

LAST RIDE IN A HOT AIR BALLOON

THE 4TH AUCKLAND TRIENNIAL



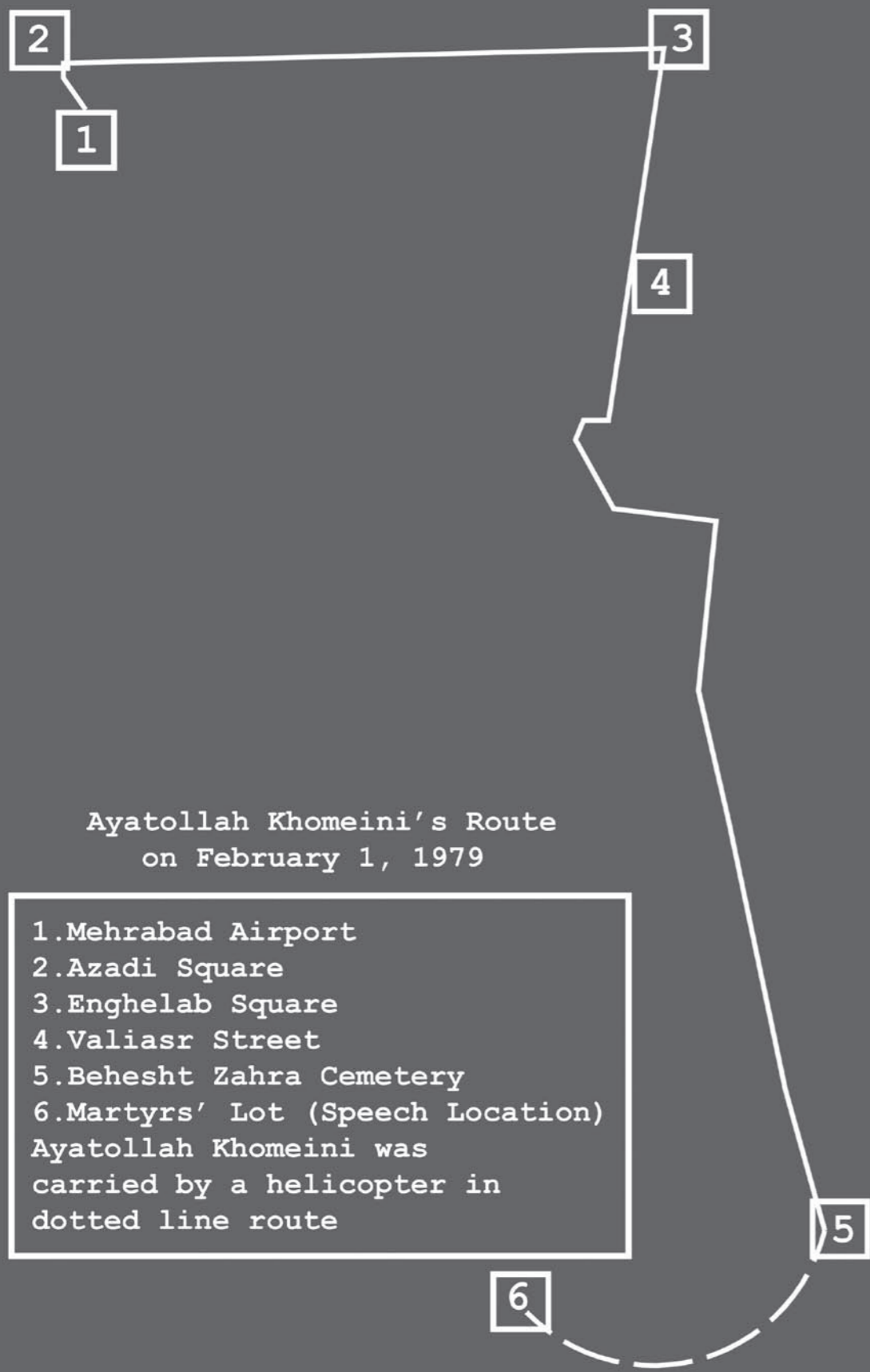
LAST RIDE IN A HOT AIR BALLOON

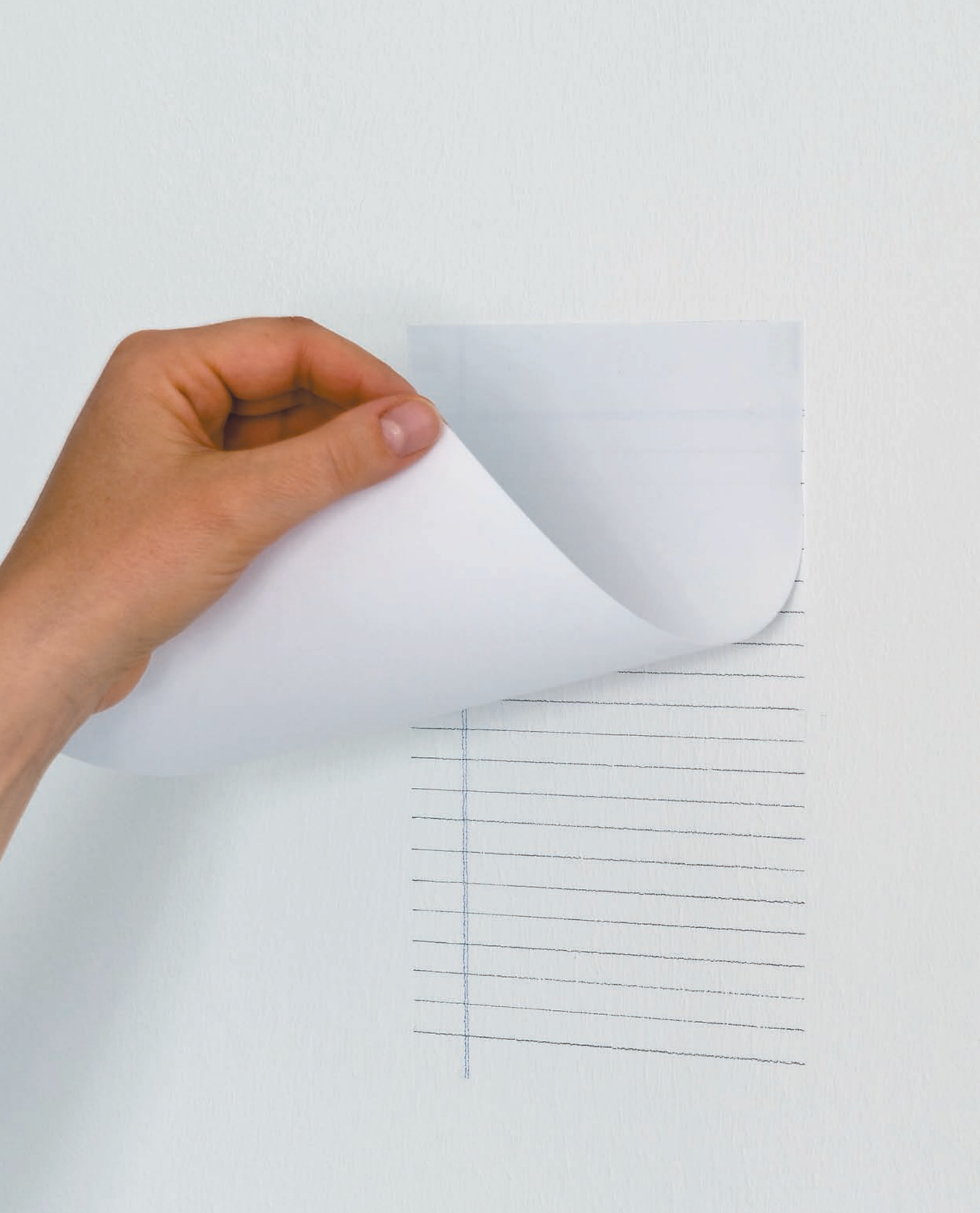
THE 4TH AUCKLAND TRIENNIAL

CURATED BY NATASHA CONLAND









ARTISTS

NICK AUSTIN_New Zealand
MAHMOUD BAKHSI_Iran
RICHARD BELL_Australia
JOHANNA BILLING_Sweden
MARTIN BOYCE_Scotland
GERARD BYRNE_Ireland
SHAHAB FOTOUHI_Iran
ALICIA FRANKOVICH_New Zealand
SHILPA GUPTA_India
SHARON HAYES_USA
ROBERT HOOD_New Zealand
MARINE HUGONNIER_France/UK
SHIGEYUKI KIHARA_Japan/Samoa/New Zealand
LARESA KOSLOFF_Australia
LEARNING SITE_Denmark/Sweden
JORGE MACCHI_Argentina
ALEX MONTEITH_New Zealand
TOM NICHOLSON_Australia
MIKE PARR_Australia
PHILIPPE PARRENO_France
GARRETT PHELAN_Ireland
BUNDITH PHUNSOMBATLERT_Thailand
OLIVIA PLENDER_UK
WALID SADEK_Lebanon
TINO SEHGAL_UK/Germany
MICHAEL STEVENSON_New Zealand/Germany
TOVE STORCH_Denmark
ZHENG BO_China

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CURATOR AND COMMISSIONING EDITOR

Natasha Conland

MANAGING EDITOR

Jane Davidson-Ladd

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Natasha Conland and Anna Parlane

IMAGE EDITORS

Jane Davidson-Ladd and Anna Parlane

COPY EDITOR

Nic McCloy

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY PHOTOGRAPHERS

John McIver and Jennifer French

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Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Cnr Lorne and Wellesley Streets
PO Box 5449
Auckland 1141
New Zealand

www.aucklandartgallery.com

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Chris Saines

FOUNDING PARTNER



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The 4th Auckland Triennial, Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon sets New Zealand's most ambitious contemporary art event off on a new trajectory; rising on the currents of the triennials preceding it and, at the same moment, striking out in some exciting new directions. While the theme of this Triennial is in essence poetic, it is not so elliptical as to exclude more literal readings. Indeed, whether lodged in the historic or the contemporary imagination the act of riding in or looking up at those aloft in a balloon is one of the transcendent sights of modern times. Speculating on the idea of a last ride in such a magnificent aircraft, this Triennial might well have a wistful ambiguity about it, heralding the imminent loss of something long admired. Not surprisingly, there is more to it than that.

The first image that curator Natasha Conland's theme brought to my mind was Odilon Redon's celebrated drawing The Eye Like a Strange Balloon Mounts Toward Infinity, 1878. Redon makes a marvellously enigmatic sign in the sky – conflating a floating hot air balloon with a colossal eye, its gaze raised heavenwards. He seamlessly conjures the material and mystical worlds: a balloon unfettered by gravity and unburdened by the weight of earthly existence; and the all-seeing eye of God on an oddly mystical quest, looking upward not outward as it usually would. The title (like Conland's Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon) is one part obvious, two parts esoteric, and three parts strangely compelling.

This exhibition uses the hot air balloon as a symbolic platform from which to survey the ideas of adventure and risk long associated with ballooning: from Jules Verne's fictional exploration of Africa in 1863 to the global circumnavigation of real life adventurer Steve Fossett in 2002. If their adventures were undertakings of uncertain outcome, bringing with them the potential risk of exposure to injury or loss, how might these same terms help to delineate a particular attitude in contemporary art? At a historical moment marked by global economic contraction and risk-aversion, this Triennial explores these intrinsically human drives – to venture into new territory and to speculate on new conditions – as productive and expansive sites for contemporary artists.

These conditions might be fundamentally human ones, or just as readily political, social, scientific, environmental or ecological. Regardless, the artists in Last Ride invite us to see or experience their world views from an alternative perspective. Whatever their artistic purpose or strategy, the works in this fourth Triennial are more than ever concerned with the effect of contemporary art's creative action in and on the world, a world currently endeavouring to manage risk from economic mis-adventure and from global warming, health pandemics, and the like. While understanding the potential dangers of such events, we ignore at our peril what it is that adventurers and risk-takers continue to make possible in our lives.

Drawing the strands of this Triennial around such a particular and pertinent notion, Natasha Conland, Auckland Art Gallery's curator of contemporary art, has travelled the globe focusing on the axis of Asia and the Middle East. It has allowed her to investigate contemporary practice in countries such as China, Japan, Syria, Iran and Lebanon, much of it little seen by New Zealand audiences, and re-acquainted her with the more familiar Euro-Americentric centres of Berlin, Paris, Copenhagen and New York. Often venturing into unknown territory herself, the on-the-ground conversations with artists had the most insistent influence on her project. I want to acknowledge the Gallery's deep gratitude to Natasha for the utterly persuasive manner in which she has joined poetic and artistic licence with an inspiring curatorial intelligence. Her titular premise might well be metaphorical but her industry and personal commitment have been literally remarkable.

At the same time, I must thank the 29 artists who have given their unfettered support to her and our enterprise. Many have made new works, while others have remade recent work in dialogue with the Triennial's theme. I also must acknowledge the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark for their loan and the many private galleries for their support. I am grateful to them all and welcome the greater number of those participating artists who have been able to travel to Auckland, along with the keynote speaker involved in our Vernissage. That they can do so is attributable to the

CURATOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Natasha Conland

support of international cultural agencies, including the Australia Council for the Arts, the Danish Arts Council, Culture Ireland, Goethe Institut, Asia New Zealand Foundation, the Embassy of France and ifa. In this same context, I wish to thank the School of Art and Design at AUT University and Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland for their generous facilitation of residencies.

That we have a triennial increasingly of this city is attributable to the wonderful collaboration the Auckland Art Gallery enjoys with its exhibition partners. Artspace, through its director Emma Bugden, the George Fraser Gallery through the University of Auckland's Professor Jonathan Mane-Wheoki and public programmes manager Sonya Korohina, and AUT University's St Paul St, through dean of design and creative technologies Desna Jury and its director Dr Leonhard Emmerling, have all added immensely to this citywide project. While these public art institutions remain central to the Auckland model, this fourth iteration marks our first move out into the city, as Shed 6 becomes annexed into the site map. Leading out from the Auckland Art Gallery, the Patrons of the Triennial – Dame Jenny Gibbs, Rose and John Dunn, John and Jo Gow, Dayle and Chris Mace, Fran and Geoff Ricketts, Andrew and Jenny Smith, Adrienne, Lady Stewart, Lady Philippa Tait and the Thanksgiving Foundation – and a new entrant into the frame, the ArtFiveO Trust, have raised their generous support to reach artists across these venues.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the support of our sustaining sponsors, accommodation supplier the Elliott Hotel, paint supplier Aalto Colour and print provider Geon.

