTRAL VICTORIA

TEXT AND IMAGES: KATE STONES

Jude Anderson has a background in site-specific theatre and performance. She is the director of Punctum, an organisation operating from Castlemaine that supports Live Arts through a program called the Live Arts Incubator. Live Art is a term used to describe all acts of performance undertaken as a work of art. The term came into usage in the United Kingdom in the middle of the 1980s to recognise both new and existing performance-based work as a form of creative expression that is not only independent of the traditional visual artforms, but also of theatre and dance. The Live Art Development Agency in London describes Live Art as: 'Live Art should not be understood as a description of an artform but as a strategy to 'include' a diversity of practices and artists that might otherwise find themselves 'excluded' from all kinds of policy and provision and all kinds of curatorial contexts and critical debates.'¹ Melbourne-based writer and curator, Celia Karl also manages Allan's Walk Artist Run Space in Bendigo. Kate Stones is a visual artist who has recently relocated to Castlemaine from Melbourne. In March 2009 Stones exhibited *Work, Rest and Play* at LaTrobe University Visual Art Centre, Bendigo, and will undertake a Seedpod project at Punctum's performance space in November 2009. The three met to discuss hybrid practice in a regional context.

Jude Anderson: Why here? Why not Brisbane, why not Perth, why not Darwin? I'm yet to be convinced of the integrity of artists wanting to show their work outside Melbourne. It's a new thing.



Kate Stones: What are the negative aspects?

JA: Parachuting your work. Not thinking about how it's contextualised by where it is exposed. Many artists don't ask the right questions, or even consider if or why their work is interesting to an audience. The question needs to be asked of the artist, why here? If they can answer that, then there is a preparedness to engage.

Celia Karl: There are a couple of Melbourne-based artists who will be showing at Allan's Walk Artist Run Space (AWARS) next year, who will produce and exhibit work specific to the region, and who will be based here for three or four weeks beforehand. Next year AWARS will be exhibiting work by artists living outside the region that does more fully engage with the area and what it means to show in a regional context. Personally, I'm interested in art for its universal meaning, and aware of definitions that reinforce boundaries between regional and urban areas. I'm conscious that focusing on work that is very specific to location can insert boundaries as opposed to breaking them down, resulting in increasing isolation from the national discourse, rather than creating something in and of itself. There is a feeling, especially coming from emerging artists, that sometimes too much emphasis is placed on context. While an experienced artist can work within the context and make something that is also universal, sometimes this doesn't occur to artists who are at the beginning of their career, who need to be encouraged to think beyond their immediate environment.

JA: This is where AWARS and Punctum can encourage artists to look beyond the obvious. In terms of context and site, there's a whole lot of thinking about non-space at the moment, places of non-space, how they can be a meeting place, and what this might mean.

KS: What do you mean when you refer to non-space?

JA: Well, dislocation as opposed to location.



So, if you look at the question of being out of place and what that implies, which is a great preoccupation at a global level, whether it be in terms of corporate or political refugees, then it doesn't matter where you are. On that level AWARS and Punctum can be engaged in opening up questions. Space or place need not be about the gum trees or the geography.

KS: Jude, why did you choose to work in Castlemaine?

JA: There is a pool of great contemporary practitioners here, who work really efficiently together. When I was based in Europe and South America, I was also working outside a metropolitan base.

KS: I don't think I would attempt any work in Melbourne like that which I am proposing for Punctum. Central Victoria allowed me breathing space to consider myself in a different way and feel that it was safe to play around with my identity, for example, thinking that maybe I *do* make performance work. There is an aesthetic aspect in an urban environment that reinforces the dominance of cultural norms, cultural ideas and identity that are built or constructed, like the architecture itself. The built environment is, in the main, visually impenetrable and its structures are very rigid, based on the cube. Once out of that environment I felt like I could take a deep breath and try anything.

CK: Many artists are faced with the cycle of exhibiting with artist run initiatives until



KATE STONES
WORK, REST AND PLAY
(DETAIL) 2009
INSTALLATION DETAIL
LATROBE UNIVERSITY ART CENTRE,
BENDIGO
COURTESY THE ARTIST

OPPOSITE,
ABOVE: CELIA KARL
BELOW: JUDE ANDERSON

understand the questions that are being posed differently to those that are being asked in gallery settings.

KS: With my exhibition *Work Rest and Play*, who was the audience? Who was the practitioner? If someone enters that space and is invited to move the work around and change its structure, are they the audience? The use of soft materials in my work has encouraged people to sit on, touch or stroke objects. My responses were slightly conflicted, so I really wanted to see what would happen if I made these questions part of work that requires physical engagement.

JA: That's why we have set up the Live Arts Incubator, because I think the most interesting question is: to what extent does my work exist without someone being in the same space? It comes alive when the audience is given a place *within* the work, not in front of it or around it but within it. *Work, Rest and Play* drew on a very intelligent space; the work is interpreted through sensory engagements beyond the visual realm. There is a sensual intelligence in operation that I find really interesting. The work becomes that which each person makes it through a very tactile interaction.

CK: Kate, in comparison to other participatory works, the outdoor elements of *Work, Rest and Play* were participatory but the indoor work was not interactive. The opening up and joining of those two spaces emphasised that the artist and not the audience was in control. The negotiation of space and audience would be completely different in an organisation like Punctum.

KS: Yes, I look forward to the challenge of extending those ideas in the more performative context of Punctum.

being offered commercial representation. Regional non-institutional art organisations can provide artists with an opportunity to show work outside that cycle.

JA: That is a visual artcentric perspective. Live arts covers a whole investigation of relational practice including basic artform exploration that could be choreographic, sound or performance orientated work. All of those circuits work differently to the visual art world, and we need to have an understanding of the production and presentation machinations in such systems, which is where the expertise of the Punctum members comes in. Commercial galleries

are set up for product which is saleable, but crossover, cross-disciplinary, pluro-disciplinary or hybrid practice—where are the places for them? Well there aren't any so you have to create them, which means that you are necessarily working in a marginal way. Once you have accepted that what you are doing is outside the mainstream, why do you need the city? Why don't you go where everything is cheaper, where there are really dynamic partnership possibilities that are easier to establish, and then take them to an international level, because internationally is where audiences are coping with crossover arts. We are working on how to get stuff out of institutions and engage those audiences who

1. http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/about_us/what_is_live_art.html accessed on 4 May 2008.

KATE STONES
WORK, REST AND PLAY
(CUBBY WITH RMIT ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS) 2009
LATROBE UNIVERSITY ART CENTRE, BENDIGO
COURTESY THE ARTIST

OPPOSITE:
KATE STONES
WORK, REST AND PLAY
(CURTAIN AND POD) 2009
INSTALLATION DETAIL
LATROBE UNIVERSITY ART CENTRE, BENDIGO
COURTESY THE ARTIST







ANARCHISTS IN THE ACADEMY

Four perspectives (from inside and outside) on *The (self initiated, Artist funded) second (fourth) Y2K Melbourne Biennial of Art (& Design)*, 19 November to 6 December 2008, TCB art inc (Level 1/12 Waratah Place, Melbourne), and other locations.

i Christopher LG Hill's *Y2K Melbourne Biennial* offered a glimpse into how contemporary art practice can be presented properly. This may be a fairly large boast, but I am convinced that it is an appropriate statement for an artist-run initiative show that titled itself a 'Biennial'. In contrast to the often sterile and disappointing presentation of contemporary artwork that frequently greets us when we view the public staging of art, the *Y2K Biennial* gave us an alternative vision. It showed that art can be exhibited in a way that embraces and enhances the experimental, inquisitive, process driven and open-ended nature of contemporary practice. It showed what happens when art isn't cleaned of its edges; what happens when it isn't orchestrated into something palatable and easy to digest. Not that the *Y2K Biennial* was unpalatable, far from it, it's just that it deliberately organised the works to—and chose artists that—maintain a speculative edge. It demonstrated the potential of bridging the gap between the interactions with art practice as they occur through the making of an artwork and how art can be received. After all, how many times have we heard the words 'the work looked better in the studio (or in situ)'? The *Y2K Biennial* successfully brought to the gallery the chaotic, difficult and rewarding practice of dealing with art in its raw state.

Nicholas Selenitsch

ii The anarchist anthropologist David Graeber suggests that the difference between Marxism and Anarchism is that Marxism has tended to be a theoretical or analytical discourse about revolutionary strategy, while Anarchism is concerned with ethical discourse about revolutionary practice. In this sense, the exhibition posited as the 'second (fourth) biennial of Melbourne' offered a type of participatory democracy—multiple curators and diverse disciplines both acknowledging and disguising what markets have glorified as consumable authorship and collaboration. As we perhaps know, for democracy to work it needs many voices and visions—the *Y2K Biennial* collected and elevated the transient, fluid, subjective and at times schizophrenic approaches of contemporary artistic practice in Melbourne. This was perhaps evidenced on entry by Jon Campbell's flag *It's gonna take a lot of love* and Xin Cheng's knotted-sheet escape route; both works symbiotically confident, welcoming and self-doubting. Funnily enough, in a rather humble and local way, the *Y2K Biennial* not only extended what has been cited as the 'complex and humanist legacy of the first biennial, *Signs of Life*'; it deliberately questioned the economic and hierarchical structures that have since prevented another *Melbourne International Biennial* from being staged.¹ In addition, by being held in this branded and acronymic economic climate, the *Y2K Biennial* further questioned the structure and 'all-star casts' of the international biennial and triennial circuit. Ignored by the mainstream media and art press, the *Y2K Biennial* has perhaps highlighted that the local establishment is still, unfortunately, not ready for artistic practice to be generative of social knowledge without a clearly defined (and marketable) figurehead and product.

Lisa Radford

1. Felicity Fenner, 'New Life in Melbourne - first Melbourne International Biennial, 1999', *Art in America*, January 2000.

THE (SELF INITIATED, ARTIST FUNDED)
SECOND (FOURTH) Y2K MELBOURNE BIENNIAL
OF ART (& DESIGN) (DETAIL) 2008
INSTALLATION VIEW
COURTESY THE ARTISTS AND TCB ART INC., MELBOURNE.
PHOTOGRAPHER: NICK SELENITSCH

iii

'When Will I ... Will I ... Be ... Famous?!'
(I Kant answer ... he can't answer that).

So I'm trying to remember what the *Melbourne International Biennial* (the first one) back in the late 90s was like ... oh yeah, I remember now ... I was in my Honours year at the VCA and I was an installation volunteer for Ricky [Swallow], not actually making the work (my blades weren't sharp enough to cut the cardboard to make the sculptures ... I'm good but not *that* good!) but just doing menial labour work ... well to be more exact, cleaning the windows for Ricky, where his record player works were going to go. Anyway the thing is I remember cleaning, cleaning, I'm not really good at cleaning ... especially windows ... 'Hey! I'm not a window cleaner! I AM AN ARTIST!' I *thought* ... but I guess it's like when you start out as a kitchen hand you can eventually become the head chef ... then a celebrity chef? Gordon Ramsay?! Anyway, I remember the Biennial being a big deal at the time ... it was going to be the first one and as it turned out the last one ... I remember Callum [Morton] saying 'If we don't have another one, it's going to be known as the Melbourne One-ennial!' at a forum at Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces about a year after the Biennial.

Fast forward, back to the future. Now it's no longer the 'One-ennial', thanks to Chris [LG Hill], my installation was part of the second (fourth) one? I built myself my own pavilion (well I guess it's probably going to be the only biennale I'll ever be in so I might as well make the most of it!) and named it the *STUDIO MASATOTECTURES PAVILLION*. Actually it wasn't really a pavilion, I just crammed (almost) all the stuff I had amassed over the years, my old work ... because I like *my old stuff better than my new stuff* ... (remember that Regurgitator song?). I also included some of the TCB art inc. furniture, the other artist's stuff I liked I had hanging around in the studio, plus two special guests: a painting by Lisa [Radford]—the cast in Dawson's Creek ... (you remember that TV show? 'I don't wanna wait' ...), and an abstract painting (kinda like a blurry version of a Tomma Abts) that Madeline gave to me for my birthday.

You know, 'If you build it ... they will come!' and they did!

Masato Takasaka

iv

The (self initiated, Artist funded) second (fourth) Y2K Melbourne Biennial of Art (& Design)'s existence and positioning in an artist-run space such as TCB art inc. seemed to be the natural outcome for a generation of practitioners who, whilst collectively disillusioned and disconnected from traditional mainstream hierarchies and avenues operating in the Melbourne art world, function as both self-sufficient and networked artists with a do-it-yourself, 'taking care of business' attitude.

Y2K, organised by and centrally welded around the interconnections of Christopher LG Hill, became the physical manifestation for an alternate model or structure of production and presentation that exists and is based in networks, in cyberspace, on blogs, YouTube, online groups and group discussions. With shared knowledge and shared resolve to make things, and to make things happen regardless of isolation, location, and capital, the networked generation are taking control of their own destiny.

Y2K could be read as a critique on the lack of opportunity and support for an alternate space within a largely monosyllabic artistic culture. For some reason I continue to think how great it would have been to see the Y2K project exhibited in the smaller galleries at ACCA, or even overseas in an external context, to showcase the breadth of such a creative 'zeitgeist'.

Danny Lacy

Nicholas Selenitsch is a Melbourne-based artist, who lectures in the Painting Department at the VCA. He is represented by Sutton Gallery, Melbourne and his work was included in *The (self initiated, Artist Funded) second (fourth) Y2K Melbourne Biennial of Art (& Design)*.

Lisa Radford is a Melbourne-based artist and writer who is also on the committee of TCB art inc.

Masato Takasaka is an artist who lives and works in Melbourne, where he is currently undertaking a Master of Fine Art (by Research) at the Faculty of Art and Design, Monash University. His work was included in *The (self initiated, Artist Funded) second (fourth) Y2K Melbourne Biennial of Art (& Design)*.