Since its establishment, the Triennial has fostered another kind of leadership. Focused this time on contemporary cultural development, it is applied most productively through the agency of Creative New Zealand and the interventions and patronage of the Chartwell Trust and the Sue Fisher Art Trust, all of whom give unwaveringly to this project. I wish to acknowledge the Triennial's real indebtedness to CNZ, its board and its staff led by Alistair Carruthers and Stephen Wainwright respectively, and the always

encouraging and inspiring leadership of Rob and Sue Gardiner and Sue Fisher. What they do matters.

Helping to broker and leverage an event of this scale in a sustainable way has been our triennial partner AUT University, through vice-chancellor Derek McCormack. Their commitment to supporting the triennials in 2007, 2010 and 2013 is without parallel. AUT is more than a good neighbour and more than a venue and residence partner. Together with the Gallery's principal funder and manager, Auckland City Council, AUT University has committed itself to an uncommon level to the success of the Triennial. I thank them both, finally, as I thank you, our audience, for helping to make the 4th Auckland Triennial, Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon the best ride yet.

Chris Saines, Director, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki.

Exhibitions can sometimes feel like snowballs. No matter how small or solitary their original form, they naturally gather momentum and form, and eventually the expansion of parts leads to their realisation and puts them into play. With Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon, momentum gathered slowly, and the discussions I had with artists, associates and friends all helped contribute to its form, whether or not they are visible in the final tracks of the exhibition venues.

The collected conversations with colleagues during my research were incredibly important both in defining the direction of my enquiry and in helping to set the course of ideas as I sketched them. Travel to the countries of Iran, Syria and Lebanon, would not have been possible without the conversation, stimulation and challenge afforded me by artists Alexandros Georgiou, Natascha Sadr Haghighian and Walid Raad and the assistance of Creative New Zealand. While there, I was assisted in the exchange of ideas and much needed reflection by Hamid Severi, Barbad Golshiri, Kiarash and Kianoosh, Buthayna Ali, Christine Tohme, Tony Chakar, Lamia Joriege, Akram Zaatari, Rabi and Lina, Ali Cherry, Monika at Umam Production and Zeina at the Arab Image Foundation among many others. A journey in South East Asia was filled with vital travellers' conversations with many, including the company and humanity of Doryun Chong, and critical reflections with Clara Kim and Pauline Yao. As always in Singapore, Lee Weng Choy provided more than fresh conversation. Travel to Copenhagen included the generous input of Lars Bang Larsen pre-departure, and the opportunity to rekindle discussion and dialogue with friends, Tone Olaf Nielson, Henriette Bretton-Meyer and Simon, for which I am indebted to the help of the Danish Arts Council. In France, I was grateful for the generosity of Claire Staebler, tag team conversation with Raimundas, the assistance of Florence Bonnefous, and a whirlwind exchange and perambulation with Catherine David. Further, to name just one agent from across the Tasman, special thanks go to Max Delaney for his offerings.

The Triennial is a vital platform in Auckland, New Zealand, where it speaks directly to a kind of imagining which takes place here – both artistic and curatorial. While it's difficult to separate the ongoing discussion with friends and colleagues from the direct generosity given towards

A special tribute to ArtFiveO, who responded to my call to invest in curatorial work, bringing a fresh group of patrons and participants into the Triennial's aspirations. They met me along the way with full enthusiasm and unspoken faith. For this, I thank the core members of this fundraising group: Belinda Masfen and Kriselle Baker who teamed up with Michael Lett, Ben Plumbley and Tim Melville to draw together supporters.

These include from the ArtFiveO Trust: Richard Beca and Kirsty Wilkinson, Richard Douglas and Kriselle Baker, Joanna Ferrier, Jo and Terry Gould, Michael Lett, Ange Marshall and Alex Swney, Belinda and Rolf Masfen, Wendy Miller, Paul and Laura Savory, Lynn Theron and Karl Jansen.

They in turn were joined by founding donors Alastair Carruthers, Joanna and John Chaplin, A and M Clatworthy, Annie Coney, Christel Cook, Sarah and Warren Couillault, John Dixon and Nicky Ryan, Simon Fisher, Jillian and Daniel Friedlander, Jane and Neil Haines, Roxanne Horton, Melanie and Duncan Leigh, J and P Masfen, Keitha and Connel McLaren, Leigh Melville, Tim Melville, Amanda Parker and Richard Williams, Lisa Partigliani, Ben Plumbly, Simon Robertson, Frances Sargent, Jodie and James Snell, Vicki St John, Stephen Marr, Carolyn Vautier, Roger Wall and other anonymous donors.

ArtFiveO thanks Karen Walker for her assistance.

the Triennial, specific thanks are owed to Kate Montgomery, Jonathan Smart, Aaron Kreisler, Elizabeth Caldwell and Siv B Fjaerestad. Others such as Jan Bryant, Catherine Hammond and Ian Wedde played roles outside the organisation in guiding text and idea into form. In Auckland at the Triennial's locale, I must thank the support, collegiality and frank understanding of Emma Bugden and Leonhard Emmerling, both of whom stand as directors of our exhibition partners. Thanks are also due as ever to Arch MacDonnell and the design team at Inhouse for their creative perseverance and more.

Closer still to the direct cause and effects of the project are the Auckland Art Gallery staff who are drawn differently into the Triennial's auspice, impact and curatorial pace. Specifically, I'd like to thank the core team, my colleagues, for their professional opinion, response, ambition for the project and energies. These are web coordinator Sarah Eades, media coordinator Kate Orgias, marketing and development manager Dawn Torvik, the ever capable and smiling registrar Rachel Walmsley, the tireless energy and professional practice of the catalogue's managing editor Jane Davidson-Ladd, and equally, exhibition designer Scott Everson's high standards and pursuit of lateral gains. Thanks go separately to Judith Cooke, the exhibition's project coordinator, who has accompanied me on most of this journey in what has often felt like the imperatives of two. Warm thanks go to a cluster of volunteers, most notably Chloe Weavers whose remarkable persistence has completed many pieces of unfinished business and to Lara Mathews. Through the marvellous generosity of John Mayo and the Marilyn Mayo Foundation, we appointed Anna Parlane as Mayo Intern and Curatorial Assistant on the project. Her talent and conscientious energies will live on in the exhibition and its publications. I'd like to acknowledge Louise Pether and Chris Saines for their open support and more often liberal assumption that I was in the right place and time to do this work, and take flight with the often indefinable balloon.

Final exhibition thanks must go to the artists, without whom Last Ride would have remained tethered.

And to Simon, his fearless desire for adventure, and our new one.

ESSAYS

LAST RIDE IN A
HOT AIR BALLOON
Natasha Conland

NAVIGATING IN A
DISCOVERED WORLD:
AN ESSAY
Doryun Chong

THE ODD COUPLE:
RISK/DANGER AND THEIR
SIGNIFICANCE FOR ART
Leonhard Emmerling

LAST RIDE IN A HOT AIR BALLOON

Natasha Conland

One should never make too much of a title. Especially when it's clearly the author's creation as opposed to a citation. Yet the title for the 4th Auckland Triennial contains a strong visual cue that perhaps needs some orientation. *Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon* is a metaphoric introduction to the themes of the exhibition, containing a highly evocative object of the modern era – the travelling airborne balloon – and by implication its finale. The curatorial premise presents the opposition of these two images as counter forces. The exhibition, associated as it is with themes of adventure and risk, is not a literal investigation of the balloon in our imaginative and actual history.¹ Rather, *Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon* describes a condition for viewing, an artistic perspective both imagined and experienced.

THE BALLOON IN MY TITLE

The history of balloon travel, and its development in popular conscience since the eighteenth century, nonetheless aids our understanding of this metaphor. The hot air balloon as we know it today emerges through popular experience and account with its first flight in 1783. In June that year, the brothers Joseph Michel and Jacques Étienne Montgolfier gave their first public demonstration of the balloon's capacity in a village near Lyon, France. Experiments of the

1. There have been a couple of exhibitions which have looked specifically at risk in contemporary practice mostly from the perspective of its potential for art and artists. Their focus has been the visitor's engagement in 'calculated risks' as in the exhibition at the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, 'At Your Own Risk', 2003; and Risk, at the Luleå Art Biennial, Sweden, 2009, which looked at the human capacity for error.

2. Preston Remington, 'A Monument Honoring the Invention of the Balloon', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, new series, vol 2, no 8, Apr 1944, p 241. The first balloon flights carried an array of animals before humans were willing to board the vessel. Ironically, the first aeronaut, Pilâtre de Rozier, was also the causality of the world's first air disaster, when the balloon carrying him and a passenger crashed less than two years after his groundbreaking ascent.

3. Vojtěch Jirat-Wasiutyński, 'The Balloon as Metaphor in the Early Work of Odilon Redon', *Artibus et Historiae*, vol 13, no 25, 1992, pp 195–206.

4. As above, p 197.

initially tethered flights occurred rapidly over the following months in prominent locations, drawing vast crowds of spectators said to have numbered 300,000 for a flight from the Champ de Mars, near the centre of Paris, and over 100,000 at Versailles. It wasn't until October of that year that a human passenger, young aeronaut, Jean François Pilâtre de Rozier, ventured onboard for a flight which lifted about 217 feet in the air, remaining there for over six minutes.² Then in December a hydrogen version of the balloon carried two passengers on a two-hour flight from their launch in the Tuileries Gardens to a village twenty miles northwest of Paris.

And so, with these experimental flights begins the spectacular proposition of air travel. Heading into the nineteenth century, balloons captured the popular imagination in France and throughout Europe, aided by further aeronautical advances in the 1850s and 1860s.³ Their popularity then received a tremendous boost during the Franco-Prussian war when they were used by besieged Parisians to make daring escapes and to communicate with the rest of France.⁴ Depictions of balloons are potent throughout popular and artistic imagery of the nineteenth century, and in the work of French artist Odilon Redon they become powerful

symbols for transcendence and unearthly vision (illustrated p 26). Writing on Redon's imagery, art historian Vojtěch Jirat-Wasiutyński describes how the balloon's visibility in popular culture superseded their largely unseen military and surveillance functions:

Despite their important military and scientific uses, balloons figured most often as showpieces, popular sources of adventure and entertainment at fairs in the mid-nineteenth century. Tethered ('captive') balloons, which allowed the general public to share the heady sensation of flight in complete safety and comfort, were star attractions at the Paris Universal Expositions of 1867, 1878, and 1889.⁵

From the mid nineteenth century, the balloon's provision of a spectacular and panoramic perspective is concurrent with developments in the newly accessible forms of photography and film-making, which were rapidly altering the 'visible' world. While, by the twentieth century, the balloon's true potential for aiding airborne travel is overtaken by rapid developments and improved efficiencies elsewhere, something of their inspiration as symbols of adventure, leisure and panoramic splendour remains. As their social function and productive value recedes, their romantic potential nonetheless lingers, as does Redon's distinctly modern depiction of them as vehicles for an 'all seeing' eye, a distinctly earthly aspiration. By the end of the twentieth century, imagery of hot air balloons is complicated by a visual analogy with a more threatening version of an airborne mass – the atomic bomb and the mushroom cloud that follows, and the nuclear threat it implies more generally.



Above:
The ascent of the first untethered balloon flight to carry passengers. 'Aeronautical globe experiment by Messieurs Charles and Robert in the Tuileries Gardens, Paris, 1 December 1783' [1783], handcoloured etching, Tissandier collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

s.
As above, p 197.

Right:
Two aeronauts, depicted as a cat and an ass, escape the fire that engulfed their balloon while it inflated at Luxembourg Gardens, Paris. 'Deplorable blaze of the aeronautic machine of Abbé Miolan and Janinet on Friday 11 July 1784' [1784], handcoloured etching, Tissandier collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

Previous page:
The first balloon flight to carry 'passengers': a rooster, sheep and duck. 'Aeronautical experiment at Versailles on 19 September 1783 in the presence of their Majesties, the Royal family and more than 130,000 spectators by the Montgolfiers with a balloon 57 feet in height, by 41 feet in diameter' [1783], etching, Tissandier collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

And so, by the early twenty-first century, the question is, what is retained of the balloon's romantic conception? An aestheticised object of pure-spectrum colour in clear sky; romantic notions of 'slow travel' and soft adventuring with an obtainable God's-eye view; something we'd like to *experience* in this lifetime we know not why; or the fire-born bubble suggestive of latent crisis. Implicit in the symbolism of the balloon, if not its ongoing representations, is a willed transcendence from earthly threats, along with the ability to obtain an objective remote view from it.

The title, therefore, insinuates a mixture of variables that are somewhat at odds with one another: a romantic vision of unimpeded perspective, with a somewhat apocalyptic end. However, there's something in this perspectival image that recalls the sublimated condition of our current moment, something distinct from the discourses of global exchange, and the politics of travel and locality which dominated the early part of the twenty-first century's discussion of biennial culture and practice. The metaphor emerges in part from observations and conversations with artists through the lateral axis of Asia and the Middle East in which defined or expected political positions were seemingly held in abeyance. Instead, their desire to claim a speculative condition, while proximate to the social cultural conditions of their immediate location, was powerfully evident. Their perspective contains a mistrust of visual reference points and documents in favour of slippage into what we might typically call a remote 'poetic' condition for exploration. And so, the title becomes a conflation of two ideas central to the exhibition – the existence of an adventurous impulse within an associated field of risk.



CHANGING CONDITIONS FOR ADVENTURE AND RISK

Within the balloon's lifespan, the terms of adventure and risk have themselves changed and acquired new connotations. In the eighteenth century, at the emergence of the industrial period, an adventure very much represented something 'out of the ordinary'. The word encapsulated stories of explorers, mostly reduced to individual heroics, and their battles with the elements of nature, animals, travels and foreign lands. Whatever the hazards and risks associated with these stories, harm was not typically perceived beyond the scope of their actions. The causes and effects are the results of deliberate individual action. Arguably these adventurers were driven by the greater aims of the industrial age – the generation of wealth, industry, scientific advance and productivity. Adventure and risk in equal parts were fostered in a culture orientated to the acquisition of gains and rewards. By the late-modern period, this focus shifts through the counter-culture exploration of internal 'awareness', transcendence via drug culture and renewal. However, risk taking in this period is still tied to the terminology of personal gains, even if these were of a non-material kind.⁶

However by the close of the twentieth century, the impact of adventure and risk compound with the perceived and actual effects of globalisation. In his classic account of risk in society German sociologist, Ulrich Beck, describes the core difference between the accepted risks of the industrial age and those of today, as the shift from individual to global threats. In a point of dramatic differentiation he writes:

Right:
Satirical print suggesting British aeronaut Charles Green's proposed trans-Atlantic flight would be blown off course and land in the Antipodes. Johann Wenzel Zinke after J Cajetan 'Green's great hot air balloon in the land of the Antipodes' [1840s], handcoloured etching, Tissandier collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

6.
The exhibition and its accompanying catalogue *Ecstasy: In and About Altered States, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2005*, looked specifically at how the language of transcendence as explored by modern painters Kasimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian played out in contemporary culture. In his curatorial essay 'Live in your head – ecstasy in and about altered states', curator Paul Schimmel, identified the ongoing interest in transcendence as a goal underpinning aspects of contemporary practice. In particular transcendence from the everyday physical and mental limitations of prescribed reality.

7.
Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, 1986; Mark Ritter (trans), Sage Publications, London, 1992, p 21.

8.
As above, p 12.

*Anyone who set out to discover new countries and continents – like Columbus – certainly accepted 'risks', but these were personal risks, not global dangers like those that arise for all humanity from nuclear fission or the storage of radioactive waste. In that earlier period, the word 'risk' had a note of bravery and adventure, not the threat of all life on Earth.*⁷

The global impact of colonisation – and its related and often catastrophic threats – is not incorporated here by Beck into his account of immediately personal risks. However, his point is to differentiate the immediately perceivable, versus the intangible risks involved in nuclear war and climate change, for example. So, the risk society is not so much a measure of impact but a definition of a new variety of social effect.

Today, while the terms of adventure may not have changed significantly from their eighteenth-century usage, the social environment from which they emerge and take effect has changed dramatically. Ulrich Beck's outline of a 'risk society', first published in 1986, urged readers for 'new ideas and theories' to fit a radically changed social environment.⁸ This is a society in which the logic of wealth production (industry) has led to a society in which the production of global threats (risks), now 'overshadows' the production of industrial capital. In what Beck refers to as a 'reflexive' modern society, the structures and ideologies of industrial society still exist, but they are increasingly overshadowed by the modern production of irreversible threats to life, plants, animals and human beings. Twenty years on, Beck's writing might be properly contextualised by its reaction to the enviro-chemical disasters in Europe and other areas of the globe in the 1980s,



9.
As above, p 22.

10.
As above, p 25.

11.
One of the key comparative differences between the industrial society, as described by Karl Marx and Max Weber, and today's risk society for Beck is the tangibility of wealth generation within the industrial period versus the intangibility and often unquantifiable suggestion of risks today.

12.
Beck, *Risk Society*, p 23.

which were widely reported to be the result of unsafe industrial practices. In considering their impact, his intention was to prove that any analysis of industry and science in isolation does not capture the spreading social effects and anxieties of new global atrocities. In his words, 'the ecological and high-tech risks that have upset the public for some years now... have a new quality. In the afflictions they produce they are no longer tied to their place of origin – the industrial plant. By their nature they endanger all forms of life on this planet.'⁹ Viewed solely as matters of nature and technology or of economics and medicine, highly developed societies characterise a loss of social thinking.¹⁰ For Beck then, today's hazards differ precisely because of their global nature, because of the difficulty of localising them within purely industrial terms or terms of social welfare management.

A core component and ethical challenge for the 'risk society' unlike the wealth society is the unknown and unintended consequences of risk.¹¹ These new risks exist primarily in the future, and are not yet apparent to the perceptions of the present, but rely on a clear understanding of the effects for future generations. Their 'invisibility' in the present makes them vulnerable to interpretations of either scientific or other knowledge, and open to manipulation and construction. Hence, in a society of conflicting opinions and interests, the mass media, scientific and legal professionals in charge of defining risks, occupy key social and political positions.¹² A relevant example for today is the conflicting data surrounding the risks attached to global warming. In characterising our response to the risk society, Beck writes that due to the global nature of the effects, people unite in global communities

of ‘danger’. He describes the global calls for action as a new kind of utopia, that of collective communality and action. But as a utopic aspiration it is unique because of its negative manifesto; that is, global collectivity driven by negative prevention rather than positive tangible creation. Ultimately, the very limits of the risk society appear to be in its totalising impact – that we are all part of its cause and effect. Therefore it has the potential to produce apathy in the face of indistinct possibilities for immediate individual action. Beck writes, a ‘risk society is a catastrophic society. In it, the exceptional condition threatens to become the norm’, admitting further, that ‘there is no escape, people ultimately no longer want to think about it’.¹³ Accepting Beck’s contention, the question is how does the adventurous impulse, that necessary escape mechanism, survive in a sphere of self limitation and overwhelming risk?

Making Beck’s analogy *useful* for the individual’s experience of risk is problematic, as he stops short of at full discussion of the possibilities for individual action other than their collective utopic response. His description of a shared global communal response in the face of global threat does not account for the individual experience of ‘being in’ or living in a risk society. That is, the psychological and spatial awareness and impact of a society, which shifts dramatically from the tangibility of wealth production to a totalising present and unknowable future. His allusion to the psychological condition of the risk society, whether communal or individual, is pitched as a rhetorical question: is anxiety sustainable as a founding principle of social or political movements? The question is left hanging for future communities to contemplate.

^{13.}
As above, pp 24, 37.

^{14.}
Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, Berkeley and London, 1984.

^{15.}
Beck, *Risk Society*, p 33.

BEING IN THE RISK SOCIETY

Published contemporaneously with Beck’s *Risk Society* is French scholar Michel de Certeau’s collected writings on *The Practice of Everyday Life*.¹⁴ Critical to the book is his chapter on spatial practice, ‘Walking in the City’, which develops a theory for individual behaviour in urban society. For de Certeau the individual’s everyday reappropriation of spatial experience through the simple action of walking, is in direct contradistinction to the language of catastrophe. The relevance of his remarks for the topic of adventure and risk, is that de Certeau provides us with a model for productive and sustainable exploration that is unimpeded by the stultifying impact of global threats, and adventure’s attachment to the acquisition of gains. Instead, he describes a mode of being that is based on potential and possibility, realised through a physical engagement with space.

What we get in de Certeau is a theory of individual agency or autonomous action within a seemingly prescribed urban space. However, the individual’s route is not posited in opposition to the ‘generalised other – the system’ (which Beck warns will lead to fatalism in the face of real threat).¹⁵ Rather de Certeau describes how alternate experiences are developed and articulated beyond the ‘mapped’, knowable or describable spaces defined by those who govern the macro spaces of the city. It is an exploration of the experiential development of ideas, actions and responses, amongst the less tangible aspects of our lived environment.

Admittedly, de Certeau has a different point of enquiry to Beck’s explication of the time-based changes in our society – the continuum

from present catastrophe to future unknowns. For de Certeau, ‘catastrophe’ is aligned to the language of civic authority and administration, and is used to reword the changes affecting their ideologies. That is, ‘the City’ upholds its privilege and authority at any given time by inverting the content of the message from progress to catastrophe.¹⁶ And here they concur, as for Beck also, what emerges in a risk society is the political potential of catastrophe.¹⁷ For de Certeau, ‘catastrophe’ is largely intangible for everyday spatial experience because it relates to the ‘concept’ of the city as opposed to its unpredictable, lived account. A panoptic administration rarely takes into account the dimensions of daily experience, unless we can describe the everyday in all seriousness as a ‘walking catastrophe’.

THE DOWN LOW ON UP HIGH: RELATING ADVENTURE TO RISK

In de Certeau, ‘the walk’ is a metaphor for exploration and adventure within any predetermined environment – even in (or especially in) a ‘risk society’. An individual’s walk, which takes its own turns, route, and set of micro-decisions, is a secret reappropriation of space. It’s secret because it is invisible to administrators and impossible to predetermine. He compares the free agency of walking within a pre-mapped city to enunciation in language, to writing versus the written text, and the touch and tale of the paintbrush versus the finished painting.¹⁸ In the language of visual art, the walk is not just site responsive, it is process orientated. The critical point here is that through this action or enunciation, individual articulation transforms the city. De Certeau writes that the walker ‘actualises’ the possibilities within a spatial order and makes them literally exist ‘but he

^{16.}
De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp 95–6.

^{17.}
Beck, *Risk Society*, p 24.

^{18.}
De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p 98.

^{19.}
As above, p 98.

^{20.}
As above, p 101.

also moves them about and he invents others, since the crossing, drifting away, or improvisation of walking privilege, transform or abandon spatial elements’.¹⁹ Here he comes close to articulating in spatial terms the freedom of invention. For de Certeau, walking is a liberal, creative and poetic function of existence, which frees up the individual to reorganise their daily experience, opening up voids and gaps in ‘the system’:

*The long poem of walking manipulates spatial organizations, no matter how panoptic they may be: it is neither foreign to them (it can take place only within them) nor in conformity with them (it does not receive its identity from them). It creates shadows and ambiguities within them. It inserts its multitudinous references and citations into them (social models, cultural mores, personal factors).*²⁰

For de Certeau, walking (and by extension travelling) stimulates gaps and unknowns rather than fulfilling them. Its ability to conjure the unknown therefore mirrors the notion of risk in Beck’s society, which is by definition a future space, a fictive and unknown set of possibilities. Consequently, learning from it or coming to terms with it creatively requires this kind of spatial orientation rather than the more catastrophic language of time based change which implies a global environment in inexorable collapse. I would go so far as to suggest that we need this degree of agency to sustain ‘being in’ and ‘acting in’ our environment, observing its changes and finding independent measures for dealing with it.

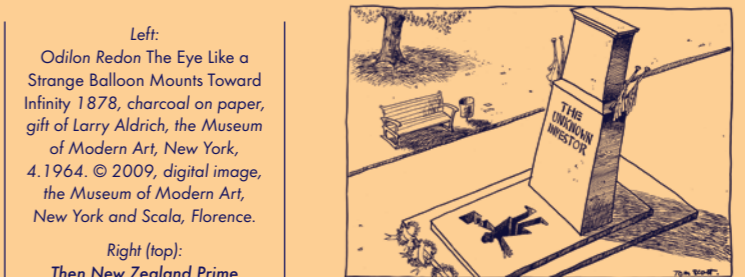
In the introduction to de Certeau’s chapter, ‘Walking in the City’, he begins with a metaphorical account of being high in the air looking down



at the city of Manhattan from the World Trade Center, a perspective which echoes the imagined view of earth from the hot air balloon. Writing before their cataclysmic fall, he describes a modern subjectivity very much aligned with Odilon Redon's portrait of the balloon as a 'solar eye' looking down on earth like a god.²¹ The earthly 'lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more' echoes Redon's balloon with no other features than a single seeing eye.²² It's a disorientating passage, as you the reader – not yet orientated to the author's own perspective – are carried on a flight of fancy, wishing to join him on this panoptic scope of the city below. The urge is a powerful one. Its aesthetic and perspectival condition reiterating the legacy and ideals of modern authorship, with the city transformed through remote distance into a spectacular total-scape of texture, optics and light. The conceit here is that from the balloon's basket we're all our own authors in a way that's inconceivable within the lived anxieties of our experience of earth below. De Certeau's spatial practice provides us with a model for authorship *within* the complexity of the city below. It does so, nonetheless, by retaining an understanding of the powerful motivations for once romantic notions of exploration: "Travel (like walking) is a substitute for the legends that used to open up space to something different."²³

THE NEW ZEALAND ADVENTURE

De Certeau's metaphor of Manhattan as an urban island – 'a stage of concrete, steel and glass, cut out between two oceans' – echoes the historic role that island nations have played within the modern industrial period as sites for adventure, platforms for projected fancy and ungoverned experiment.²⁴ Herein lies the relevance and site-specificity between



Left:
Odilon Redon *The Eye Like a Strange Balloon Mounts Toward Infinity* 1878, charcoal on paper, gift of Larry Aldrich, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 4.1964. © 2009, digital image, the Museum of Modern Art, New York and Scala, Florence.

Right (top):
Then New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange and Minister of Finance Roger Douglas march over the unemployed, while former Labour prime ministers comment in horror from above. Eric Heath 'Whatever happened to our dream?', *Dominion* 23 Feb 1987, bromide of ink drawing, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

Right (bottom):
Tom Scott 'The Sharemarket crash', *Evening Post* 25 Nov 1987, ink drawing, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

21.
The imagery I refer to here is Redon and while the sentiment connects directly to his work, the words are however de Certeau's on the perspective from the Twin Towers. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p 92.

22.
As above, p 92.

23.
As above, p 106.

24.
As above, p 91.

25.
The New Zealand Experiment was most notably used as the title of law professor Jane Kelsey's 1995 book on the introduction to this country of neo-liberal economic theory from 1984 and its social and political consequences. Jane Kelsey, *The New Zealand Experiment: A World Model for 'Structural Adjustment?'*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1995.

the exhibition's theme of adventure and risk, and its location in Auckland, New Zealand. As the southernmost island nation in the world – and one of the most recently settled major land masses – it has a relatively recent cultural legacy of discovery and arrival. First mapped by Polynesian explorers (from the late 13th century on), then by Dutch explorer Abel Tasman and his crew in 1642, followed by the British naval officer James Cook in 1769. Vulnerable to the impact of exploration, New Zealand's flora and fauna, which had for so long remained safe through geographic isolation, reacted with dramatic force to human contact resulting in rapid extinction. Its recent formation as a bicultural nation in 1840, varied volcanic geography, exposed temperate maritime climate, and late twentieth-century political and economic shifts have made a nation susceptible to various forms of dramatic change.