Danny Lacy is Program Administrator at Monash University Museum of Art.

The (self initiated, Artist funded) second (fourth) Y2K Melbourne Biennial of Art (& Design)

19 November to 6 December 2008

TCB art inc.
Level 1/12 Waratah Place, Melbourne

Artists included:
Bianca Hester, Sean Bailey, Simon Taylor, Jon Campbell, Kate Newby, John Nixon, Matt Hinkley, Nick Mangan & Ying Lan Dan, Nick Selenitsch, Kate Smith, Dan Arps, Damon Packard, Ida Ekblad, Daniel du Bern, Alexander Ouchtomsky, Ben Tankard, Liv Barrett, Scott Mitchell, OSW, Animal Charm, Matthew Brown, Jane Caught, Alex Vivian, Masato Takasaka, Helen Johnson, Sean Peoples/ Cheese Peoples, James Deutscher, Sriwhana Spong, Kain Picken, Rob McKenzie, Kain Picken & Rob McKenzie, Spiros Panigirakis, Lisa Kelly, Joshua Petherick, Matt Griffin, Geoff Newton, Pat Foster & Jen Berean, Liz Allen, Gregory P Sharp, Justin K Fuller, Ardi Gunawan, Xin Cheng, Hao Guo, Annie Wu, Christopher LG Hill, Janneke Raaphorst, Ruth Buchanan, Tahī Moore, Taree Mackenzie, Simon McGlinn, ffiXXed, Christopher Schueler & Matthew Hopkins, Dylan Statham, ACW, Fiona Connor, Evergreen Terrace, Nathan Gray and more ...



LILY HIBBERD

Site/Recite (a prologue)

Gary Hill

Description from Electronic Arts Intermix <<http://www.eai.org/eai/title>>

With startling precision, Site/Recite moves across and around a table-top graveyard – bones, butterfly wings, egg shells, seed pods, crumpled notes, skulls – in a series of seamless edits that present a continuous flow of detailed close-ups. This taxonomy of dispossession, “little deaths that pile up,” is juxtaposed to a narration on the linkage between semantic self-consciousness and visual experience. Through the window of this text, the objects on the table come to model how consciousness affixes itself to material manifestations and how memory is constituted by the collection of empty vessels. Site/Recite is a prologue for Which Tree, an interactive videodisc installation that presents viewers with a maze of interconnected branch points, allowing them to wander through its forest of images and words to discover the “texts” of their own thinking patterns.

Gary Hill

Site Recite (a prologue)

1989, 4:05 min, color, sound

Voice: Lou Hetler. Camera/Lighting: Rex Barker. Produced by IMATCO/ATANOR for Television Espanola S.A. El Arte de Video.

Nothing seems to have ever been moved. There is something of every description which can only be a trap. Maybe it all moves proportionally cancelling out change and the estrangement of judgement. No, another order pervades. It's happening all at once, I'm just a disturbance wrapped up in myself, a kind of ghost vampirically passing through the forest passing through the trees.

The sun will rise and I won't know what to do with it. Its beak will torture me as will its slow movement, the movement it invented that I can only reiterate. Too much time goes by to take it by surprise. Bodily sustenance is no longer an excuse. The quieter and stiller I become the livelier everything else seems to get. The longer I wait the more the little deaths pile up.

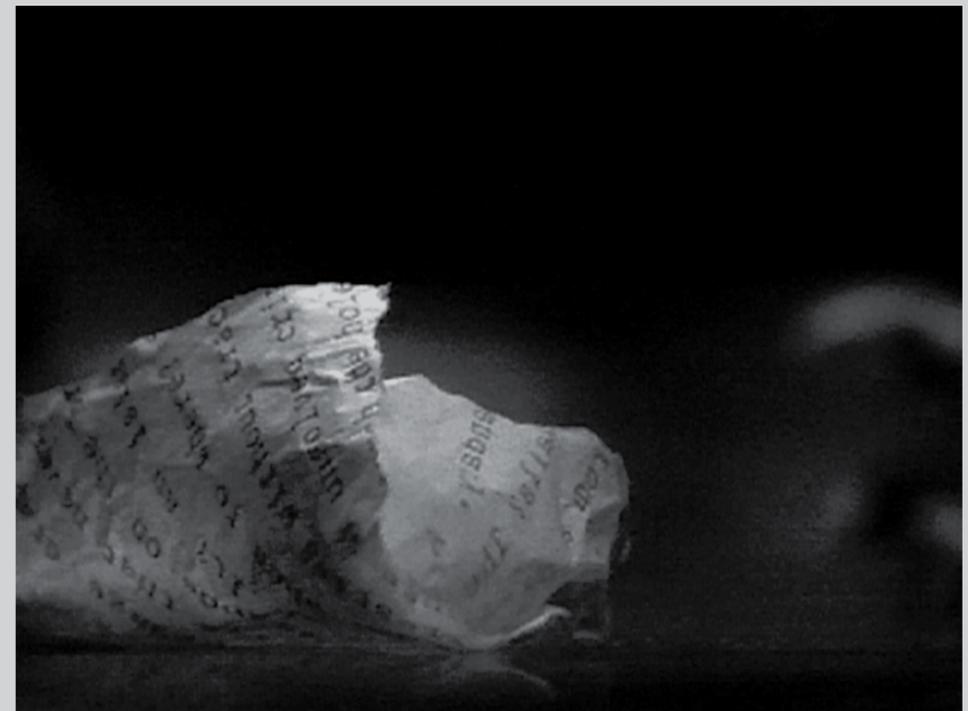
A vague language drapes everything but the walls--what walls? The very walls that never vary--my enclosure, so glorious from a distance, stands on the brink of nothing like a four-legged table. What is it? An island with a never ending approach? A stopgap from when to where? Something to huddle over with my elbows like trestles without tracks, the bases of which are scattered with evidence of unsolved crimes? The overallness of it all soaks through, runs through the holes in my hands and continues to run amok, overturning rocks that should not be overturned, breaking bread that should not be broken.

So much remains. No doubt it can all be counted. Starting with any one, continuing on with any other one until all is accounted for, a consensus is reached. That it can all be shelved in all its quantized splendor, this then is the turf.

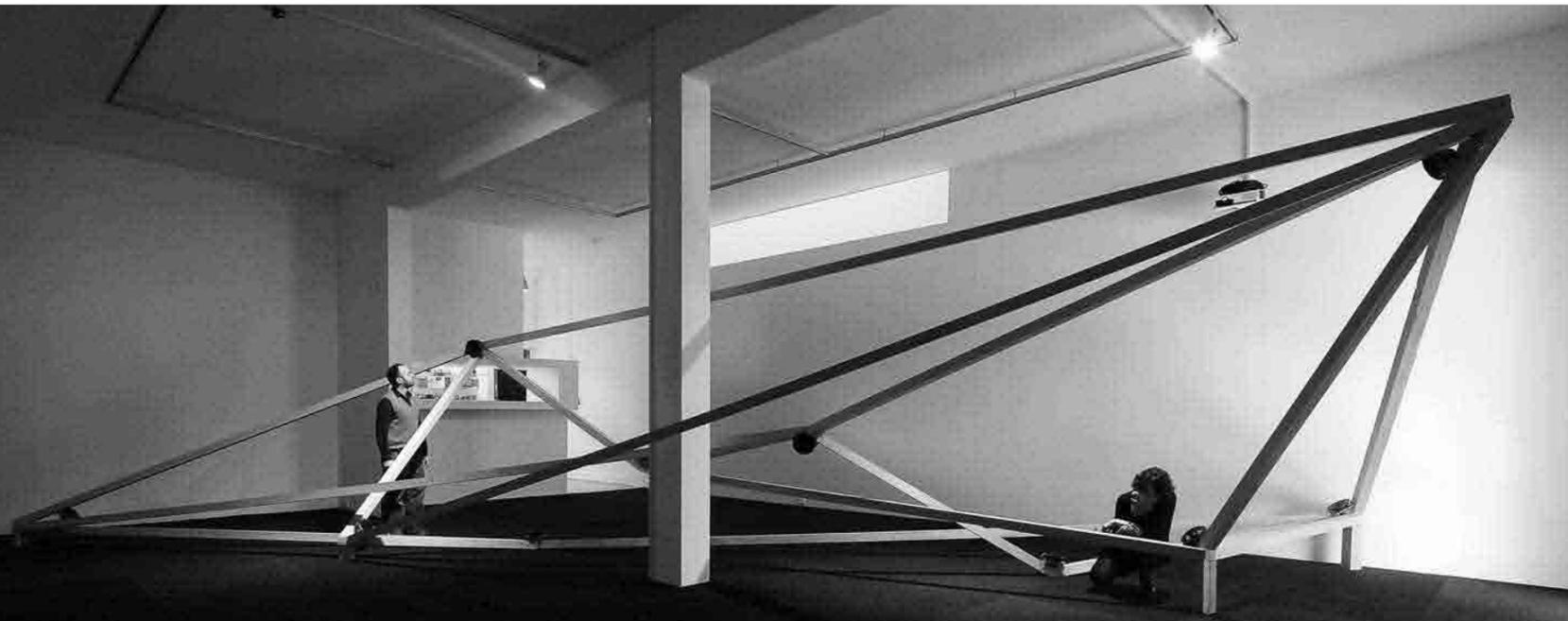
These sightings. This scene before me made up of just so many just views (nature's constituency) sits with indifference to the centripetal vanishing point that mentality posits so falsely. Brain, minding business, incessantly constructs an infinite series of makeshifts designed to perpetuate the picture--the one like all others that holds its breath for a thousand words, conversely exhales point zero zero one pictures. This insidious wraparound, tied to the notion “I have eyes in the back of my head,” binds me to my double, implodes my being to a mere word as it winds the world around my mouth. A seamless scroll weaves my view back into place--back to back with itself--the boomerang effect, decapitates any and all hallucinations leaving (lo and behold) the naked eye, stalking each and every utterance that breaks and enters the dormitories of perception. I must become a warrior of self-consciousness and move my body to move my mind to move the words to move my mouth to spin the spur of the moment.

Imagining the brain closer than the eyes...

Copyright © 1989 Gary Hill



GARY HILL
SITE RECITE (A PROLOGUE) (DETAILS) 1989
VIDEO, DURATION 4:00
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST
AND DONALD YOUNG GALLERY, CHICAGO



WHAT WE HAVE HERE IS A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE: AESTHETICS AND GEOFF ROBINSON'S NORTH. AT THE JUNCTION OF INWOOD HILL PARK NEW YORK AND JÖKULSÁRLÓN SOUTHEAST ICELAND, FEBRUARY–MAY 2008

TEXT: MICHAEL PULSFORD / IMAGE: JOHN BRASH

In 2008 Geoff Robinson travelled through and between Inwood Hill Park in New York City and Jökulsárlón in south east Iceland, following and recording the interesting sounds in each location. His 2009 installation *North* is an abstract sonic and sculptural map that merges the two sites, letting them resonate together, while tracing the paths the artist wore. I looked at *North* at the opening and thought about those skinny dirt trails worn by pedestrians who ignore paved paths and walk where they want, what landscape architects call 'desire paths'.

I couldn't hear any of Robinson's field recordings at the opening: they're quiet and exhibition openings are loud. Sitting in Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces a week later, the space was quieter and I could let my ears pull me around Robinson's map. I thought about how memory works: how we build separate things together in our minds because of the resonances we find between them, resonances which are local and personal,

based on the peculiar desire paths we've taken through time and space. It made me want to merge two things in my own map. One of them was *North* itself. As for the other, I'd been reading a lot of analytic aesthetics in the days before seeing *North*. Analytic aesthetics is the branch of philosophy that deals with the fine arts. It aims at a comprehensive explanation of what art is, where art gets its power, and the relationship between the various arts. What struck me as I stood with *North* was how little these explanations offered to the actual artwork in front of me.

Though philosophers had written about art before then, aesthetics only emerged as a distinct field of philosophy in the first part of the eighteenth century. The writings that defined the field also delimited the system of fine arts which were its object of study. Early aestheticians explained art as mimetic—getting its power from the imitation of things in the non-art world. Today music would present a problem for

a mimetic theory of art because no one has been able to argue convincingly that the majority of music represents anything at all.¹ However, in eighteenth century Europe music was held to be mimetic too: there was purely instrumental work but vocal music was at the centre of European professional music practice, and it was argued—by composers as well as philosophers—that vocal music should focus on representing the contours of speech. In the classical period which followed, composers shifted their attention and practice to purely instrumental music of greater and greater complexity, and it became hard to tell how such music might be mimetic or even representational. Some philosophers claimed that music was representational in subtle ways: that it represented emotions, for example, or pure will, as Schopenhauer argued. Another strategy was to exclude music from the fine arts altogether, as Kant did, arguing that if fine arts are representational, and music does not represent, music cannot be a fine art.²

Both rhetorical strategies started to flounder when painters produced non-representational images, and mimesis therefore no longer worked as a comprehensive explanation of art. Aestheticians settled on 'expression' as a replacement, which was effective until artists started making work that didn't seem to be expressing anything; this was followed by a period of confusion in aesthetics that has yet to end.

Prior to this, Gottfried Lessing tried in his 1766 *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* to delineate an alternative construct with which to think about art—the appropriate territory for each studio area. (He was governed by notions of propriety we no longer have.) Later Clement Greenberg would extend this argument to say that any given studio discipline should only concern itself with its unique qualities and purify itself of anything which could be done in another medium.³ The problem with both attempts is they don't consider how studio disciplines are locally constructed ideas whose boundaries are not necessarily fixed. To take an example from the ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl, some languages have no word for music as a separate entity from dance.⁴

Rather than inherent differences, the histories of the different studio disciplines are separated from one another by technical limitations which history is, at least at the moment, dissolving. But let's try to consider *North* as a piece of sound art and as a sculpture, from the point of view of these attempts to create a language with which to speak about art.