Once a world leader in economic and social security via the state welfare system, from 1984 New Zealand engaged in dramatic economic reforms in what is now coined 'The New Zealand Experiment'. This phase of 'experimentation' employed what were at the time radical introductions of market liberalisation, free trade monetarist policy and a deregulated labour market.²⁵ This was followed by dramatic



Left:
Garrick Tremain "For a moment I thought they had lift-off." "It can't be for want of hot air." Otago Daily Times 7 Apr 2009, digital illustration, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

political change in 1996 with the adoption of the mixed member proportional representation system (MMP) replacing the British plurality system, or 'first past the post'. New Zealand's vulnerable economy was hit hard by the global stock market crash of 1987, creating striking effects and changes for many of the key players of New Zealand's economic reforms and opportunities. When the documentary *Class of '87* screened on national television in 1992, it described the surreal proportions of risk taking that had taken place in the financial sector just five years prior.²⁶ In his work for the Triennial, artist Michael Stevenson draws on a particularly memorable interview with Fay Richwhite bankers, Joe Godard and Tony Gavigan, who allude with a mixture of nostalgia and maturing disbelief to their experience of this era:

Interviewer to TG: *How long did it take you to become a millionaire?*

TG: *[from 1984] by 1986 on paper. Most of the execs were millionaires on paper.*

JG: *I remember the first time you and I ever went to the races with Fay Richwhite was to Tauranga in a corporate jet. Hop on a jet and it was up, two gins, and down in quarter of an hour. It was my first taste of the excesses*

^{26.}
Class of '87, two-part documentary, directed by Richard Riddiford, produced by Zee Films and Television New Zealand, Auckland, 1992.

^{27.}
Joe Godard and Tony Gavigan interviewed by Maggie Barry in Class of '87, as above.

^{28.}
Comments and headlines indicating that the 2008-9 recession was the worst since the Great Depression of the 1930s were particularly hotly debated in the US where President Barack Obama was quoted comparing the contemporary situation to its most historic and dramatic antecedent.

^{29.}
Beck points to the inertia which occurs when faced with varying scientific opinions within the risk society, remarking that the social effect of risk definitions are not therefore dependent on singular scientific validity, Beck, *Risk Society* p 32. Moreover he highlights that where there is no escape, people no longer want to think about it. He writes that 'eschatological eco fatalism allows the pendulum of private and political moods to swing in any direction. The risk society shifts from hysteria to indifference and vice versa.' p 37.

of the day. It seemed pretty stupid flying there in a jet when you could drive there in an hour and a quarter.

TG: *...but it was business and we had lunch at Bob Owens' place.*

JG: *...Champagne breakfast before the races [then] we lost all our money, lost all the bosses money...*

JG: *[solo interview] I thought it would never end. I thought I was magic you know, [that] I could run across the road and cars would miss me, I wouldn't look sometimes you know, it was that sort of magic, you thought you were invincible, you could do anything.²⁷*

MAKING ART OUT OF IT

At a moment in which it appears our global economy is struggling to recover from what some have catastrophically termed the worst recession since the Depression, it behoves us to look back on moments of high risk taking and adventure in the modern era and examine our responses.²⁸ And, rather than confounding ourselves with overwhelming and often contradictory accounts of the current crisis or its normalisation, is it now time to shift our thinking around the terms of adventure and risk in our daily practice?²⁹ The themes to emerge from the artists and works in the exhibition range across ideas of adventure and risk as they pertain to the ongoing exploration of materiality, the experience and history of adventure as tropes, political spaces without polarity, physical freedoms and alternatives for ecological and economic structures.



Above:
Tove Storch Untitled 2009, cloth, silicone, metal, installation view: Rethink: Contemporary Art and Climate Change, Den Frie Center of Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, 2009, courtesy of the artist. Photo: Anders Sune Berg.

At the micro level, or what de Certeau calls 'microbe-like' practice, the exploration and possibility for adventure within one's immediate material surroundings is critical to the exhibition topic. Perhaps this is also the area most difficult and necessary to contemplate, as it relates to the way in which an artist approaches the conditions of sustainable adventure. The artists who have an affiliation with this area of the topic share an interest in hybrid forms. Often working between previously determined disciplines, their work remains unresolved and difficult to determine and reference – in a sense geared towards making the known 'unknowable'. With shifting allusions to historical time, their exploration is often made within the raw mediums of lived experience. An example here is the work of **Tove Storch**, whose mostly sculptural practice appears to move between form and image. Her work has heritage

in minimalist practice but steals from the kind of image making and trickery which makes one thing into another. Storch's materials often absorb effects other than their physical properties through her handling of them. Fabric so soft and smooth might appear heavy and hard or a solid structure may imply a void. Centred in the materials of the every day, **Nick Austin's** paintings are like a trail through his interior and exterior daily experience. They might include references to texts and readings, observed materials, suggestive associations, and the kind of connections which imply how one thing might improbably remind of another – providing clues of the artist's and our own interaction between space and time. As another kind of double agent, **Philippe Parreno** regularly works with others to alter his route and agency in the art making process. Parreno is attracted to forms, myths and personalities who



Above:
Tom Nicholson Nardoo flag
(red wedge) 2009,
colour photograph,
courtesy of the artist and Anna
Schwartz Gallery, Sydney.
Photo: Christian Capurro.

have foggy edges – clouds, ghosts and ambiguous heroes. The work included in the exhibition is a metaphor for the very basics of exploration from limited means, inverting grand notions of artistic discovery. Via the language of new media **Shilpa Gupta's** *Singing Cloud* is evidence of her sculptural treatment of technology. Remarkably she creates a visual experience of technology, in this case a cloud of sound. Gupta typically implicates the viewer in the exchange, encouraging their active exploration and provoking a combination of curiosity and fear of the unknown. **Martin Boyce** uses reference points which are readily available in the surrounding urban landscape. But in reappropriating them, he disorients their often modern architectural reference, making it foreign, useless, wrong-headed in its materiality, and in so doing, tactile for the eye. Three very early works of **Mike Parr's** are

included in the exhibition, works which predate the often catastrophic forms of performance he developed in later years. In the Triennial works, Parr shows the early motions of experimental explorations, which forced the viewer to consider basic time-space experiences through simple orientations with media and materials. Quite simply, by exposing the raw 'facts' of his material conditions he exposes the gaps in art's ability to be definitive. Again, with a dominant focus in the area of new media, **Bundith Phunsombatlert** creates for the Triennial a poetic space, which is both silent and attentive. His small pathway through the gallery encourages the visitor to speculate on invisible bird flight, an implied form which is beyond the materials to hand.

The works which relate directly to the experience and history of adventure incorporate some

of its traditional tropes. These include travel and voyaging, investigation and discovery, exploration, spectacle and their documentation. At its most literal interpretation, this thematic strand includes the search for, and record of, 'scapes' in all forms. However with all these artists, the concentration of experience is on the disjunctive, actualised experience rather than its culmination. That is, not adventure gained, but its unfolding, thereby engaging the viewer in the 'how' rather than the 'what'. Examples here include **Johanna Billing's** video of a sailing lesson, which depicts the process of learning alongside the visual mapping of the journey. Billing interweaves the duration of lesson with the duration of the final voyage and its prosaic encounter with the shoreline in Scotland. While the title, *This Is How We Walk on the Moon*, alludes to 'Man's' greatest modern exploration, she reorders her own explorative journey so that it is difficult to determine its purpose, beginning or end. Staged in a classroom environment, it is a strangely democratised adventure – the camera shifting between the faces of the participants – rather than an individual journey. **Marine Hugonnier's** series explores exploration itself via the medium of film and film's historic framing of the globe. She uses the tools of anthropology to consciously objectify time and place, and despite her interest in the emergence of the panoptic-scope in film, she continually reminds us of the construction of such images and their implications for modern cinema. **Alex Monteith**, on the other hand, explores the psychological significance of adventure in many cult activities, which depend upon speed, scale and risk. Her film on surfing, *Red Sessions*, is 'slow film' in four-channel video panorama, which works in contradistinction to surf-film hyperbole and competitive sports

in general. Monteith shoots the surfers in red competition vests, highly contrasted on the water as they move in the distance. Their day, captured in real-time, focuses on waiting for the wave and the bobbing determination as they wait for their 'hit'. **Gerard Byrne's** work inverts scientific enquiry using what appear to be the tools of objective accounts – documentation, voice recording and photo archiving – to attend to the legacy of the Loch Ness monster. Instead he disorients the truth-telling process by focusing on the more haphazard nature of myth-creation in all its vernacular form, characterised, splintered and highly personal. In **Tom Nicholson's** storyboard frieze, he recreates the famous account of Australian explorers Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills and their journey into the desert. His project becomes an enquiry into how we memorialise heroic adventure, what relics we provide for society of the narrative and what's left out in its commemoration. His memorial project inevitably captures our inability to incorporate social change in the interpretation of myth against the backdrop of our changing perception of these figures and their actions.

The inclusion of artists who stand strongly within a political moment, but engage it through a foreign sensibility or lens, is an important component of a cluster of works which address what I have called freedom from political polarity. This simultaneous engagement and defamiliarisation of political address is made via the personal, the spectral or speculative, gendered address or comic reorientation. It creates something close to individual as opposed to collective agency, which is less about oppositional power and more about the liberty of perspective which comes via the micro view, the intimate, the non-categorical.



Above:
Zheng Bo Karibu Islands
2004–9 (ongoing),
videos, texts and discussions,
installation view: The First
Chinese Art Exhibition on
Gender Diversity, Civilian Film
Studio, Beijing, June 2009,
courtesy of the artist.

In this case artist **Zheng Bo** investigates freedom, both gendered and ethnic, via the decoy of fiction. He constructs and disorients space, then re-engages the real-time of social encounter, asking visitors to effectively ‘vote’ on the possibilities for a hypothetical reality – the fictional islands of Karibu – constructed from bit parts of recognisable popular culture. **Mahmoud Bakhshi** more directly engages in the political space of his national state Iran, yet via its diffuse symbols and the detritus of sloganistic popular experience, national motifs, which he extracts, revealing instead their beauty, humour and shallow reference to life lived within the urban space of Tehran. Likewise, **Shahab Fotouhi** creates an eerily oblique view of his lived political environment in Iran. Popular visual language is a primary tool alongside spectral materials which seem to pacify or disavow political intent. The visual allows necessary space

for abandon within this environment. In his work for the Triennial Fotouhi recounts the route that Ayatollah Mousavi Khomeini made through Tehran to Martyr’s Square following the 1979 revolution. However, this powerfully symbolic voyage is written as a series of oblique markers, signs, encounters with the city today, its very understatement a challenge to the grandiosity of the original gesture.

Standing differently in relation to the politics of the West are Sharon Hayes, Richard Bell and Garrett Phelan. **Sharon Hayes**’s work sets up a personal indicator for what appears to be a standard structured political protest. Then, in what is a disarmingly personal mode of address, whether on the street or in the gallery, she directs a form of political messaging through intimate language. Visitors listen to proclamations directed at ‘you’,

which can only be them. Carrying the intimacy of love letters rather than the manifesto of political thought, she equates the duration of a lover’s relationship to the more globally pressing war in Iraq. In **Richard Bell**’s trilogy of recent video works, he addresses middle Australia through his own highly characterized ego – as ‘Aboriginal artist’ and provocateur. From Freudian analyst to documentarian to artist, he uses humour to undermine the anxiety that still surrounds both Aboriginal and Australian national identity in popular experience. Alternately, Irish artist **Garrett Phelan** is interested in an individual’s journey into politicisation, which he explores through a multi-faceted range of doodling, sound recordings, manifesto-like scripts and voice radio. While on the surface his installation of generative matter looks like the interior workings of political agency, their actual narrative comes closer

to the fragmentary stream of consciousness which makes up certain and uncertain thought processes common to most people as they engage with subjectivity.

The works which correspond to the idea of physical freedom are from artists who are interested in the most direct forms of spatial interaction. Contrary to modern notions of physical risk and avant-garde gesture, these artists literalise ‘being in’ history, culture (particularly the culture of the museum) and social and urban spaces. At the same time, they shift agency between the active players in the experience of art, making action itself contestable and therefore open. **Alicia Frankovich** uses water as a metaphor for the daily use, reuse and the recycling of action. She compiles a ‘fountain’ collecting references in her surroundings and using her own body as

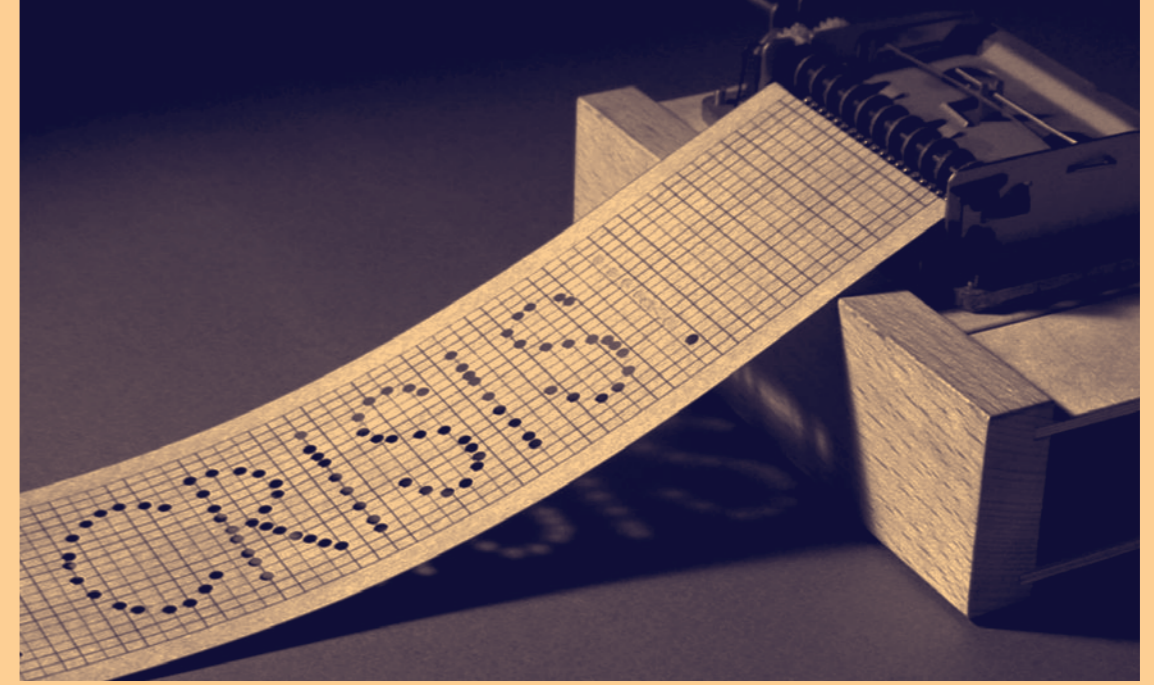


Above:
Laresa Kosloff
St Kilda Road (still) 2010,
super 8 transferred to DVD,
courtesy of the artist.