First, whatever problems might attend music's representational status needn't concern us here, both because there are now other sonic arts beyond music, and because all the sonic arts gained the power of representation when recording and playback technologies were developed. *North* takes advantage of both. It's a surround sound installation that is not necessarily music, though it does some of the things music does; directing our attention to different groups of sounds in turn within a formal structure. It doesn't seem to me to be about emotion, but the field recordings are by nature evocative of the places in which they

were recorded. The field recordings are quiet and play one after another, each from its own speaker, so the audience is drawn around the structure by the sounds, encouraging a quiet attentiveness.

We have more trouble trying to read *North* as a sculpture because analytic aesthetics hasn't had a whole lot to say about sculpture.⁵ What can one say about it then?

For starters, *North* is representational, without being at all mimetic. The work is a document of the process Robinson pursued in making it: the heights and layout of the speakers represent the elevations and relative locations of the places where the respective field recordings were taken. It's a map rather than an imitation of anything. In addition, many things are mapped: spatial relations, desire paths and sounds. The mapping is performed by building alignments between elements, some of them—like the bands of coloured light projected onto the walls and which correspond to whichever particular location we are hearing at the time—seemingly arbitrary.

Trying to build a desire path of my own between *North* and analytic aesthetics, I find simply a failure to communicate. Robinson's *North* has no use for the theoretical schemas of the aestheticians. This is not unusual today, but there was a time when the recommendations of aestheticians were influential in guiding artistic practise, perhaps because aestheticians and artists of the day were both happy to look to classical antiquity for inspiration, and the flow of ideas between the two was easier.

Considering aesthetics, I found a surprising lack of attention paid to contemporary art.⁶ One aesthetician I contacted told me they hadn't decided whether photography was an art yet, comment I find simply baffling. There is no particular reason why practising artists should pay any attention to aestheticians unless they're saying something useful, because making sense of aesthetics is not a necessary part of art practise. Making sense of what artists do, however, is precisely the mission of aesthetics.

And as far as the Laocoon problem goes (and the conceptual dilemma of languages without words for music that distinguish it from dance), perhaps a work like *North* expands upon the precedents of practises that elude the need for words for either sculpture or sound art.

Michael Pulsford is a Melbourne-based musician, composer and writer.

GEOFF ROBINSON
NORTH. AT THE JUNCTION OF INWOOD HILL PARK NEW YORK AND JÖKULSÁRLÓN SOUTHEAST ICELAND, FEBRUARY–MAY 2008 2009
PINE, STEEL FIXINGS, COAXIAL SPEAKERS (X10), 5-CHANNEL SURROUND SOUND DVD WITH VIDEO PROJECTION (X2), CABLE, CARPET 1160 X 882 X 396CM
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST

1. There are exceptions of course: the program music of Richard Strauss and others aims specifically at sonically representing non-musical events using the orchestra; Wagner's elaborate system of *leitmotifs* tries to build a kind of dictionary of musical phrases to refer to characters and themes; and *musique concrete* and sample-based music can both directly reproduce sounds from the (otherwise) non-musical world. These exceptions, influential though they are, still amount to a minority.

2. Peter Kivy, *Philosophies of Arts: An Essay In Differences*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, chapter one.

3. Clement Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', in Clement Greenberg, John O'Brian, *The Collected Essays and Criticism: Perceptions and Judgments 1939–1944*, University of Chicago Press, 1988 (Original article published 1940).

4. Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts*, (2nd edition, revised), University of Illinois Press, 2005, pp. 22–23.

5. Robert Hopkins, 'Sculpture', in Jerrold Levinson (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 572–582.

6. This isn't to say it's ignored, but as a new reader in the field of philosophical aesthetics I did not find much evidence of interest in contemporary art in this field. If interest is there it is a minor theme rather than a focal point of the discipline.

A TALK WITH JIM DENLEY: IMPROVISATION, ETHICS AND PLACE

TEXT: BEN BYRNE / IMAGES: JIM DENLEY



MONICA BROOKS
PLAYING DURING
A WALK ON
MARIA ISLAND
MARCH 2009
COURTESY
THE ARTIST

Jim Denley has just completed a residency on Maria Island, off the coast of Tasmania, with collaborators Monica Brooks and Dale Gorfinkel. The three musicians explored the island each day as part of the *Ten Days on the Island* festival. They spent their time walking, listening and playing together, inviting the public to join them in their explorations for the last few days. This might sound like a novel idea but for a man who has been playing improvised music in the Australian bush and in venues all over the world for over forty years, it is perhaps the most natural thing in the world.

Apart from *A Walk on Maria Island*, in the last couple of years Denley has completed a number of other projects demonstrating his focus on improvisation and site-specific performance. For example, he has undertaken a fifteen-day solitary walk in the Budawang Mountains of New South Wales, armed with only his saxophone, camera, audio recorders, food and a solar recharger. The resulting album, *Through Fire, Crevice and the Hidden Valley*, received an Honorary Mention in the Digital Music category of the *Prix Ars Electronica* in 2008 and has spawned several radiophonic pieces for ABC Radio National. In addition he has organised the annual *West Head Project* for the last three years, gathering a group of musicians

to play one-off improvisations together on a large, flat, tessellated rock on top of West Head in the Ku-ring-gai National Park. After living in Sydney for many years, Denley recently moved to the Blue Mountains where he has continued to play, explore and record outdoors.

BEN BYRNE: Although you have played with many different musicians, in various styles and in a countless variety of contexts throughout your life, you have always remained focused on improvisation in your music. What is the significance of improvisation for you personally and how do you approach it?

JIM DENLEY: I remember trying to compose in a traditional way when I was younger. It felt wrong to me. I don't feel comfortable telling others what to do. So I stopped trying to control others and continued to work with them on a collaborative basis, in the moment. This is the major significance of improvisation for me—to share the creative act with others.

It's important that the major collaborative dialogue takes place in real time, within the music. As soon as it starts occurring outside the music I'm nervous. I don't like the power games that result.

In some of my solo projects I get more compositional and a lot of the recordings I produce I regard as compositions, although they start life as improvisations. They are fixed, repeatable, have been reviewed and often edited, which sounds like composition to me. Recording is central to my process. I use it on a daily basis; it's my notation. It's a feedback to monitor the developments of the music as it evolves, and a way to achieve a finished composed object.

I find that repetition of ideas and structures in the music never works. Early on in my career I recorded a concert with percussionist Peter Ready. We loved the stuff so much that we learnt it for the next gig and we were so disappointed when we played that composition. We made the mistake of not being open to the specific space-time we were in.

The French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty uses the word 'plunge' to describe really being in the world. I believe that each space-time is unique, so I try and find an appropriate music for that space-time. Improvisation allows me to plunge into space-time and engage with the world. It doesn't always work, but I'm happy trying.

"For me, improvisation is always an experiment. It's an experiment with sound, space and time, but with politics and social interaction as well."

BB: You have said that although you are a musician you are most interested in the question of ethics, and that the various recordings and projects you have undertaken, and the focus you have on improvisation and the groups you play in, such as the Splinter Orchestra, are all linked by a concern with the ethics of playing music. Can you explain the ethical approach that you feel you attempt in music and why the issue of ethics is so important to you?

JD: I find it revealing that since about 2000 many of the younger musicians I play with are capable of advanced improvised music in large groups. This seems to me to indicate an evolution in humans and gives me enormous hope because, frankly, I don't think we were capable of it ten years ago; infantile egotism always used to get in the way. For me, improvisation is always an experiment. It's an experiment with sound, space and time, but with politics and social interaction as well. It's not that I asked myself 'How am I to behave as a musician?' It's more that the usual models of playing music felt wrong to me. One had to find new ways.

Each group is a new exercise, a delicate feeling out of the personalities and potentials of the interactions. It's very complex and very exciting, but I don't think dogma works, there is not one way to solve each group dynamic. That's why the dynamics of music groups can be so magical and inexplicable. In the end, the main reason I remain passionate about music is because it is a modelling activity where we are trying to work out ways of being and making together. We have some major challenges in the world at the moment that need some new models of working together.

BB: After living in Europe off and on for a number of years, you returned to Australia to live in Sydney and, more recently, the Blue Mountains. Why did you make that choice, given the significant opportunities that exist for you internationally?

JD: After three or four months in Europe I always get homesick. I realised the reason I play music has something to do with Australia. I adore the acoustics I can find in the landscape here. When I lived in Brussels I would often go to the woods outside the city to play. Something didn't feel right though. I'm not sure I understand these feelings but I'm sure they have a lot to do with why humans play music and why, sometimes, they don't.

BB: You had a pronounced interest in jazz early in your life as a musician and have worked playing jazz and commercial music to earn a living but despite your continuing interest in improvisation you have said that you remain unconvinced of the relevance of jazz both to contemporary musical life in Australia and the directions of your own work.¹ What role do you feel place has in music and how do you think it has affected the music you make?

JD: I hope to always play site-specific music. The sites I know best and love to play in are here in Australia. To me there was always something false about playing jazz here, or medieval European music, or Balkan rhythmic complexities. I played those things, and they didn't resonate with my soul, I think they never resonated full stop. Music isn't just between people, place is the other element. If we play traditions from other places here, it will always be a misinterpretation. I think place was central from quite early in my musical development, and it asked me difficult questions.

The first time I remember playing music into the bush is when I was twelve or thirteen on a family holiday to the Warrumbungles. I climbed with my dad and sister to the top of a mountain with my flute and played while the eagles glided above. I was aware that the content of my playing shouldn't be Mozart or Jethro Tull—the things I could play. I realised I should play something else, something more appropriate. I had nothing to play that was original and appropriate at that stage, but I was aware of the problem.

BB: Last month you traveled to Tasmania for a residency on Maria Island, and you have conducted numerous other recordings and projects involving improvising in the bush in various locations around Australia. Please explain what interest these places hold for you and how you feel the experience of playing in such environments has affected your approach to music.

JD: I genuinely feel that many of the acoustic spaces where I have played—the Budawangs, or Maria Island or the Blue Mountains—are far superior to most of the venues and studios I work in. I like the recordings I make in these spaces more than ones from the best studios. The Monolith Ravine in the Budawangs is my favourite place in the world to play and record; large trees and pocked marked, curved walls of stone provide complex surfaces for reflection.

In comparison, I find most of our buildings sonically simple minded. But I guess it's not just about acoustics. I like the other resonances in these spaces and I like the questions they ask of my music.

Art is partly about solving problems. If we put ourselves into these spaces we have to design sound that works, and because these are unique and often wonderful acoustics our solutions are potentially unique. In these places I often find the music intertwined with all the other elements there, and I like this feeling of being woven into the world. I usually find that audiences get it. People have been doing this, playing music, in these places for thousands of years and I'm not sure there is a good reason why we should stop.

Ben Byrne is a Melbourne-based artist, musician, writer and curator.

1. John Jenkins, 'Jim Denley' in *22 Contemporary Australian Composers*, NMA Publications, Melbourne, 2000. Viewed 05/04/09. <http://www.rainerlinz.net/NMA/22CAC/denley.html>.



JIM DENLEY PLAYING DURING
A WALK ON MARIA ISLAND MARCH 2009
COURTESY THE ARTIST
PHOTOGRAPHER: DALE GORFINKEL



DALE GORFINKEL PLAYING DURING
A WALK ON MARIA ISLAND MARCH 2009
COURTESY THE ARTIST
PHOTOGRAPHER: JIM DENLEY

THE THOUGHT IS MADE IN THE MOUTH

TEXT: AMELIA GROOM

Losing their names, these things under-went a process of uncreation and reverted to chaos, existing only to themselves in an unstructured world where they were not formally acknowledged, becoming an ever-widening margin of undifferentiated and nameless matter surrounding the outposts of man, who no longer made himself familiar with these things or rendered them authentic in his experience by the gift of naming.

(Angela Carter, *Heroes and Villains*, 1969)

Moaning, murmuring, squeaking, beeping, chattering, purring, scratching, sucking. The sounds that are stitched together in Alex Vivian's improvised *a cappella* music are at once primitive and futuristic, operatic and tribal, funny and scary, human and mechanic, and simple and powerful. They are repeated relentlessly, forming rhythms that come in waves, intricately layered on top of and woven in-between each other, putting the listener on edge one minute and lulling them to sleep the next.

Vivian recently gave me a copy of *Piss & Glitter*, a self-distributed cassette with recordings of two tracks called *Gothique Mongoose Faerie* and *Piece Angel*, in which the pulsating, droned-out vocals quickly take on a mesmerising and trance-like quality that is all consuming. Using nothing but his own voice and a loop, accidental rhythms arise when disjunctive sounds build on top of each other, feed off the other, fight with each other and mutate in different directions.

His sound experiments are spontaneous, self-sufficient and raw—much like his preferred visual art technique: collage. The reuse of existing motifs in new compositions is a way to avoid totalising ideas. It's an aesthetic Vivian first enjoyed when his mum made collages for him as a kid. They started out as compilations of marriage announcements and clippings from local papers about people he knew from the country town where they lived, but over time became more obscure. 'Ads for strawberries and stuff like that started popping up in the collages,' Vivian recalled to me as he was setting up his last solo show in Sydney (at Black & Blue Gallery in February 2009), 'and I loved the randomness of it.'

Comprised of prosaic images and found objects, his works themselves are expendable

too—many of them thrown away once a show is over. While Vivian has a decidedly anti-precious approach to art, by contrast the medium of collage can also be seen as coming from an archival impulse; an attempt to record and remember fragments from our image-saturated world. The obsessive collecting of clippings from *Dungeons and Dragons* pamphlets, skating magazines, gay street press and old copies of *TV Hits* is a process of cataloguing images that are otherwise highly ephemeral.