the ruse, lever, agent, probe and guide. In making these connections, she forces a physical interaction with a once remote sculptural space that requires us to engage with physical proximity and all its implication. Conversely, Frankovich's one time collaborator **Laresa Kosloff** acquires actions from what appear to be out of time and out of context moments for the viewer. She furthers this remove by recording these found actions on the deliberately antiquated medium of Super 8 film. Kosloff is an investigator of 'improper' action in Melbourne. The secret physical activity which occurs in the public space gathers momentum, audience and cult and entertainment status. Humour garnishes the imagery, irreconcilable amongst the 'serious' architectural language of the city. Alternately, **Tino Sehgal**, produces real-time encounters between people. These choreographed interactions are constructed to reorientate our physical social space within gallery and museum settings. Opposed to art's role in the economy of production, his 'constructed situations' remain exactly this – absent of materials for making or documentation, they exist in the aftermath of the encounter in memory, myth and the duration of lived experience. Practiced in the transitional spaces of gender and cultural negotiation, **Shigeyuki Kihara's** work in the Triennial shifts

from her own body to the potential for cultural interaction. The *Talanoa* series sets up artificial encounters between cultural groups in the context of improvised performance, and through the cultural site of music and dance she puts to the test the force of multi-ethnic collaboration. Differently, **Walid Sadek's** installation in the Triennial is noticeable for its absence of the body. In his installation he ostensibly follows the story and historical accounts of one-time Japanese terrorist and martyr Kozo Okamoto. Resistant to re-enacting and revivifying the complex nature of Okamoto's story and presence in Palestine and Lebanon, Sadek instead asks you to consider how to interpret an encounter with the figure of Okamoto through his absence. Mistrustful of the role of imaging, the installation is instead reliant on minimal text and spatial markings, which ask the viewer to 'be in' and consider history from the moment of encounter.

Finally, there is a core number of works in the exhibition which refer to alternative ecological and economic structures and narratives. These works are often playful experiments with the boundaries of 'economic' models. Teasing out the mythic potential from serious accounts of modern economic development, they provide a network of possibilities in which gains and



Above:
Jorge Maachi
12 Short Songs (still) 2009,
DVD, courtesy of the artist
and Galleria Continua, San
Gimignano, Beijing, Le Moulin.

losses play out in phantom-like realities. The economy and its alternative measures are both the site of research and investigation, and are experimentally redeployed into errant logic and productive use. **Michael Stevenson** has recently used the narrative structure of film to decode the labyrinth of relationships he weaves between the worlds of economic, artistic and political risk taking. These often uncanny narratives are so far from standard norms that on face value they seemingly disassociate with the real-time and space of today. Yet they configure in a set of relationships and hyper facts, to translate something tangibly incomprehensible about all forms of historical account. **Olivia Plender's** work uses the borrowed language of eighteenth-century adventure and commercial exploration. Plender's typically intensive research takes her into proximate role-play with historical subjects and experiences from which she sets up popular encounters, games, rituals and mysterious re-enactments. With one hand on empirical knowledge and garnered fact she builds a taste for the mythic, unstoppable quest for errant histories. **Jorge Macchi's** music boxes, playing phrases from hole-punched cards, recall recent economic events, and remind us that a word or document commonly encountered can manifest strange behaviours. The documented

performances show twelve songs playing different tunes, reappropriated from their origins as headlines of catastrophe or global impact, their proper meaning is usurped by sound and image jingles. Like enunciation itself, he reminds us of our ability to mispronounce, play and wreck havoc with received knowledge through the act of communication. Similarly, he reminds us how significant events become lost and playfully reabsorbed in the banal rhythms of the everyday.

The collective **Learning Site**, led by Rikke Luther and Cecilia Wendt, has designed a dwelling in reverse logic for the context of the Triennial. It is an experiment in deconstruction and decomposition, using a combination of advancements in eco-housing and permaculture to resolve the burden of longevity we associate with housing and shelter. In *The House of Economy*, mushrooms are both a metaphorical appendage, and tools in a project which has the real task of positing alternative conditions for investing in dwelling and the one-time utopian project of alternative living. **Robert Hood** is a collector of refuse which he doesn't always know how to place or position. He challenges the non-functioning presence of his material surroundings, calling on its capacity to redirect material energy. From this Hood has

created plastic bag ectoplasms, art historical rebirths and street-culture salvations through his collected objects. His interest in material refuse is both an intervention in decaying modernity, and revivification of his surrounds in which he takes a walk through the unnoticed or unadministered material leftovers. Hood's version of eco-awareness lies less in the symbolism of action and more in the provocation for us to engage with the unseen everyday.

AND SO RETURNING TO ISLANDS...

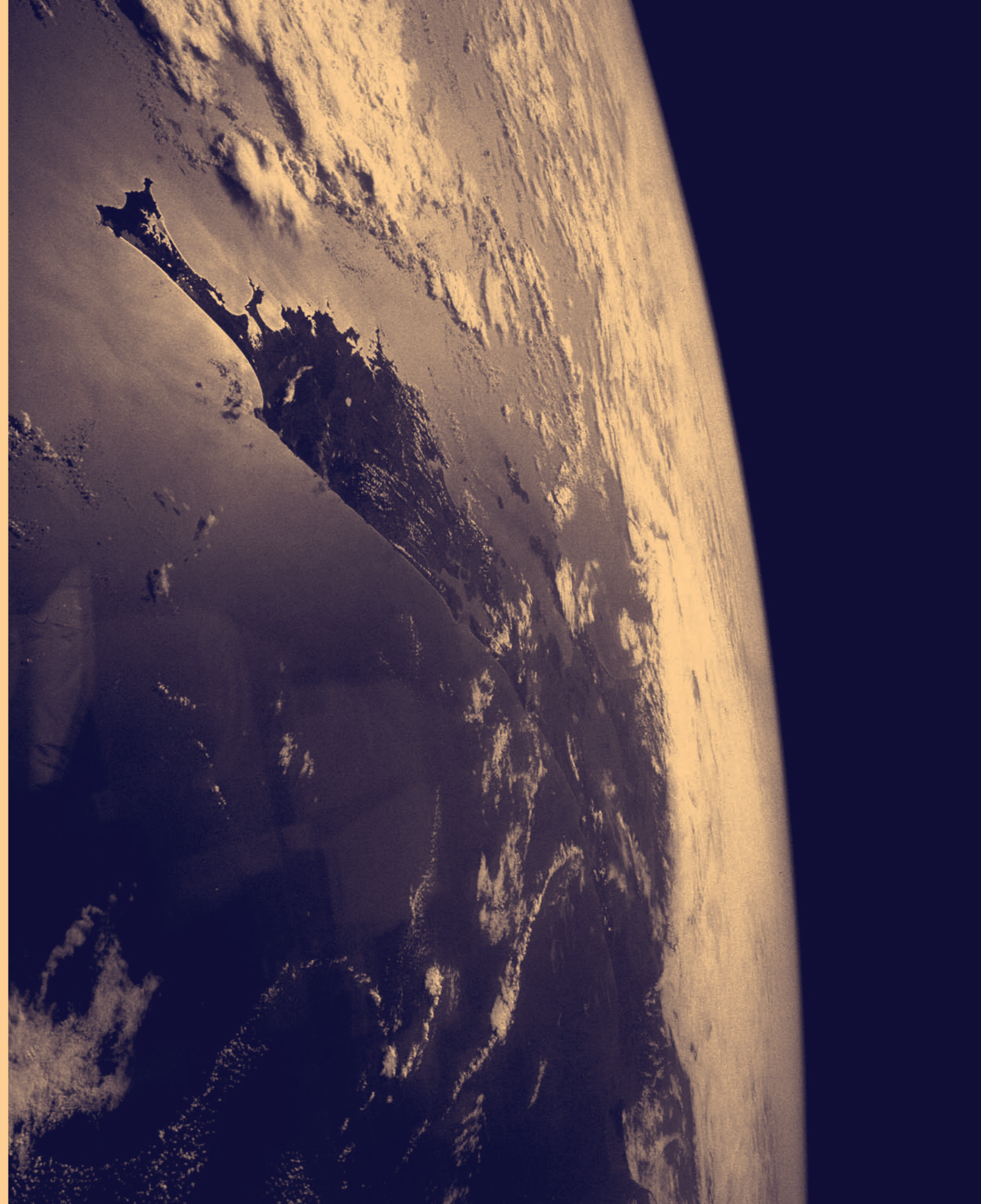
Let us return for a moment to the island. From a distance, it is a metaphor of possibility and absence in heavenward isolation. The persuasive force of panoptic vision, cultivated by the concept of the balloon and skyscraper alike in modern thought, allows us to see all land mass as islands of opportunity. But in turn it prevents our engagement with the details and determinants of lived experience, which are both necessary and essential if we begin to understand the unknown risks of the future. The metaphor deflates and falls when it collides with the new realities of interdependence in our fragile global community. Fragile because, other than the support or condemnation of industrial ties, we know not what it is built on. There are no islands in a society affected by the tides of global risks. Just as there was no balloon travel without hot air. So, how do we adventure and where will it take us?

Today, while we digest the causes and effects of our most recent global recession, is it not a reminder of the all too disparate fields of our political, economic, environmental, social, scientific and cultural terrains? Is this then still the ultimate risk and responsibility, to develop

*Right:
Top of the North Island of
New Zealand from space
1 June 1983, NASA, Johnson
Space Center, Houston, Texas.*

an understanding of their sustainability and interconnectedness? Moreover, to find a way for the ride to continue within the microcosms of our space-time experience no matter how indeterminate it might be? Within the field of art, this may mean contemplating a sustainable creative enquiry without getting caught in the paradigm of risk prevention or production? In this moment, art then uses its 'poetic licence' to wreak havoc with proper notions of 'understanding'. Instead art's intelligence opens up fissures even while we analyse, document, debate and take account of the impact of global recession and the impact of adventurous risk taking in still fundamentally modern terms. Perhaps art will explore via kinaesthetic account, the possibilities for experiential knowledge, of being in this moment. It can only be confusing – as art's potential here is not to 'reveal' but to explore experience through material matter and the intellectual refuse of our age.

Natasha Conland, *Curator, Contemporary Art,*
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki.



NAVIGATING IN A DISCOVERED WORLD: AN ESSAY

Doryun Chong

I. MANHATTAN: 40°43'42"N, 73°59'39"W

I write these words while sitting in Midtown Manhattan. The location is just blocks away from Columbus Circle, at the intersection of Broadway, West 59th Street, Eighth Avenue, Central Park West and Central Park South. It marks the southwest corner of the gargantuan green rectangle – that great artifice of nature called the Central Park. The Circle is named after the almost 25 metre-tall monument of the Genoese mariner standing atop an obelisk. It was erected in 1892 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of his touchdown in the Caribbean, as if a springboard to the Americas, however distanced these islands are in actuality from this point in the island of Manhattan.¹ The Caribbean used to be such a far-off place in my mental map of the world. With my recent settlement on the eastern seaboard of the United States, however, the Antilles have begun to feel incredibly proximate, all of a sudden. I am startled every time I hear that it is just three hours by plane to Puerto Rico and no more than five hours to Trinidad and Tobago, just off the coastline of Venezuela.

The year 2009 marked the 400th anniversary of another 'discovery' – that of this very island I now reside and work in. It was in September 1609 that Henry Hudson, an Englishman working

Left:
Columbus Circle, New York City.
Photo: Doryun Chong.

1.
Christopher Columbus (c1451 – 1506; Christoffa Corombo in fifteenth-century Genoese) explored the West Indies – also known as the Antilles – and Central America in four voyages financed by Isabella I of Castille. In the initial 1492 voyage, he reached the modern day Bahamas, and then Cuba and the island of Hispaniola (Haiti and Dominican Republic). He thought the islands were part of the East Asian mainland. In three subsequent voyages (1493, 1498 and 1502), he explored the Lesser Antilles (including the islands of Guadeloupe, Montserrat and Antigua); the Greater Antilles (including Puerto Rico and Jamaica); Trinidad and Tobago, and the northern coast of Venezuela; and Central America (modern-day Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama). Bringing this thus-far unknown part of the world into European consciousness, Columbus's voyages started the European colonisation of the 'New World'.

2.
Verrazano's name is however now borne by a bridge that connects the boroughs of Staten Island and Brooklyn.

for the Dutch East India Company, entered the estuary of the river, which now bears his name and lines the Western side of Manhattan Island. But as is the case with so many of the incidents in the annals of European exploration of the 'New World', Hudson wasn't the first European to enter the territory that is now New York. As far as we know, the first was Italian Giovanni da Verrazano, who sailed into the Upper New York Bay almost a century before in 1524. Verrazano's voyage to the North American continent, at the invitation of a French king, was carried out in search of a passage to the Pacific believed to exist between two previously discovered landing spots – Florida and Nova Scotia – so that Europeans could reach the storied land of riches, Cathay. Perhaps it is because Verrazano thought that the body of water he sailed into was a large lake that it was not his name but Hudson's that got attached to the river.² The Pacific was not reached on this maiden voyage, yet perhaps emboldened by his initial success, Verrazano made a few more trips westward. In 1528 on his last voyage, it is said that he was killed and eaten by ferocious Carib natives – probably on the island of Guadeloupe.