The interweaving of contradictory impulses and emphasis on found materials and chance in Vivian's work also brings to mind the anarchistic spirit of Dada. Embracing immediacy and random spontaneity, the Dadaists fused visual, textual, performance and sound components while vehemently denouncing any total ideas. Tristan Tzara, who claimed 'thought is made in the mouth', created poetry by pulling words at random from a hat, and Hugo Ball spoke of inventing a sound poetry or 'verse without words', with a view to creating a new language untainted by convention.

While Vivian's earlier recordings and performances were lyrical (albeit usually nonsensically), he reached a point of departure from words. His more recent work has turned to free-form vocal expression, a different type of language created from made-up and accidental noises. The attraction to naivety and infantile un-thought in Vivian's music also synthesises with Dada, which was named in reference to baby speak, or to a child's word for hobbyhorse in French. Vivian's sound has long retained a drive towards pre-verbal states, and while one of his many past musical outfits was called Googoo Gaga, his current collaboration with his art school buddy Christopher LG Hill has the babyish name Gugg.

Having gained a following over the last few years performing and recording solo under the moniker Always, Vivian is now focusing on rehearsing and recording in Gugg. He says the decision to drop off the live circuit is part of his general drive towards greater musical consideration and control. While Gugg's practice remains solely improvisational, Vivian identifies a move within



the collaboration towards more form and structure: 'I like the whole "chance" thing when it brings new ideas but sometimes it just goes around in circles. Sometimes it's too easy and it rules things too much,' he told me with a hint of exasperation when we met for a can of Coke on Brunswick Street in March. 'In Gugg we're introducing more planning and control, and that has meant it's actually less concrete than Always had been.'

This struck me as an interesting claim from an artist whose work has been so strongly identified with anarchic randomness, but an underlying systematic approach and precision within the mayhem has been consistently identifiable within Vivian's work. In a way, recognisable meaning and structure are lost through relentless repetition, resulting in a loss of familiarity, but at the same time new systems and structures emerge, rather like the dialogue between *déjà vu* ('already seen') and its reverse *jame vu* ('never seen before'). Reminiscent of the freedom Angela Carter evokes within the absence of naming, Vivian's re-assemblages allow things to revert to chaos, lose their names and undergo a process of uncreation, showing that chaos and order exist in and through each other.

Amelia Groom is a freelance arts writer based in Sydney.



LEFT:
GUGG *PISS & GLITTER* 2009
AUDIO CASSETTE TAPE

ECSTASY AND DECAY (DETAIL) 2009
BLACK & BLUE GALLERY, SYDNEY
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST



LEFT
ECSTASY AND DECAY (DETAIL) 2009
BLACK & BLUE GALLERY, SYDNEY
IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST

GUGG: CHRISTOPHER LG HILL (LEFT)
AND ALEX VIVIAN (RIGHT)



JUSTINE KHAMARA

The poet has to be ready to sacrifice his life twice:

For the love of art – his work, posterity, the king of Prussia¹³⁷... but when it comes down to it he's a man like everyone else: for you, for himself, for the first to arrive.

– However I am no less cowardly about it!



Formal notice.

Marsyas¹³⁸ is a myth for little children only. Play with the flayed one¹³⁹ and don't over-indulge your skin.



Dying of hunger

Before I get there, how many dead people will I meet on my way that I won't know how to avoid. Before corporeal privations, only futile privations: love, ambition, liberty, harmony, dream... the least chimeric Roman is as likely as a Russian to allow the circus to take precedence over daily bread.¹⁴⁰

If I regain consciousness after so much fainting, I will suffer unspeakable discomforts in my flesh which is devoted to so many more delicate torments: finally cold, weakness... and insomnia will make all food disgusting to me. Everyone carries unexpected conclusions within themselves, among these, to face up to the great fear, the great desire must not be forgotten.

But under another name: vertigo, aren't they inseparable?

Mysterious without make-up, we touch her with a finger. Play bones with a skeleton.¹⁴¹ (I recommend it to all bare-footed children at Christmas, without a nest for eggs to be laid in.)

We've got the beautiful praying mantis who devours those she has fiercely fascinated within our skins, bone deep, and that isn't all. We desire her less than we respect her. We are interested in her soul more than anything. In her rest.

174 —

Excerpt from:
Claude Cahun, *Disavowels*, Susan de Muth (trans.), Tate publishing, London, 2007.

REVIEW



FLIPBOOK/LOCKGROOVE

TAPE PROJECTS
PLATFORM FRAME RESIDENCY (PART 1) 2009
TEXT: SIMON O'CARRIGAN / IMAGE: DIN HEAGNEY

Flipbook/Lockgroove was the first chapter in Tape Projects' residency that will continue until August 2009 in Platform's unique gallery space under Melbourne's Flinders Street Station.¹ The project comprised eighteen flipbooks, and a vinyl LP containing sixty-two soundtracks, installed in a style akin to shopfront merchandising. Also editioned as a box set—in a design reminiscent of a pizza box—this was take-away art, consumable in slices. On a base of vinyl, with audio tracks and flipbooks as toppings, the audience were free to mix and match to suit their appetite.

Flipbook/Lockgroove encouraged the audience to create audio-visual relationships without employing digital (or 'new') media, through the use of an analogue format for both the audio and visual components. The digitally created recordings were output to an analogue format, giving them a direct correspondence between physicality and duration that the digital form precludes.² The flipbooks could be played at any rate the user wished, and the locked groove tracks subverted their own duration when forced to loop.

It was the two specific mediums employed in *Flipbook/Lockgroove* that reinstated temporal flexibility to both sound and image. The stasis of a loop, or an unflipped book, was open to performative, process-driven, and ever re-configurable engagements. With Tape Projects having concealed the artist credits for each track and flipbook, the mix-and-match selections were consequently arbitrary. The required agency of the audience brought out participation as a core theme. This was emphasised in the box set by the inclusion of three blank flipbooks, an invitation to 'do-it-yourself'. Knowledge of the previous iterations of the work as interactive installations was not necessary to elucidate the need for participation to activate this new project.

Through this (potential) interaction, *Flipbook/Lockgroove* enacted a pedagogical dimension. While the audience play, experiment with and reperform the work, and hence gain knowledge empirically, gaps still remained in the audience's understanding of the processes and reasoning behind each component. This ensured the work was not didactic, but a repository open to interpretations; an experiential work, to be engaged in and not just viewed. While many new media works are driven by experimentation and a process-based focus, here a certain agency was generously passed on to the audience.

To invoke the McLuhanism, the very message of the work was the medium. The medium in use was not 'old' or 'new' media, not pressed vinyl or bound paper, but the act of play. It is fitting then, that the term 'residency' is applied to the series of exhibitions to be staged by Tape Projects at Platform in 2009. Artists-in-residence are usually charged with creating new work, teaching, and offering questions to new audiences, *in situ*. With *Flipbook/Lockgroove*, Tape Projects achieved all three.

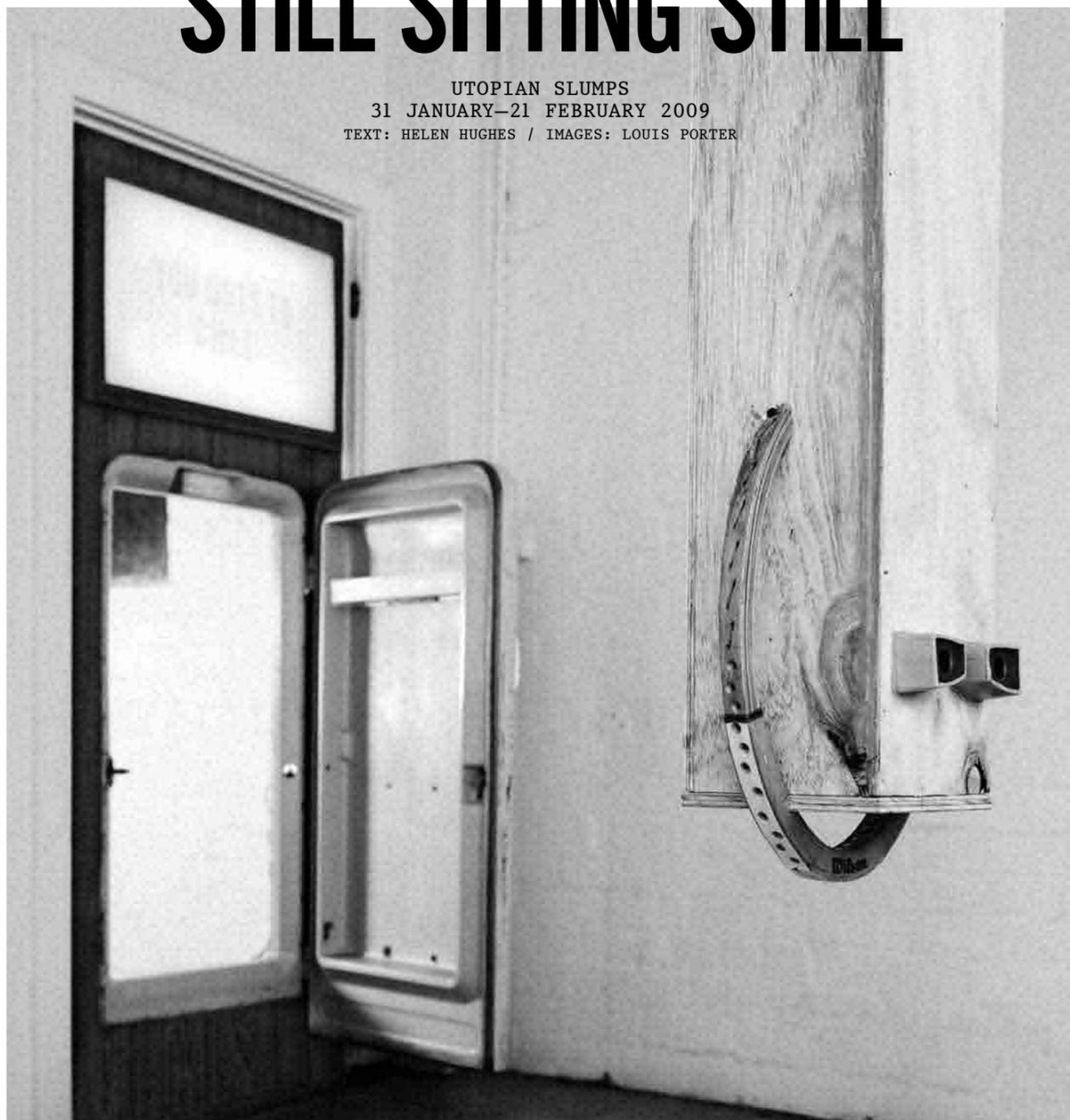
Simon O'Carrigan is a visual artist and animator based in Melbourne.

1. Tape Projects are a Melbourne-based collective of artists working across many forms of new media, with a decidedly lo-fi attitude. Their communal, open-source and collaborative approach to art making dictates that they be known more by their collective name than individual names. For a full list of collaborators, see <http://www.tapeprojects.org>. The author has previously collaborated with Tape Projects, but has had no involvement in *Flipbook/Lockgroove*.

2. Frames in video are 'interlaced' meaning they overlap across time, and digital audio tracks can be compressed without being shortened. Film is comprised of discrete frames, running at a predetermined rate per second, and vinyl recordings have a physical track length that (unless played at the wrong speed) directly correlates with their duration.

DANIEL MOYNIHAN STILL SITTING STILL

UTOPIAN SLUMPS
31 JANUARY–21 FEBRUARY 2009
TEXT: HELEN HUGHES / IMAGES: LOUIS PORTER



Since at least 1917, when Duchamp proffered *Fountain* to the selection panel of the *Société des Independents* for their annual exhibition, the intertwined concepts of art as spectacle and art as a critically engaged prank have informed the strategies with which artists have critiqued the institutional definition of art objects. More recently, through the exploits of artists—such as, Daniel Buren, to pick one example, whose personal ideology pivots around a highly privileged, discursive brand of institutional critique—a significant strand of this practice has developed its own meta-commentary, driving a wedge between art and its wider audience. Daniel Moynihan's exhibition *Still Sitting Still*, held at Utopian Slumps in February this year, riffed on this legacy of the art joke and its annexing by art criticism in recent years, adding to an alternative and accessible dialogue developing alongside the increasingly internalised debate related to institutional critique. Moynihan's vast, site-specific installation, punctuated by a series of conceptual gags, was a generous joke that refreshingly ignored the trappings of this later, slightly hermetic mode of criticism. Less didactic, instead Moynihan's humour took the work in a centripetal direction.

To turn to the work: arriving at the top of Utopian Slumps' notorious staircase, you were presented with a bathtub embedded in a carpeted plinth and a makeshift periscope suspended above it at eye-level. Stepping down into the tub activated gag #1. Concealed beneath the plinth was a waterbed that caused the bathtub to sway like a rocking boat when touched, catalysing a moment of involuntary slapstick. Looking through the periscope, you searched for some littoral vista only to be presented with a confusion of geometric constructions amidst the tangle of the gallery's existing wooden beams.

Leaving the bathtub in order to follow the direction of the telescope, entry was blocked by a refrigerator door (replete with crusty stickers and old magnets) refitted in the doorway. One of the stickers was a miniaturised cover of the old hip-hop album *Strictly Business* by EPMD, modified to include Moynihan's self-portrait Photoshopped onto Parrish Smith's face (gag #2). Additionally, the acronym 'EPMD' (Erick and Parrish Making

Dollars) had been reshuffled to read 'EPDM', referencing Moynihan's initials (gag #3). Upon opening the refrigerator door, lights above displayed the words 'YOU GOTTS TO CHILL', a song title from *Strictly Business* and also a hint at what lay beyond the door (gag #4).

What did lie beyond in the second space was a giant, plywood iceberg suspended from the ceiling. Walking beneath this synthetic construction, the sheer bulk of materials hanging above you in an ominous, Damoclean gesture and its veneered extremities grazing your head was transfixing, as were the shimmering reflections in the silver space-blankets surrounding the iceberg. This—you now realised—was what you had seen from the periscope in the previous room. Meanwhile, the space filled with the drone of a solitary air conditioner, labouring desperately to keep the artificial iceberg from melting in the middle of February's heatwave.

Perhaps best articulated by the metaphor of the struggling air conditioner that was the punch line of this slowly unfolding joke, Moynihan's installation went beyond merely ridiculing the hackneyed trope of the spectacularised art object. *Still Sitting Still* drew everyone in: physically, through the slapstick motion of climbing into the unstable bathtub; comically, through the references to EPMD; and intellectually, through the irony underpinning the act of contemplating a veneered iceberg and its air conditioner/life support system in a contemporary art space in Collingwood. After almost two decades of watching some of the more nihilistic strands of institutional critique unfurl, some of us may have been left feeling a little cool. Moynihan's immersive art prank, which operated on a whimsical and interpersonal level—drawing its audience towards the centre of the gag by punning on itself, rather than outwardly attacking the institution from within—resuscitated the waning relationship between artwork and audience, and re-inspired some faith in the inclusive art gesture in the process.

Helen Hughes is an art history student currently undertaking the Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces and Art & Australia Emerging Writers' Program.



THIS PAGE, OPPOSITE & PREVIOUS:
DANIEL MOYNIHAN
STILL SITTING STILL (DETAIL) 2009
MIXED MEDIA
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
COURTESY OF DANIEL MOYNIHAN
AND UTOPIAN SLUMPS, MELBOURNE





TRILLING WIRES IN THE BLOOD

21:100:100: ONE HUNDRED SOUND WORKS
BY ONE HUNDRED ARTISTS FROM THE 21ST CENTURY

GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY ART SPACES, MELBOURNE
11 OCTOBER—15 NOVEMBER 2008

TEXT: NICK CROGGON / IMAGES: ANDREW CURTIS AND DANIEL PETERSON

CURATORIUM OF ALEXIE GLASS, EMILY CORMACK, OREN AMBARCHI AND MARCO FUSINATO. GALLERY DESIGN BY EMILY CORMACK, ALEXIE GLASS AND ADAM HOWE.

Numerically speaking, *21:100:100*, as part of the 2008 Melbourne International Arts Festival at Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces (GCAS), was a grandly ambitious project: presenting 100 pieces of music by 100 artists from the twenty-first century. No less weighty was its broader ambition of bringing this number of works to light while concurrently asking the question, 'in what light?'. The exhibition, in other words, not only surveyed a decade of sound, but also questioned what was at stake in its very act of presentation.

The constellation of works covered by the show painted a diverse and often challenging portrait of music in the last decade. Each of the 100 artists had been carefully selected by a curatorial team, consisting of GCAS curators Alexie Glass and Emily Cormack, and music practitioners Oren Ambarchi and Marco Fusinato. The pieces—some of which were created specially for the show—stretched across oceans and genres. They ranged from American minimal sound pioneers Alvin Lucier and Charlemagne Palestine to more recent digital experimenters such as Japan's Ryoji Ikeda, from shamanic improvisational circles (Finland's Kemiälliset Ystävät and Italy's $\frac{3}{4}$ HadBeenEliminated) to eccentric US songwriters such as Jandek and Scott Walker.

Yet, for a show dedicated to sound, the gallery itself was eerily quiet. In a smart design conceived by Cormack, Glass and Adam Howe of the Melbourne International Arts Festival, the works were channeled into 100 pairs of separate headphones. These were laid out alphabetically, each with an accompanying text, in a curving line that snaked across the gallery floor. Finally, in a stunning unifying gesture, the entire gallery was bathed in an electric blue light, casting the dark lines of the headphone wires into sharp relief and projecting spidery shadows on the walls. Amidst this dispersed field, the sound works became points of intensity, each work unfolding its hermetic world for the pleasure of a single listener.

But what was the meaning of such a dramatic presentation of music within the space of a contemporary art gallery? The contrast between the sparse diluted wash of the exhibition's aesthetic layout, and the intense introversion demanded by each individual work pointed to a broader tension between music and the visual arts that has long crippled dialogue between the two. While the realm of visual art is always turning to tools like language, architecture or music to describe or expand its bounds, music is usually far less trusting of such dialogue. A dominant mode of thought that hovers around music seems to suggest that to listen properly is to be sealed off from all other modes of artistic engagement; to experience sound requires one to become a focused aural unit, with eyes closed and mouth shut.

As Oren Ambarchi noted in conversation with Marco Fusinato in the catalogue published to accompany the show, 'Y'know this is bullshit talking about this stuff, the real way to experience it is by listening'.¹ In such an environment, the task of engaging a dialogue, either about the relationship between art and music, or merely about music itself, becomes a very difficult one indeed.

But what really underpins this butting of heads? Is it an aggressive act or 'a dilemma'? The problem is one of time. In the same way that an architectural or visual form occupies space, a work of sound occupies time, weaving its particular shape and texture through the fabric of time itself. Time in music is movement, but not movement in a spatial sense. Rather, it is a process of unfolding; the unraveling of a musical image that results in what Morton Feldman would call a 'transfixing' of time.² From Masonna's screeching walls of noise to Ambarchi's own beaded strings of tones, *21:100:100* elegantly demonstrated the way in which music, like art, could flex and expand through time to create its own very material forms. It is in this sense that the sound recordist Francisco López, whose piece was made from sound recordings of Costa Rica's La Selva forest, wishes his works to be understood; not as the acoustic traces of remote physical spaces, but rather as new aural creations which carve their own space in both time and the mind of the listener.³

The great victory of *21:100:100* was its realisation that to *present* sound, especially in an art gallery, one must confront the challenge

of a fundamental disjunction of form that allows for time. *21:100:100* staged the problem of dialogue between the conditions of music and art as a tension of form, played out between the appearance of the exhibition in the gallery's space (the blue light and black wires), and the durations of the sound works. Manifesting this tension, the gallery's eerie quietness became like the silence of an indrawn breath—the installation itself a powerful metaphor for the discursive and durational space opened up by the show's act of presentation. *21:100:100*'s final message seemed to be that it is only by directly confronting the fundamental formal differences between music and art that a means for surmounting these dissimilarities, and hence the opening of a space for dialogue, can be created.⁴ The web of hanging wires that were the lifeblood of the project's visual and aural dimensions were also its symbolic crux.

Nick Croggon lives and works in Melbourne, at a law firm by day and as an art writer by night.

1. Oren Ambarchi in *21:100:100: One Hundred Sound Works by One Hundred Artists from the 21st Century*, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne and MONA, The Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, 2008, p. 339.

2. Morton Feldman, 'Vertical Thoughts', in *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, Exact Change, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 12–14, p. 12.

3. Francisco López, 'Profound Listening and Environmental Sound Matter', in Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner (eds.), *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, The Continuum International Publishing Group, New York, 2004, pp. 83–87, p. 83.

4. In this very space a few weeks later, then cleared of the show, GCAS held a public forum to both debate the project and launch an excellently produced catalogue.

THIS PAGE & OPPOSITE:
21:100:100: ONE HUNDRED SOUND WORKS
BY ONE HUNDRED ARTISTS FROM THE 21ST CENTURY
INSTALLATION VIEW
GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY ART SPACES, MELBOURNE
COURTESY GERTRUDE
CONTEMPORARY ART SPACES



EMMA WHITE BLANK MEDIA

MOP PROJECTS, SYDNEY
26 FEBRUARY–15 MARCH 2009

TEXT: OLIVIA SOPHIA / IMAGES: EMMA WHITE



Emma White's exhibition *Blank Media* is ostensibly about language. Entering MOP Projects, a Fimo replica of a gallery work label welcomes you to a world of carefully sculpted textual artifacts. Pens and pencils inhabit a space between object and word, while a suspended light bulb titled *Epiphany (burnt out)* (2009) suggests the illuminating, if contested, power of language. The mental switch is flicked, and we think 'got it'.

But there's more to this stationer's shop. White's work is made almost exclusively from Fimo, a readily available craft clay popular with children. Using her hands and a scalpel, White manipulates the medium into exacting simulations of everyday objects. She is aware of the pitfalls of reproducing objects from a mental image alone, particularly the failure of memory, and insists on copying typical mundane artifacts. The resulting replicas are exacting to the point of confusion, and gently undermine our trust in sensory information. Faint fingerprints left in the Fimo act as reminders of the physical gestures of creation. They are the punctum that ruptures White's realism.

White approaches the potential of a stick of Fimo as a photographer would employ a roll of film, and it's not surprising to learn that she studied photography at art school. Like photography, sculptural realism can, on one level, be reduced to a mode of selection. That is to say, what the artist chooses to replicate assumes more importance than the fact of replication. Through accurate recreation the medium dissolves, giving preference to the object or concept represented, and resigning the original referent into the

realm of ideas. Ironically, however, our empathy is for the artwork in front of us, for the idea of the object, rather than its original.

In *Blank Media*, this re-presentation is used as a platform for considering the conundrums of linguistic communication. *Template (alphabet)* (2009) is a working copy of a stencil that highlights the exponential potential of linguistic communication (the 600,000 words of the English language can be created from just twenty-six letters), where as *Moot Writing Implements* (2009) points to the limitations of language. The impotent replicas exist in a 'moot' zone, a liminal space between thought and expression.

White's exploration of copying, creation and communication are distilled in *Reproduction* (2009), a mesmerising video of a photocopier endlessly inhaling and exhaling blank sheets of A4 paper. Without the video, *Blank Media* risked being a collection of endearing objects connected by an interesting theme. A copy of a copied copier repeatedly copying copies, the video situates the other sculptures within a condition of continually cycling repetition. *Reproduction* is a mirage of copies, a meta-narrative for the other acts of replication placed around the room. The photocopier is also a playful mirror of the artist's process and her concerns in this exhibition. Art and language can be fun and games, and it is evident that White enjoys playing them.

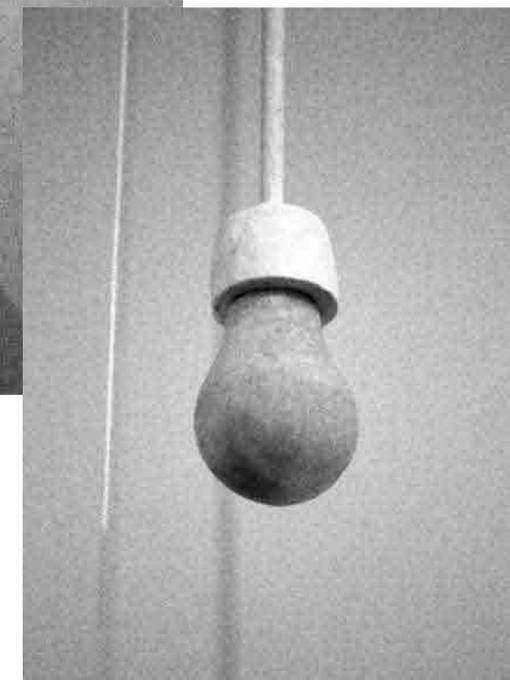
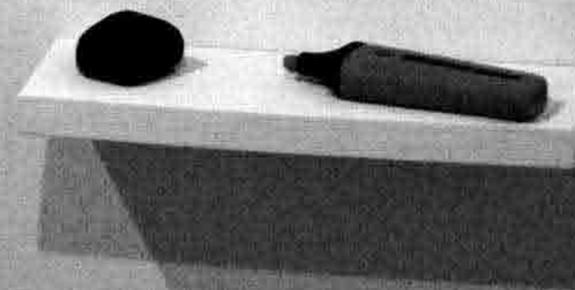
Olivia Sophia is a Sydney-based arts writer.



OPPOSITE:
EMMA WHITE
*UNTITLED (MOOT WRITING
IMPLEMENTS)* 2009
POLYMER CLAY
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
COURTESY THE ARTIST

LEFT:
TEMPLATE (ALPHABET) 2009
POLYMER CLAY
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
COURTESY THE ARTIST

BELOW:
EPIPHANY (BURNT OUT)
(DETAIL) 2009
POLYMER CLAY, SYNTHETIC
VENETIAN BLIND CORD,
WIRE, HOOKS
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
COURTESY THE ARTIST





NORTH STAR / DARK STAR

THE NARROWS
29 JANUARY–28 FEBRUARY 2009
TEXT: AMELIA DOUGLAS / IMAGE: TOBIAS TITZ

NORTH STAR/DARK STAR
INSTALLATION DETAIL
COURTESY THE NARROWS, MELBOURNE

The premise was simple: to bring together four artists whose works engage with Iceland, as both a place and as a concept. As someone who knows little about either Iceland or Icelandic art, I was intrigued by the idea. Add to this that only one of the artists in *North Star/Dark Star* originated from Iceland, and we have a very interesting platform to embark from indeed.

In a bid both to avoid the ‘mini-survey’ approach and to deter exoticism, curator Greg Fullerton secured a small selection of significant historical pieces by Swiss-German Dieter Roth (1930–1998) and Austrian-born Franz Graf (b. 1954), which were shown alongside works by younger artists Huginn Þór Arason and Sandra Vaka Olsen (from Iceland and Norway). This kind of independent curatorial work occurs all too rarely in smaller Australian galleries, mainly due to the prohibitive costs of international insurance and freight for work by artists of Roth’s calibre, but also, I suspect, because of a general pressure to focus on the ‘now’ at the expense of the ‘then’ (the most recent works; the latest artists). *North Star/Dark Star* instead allowed the contemporary and the past to coalesce, offering a rare opportunity to consider Roth and Graf’s influence upon a younger generation of artists, while leaving space for shared resonances to emerge.