It is by now fairly well understood that Shakespeare took various contemporary accounts



Above:
John Pierre Simon after
Henry Fuseli Shakespeare:
*Tempest, Act I, Scene II (detail of
Caliban)* 1797, mezzotint and
dust-ground aquatint on wove
paper, Auckland Art Gallery Toi
o Tāmaki, gift of Peter Tomory,
2002.

of the Carib Indians by European explorers – including that of Columbus and his men – to come up with the half-animal, half-man character of Caliban in *The Tempest*. This, one of Shakespeare's last plays, is believed to have been written 1610–11 (concurrently, Henry Hudson was exploring what is now Labrador, Canada, this time charting what he thought to be the true Northwest Passage). A slave to his European master and sorcerer Prospero, Caliban is a figure of slavery and abjection, disfigurement and underdevelopment. A cipher of colonial subjection, the character was employed as a psychoanalytic trope to illustrate the psychology of colonisation in Octave Mannoni's book *Prospero and Caliban*, 1950. In it, the French psychoanalyst posits the notion of the 'dependency complex', which he developed based on his observation of a revolt of the natives in Madagascar in 1948. Mannoni's book is perhaps better known through a trenchant critique of its assumptions by Frantz Fanon, hailing from Martinique, in his classic text *Black Skin, White Masks*, 1952.³

Four centuries later, the Caribbean is no longer a mere landing spot fortuitously and fatefully facilitated by the trade winds for European explorers, nor is it a fantastical territory of wicked cannibals. Rather, in this postcolonial time of ours and in this age of easy air and water travel, it is a location tied most closely in the minds of many to the sun and leisure, rather than industry and productivity. This contemporary association was perfectly exploited when two well-known art world figures, artist Maurizio Cattelan and curator Jens Hoffman, hatched the conceptual prank that was the Sixth International Caribbean Biennale in 2001. Fully accompanied by promotional materials such as magazine

3.
For Fanon, Mannoni's theorisation of the natives' 'dependency complex' is problematically based on the assumption that the colonised are psychologically predisposed – in a neurotic fashion – to seek out their coloniser and thus fails to explain colonialism in any rational way.

4.
Jenny Liu, 'Trouble in Paradise: The Sixth International Caribbean Biennale', Frieze, no 51, Mar–Apr 2000.

advertisements and press dossiers but with no actual organisation and presentation, not to mention art, the purported exhibition consisted of a handful of artists on vacation along with a small group of invitees. One writer present assessed: 'There's something sad about so cynical and ambivalent a gesture as the Caribbean Biennial: one would think that a critique of one's own practices would be ethical, even idealistic. Here, the humour was both a performance of aggression and a weapon of despair, another cheerless rehearsal of irony and parody.'⁴ Here I am less interested in quibbling over the value of this particular project, than in pondering the ways in which a geographic location, overloaded with historical narratives and symbolic weight, could be rendered empty of signification to such an extent that it is capable of hosting a 'non-event'.

Going a little further, I wonder then how I can contemplate the history and symbolism of the Caribbean, when I have never set my own foot in the place – surely, a multiplicity of places. This is not to suggest that reflection on a place must be endorsed and justified by authenticity of experience and presence, of having been there and having seen and felt it. Rather, I am admitting that the Caribbean – criss-crossed with spatial and temporal facts, and with literary and metaphorical allusions, as laid down in the paragraphs above – is for me both a reality and a phantasmagorical 'non-place.' Our consciousness of the world is ever more replaced and determined by GPS and Google Earth, together constructing a false sense of omnipotence. These tools enable us to be located wherever we might be and to locate anywhere without moving an inch. Somewhere in between these two wondrous technologies is a space available for words and imagination,

with their unavoidable failings and lacunae. When an important part of your job is to be at as many places as you can manage (and when the job seems to increasingly involve hearing and learning from artists' stories about many places and their historical peculiarities), your sense of the world – and of time – simultaneously grows more complex and reveals innumerable blind spots in consciousness. Or, at least I hope so.

2. ONE POSSIBLE NAVIGATION IN THE WORLD, AMONG MANY

Critiques and complaints in the last couple of decades around the curator's role as a globe-trotting, mileage-accruing (read dilettantish and superficial) nomad used to be aplenty but by now seem to have grown staid. The image of the itinerant curator has perhaps become too naturalised to even warrant snide comments about it. While the jury may be still out on the lifestyle and methodology of contemporary art curators, it is undeniable that the particular evolutionary pattern of the profession has to do with the fact that many exhibitions in recent years have resembled a cartographic art. One manifestation is the mounting of stupefyingly large-scale exhibitions that round up artists from the far reaches of the globe or the planet, riding on the waves of globalisation, real and imagined. The Pompidou Centre's 1989 exhibition *Magiciens de la terre*, which put professional contemporary artists mostly from the West, side-by-side with artisans and makers from the rest (eg Tibetan sand mandala monk-painters and Oaxacan woodcarvers from Mexico) is yet to be surpassed in its scale of ambition. More recent examples such as Documenta XI, 2002, with its far-reaching 'platforms' (symposia held in Vienna, Berlin, New Delhi, St Lucia and

Lagos) leading up to the exhibition in Kassel, Germany, and the next edition, Documenta XII, 2007, with its thesis of 'the migration of form' and its claim of the formlessness of large-scale exhibition, may have come closest.

But it would be to misrepresent the case to suggest that only curatorial itinerancy has responded to the metamorphosis of geopolitics and the evolution of capital from the Cold War-era model to the current globalised, neoliberalist guise in bringing about arguably the most notable change in contemporary art in the last few decades. For there have also been important changes in artistic practice per se, revolving around the idea of travel, its actualities and its imaginaries. Some of the instances are well-known and widely discussed in Western art press: the voyage of Pierre Huyghe and an invited coterie of fellow artists to the Antarctic in search of a small isle where a (mythical) albino penguin lives (*A Journey That Wasn't*, 2005); Rirkrit Tiravanija and Kamin Letchaiprasert's *The Land* project, initiated in 1998, self-sustainable rice farm-cum-artistic/architectural projects in northern Thailand; and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's longstanding research into 'tropical modernism'. A revival or rediscovery of mobility – and perhaps more importantly, re-romanticisation of that particular mode of being – is visible everywhere in contemporary art but still awaits serious examination and discourse. (I understand *Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon* is precisely one such attempt.)

For many contemporary artists whose production is immaterial and contingent – even incorporating their often concrete material forms – the site of labour and production is no longer

fixed, having transformed ‘from a sedentary to a nomadic model’.⁵ Art historian Miwon Kwon assesses: ‘if the artist is successful, he or she travels constantly as a freelancer, often working on more than one site-specific project at a time, globetrotting as a guest, tourist, adventurer, temporary in-house critic, or pseudo-ethnographer’.⁶ The extension or evaporation of the site and the attendant change in modalities of artistic identity (or vice versa) have also transformed artists’ behavioural patterns – their verbs even. ‘If Richard Serra could once distill the nature of artistic activities down to their elemental physical actions (to drop, to split, to roll, to fold, to cut, etc), the situation now demands a different set of verbs: to negotiate, to coordinate, to compromise, to research, to promote, to organise, to interview.’⁷ And travel here is understood as much spatially as temporally. Oftentimes, it is both. Another notable and closely related aspect in recent artistic practice has been archival, historical and historiographic tendencies. These are manifested in an ‘idiosyncratic probing into particular figures, objects, and events in modern art, philosophy, and history.’⁸ That is, artists’ travels are carried out usually not for the sake of just being there, but for the purpose of unearthing and sharing what cannot be gained from sitting in the armchair with stacks of books and a laptop computer; in other words, in order to shed light on that which is hidden in shadows in grand narratives or surveys – those ‘non-places’, ‘non-events’ and even ‘non-moments’. Such research-based practices also tend to ‘lead to works that invite viewers to think about the past; to make connections between events, characters, and objects; to join together in memory; and to reconsider the ways in which the past is represented in wider culture.’⁹

5. Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2004, p 4.

6. As above, p 46.

7. As above, p 51.

8. Hal Foster, ‘An Archival Impulse’, *October*, no 110, Fall 2004, p 3.

9. Mark Godfrey, ‘The Artist as Historian’, *October*, no 120, Spring 2007, pp 142–3. Godfrey states further that there are ‘important differences’ between his notion of ‘artist as historian’ and Foster’s concept of ‘archival impulse’ in contemporary artistic practice: ‘[Foster’s] concept of “archival” practice is not restricted exclusively to artists concerned with historical representation... My examples are all of art works specifically concerned with history.’ (p 143, note 5).

10. Foster, ‘An Archival Impulse’, p 21.

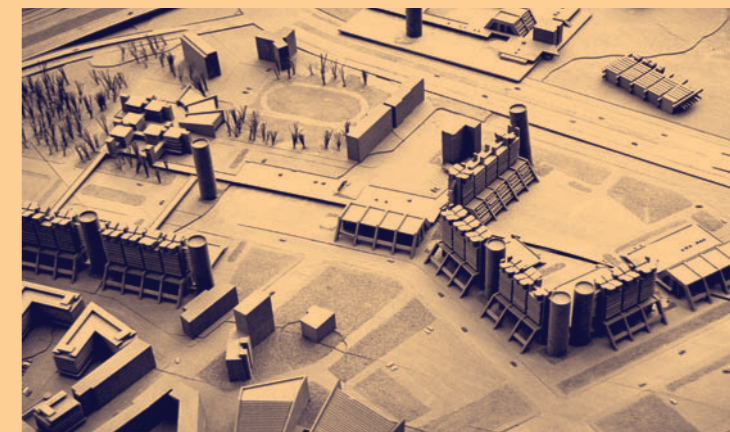
11. The following description is derived from Susan Cross (ed), *Simon Starling: The Nanjing Particles*, MASS MOCA, North Adams, Massachusetts, 2009.

Take for instance Tokyo and Kiev-based, but physically and virtually peripatetic, artist Sean Snyder and a host of findings he has made from the presents and pasts of remote corners of the world. His restless purview has taken him to Bucharest, Romania and Pyongyang, North Korea on investigations of architectural follies, specifically the former House of the People and the unfinished behemoth, Ryugong Hotel, respectively (*Bucharest/Pyongyang*, 2000–4); to Skopje, Macedonia to study a partially realised urban planning project based on a proposal by Japanese architect Kenzo Tange and his team in the aftermath of a massive earthquake in 1963 that levelled the city; and to Baghdad on the first days of American invasion and to the ‘spider hole’ at the end of which was the little bunker room where Saddam Hussein managed to hide and survive for months subsisting on American snacks (*Casio, Seiko, Sheraton, Toyota, Mars*, 2004–5; *Untitled (Archive Iraq)* 2003–5; *The Site* 2004–5). When artists operate as traveller, archivist and historian all at once, a curator’s job – at least, as it is understood by this author and as it has been the case for me vis-à-vis Snyder – is to be informed of their itineraries, to develop fascination and sympathy for their obsessive, romantic or melancholic wanderlust, and also to have crash courses on their explorations and findings. Along with their sometimes ‘tendentious, even preposterous’ logical steps and thinking processes involved.¹⁰

Here are two additional discoveries that I encountered in two different locations recently. Just a few weeks ago, I learned about a recent project by Simon Starling presented at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.¹¹ The artist’s solo presentation in an enormous

football field-sized exhibition hall in the museum consisted of an installation of two very large blobby, polished stainless-steel sculptures, titled *The Nanjing Particles (After Henry Ward, View of C T Sampson’s Shoe Manufactory, with the Chinese Shoemakers in Working Costume, c1875)*. The sculptures are based on a stereographic photograph of Chinese workers at a shoemaking factory that is now part of the museum campus – or more precisely, silver particles extracted from the print’s emulsion, which were then made into 3-D images with the aid of an electron microscope and then magnified 25,000 times. The scanned images of the particles were in turn computer-rendered into models, which were then manufactured as sculptural objects – at one million times the original size of the particles – in a foundry in China. Well known for his intensive research process, elaborate narratives and object-making that are always complexly interconnected, Starling dived into studying the history of the site itself. In the course of this research, he found the stereograph, made by a certain Henry Ward named in the title of the work, of Chinese immigrant labourers who were brought in around 1870 to replace American workers on a strike and were willing to work for lower wages. The extended sojourn of these workers gave the town of North Adams, Western Massachusetts the title of home to the largest population of Chinese migrant workers east of the Mississippi at the time.

Soon after this discovery, I was sitting with artist Danh Vo in Berlin to hear about his ongoing work which involves his homeland Vietnam, the history of French colonisation and missionary work in Indochina and the biography of his own family as refugees that settled in Denmark. One project arose from his ongoing collaboration



Top:
Sean Snyder ‘Model taken out of storage from the City Museum of Skopje, 2005’, from *A Revisionist Model of Solidarity* 2004–5, photograph, courtesy the artist.

Bottom:
Simon Starling *The Nanjing Particles (After Henry Ward, View of C T Sampson’s Shoe Manufactory, with the Chinese Shoemakers in working costume, North Adams and vicinity, c1875) (detail)* 2008, forged stainless steel, installation view: MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts, 2008–9, courtesy of the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York. Photo: Arthur Evans.



with American anthropologist Joseph Carrier, who worked for the American military and then for a non-governmental organisation in the 1960s and 1970s. Vo displayed photographs salvaged from Carrier's private archive that he had surreptitiously snapped of young Vietnamese men. The photographs form a melancholic and at times troubling screen upon which Carrier's homoerotic desire was projected. The images are also complexly invested with the Westerner's gaze upon the bodies of the colonised as well as with an unavoidable intimation of a relationship of violence and domination in which two nations have been implicated. In another evolving project presented at various venues, Vo brings together in installation forms, various *objets trouvés* from his research and travels. The objects include stunning nineteenth-century chandeliers the artist acquired after seeing press photographs of the signing of the Vietnam Peace Accord in 1973 in the Hotel Majestic in Paris; a saddle believed to have belonged to a French missionary in Vietnam who was captured and executed; and a sword with a French coin decorating its handle, once in the possession of a member of the Vietnamese 'montagnards', who fought alongside the French and the Americans and were subsequently brutally repressed by the government of the reunified Vietnam.¹²

As divergent from each other as these projects are, Starling and Vo are both interested in disinterring forgotten historical relationships and tracing the routes of travelling histories and biographies in relation to objects, whether made or found. In the late 1960s, American artist Bruce Nauman, fresh out of graduate school, rented a former grocery store in the Mission district of San Francisco and isolated himself therein.