The North Star, Fullerton tells me, is a navigational beacon for those north of the equator. In Iceland, the star acts as a guide for lost travellers, visible high above icy landscapes in the darkness of night. In the exhibition, this celestial feature offered a starting point for spatio-temporal dispersions: a locus of place and space that might become unfixed and ‘darkened’, perhaps by the light of the moon.

Lunar motifs proliferated across the works, lending a science-fictional timbre to the overall aesthetic. Sandra Vaka Olsen’s photographic diptych, *A Light Corruption* (2008), captured barren, moon-like landscapes by means of double exposure—Olsen opened the back of her camera at the same time the shutter was released, streaking accidents of light across the negatives. These landscapes were exhibited in tandem with her grid of twenty moons, a Becher-like typology of naturally recurring forms. The moon appeared again in Franz Graf’s new series of digital prints *Untitled* (2009). Here, photographs of volcanic landscapes, trees, the sky and an Icelandic health spa were overlaid with Graf’s familiar geometric mandalas and heavy black circles—Fellini’s *8½* meets 1970s, prog rock album covers.

Huginn Þór Arason’s performative paintings *börkur* (‘bark/hide/cover’) introduced a welcome tactility to an otherwise graphically saturated exhibition. For some time, Huginn has been involved in ‘re-making’ his wardrobe, painstakingly replicating the shapes, patterns and textures of his garments into wearable art works. Neatly folded versions of Huginn’s underpants and socks were laid out on chairs; a couple of hand-painted jackets hung on hooks. Although this was billed as a generous gesture, Huginn has previously admitted to a ‘pathological interest in the surface of things’, and it’s worth taking this claim seriously.¹ How can you act if you believe that the universe ends at the edges of your coat sleeves? Less self-absorbed was Huginn’s invitation for visitors to write a postcard in response to a pile of abstract watercolours, and to stamp them with the text *þú varst hér í anda* (You were here in Spirit) for eventual return to the artist.

The real gem of the show was Roth’s sound piece *Autofahrt No 1* (1979), an unedited recording made by Roth during a car trip with his young son across Iceland. As Dieter drives across the landscape, he and Bjorn chat, get bored, tune the dials of the radio, listen to the hits, and make comments on passing cars. This work is a time capsule, ghosting space with the sounds of a journey long since past.

I listened to Roth’s record while taking in his screen print, *Ein Gerissener Hase* (A Sly Hare) (1990). The shape of Iceland (Roth’s chosen homeland for over four decades) is graphically remodelled as a giant, polytonal rabbit: a rainbow of browns, pinks, oranges and yellows in an ocean of stratified blue, recalling the mutability of locations and their shifting incarnations as islands of meaning. This image is a good metonym for *North Star/Dark Star* as a whole: Iceland appears as a hazy presence, an abstract backdrop that allows for more ambitious explorations of space, time, presence and absence; refolding territories and sight lines to produce altered states, and, possibly, altered minds.

Amelia Douglas works as a curator and writer in Melbourne. She is a member of the Editorial Committee of *un Magazine*.

1. Thanks to Greg Fullerton for his comments on the exhibition.



PAUL J KALEMBA
*RESISTING SUBVERSION
 OF SUBVERSIVE
 RESISTANCE,
 PROPOSITIONS TOWARD
 URBAN (R)EVOLUTION,
 (DETAIL) 2009*
 VEGETABLES, WOOD,
 CARDBOARD
 230 X 95 X 37 CM
 COURTESY THE ARTIST
 AND PLATFORM ARTISTS
 GROUP INC., MELBOURNE

RESISTING SUBVERSION OF SUBVERSIVE RESISTANCE: PROPOSITIONS TOWARD URBAN (R)EVOLUTION

PLATFORM ARTISTS GROUP INC., 6–28 MARCH 2009

TEXT: LEON GOH / IMAGE: DIN HEAGNEY

FEATURING WORKS BY PAUL J KALEMBA,
 MARC DE JONG, VAN THANH RUDD AND TOM CIVIL
 CURATED BY PAUL J KALEMBA

Acronyms such as GFC, GDP and CPI are appearing in profuse numbers, signifiers of the impending financial crisis that is supposed to affect us all. Has this economic discourse of doom and gloom diverted attention from the need for socially engaged, witty and artistic commentary on other political issues, such as social justice and climate change? *Resisting Subversion of Subversive Resistance: Propositions toward urban (r)evolution*, curated by Paul J Kalemba, suggests otherwise, proposing various possibilities for a real and effective critique of our social condition.

Marc de Jong's work, *Resisting Subversion of Subversive Resistance*, successfully highlights local attitudes toward our contemporary situation. Referencing text-based conceptual art, de Jong appropriated cringe-worthy Aussie vernacular speech that reinforces some semblance of a national identity and community. Phrases such as 'See yuz later' and 'Sweetaz' are presented in the form of green road signs. Although humorous, they flag attitudes inherent in signifiers found in xenophobic rants against a perceived 'other', and language that can be heard, for example, in current affairs. Situated in the brightly lit and uninhibited void of their display case, de Jong's signs are unapologetic clichés, portraying a local mythologised sense of self.

Also employing a similar in-your-face strategy, Van Thanh Rudd's work *Economy of Movement - A Piece of Palestine* displayed a small grey-brown stone in front of two framed, vibrant blue text plaques, designed to look suspiciously like Connex literature. One of the plaques read, 'The stone exhibited is from East Jerusalem, Israel (Occupied Palestinian Territory). It was thrown

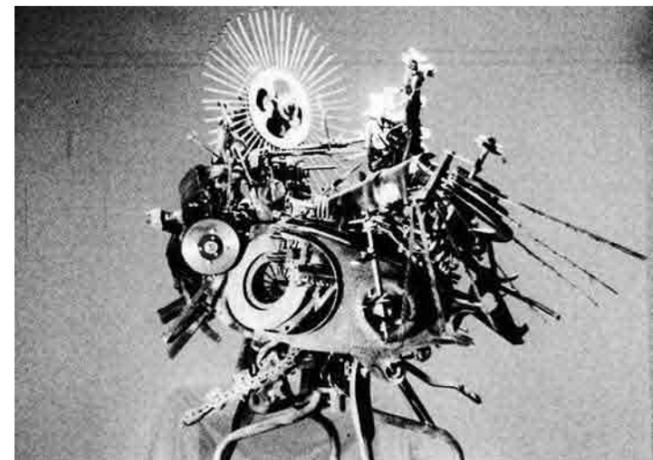
at an Israeli Defence Force Tank (IDF) by a Palestinian Youth'.¹ By employing a classical institutional display technique and presenting the rock as a rarefied art object, Van's work is an act of subversion, reinforcing its (false) emblematic significance as an authoritative document of defiant uprising. There is a sense of immediacy in the simplicity of the work, which also acts as a comment on our apathy in engaging critically with global events.

Paul J Kalemba created a number of clever works that critiqued the lack of social responsibility of corporations. *Beyond Petroleum* evoked the strategic marketing changes implemented by oil company BP—a 'green' image—aimed at appeasing the average consumer's media-fuelled concern over climate change. Arts activism on a DIY scale, Kalemba cheekily subverted this corporate dishonesty with jars of colourfully preserved fruits; a proposition for a kaleidoscopic utopian future where cyclists are the majority of road users and the common cause takes precedence over rampant individualism and gas guzzling SUVs.

Whilst exhibitions at Platform can appear to lack thematic consistency due to the display box nature of the space, exaggerated in this instance by the broad sweep of topics that were addressed by the artists, what *Resisting Subversion of Subversive Resistance* successfully achieved was recognition of the need for daily acts of social and political engagement. With our existence becoming increasingly framed by a sense of apathetic stupor and fear-inducing media headlines, *Resisting Subversion* was the non-financial stimulus package that we all needed.

Leon Goh is a freelance writer based in Melbourne

1. Connex's parent company Veolia is currently building a light rail network through disputed land in East Jerusalem.



ARTHUR CANTRILL
 AND CORINNE CANTRILL
 ROBERT KLIPPEL—
JUNK SCULPTURE 1964
 (1964)
 FILM STILL
 IMAGE COURTESY OF
 ARTHUR CANTRILL AND
 CORINNE CANTRILL

ARTISTS ON FILM

MELBOURNE CINÉMATHÈQUE,
 25 MARCH 2009

TEXT: LUCILLE PATERSON

Recently, Melbourne Cinémathèque screened seven films exploring the intersections between cinema and other artistic practices as part of an experimental film program *Artists on Film*, curated by Adrian Danks. By revealing ways in which cinema can expand on or transform the meaning and experience of artistic practices, the program made some suggestions as to how the ambitions of the cinema avant-garde engaged with the practices of avant-garde artists in the twentieth century.

Most of the films were from the 1960s, a decade of renewed interest in experimental film in North America, and also the period just prior to the emergence of conceptual art, with a consequent turning away from art practices wholly devoted to the art object. As a record of this era and its culture, Robert Breer's film, *Pat's Birthday* (1962), documents a series of happenings involving Claes Oldenburg and other artists over the course of one day. The film reveals the surge of artistic experimentations and ephemeral performance and happenings occurring outside the gallery and museum in the 1960s.

On March 17, 1960, Jean Tinguely set his self-destructing, kinetic sculpture, *Homage to New York* (1960) in motion outside the Museum of Modern Art. After a series of combustions, the whirling, clamorous sculpture collapsed in a heap of smoking debris, to the vigorous applause of the elegantly dressed museum audience. Breer, who collaborated with Tinguely on the artwork, documented the event in *Homage to Jean Tinguely's Homage to New York* (1960). The filmmaker used a number of cinematographic techniques such as double exposures, single frame shots and animation to portray the construction of Tinguely's sculpture from bicycle wheels, a piano and bits of scrap metal, as well as its auto-destruction.

Through his playful homage, Breer investigates the mechanical movement of the sculpture and satirises romantic notions of the relationship between artists and their work. In conveying the affinity between his artistic practice and Tinguely's, Breer also creates a highly distinctive work.

The screening also included two films by influential Australian experimental filmmakers Arthur and Corinne Cantrill: *Robert Klippel - Junk Sculpture 1964* (1964) and *Ivor Paints Arf Arf* (1998). *Junk Sculpture* takes as its subject a Robert Klippel sculpture, and cleverly lets us see the menacing and other qualities of the artwork by means of the simple devices of dramatic lighting, abrupt changes of perspective and a discordant score.

The film *Ivor Paints Arf Arf* focuses on a single painting, a group portrait of the sound art performers Arf Arf, painted by Ivor Cantrill, the filmmakers' adult and autistic son. While *Junk Sculpture* emphasised the existing qualities in an artwork, *Ivor Paints Arf Arf* infuses new meanings into the painting by manipulating the images around the painting. The Cantrills render everything external to the canvas either in shades of grey or in vivid contrasting colours, effects that render the surrounds of the painting relatively abstract. This in turn places the painting as the focus and centre point of any other reality. Through its presentation of seminal works of the cinema avant-garde, and collaborations between filmmakers and conceptual artists, *Artists on Film* revealed new perspectives and experiences of art and performance while at the same time indicating how visual art contributed to expanding the possibilities of cinema.

Lucille Paterson is a Melbourne-based writer.

WEST BRUNSWICK SCULPTURE TRIENNIAL

21 MARCH–12 APRIL 2009

TEXT: KELLY FLIEDNER / IMAGES: BIANCA HESTER



Lucas Ihlein's roving project *Get My Goat* initiated the informal proceedings that defined the wBST. Leading a goat through suburban streets, Ihlein attracted attention from the residents, who formed a participatory and collaborative audience. This mode of artist-audience interaction, whilst acknowledging that members don't share common histories, or even identify themselves as part of an artistic project, recognises the importance of engaging with new publics outside the walls of institutions in order to subvert and re-energise the traditional relationships between author and audience.

Practices based on participation formed the intended premise or mode of most projects within the wBST. Helen Walter's large scaffolding structure, on which sound and video events were staged at the site of Anstey and Ashton, facilitated screenings and exhibitions held within the broader context of parties and celebrations, communicating to visitors who were not merely consumers but also participants. The collective participants created narratives of belonging, which could be considered in terms of post-institution or new-institutional critique for their examination and promotion of a social imaginary of new communities and networks.

Susan Jacobs and Ardi Gunawan's video collaboration displayed at 135 Union Street depicted the artists clearing the vacant block of land for Walter's structure at Anstey and Ashton, ploughing the ground and removing large amounts of overgrown grass that was subsequently transplanted into the backyard at 135 Union Street. This process-driven collaboration, whilst strongly focusing on spatial and material transformations, exemplifies the most pertinent objective of the wBST—the dispersal and displacement of site into networks or components of social relations that created spaces for communities and belonging.

The striking connections between the lounge room of 135 Union Street and the exhibition space at Ocular Lab further emphasised the importance of connecting sites in order to facilitate social relations. Artists displayed similar works on both sites, highlighting the fact that interpretation shifted due to the drastically different contexts in which the art

ARTISTS: FIONA ABICARE, MARCUS BERGNER, TERRI BIRD WITH FIONA ABICARE, STEPHEN BRAM, MATTHEW BROWN, MICK DOUGLAS WITH CULTURAL TRANSPORTS COLLECTIVE, MIKALA DWYER, ARDI GUNAWAN, BIANCA HESTER WITH SASKIA SCHUT, CHRISTOPHER LG HILL, LUCAS IHLEIN, RAAFAT ISHAK & TOM NICHOLSON, SUSAN JACOBS, LISA KELLY, NICK MANGAN, SALLY MARSLAND, SCOTT MITCHELL, SPIROS PANIGIRAKIS, NIKOS PANTAZIS, ALEX RIZKALLA, GEOFF ROBINSON & JENNIE LANG, SASKIA SCHUT, HELEN WALTER, JUDE WALTON WITH PHOEBE ROBINSON.