In a series of performative works, Nauman transitioned from making objects to turning his own body into an object and investigating its relationship with space. If Nauman's studio was the ground zero where arguably the most radical and influential reconsideration of sculpture in the last decades was carried out, it can also be argued that his self-isolation exposed the fundamental status of the object. Nauman thus ushered in the 'post-studio' eschewal of a physical space in which to make things, as well as the collective itinerancy of many artists today.

If more and more artists have indeed turned their studios into roving caravans, curators accordingly become more (or less) than the caretaker of objects and must assume the duties of following or joining the travel routes and itineraries of artists' projects, while negotiating his or her own. While a curator's job is often to stay behind the scenes, it is impossible, perhaps even dishonest, to completely evacuate one's subjectivity from his or her curatorial labour, especially when the subjectivity is unavoidably produced and constantly inflected by an individual's political, socio-economic, racial and ethno-cultural specificities. At the same time, it would be a contradiction not to admit to the increased potential for chance and accident in this new mode of us existing and working beyond confinement.

3. TERRA (IN)COGNITA

In 1600, ten years before Henry Hudson's sail into New York Bay and Shakespeare's completion of *The Tempest*, an English mariner named William Adams made landfall in Japan after a harrowing voyage that killed most of his shipmates.¹³ Adams had left Rotterdam two years prior in a five-ship fleet owned by the Dutch East India Company.

Left:
Danh Vo

26.05.2009, 8:43 2009,
late nineteenth-century
chandelier from the ballroom
of the former Hotel Majestic,
Avenue Kléber, Paris.

Galoppa! 2009,
The riding saddle of Bishop
Peter Trần Thanh Chung who
ministered to the indigenous
people in the Central Highlands
of Vietnam between April
1958 and August 1966,
and the last missionary to use
horses for this purpose,
provenance: Diocese of
Kontum, Vietnam,
on loan from John Morace
and Tom Kennedy, Los Angeles.

The Resurrection 2009,
visual dictionary for the
Bahar Montagnard language,
provenance: Diocese of
Kontum, Vietnam,
on loan from John Morace
and Tom Kennedy, Los Angeles.

Installation view: National
Gallery Prize for Young Art
2009, Hamburger Bahnhof,
Berlin, 2009–10,
courtesy of the artist and Galerie
Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin.

12.

These installations have been
realised at Kunsthalle Basel,
11 Jun – 23 Aug 2009 and
at Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin,
11 Sept 2009 – 3 Jan 2010,
among others.

13.

The account of Adam's voyage
and life in Japan is derived from
Giles Milton, Samurai William:
The Englishman Who Opened
Japan, Penguin, New York,
2003.

In order to evade the usual eastward route around the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean, which was controlled by the Spanish and the Portuguese, the fleet sailed southward along the western coastline of Africa, west-bound across the Atlantic, around Cape Horn at the tip of South America, and then crossed the Pacific in a northwesterly direction – essentially drawing a large V across two immense bodies of water. As if the host of diseases, exceedingly inclement weathers and hostile natives that claimed many lives had not been enough, the passage of the Pacific proved especially fatal for the remaining ships and crew. By the time they came upon the island of Kyushu and were spotted by Japanese inhabitants, the fleet had been reduced to one ship, *Liefde* ('Love' in Dutch), of which Adams was the pilot. The twenty or so men left on the ship were barely able to stand up. Although Adams and his surviving crew found themselves in a country where Portuguese traders and Jesuits had an exclusive stronghold (the Catholics were naturally antagonistic toward the Protestant English), the resilient and resourceful Englishman quickly earned the trust of, and became a key advisor to, the ruling shōgun Tokugawa Ieyasu. Adams died and was buried in Nagasaki after two decades of enjoying a prosperous life and political influence in Japan, and after death, became a revered, almost mythical figure. Within a generation, the Tokugawa shōgunate would institute the *sakoku* ('closed country') policy, and the English foothold Adams had managed to secure in Japan would not see its next chapter until the late nineteenth century.

While Adams's story may be particularly extraordinary, there are many other stories – including those that haven't been told yet –

of intrepid or sometimes despicable voyagers whose trails ended with no return. The ultimate prize in the age of European nautical voyages and discoveries was the circumnavigation of the world. The first successful attempt was the expedition of Portuguese Ferdinand Magellan (1519–22), followed by, among others, that of Englishman Francis Drake (1577–80), and that of another Englishman, James Cook (1768–71, 1772–5 and 1776–9).¹⁴ And it is Cook's voyages that effectively staked Britain's claim for New Zealand, one of the most isolated landmasses on the planet, though the first European known to have reached New Zealand was the Dutchman Abel Janszoon Tasman (1642). And isolated New Zealand still is, even from today's cartographic conventions. Reflecting the Eurocentric and Atlantic-centric viewpoint, most world maps – the majority of which still use the Mercator projection – bisect the Pacific, situating Alaska at the top left corner and New Zealand at the extreme lower right-hand corner of a flat, unfurled rectangle.¹⁵ The distortion of this 2-D rendering of the round globe and the effect of the Atlantic-centric mapping of the world literally place this landmass at the edge of the world, fittingly for the islands that remained a terra incognita from the European viewpoint for the longest time. And it is not just the historical European viewpoint but also my own, I should admit, from which New Zealand is a complete terra incognita, an almost pure unknown.

For many, even in the present tense, Japan and the Pacific are less familiar than the Atlantic and Old Europe. Adams and the shipwrecked Englishmen were unknown to the Japanese, just as the Japanese were unknown to the Europeans. Even though someone like I can claim to know



Above:
Joaquín Torres-García
Inverted Map of South
America 1943,
China ink on paper,
Fundación Torres García,
Montevideo.
© Joaquín Torres-García,
licensed by Viscopy,
Australia, 2010.

14.
Technically speaking, Magellan did not complete the circumnavigation because he was killed during a battle in the Philippines.

15.
In the course of editing this essay it has been brought to my attention that most world maps in New Zealand situate the country in the centre of their pictorial plane. This is understandable and probably the case in most nations, and it further underscores the particular subjective locationality of my position and purview.

the Pacific better having crossed the great body of water numerous times by air, it turns out that my line of gaze and my routes of travel have been far closer to Adams's than to Cook's, leaving broad swathes of the earth in the shadow; that is to say, not only New Zealand but almost all of the southern hemisphere, for me, constitute territories beyond knowledge, still holding promises of adventure and risk. What would the inhabitants of that territory think of such a romantic, possibly offensively naive view?

One gesture contra such a North-centric purview, embedded in which is a system of received knowledge based on histories of colonialism, uneven development, and other forms of subjugation, may be found in the Uruguayan modernist painter Joaquín Torres-García's *Inverted Map of South America*, 1943. In the drawing, just as the title describes, we see South America upside down, with Tierra del Fuego, the southern tip of the continent, at the very top and nestled against the capital letter 'S,' next to which is an inscription that reads 'Polo'. He also drew two horizontal lines across the drawing trisecting the continent. Nearer to the bottom is the equator, and above it, the other line, below which is an inscription that reads 'S. 34° 41' W 56° 9'', likely the latitude and longitude of Montevideo, and above which is a ship with full sails. Above the ship is the sun, on the other side of the southernmost (or northernmost?) tripartite of the continent are a half moon and stars.

The drawing breaks off in the lower right-hand corner just about where the Panama Canal would be, erasing not only the whole North American continent but also Mexico, the country of Muralists, whose history dominates Latin

American modernisms. One interpreter opines, 'When Torres-García named his Constructivist academy the School of the South, he was effectively turning his back on the North in an act of proud defiance.'¹⁶

. . .

Is it at all possible for one to have a terra incognita in our age of GPS and Google Earth? In case this rather loose and associative patchwork depiction of terrae cognitae in this writing – via stories of European voyagers and contemporary art works – failed to make it clear, I am obliged to state that the stories and narratives I invoke in the paragraphs above are some of the pieces of the puzzle that is my very subjective United States – nay, East Coast – centered, northern hemispheric view of the world. And this essay (in the original etymological sense of an 'attempt') is intended as a highly individual chart of criss-crossing navigations: departing from my own island of Manhattan to the Caribbean, then across the Atlantic to the 'Old World'; on the land, up north several hundred miles to Western Massachusetts then across the North American continent to the West Coast, the gateway of Chinese immigration to America; back in the Old World, from northern Europe to the former French colony of Indochina in southeast Asia; and across the Atlantic around South America and across the Pacific to Japan; and weaving circumnavigations of the world. As extensive and far-reaching as this quick voyage of voyages has been, I would be remiss to not iterate that it also reveals my own specificities, biases and ignorance. And my own yearnings for adventure and even for risk. Nevertheless, despite or thanks to this self-consciously

16.
Robert Storr, 'The Map Room: A Visitor's Guide', Mapping, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1994, p 9.

17.
Lucy R Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*, New Press, New York, 1998.

postmodern, postcolonial disclaimer, I remain beholden to – to creatively borrow an expression from a renowned art writer – 'the lure of the local' and the romance of mobility.¹⁷ That I dare to draw my own map of the world, self-consciously exposing its incompleteness and even its political, philosophical problematics, may be attributable not only to an engine of professional motivation but also to something as irrepressible and longstanding as human curiosity itself. The voyage is not over. And the world will never be fully discovered.

Doryun Chong, Associate Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

THE ODD COUPLE: RISK/DANGER AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR ART

Leonhard Emmerling



In what way and with regard to whom or what – the work, the artist, the public, ‘society’ – can we make a meaningful connection between the terms ‘risk’ and ‘art’. And, once such a connection has been made, what are the consequences for the term ‘art’?

This text gives a short introduction to the topic of risk through system theory, drawing on the theoretical writings of German sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1927–1998). Luhmann has written extensively on the sociology of risk.¹ While it is inadequate to focus on specific terms of his theory (such as autopoiesis, operative closure, structural coupling and re-entry), hopefully sufficient material is provided to foster a meaningful understanding. Luhmann, who was widely influential in Europe in the 1990s, is mainly known for his political and sociological theory but has also written extensively about art and literature. However, it is only in recent times that his aesthetic writings have started to receive the attention they deserve. An attempt will then be made to test Luhmann’s theory of risk as it relates to art, through a discussion of Marina Abramović’s *Rhythm 0* of 1974.

I From a system-theoretical point of view, the antonym to ‘risk’ is not ‘safety’ or ‘security’, as one might expect, but ‘danger’. Security cannot be used as antonym of risk, since it can never

Translated from German by Friederike Cichon. Translations of quotations from publications originally published in other languages are also by Cichon, unless otherwise attributed.

1.
Niklas Luhmann, *Risk: A Sociological Theory*, A de Gruyter, New York, 1993.

2.
As above, p 20.

Left:
Marina Abramović
Rhythm 0 1974,
installation view: Studio
Morra, Naples, 1974,
courtesy of the artist and Sean
Kelly Gallery, New York.
© Marina Abramović.

be determined whether choosing a ‘safe’ option will result in a situation through which another promising option was missed. To go for security presents a risk in itself.² Danger, however, can be understood as a threat to system stability without causal link to any decisions made. Dangers are system-external; risks are system-internal. This means that dangers spring from the system’s environment, are unavoidable and cannot be prevented as they are unpredictable. They can only be identified as such after an event, while risks are the consequences of decisions. They are quantifiable and bear consequences for the future. By way of exaggeration, one could call them bets on the future.

The decision to expose oneself to dangers – such as circumnavigation of the globe, mountain climbing, flight in a hot air balloon or marriage – amounts to risk production. Any of these risks are only taken by the individuals concerned, who feel that they cannot do without the adventure (for marriage this gets more complicated). Risks affecting people who have not been involved in the underlying decisions – for example the use of technologies such as nuclear power or genetically modified food – however, open up problems of responsibility. Such risk-relevant decisions are made by those members of society who claim to be equipped with sufficient competence to take responsibility for accepting these risks, not

only for themselves, but also for those who will be affected by them. Whether their authority is legitimised by democratic elections, expertise or sheer assertive power, depends on the social, economic or political system in which their decisions are made. However legitimised, there are some thresholds beyond which risk no longer has any chance of acceptance – despite all quantitative analysis.³ Or, rather, there are some risks where minimisation seems to be necessary regardless of whether they can be attributed with absolute certainty to their decision-makers.

An obvious example of this is global warming. Although the ‘facts’ – that global warming is taking place – have been empirically proven and recognised, there seems to be no consensus concerning the measures that should be adopted in order to effectively counter its effects and consequences. Implementing a measure, the effect of which is doubtful and that potentially has to be replaced by another strategy not long after, seems to present a smaller risk than taking no measure at all. Each individual or decision-maker’s actions can then easily be construed as irrational or as activism, with climate change processes perceived as being too complex to be understood or for forecasts of any potential consequence to be made. This legitimises the appeal for ‘sensible’ science and instrumental reason, whose ‘proper’ application is called for in good Cartesian fashion.⁴ But the distinction between rational and irrational decision-making serves only to explain ‘the malfunctioning of communicative understanding and to legitimise the termination of communication.’⁵

However, minimising the risk by reducing greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide, for example, also involves creating risks for the job market, investments, loss of orders, state subsidies, tax revenue, location disadvantages and decrease of gross national product, to name just a few. This leads

3. *Here lies the so-called disaster threshold. Luhmann, Risk, p 149: ‘We shall therefore speak of disaster whenever the affected party refuses to allow himself to be convinced of quantitative analysis.’*

4. René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode*, 1637; in Charles Adams and Paul Tannery (eds), *Oeuvres de Descartes*, vol 6, Leopold Cerf, Paris, 1902, p 2. See also Max Horkheimer and Theodor W Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, 1947; with an epilogue by Jürgen Habermas, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1969.