Organised by the Open Spatial Workshop (OSW) collective of Terri Bird, Bianca Hester and Scott Mitchell, the *West Brunswick Sculpture Triennial* (wBST) presented a rich creative ensemble of installation, film screenings, site-specific work, sound art, performance and discursive activities. Twenty-seven local and national artists on four consecutive weekends, over five sites, sought to find ways for audiences to inhabit both public and private spaces through ephemeral provocations that challenged institutional modes of display.

was presented—Ocular Lab being a (thirteen year long) site of artistic production and display in comparison to the domestic interior of the suburban home.

The shift away from individual or autonomous sites of artistic production or display to the emphasis on networks and communities stimulates a renewed questioning of issues concerning: the role of the artist, the public function of art and the definition of community. Giving preference to moments of shared experience, lines between production and display were dramatically blurred at Nikos' Rear Entrance, a garage space behind another Brunswick home. Whether an example of the desire for interesting spaces for art and/or testament to the ability of art to inhabit any site, Niko's Rear Entrance above all became a place to hang out.

In a drafted paper, Bridget Crone discussed (with a small but devoted congregation) the importance of commissioning artists to develop their practise, rather than focus on the presentation of resolved work. Sitting within Nikos' Rear Entrance, the house (as the dominant structure to the garage) was discussed in relation to the 'Institution' whilst the garage became the annex, the alternative, and the site of significant potential to create and produce. The garage, as metaphor, rejects the set structure in favour of works in progress, experimentation and radical reinterpretation; and became the most important space for the artist-led, process-based activity that the wBST epitomised.

The common and shared domestic space where private and public boundaries blur became the hub and central active space for the Triennial, a context for gathering people together that celebrated the zone of local and suburban culture where people live their lives. If the institutional art spaces of the city represent the production of conformity, outside that—a bike ride away in Brunswick—in the residual and interstitial spaces of suburbia, life goes on. In west Brunswick, fleeting moments of communal gathering as ephemeral modes of art were preferred and celebrated.

Kelly Fliedner is Program Coordinator of Punctum, a regionally-based live arts organisation, a Program Committee member of West Space and recently became Magazine Coordinator for *un Magazine*.

LEFT:
LUCAS IHLEIN
GET MY GOAT 2009
ROUTE OF WALK
21 MARCH 2009

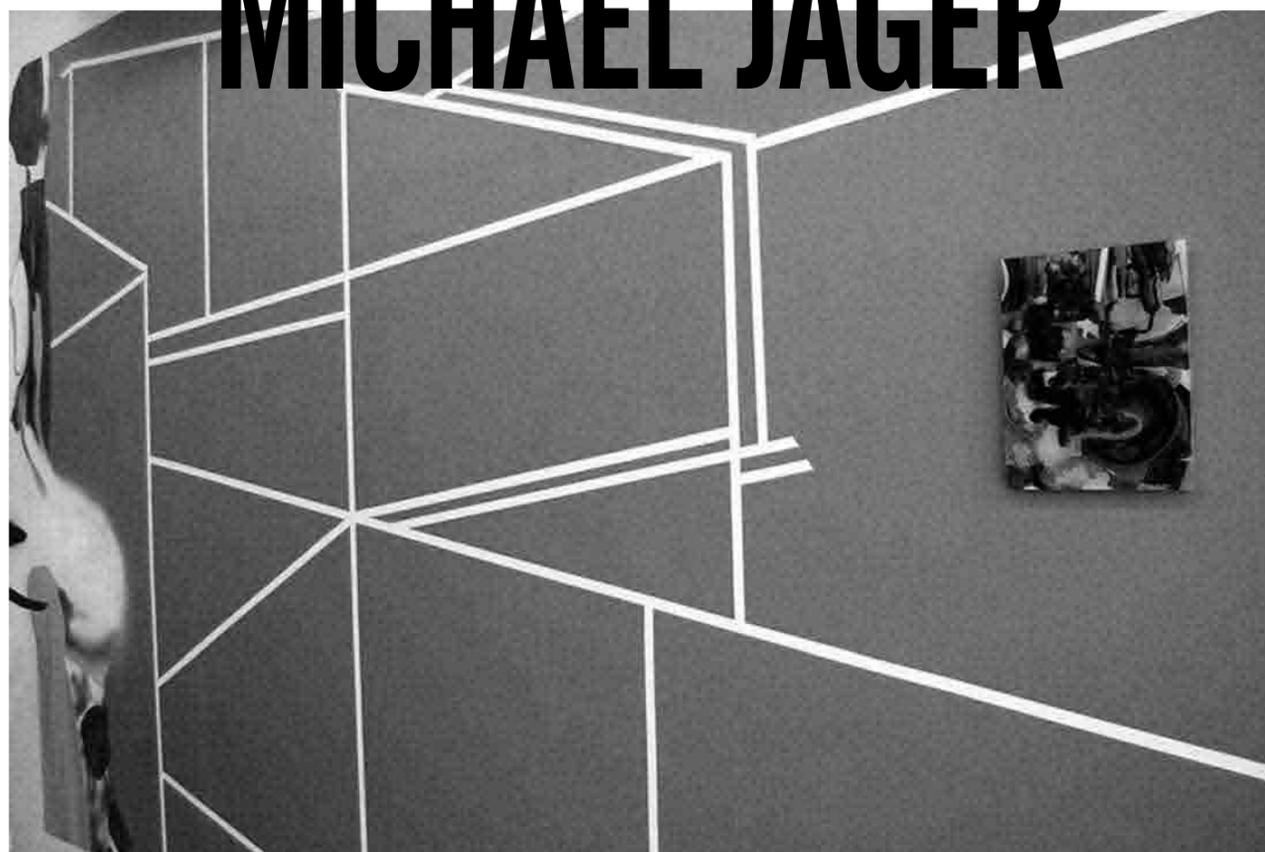
BELOW:
RIDE ON DINNER 2009
MICK DOUGLAS AND THE CULTURAL
TRANSPORTS COLLECTIVE
28 MARCH 2009



MICHAEL JÄGER
HEAP #6 2009
SYNTHETIC POLYMER SHEET,
ENAMEL AND OIL ON DIBOND
33 X 26 CM
COURTESY THE ARTIST

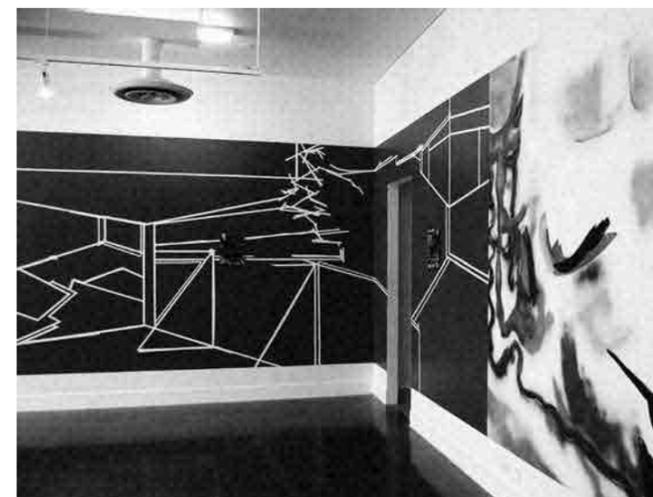
OPPOSITE:
MICHAEL JÄGER & DAVID HARLEY
ENERGETIC FRIEDA 2009
INSTALLATION DETAIL
PROJECT SPACE/SPARE ROOM, RMIT, MELBOURNE
COURTESY THE ARTISTS

POINT AND COUNTERPOINT: DAVID HARLEY AND MICHAEL JÄGER



ENERGETIC FRIEDA
PROJECT SPACE/SPARE ROOM, RMIT UNIVERSITY
10–27 MARCH 2009

TEXT: REBECCA COATES / IMAGES: THE ARTISTS



Window fronted galleries can be a boon for artists. Over the installation period, I watched the collaboration between David Harley and Michael Jäger develop from the street in front of RMIT's Project Space/Spare Room gallery. Facing onto the exterior world, the gallery revealed a kaleidoscope of colour and movement, as walls painted Yves Klein blue and cheerful orange were divided into a series of strange, morphing spaces and forms, an architecture of wall paintings and glass panels—interspersing and inter-relating—creating an unfolding, almost musical, counterpoint.¹

The nexus for the collaboration between Harley and Jäger originated when Harley lived in Germany during 2007. The artists were introduced to each others' practices, and so began a series of exchanges, conversations, and a shared interest in what they described as 'the universality of ideas'. As Harley suggested: 'it seems at this stage that we are responding to each other's abstract imagery.'² On returning to Australia, Harley made a series of three dimensional models of the gallery space, and sent these to Jäger in Germany, enabling both artists to explore their collaborative processes.

While Harley was in Germany, Jäger would no doubt have seen his recent large-scale 'digital scapes'. In these Harley explores traditional painterly techniques rendered through digital forms and processes, and the distinctive articulations of space and colour they create: multi-layered pictorial spaces and consequent illusions of depth. These extensive installation prints sing with a luminosity of colour and the vibrancy of the suggested formal visual spaces. In this collaboration Harley reintroduced his earlier abstracted paintings alongside these digital prints, as if the context invited the revisiting of original principles and the extrapolation of the digital form.

Jäger's contribution to the project was also indicative of his broader practice. Like Harley, Jäger has also created a series of pictorial spaces; abstracted rooms, painted directly onto the wall. These murals seem to act as a repository or set of ideas in which to place or superimpose smaller painted panels, and their open-ended quality makes them less like architectural spaces and more like ideas suggesting a phantasmal order. Perhaps they are a series of containers for something that neither needs, nor can be limited by, form, and hence flow around the gallery space without beginning or finite end. Spilling from the flat colour surfaces are seven of Jäger's glass panel paintings, with an effect at once microscopic and monumental. One wonders if this is a type of quantum science at work, colliding sub-atomic particles rendered in magnified, overblown detail. This is kinetic overload in compressed tablet form.

Talking with both artists, Jäger likens the process of inserting his glass panels into a structuralist form and counterpointing it with Harley's paintings and digital prints to the working process of Piet Mondrian, who, on completion of a series of works, went about painting a room in which to see them rather than inserting the works into an existing space.³ Jäger and Harley share an ongoing search for pictorial solutions, as they overlay and intersperse these colourful profusions into a series of imaginary hyper-real digital and physical spaces, and the simulated architecture they create from flat colour and line. This approach generates a new composite style at the borders where one artist stops and the other begins: an overlapping and interweaving that is at once playful and rigorous in its explorations of space and form.

Coda:

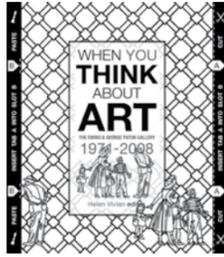
In the small, rear room that cannot be seen from the street, a flat-screen monitor shows the apparently real time unfolding, or creation, of Harley's computer-aided digital prints. Accompanying the rubbings out, insertions and smudging are the quiet hummings of the artist at work. This, finally, is the sound-scape that I always imagined accompanied these works. But it is not the language of music that I expect: gone are the symphonic sweepings or cool jazz riffs and in their place, the gentle bumbling sound of an unaccompanied piece sung out loud. Purity, it would seem, is the death of the picture.

Rebecca Coates is an independent curator, writer and lecturer based in Melbourne, and Associate Curator at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne.

1. Michael Jäger comments that the German language identifies colours with anonymous names and formulas, while Australians associate colours with proper nouns, giving the abstract a personality that would make this rendition Energetic (orange) Frieda (blue).

2. David Harley in an email to David Thomas, February 2009, as quoted in the exhibition catalogue: *Michael Jäger and David Harley, Collaboration*, Project Space/Spare Room, RMIT University, Melbourne, March 2009, np.

3. Michael Jäger and David Harley in conversation with the author, 11 March 2009.



WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT ART THE EWING AND GEORGE PATON GALLERIES 1971–2008

EDITED BY HELEN VIVIAN / PUBLISHED BY PALGRAVE MACMILLAN
TEXT: KIRRILY HAMMOND

Located deep within the University of Melbourne campus is the George Paton Gallery, a Melbourne institution with an extraordinarily rich history of exhibitions, performances and lectures that has not only inspired generations of students, but has also nurtured the careers of some of the key figures in Australian art today. *When you think about art; The Ewing & George Paton Galleries 1971–2008* is an impressive publication that brings this dynamic period of history to life with engaging essays and anecdotes by directors, artists and historians, accompanied by an extensive array of documentary images, some of which have been unearthed from the university's archive.

Editor Helen Vivian's introductory essay provides a concise overview of the book, her text equally serving as a short history of the art scene that has emanated from the Galleries from the early 1970s to the present. By contrast, the individual and often strident voices of the Galleries' directors contribute entertaining accounts of various intrigues and dramas that played out over the years. Meredith Rogers, Judy Annear, Denise Robinson, Juliana Engberg and Susan Hewitt each offer absorbing insights from their time at the helm. A comprehensive timeline of the exhibition program and publications extends throughout the book, and it is fascinating to scan the familiar names of artists who participated in some truly groundbreaking exhibitions, including: Barbara Kruger, Fiona Hall, Mike Parr, Peter Tyndall, Janet Burchill, Howard Arkley, Juan Davila, Jill Orr, Stelarc, John Nixon, Maria Kozic, Domenico De Clario, Imants Tillers, Peter Cripps, Jenny Watson, Vivienne Binns, Philip Brophy, Diane Arbus ... the list goes on.

The history of the Ewing and George Paton Galleries is remarkable not only for the calibre of the exhibitions, but also the prolific and energetic output of associated activities, such as numerous film and video screenings, school education programs, forums, public lectures and publishing initiatives.

In 1974 the first director, Kiffy Rubbo, and her then assistant, Meredith Rogers,

established *Art Almanac*, a regular listing of exhibitions that continues to be a valuable resource. They also contributed to the founding of *Agenda* and *Arts Melbourne*, arts magazines seeking to encourage a plurality of voices in arts criticism.

Public speakers invited into the program included Lucy Lippard, Bill Viola, Daniel Buren, Marina Abramovic and Ulay, Paul Taylor and Umberto Eco. In her essay, Judy Annear remarks how the plethora of international visitors in the late 1970s and early 1980s offered a range of views that had not previously been so accessible. The Galleries also enabled a feminist focus, evidenced in the establishment of the Women's Art Movement and the Women's Art Register and, as Janine Burke notes, Melbourne's first feminist art exhibition, *A Room of One's Own* in 1974.

Peter Tyndall has contributed significantly to the life of the Galleries, and in recognition his artwork adorns the cover of the publication.¹ Tyndall's work featured in *The Letter Show* in 1974, a project for which participants responded to the question: 'When you think about art, what do you think?' Helen Vivian posed this question again, thirty-four years later, as the basis for her 2008 exhibition *When you think about art*, which was held to accompany the launch of this publication.

The scope, ambition and detail of *When you think about art; The Ewing & George Paton Galleries 1971–2008* vividly presents the history of the Ewing and George Paton Galleries. The combined voices of the eminent contributors builds a clear picture of how and why these avant-garde Galleries operated, the milieu in which they existed, and their significant influence on the development of contemporary art in Australia.

Kirrily Hammond is Assistant Curator—Collection at Monash University Museum of Art

1. Tyndall's striking and graphic image is based on his design for a poster commissioned by Juliana Engberg to promote the gallery in 1986.



TOM REDDINGTON
HAPPY LAND 2008
MIXED MEDIA AND PEOPLE
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
COURTESY THE ARTIST

LOTS OF PEOPLE HAVE WHAT YOU HAVE

GEORGE PATON GALLERY
24 FEBRUARY–13 MARCH 2009
TEXT: JUSTINE GRACE / IMAGE: ANUSHA KENNY

ARTISTS: LEONIE CONNELLAN, LAURA DELANEY,
WANDA GILLESPIE, ALANNA LORENZON, ROCIO PUDNEY,
TOM REDDINGTON, DANIEL STOJKOVICH
CURATOR: ANUSHA KENNY

The role of an object's materiality in creating meaning, evoking emotion or provoking response seems almost inoperative in a world where technology so often reduces communication into typographical signs and emoticons. Yet, *Lots of people have what you have* (curated by Anusha Kenny), conveyed the enduring value of material to communicate sentiment. The exhibition brought together seven young artists whose work was 'engaged with mood and its regulation'.¹ Although sign and language played an essential role in many of the works (i.e. relaying statistical data or directing the viewer's experience of space), ultimately it was the physicality of material and the viewer's interaction with objects that formed the dialogue between maker, object and viewer.

Tom Reddington's installation *happy land* (2008) invited the audience to enter a cardboard tunnel adorned with kitschy objects from popular culture and the everyday. After crawling on hands and knees through the passageway, the viewer was alerted of their arrival somewhere new by the phrase, 'you are now at happy land'. It was the experience of the work rather than this instructive notice that affected one's mood or state of mind. Interacting with this playground-like installation was nostalgic, a reminder of the days of childhood. It also offered the simple pleasure of interacting in a space that traditionally prohibits the physicality of touch.

Leonie Connellan's *text book* (2008) also generated meaning through the audience's interface with material. After slipping on a pair of white gloves the viewer flipped through the book's delicate silk pages, which displayed statements about chaos theory and excerpts from Neil Gaiman's *Sandman: Endless Nights* (2003). Personally, being unfamiliar with both the mathematical dynamics of chaos theory and the fictional fantasies of the *Sandman* the text by itself did not resonate. However, the fabrication of the work—the aesthetic sensuality of silk and layering of embroidery and transferred images—functioned as a corporeal intermediary that fostered an intimacy with the text.

The quotations on deterministic chaos were reflected in the artist's choice of material; despite an apparent unsystematic placement of imagery, the final composition was governed by the initial limits and constraints of the silkscreen medium. Contrary to the traditional novel, Connellan's *textbook* offered effect through its materiality.

Another characteristic of the exhibition was the relationship between materiality, meaning and authenticity. Daniel Stojkovich's piece *Untitled* (2008) displayed a fading image of an interior of a Gothic church. Although the work had the appearance of an authentic sacred relic, it was, in actuality, a recently printed image of St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne. Meaning was not linked to the authenticity of material but, rather, to its appearance. The seeming decontextualisation of the image encouraged a questioning of the role of worship and ritual in an increasingly secular society. Of a similar nature was Wanda Gillespie's *Manhole #1* (2008) in which Post-It notes stuck on the ground directed the audience to 'look up', in turn revealing an artificial manhole opening onto a blue sky and lush foliage. The encounter with the incongruously placed window immediately drew a smile; a visceral response, tied not to the prank involved, but to the pleasure derived from the unexpected intrusion of the natural world.

While the material values of contemporary society have most certainly changed recently, our response to and consumption of many objects is often still determined more by symbolic values than inherent material qualities. *Lots of people have what you have*, in highlighting the ability of the materiality of art to invoke sentiments such as pleasure, happiness and wonder, is a reminder of our undervalued organic sensibilities.

Justine Grace is writing her Master's thesis in art history at the University of Melbourne and works on the editorial committee of *anti*THESIS.

1. Anusha Kenny, curatorial statement in *Lots of people have what you have*, exhibition flyer, George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne, 2009.

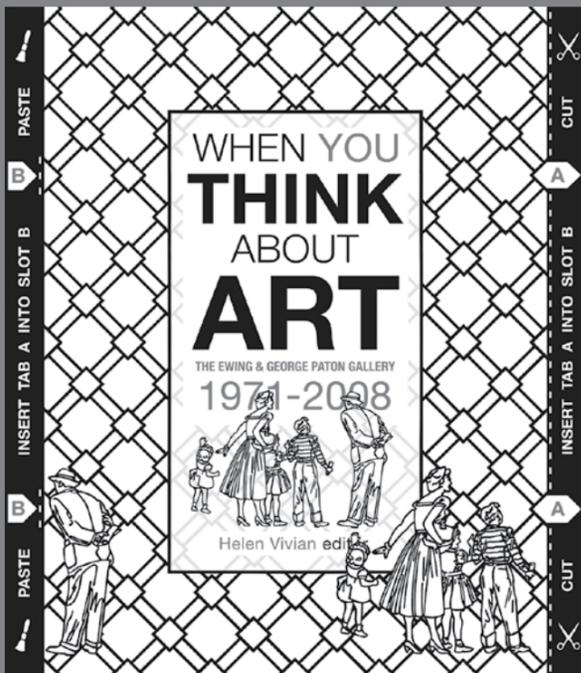
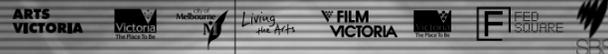
NEXT
WAVE

TIME LAPSE

NEW SCREEN-BASED WORK
BY YOUNG EMERGING ARTISTS

5:30-6:30PM
EVERY THURSDAY
JUNE 2009-MAY 2010
FEDERATION SQUARE, MELBOURNE

WWW.NEXTWAVE.ORG.AU



WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT ART

The Ewing & George Paton Galleries 1971 - 2008
Edited by Helen Vivian
Published by Palgrave Macmillan

240pp in full colour, 240x280mm

GALLERY PRICE \$69.96 (RRP) \$79.95

SPECIAL PRICE \$60.00 for past
George Paton Gallery exhibitors, curators
and writers.

This richly illustrated history examines the dramatic changes that took place from the experimentation of the seventies to the impact of Postmodernism in the eighties, through to the greater integration of these disparate forces today.

Visit the gallery website for book order form
and detailed information about the publication.

union.unimelb.edu.au/georgepaton

George Paton Gallery
Second floor, Union House, University of Melbourne, 3010
Opening hours: Monday / Friday 11 / 5pm during semester
Enquiries 8344 5418. Email gpg@union.unimelb.edu.au

An artist in perpetual motion

LEN LYE

Discover the art of Len Lye, one of the most radical
and creative minds of the modern age. Exploding with
exuberant colour and rhythm, this unforgettable exhibition
is the largest survey of his work ever presented.

Free admission!
Thursday 16 July
- Sunday 11 October

Australian Centre
for the Moving Image
Federation Square Melbourne
www.acmi.net.au



THE LEN LYE FOUNDATION

Len Lye

THE FILM ARCHIVE



SCHENKER



acmi
australian centre
for the moving image

Application Based Program

allan's walk
artist run space

Proposals accepted year round.

Allan's Walk Artist Run Space does not charge gallery rental.

Application guidelines available from www.allanswalk.com or via email from info@allanswalk.com

Shops 5 & 7
Allan's Walk
Bendigo

www.allanswalk.com
[e. info@allanswalk.com](mailto:info@allanswalk.com)
p. 03 5442 1753

HARMONIC TREMORS

AESTHETIC INTERVENTIONS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Edited by Sarah Rainbird

Featuring the work of Bronwyn Bancroft, Catherine Bell, Breakdown Press, Janet Burchill & Jennifer McCamley, Tom Civil, James Dodd, Mick Douglas, Fiona Foley, Mathieu Gallois, Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro, Adam Hill, Lucas Ihlein, Ash Keating, Deborah Kelly, Ruark Lewis, Karyn Lindner, Tom Nicholson, Mary Lou Pavlovic, Simon Perry, PVI Collective, Van Thanh Rudd, Julie Shiels, Lou Smith, Richard Thomas and Penelope Trotter.

With essays by Mick Douglas, Mary Anne Francis, Anthony Gardner, Richard Holt, Lucas Ihlein, Louise Martin-Chew, Robert Nelson and Sarah Rainbird.

Available from all good bookstores and online from harmonictremors.net

ISBN: 978-0-646-50335-6
Format: Paperback
RRP: \$24.95
Pages: 132
Height by width: 200 x 150



RICHARD LEWER

NOBODY LIKES A SHOW OFF

 **MONASH** University
Museum of Art

Monash University Museum of Art
Clayton Campus, Melbourne
1 July – 5 September 2009
Curator: Kirily Hammond

Monash University Museum of Art | MUMA
Ground Floor, Building 55
Monash University, Clayton Campus
Wellington Road, Clayton
Melbourne, Australia
T: 61 3 9905 4217
E: muma@adm.monash.edu.au
www.monash.edu.au/muma
Tues to Fri 10am – 5pm, Sat 2 – 5pm

CONICAL 2009

RENDALL & SPIER
ANDREW GUTTERIDGE
September 5 – 26

**STEPHEN GARRETT &
MARIE-JEAN HOFFNER (FRANCE)**
In association with the
Melbourne International Arts Festival
October 10 – November 7

MARIE SIERRA
CARA-ANN SIMPSON
November 21 – December 12

Upstairs 3 Rochester St
Fitzroy Victoria
Australia 3065

T: +61 3 9415 6958
E: info@conical.org.au
www.conical.org.au

Gallery Hours:
Wed – Sat
12 – 5pm



COMING TO PLATFORM...

TAPE PROJECTS
THOMAS O'HERN
SARAH BUNTING
BRIDGET RADOMSKI
LAURA CASTAGNINI
DELL STEWART, RACHAEL HOOPER, NATASHA FRISCH
CARLY FISCHER, ANNIKA KOOPS & ADAM CRUICKSHANK
DOMINIC KAVANAGH
CAROLINE IERODIACONOU
JULIE SHIELS
REBECCA DELANGE & ALEISHA BODDENBERG
MISSTER DEAN & MS TEEN
SIMON O'CARRIGAN
LYNDA ROBERTS, NEIL THOMAS, SAM KEENE
ANTHONY MAGEN, CERI HANN & CYE WOOD
ALY AITKEN
MATTHEW GINGOLD
POLLY DEDMAN
FIONA TRICK, LUCINDA SWIFT, MATILDA BROWN
EMMA MORRIS & LOUISE KLERKS
AMY ALEXANDER & LUKE RYAN
J. KRISTENSEN
SACRED HEART MISSION
ANALOGUE ART MAP
& MORE...

PLATFORM ARTISTS GROUP INC.

DEGRAVES STREET SUBWAY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

OPEN 7-7 M-F & 9-5 SAT

WWW.PLATFORM.ORG.AU

NOW ACCEPTING
EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
FOR OUR 2010 PROGRAM



EXPERIMENTAL
ART FOUNDATION



Domenico de Clario
new director may 2009

15 MAY – 13 JUNE

Mark Siebert forever 27
Fleur Elise Noble work in progress

26 JUNE – 25 JULY

Tristan Louth-Robins tensions
Shoot Collective

07 AUG – 05 SEPT

Bridget Currie regulators
Paul Sloan psychic souvenirs



Mark Siebert, 'The 27 Club (loplin)' C-type print, 100 x 70 cm, 2008

Lion Arts Centre North Tce [West End] Adelaide Australia
+61 (0)8 82117505 info@eaf.asn.au www.eaf.asn.au
Gallery Hours Tuesday 11-5 Saturday 2-5



**ARTS
VICTORIA**



Living
the Arts