5. Niklas Luhmann, *Die Moral der Gesellschaft*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2008, p 355.

6. *Functional diversification is considered by Luhmann as one of the characteristics of modern society. It replaced the stratification, eg the hierarchical structure of, for instance, tribal or feudal societies. Society is not structured by hierarchical differentiation (class etc) but by functional differentiation. The political system is not identical with the economic or the judicial system but fulfils a different function in society. This can be metaphorically described as the replacement of a vertical structure by a horizontal topology.*

to the phenomenon of risk assessment, which again generates risks as it cannot quantify risks completely nor integrate security.

Risks are connected with the problem of responsibility not only due to their possible effect on the individual or others, but also due to their inherent orientation towards the future. This is because risks result from decisions, and all decisions have future consequences. If you make decisions, you take risks, accept responsibility, and you can be held morally accountable. This becomes problematic in a society that is characterised above all by its ‘functional diversification’, by its complexity and poly-contextuality. In such a society, decisions made in one sector have consequences for another sector, yet these consequences are rarely considered during risk assessment.⁶ Increased system complexity causes increasing complexity of attributions. This is because an increase in the number of contexts impacted by decisions, and the variations over time that occur within these contexts, also increases the number of those affected by decisions, who have not had the slightest involvement in the decision-making process. Risks in complex societies produce people affected or victims, in fact any number of them.

Risk quantification reaches its limits due to this amplified complexity. For this reason, risks increasingly transform themselves into dangers. The process is twofold. As the number of decision-makers grows, so does the number of people affected. Nobody is unaffected or exempt from the consequences of risks, regardless of whether one holds any responsibility. In this sense we all become permanent victims. At the same time, the increased system complexity within differing social, political and economic systems implies that each action has some sort of consequence. Not making a decision in order to avoid a risk represents a decision of sorts and thus is a risk in

itself. There is not any non-action, nor non-decision-making. In this sense, everyone is a decision-maker, takes risks and creates risks for others, which they in turn might perceive as dangers.

The conceptual pairing of the terms risk and danger can thus be coupled with the conceptual terms of the decision-maker and person affected. To the extent to which the number of decision-makers or people causing risks rises exponentially (each of us contributes to global warming by actions which are based on certain decisions – nobody is free of decisions), the earth becomes dependent on human actions. That is to say, it becomes a shapeable, changeable, influenceable, destroyable or salvable world. Nature is increasingly regarded as being open to technical manipulation (we just have to make the right decisions in order to stop global warming). At the same time, the world created by humans is perceived as nature in as much as it represents exactly the kind of complexity, which makes accurate attributions and causal chains impossible, and where risks become dangers. As the world created by humans is perceived as non-contingent, it replaces the one not made by humans, which used to be nature.

From a system-theoretical perspective, decisions operate with expectations.⁷ Such expectations can be of a cognitive or a normative nature.⁸ That is, they can be configured in such a way that they risk the occurrence of an unexpected situation, maybe even one that is impossible to expect (cognitive), or they demand the occurrence of a situation that can be expected (normative). Normative expectations are contradictory in connection with risk as they imply that the sum of all possible situations is completely assessable – that there is no risk at all.

To a large extent, political, legal and opinion-forming processes seem to deal with the

7. *The term ‘expectation’ has a central role in Luhmann’s theory. He defines ‘structures (as) expectations with regard to the opportunities for connections of operations’, that is beyond the subjective. Niklas Luhmann, Einführung in die Systemtheorie, Carl Auer, Heidelberg, 2004, p 103.*

8. Johan Galtung, ‘Expectations and Interaction Processes’, *Inquiry*, 2, 1959, pp 213–34.

9. *Luhmann talks about risk absorption and risk transformation as the task of politics. Luhmann, Die Moral, p 356.*

10. *As above, pp 342–3.*

conversion of normative expectations into cognitive ones. They aim, for example, to moderate ‘value conflicts’ and to minimise the risks to the stability of the system, caused by irreconcilably clashing norms.⁹ The insistence on norms by either party bears the risk of a failure of communication. This problem of mismatched normative expectations is also linked to the development of a functionally diversified society. It is amplified by the production and maintenance of differently shaped contexts in polycultural societies. This problem receives its paradoxical form in the objectification of the right to subjective norms and values. Despite what ‘social conservatives’ gladly daydream of, the implementation, use and reinforcement of norms are unsuitable methods to put a halt to the atomisation of society; in fact they are its driving force. The speed, with which risk-relevant topics from any area are transformed into moral issues and debates about the validity and general acceptance of norms and values, suggests that morality as a system of mutual respect is deemed to be superior to other functional systems. Moral decision-making appears to represent a final value that needs no further justification.

*Morals also, and in particular, serve the concealment of structures, the diversion of attention in social interactions to superficial sticking points. Their ‘ethical’ reflection does not revoke this fixation (if they retain their currently valid style) but in turn only masks them in abstractions that aim at forms of reasoning, regulatory ideas, principles, values etc.*¹⁰

However, there is an absence of analysis as to whether it is ‘moral’ to argue morally or find contention rather than agreement on moral issues. In other words, arguing morally could again create risks which render themselves open to moral evaluation. Beyond the problem of the universality

of rights (human or otherwise), one can argue that to plead for morals and their totalisation as an overarching and reinforcing system, weakens all other discourses. Further, that the status of moral decision-making is nothing but a method of terror that cuts through complex interdependences in order to place itself in an untouchable area removed from the system.

II

Modern art’s anti-normativity is a key-element of how the avant-garde perceives itself.¹¹ This is not only the result of artists’ legends and gladly entertained self-portrayals – of the artist as an outsider and social renegade – but it also should be seen in conjunction with the terms of ‘the new’ to which art is reflecting.^{12 13} To say that ‘newness’ has its own tradition as a term, is not an argument against its relevance as an idea. It rather documents that from the seventeenth century onwards, art has become increasingly reflexive with regard to its own practice: art – at least since the last quarter of the nineteenth century – is a functionally autonomous part of the functionally diversified modern society.¹⁴

On the one hand, in whatever way the new is configured, it works as a criterion for distinguishing art from society: it is new with regard to what society has available as tools to describe itself and its environment.¹⁵ While on the other hand, the new functions as a criterion of distinction for what art recognises as relevant within its own operative system or what it rejects as irrelevant. Thus a value is defined which overarches other possible internal semantics, namely that of beauty. The fact that the new at the fringe of society is likely to fail and that it becomes compatible with other phenomena, in particular with fashion, increases the necessity for an internal, permanent intensification.¹⁶ Art needs to differentiate itself further as a system

11. *I am writing this without regard to discussions on modernism or postmodernism, etc.*

12. Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Die Legende vom Künstler*, 1934; Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2008. Margot and Rudolf Wittkower, *Künstler – Außenseiter der Gesellschaft*, 1963; Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1993. Paolo Bianchi (ed), ‘Bild und Seele’, *Kunstforum International*, vol 101, June 1989.

13. See Peter Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1974. Boris Groys, *Über das Neue*, Hanser, Munich and Vienna, 1992. Harald Fricke, *Gesetz und Freiheit. Eine Philosophie der Kunst*, Beck, Munich, 2000. Sylvia Zirden, *Theorie des Neuen: Konstruktion einer ungeschriebenen Theorie Adornos*, Königshausen and Neumann, Würzburg, 2005.

14. *The new as a category, initially with some entertainment value and always in close relationship with fashion from which art has never completely recovered, appears for example in François de Grenaille, La mode ou Caractère de la Religion*, Paris, 1642, p 5. Compare Jean-Baptiste le Rond d’Alembert, ‘Réflexions sur l’usage de la philosophie dans les matières de goût’, and ‘Dialogue entre la Poésie et la Philosophie’, 1767; in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol 4, A Belin, Paris, 1822, pp 326, 373–81. On how the new becomes boring refer to François Cartaud de La Villate, *Essais historiques et philosophiques sur le goût*, 1737; London, 1751, p 249.

15. For Boris Groys as the product of a cultural economy and the exchange of the values Profane and Valorised; for Imdahl as the production of ‘Unvordenklichkeit’ (the inconceivable). Compare Boris Groys, *Über das Neue*; Max Imdahl, *Giotto – Arenafresken*, Fink, Munich, 1980, pp 91–2.

of constitutive improbabilities, in order to achieve distinctiveness and functional autonomy. Art as a novelty process cannot integrate normative expectations from other functional structures, or prolong processes from other historical periods. It is essential for art to be anti-normative if it wants to be part of modernism. Ever since the avant-garde has become canonical and has established the anti-normative as its own norm, art must legitimise the rejection of the normative as the core of artistic practice time and again, formulating it anew and illustrating it. This accelerates the aging of the new, which then must be replaced by another new even faster. The acceleration of the production of the new in turn accelerates the production of the old.

Art is – for the reasons mentioned and not simply because it would like to be or because of its own repeated postulation – one of the social systems where risk is inherent. By definition, art today is inconceivable without the willingness to take risks and be risk aware. If we live in a risk society, then art is one of this society’s most prominent paradigms.

But if art has to permanently radicalise its anti-normative impetus both externally (in relationship to society) and internally (in relationship to other artforms and artistic manifestations) in order to continue to function as art, it increases the problem of its own improbability at the same time. As an idiosyncratic and highly condensed entity, art faces the problem of how to find solutions so that the risks it takes, do not turn into the risk of being muffled by its own soliloquy. Should the audience’s readiness to deal with highly selective phenomena – such as art’s formal decisions in a work – not grow to the extent to which the work’s selectivity and complexity are increased then what appeared to be risky will turn into dullness.

III

Under the paradigm of risk, art represents a system of anti-normative decisions; a system of highly condensed improbabilities. Risk in relation to art means radical opposition to normative expectations. This becomes difficult if art wants to take part explicitly in processes which are specific to other systems – processes of shaping opinions concerning political, ecological and economic decisions, discussions around human rights, the status of minorities, and the underprivileged. Let alone including affirmative practices in the style of socialist realism, fascist art and other propagandistic forms of art. Art, which in terms of semantics is not only multi-layered enough to be noticed addressing these problems – but that wants to be regarded as a decision that makes a contribution to the debate around such problems – must minimise internal complexity. It does not only have to integrate communitarian norms but also has to reduce its idiosyncrasies to be integrated into communitarian communication systems. This means that art ceases to be risky. It thereby forsakes its autonomy and becomes replaceable. While the risk of the classical avant-garde was to erode opinions on the nature of art by transgressing ‘aesthetic difference’, art at present risks making itself redundant by smoothing out this difference. This happens by reducing its autonomy, that is its internal differentiation and complexity, for the benefit of assimilation to the heteronomous.¹⁷ The assimilation to the heteronomous however signifies that the category of the new is abandoned.

Art that obeys the demand to be socially ‘useful’ makes itself indistinguishable from conventional practices of social intervention, regardless of how much current rhetoric is dominated by empty talk about defying conventions or breaking with habits. The desire to meet niche communitarian norms and values to counter the phantom ‘majority’ or

16. Theodor W Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1970, p 404, laments the proximity to the nouveauté and the ease with which the bogey of the middle class adapts to the bourgeois utilisation mechanism.

17. *Heteronomy is here understood as an antonym to autonomy. Since Kant, autonomy has described human will’s faculty, to give itself its own law. Grundlegung der Metaphysik der Sitten*, 1785; L Heilmann, Berlin, 1870, pp 66, 67, 74–95. Especially in Adorno’s aesthetic theory the terms autonomy and heteronomy are coupled extensively. Heteronomy describes a configuration (conceptual or artistic) whose form is determined by aims, categories or factors external to its principal or primary purposes. If the art-work does not follow its own law, the law itself establishes through its own standards of form, it abandons autonomy and surrenders to heteronomy (for example money, success, etc). Needless to say – in the last resort – this theory leads to an idealistic concept of the work of art.

18. One of the most striking examples is Thomas Hirschhorn’s Bataille Monument for Documenta XI, 2002, in Kassel. Hirschhorn insists on the autonomy of the art project, but acknowledges however that ‘such projects have an aesthetic that goes beyond art towards service.’ Alison M Gingeras in conversation with Thomas Hirschhorn, in *PressPlay*, Contemporary Artists in Conversation, Phaidon, London and New York, 2005, p 313.

19. Marina Abramović, *Charta*, Milan, 1998, pp 80–93. Thomas McEvilly, ‘The Serpent in the Stone’, in Chrissi Iles (ed), Marina Abramović, *Objects Performance Video Sound*, edition hansjörg mayer, Oxford and Stuttgart, 1995, p 39.

nebulous conventions and supposed power structures located in an undefined elsewhere, does not eliminate the problem that art, once it latches on to norms, renounces its opportunities for taking risks and for being radical. Effectively in adopting normative measures – even those of social responsibility – art becomes what it wants to avoid more than anything in the world: mainstream.¹⁸

IV

Marina Abramović produced her performance *Rhythm 0* in the gallery Studio Morra in Naples in 1974. The audience at the exhibition opening were presented with 72 objects – including a knife, a pistol, a fork, a perfume bottle, a chain, nails, a book, a pin and a rose – which could be used as desired. Accordingly, the gallery’s director announced that the artist would remain completely passive for six hours, thereby leaving the audience in full possession of the performative decisions. The event came to a rapid conclusion when members of the audience overpowered a visitor who held the loaded pistol against Marina Abramović’s head.¹⁹ Another account of the event, records:

the performance ended much later, precisely at 2 am, as Abramović had planned. Only then did she begin to move about on her own, a transformation from object to subject that frightened the audience, who ‘literally ran out of the space’, she remembered, because ‘they could not stand me as person, after all that they had done to me.’²⁰

The point here – why Marina Abramović’s *Rhythm 0* is relevant in the context of a discussion of the relationship between risk and the work of art – is not only that she risked life and limb in this performance. But she also put the very notion of the work of art at risk by establishing and deconstructing ‘aesthetic difference’ in the

very same act. Whichever option the audience chose – to let the work take its course; to obey the rule that anything was permitted; to prevent others from acting in a certain way even though they were obeying the rule; to become active; to remain passive – one acted ‘wrongly’ or against the work in at least one point and on one side of the aesthetic difference.

The term ‘aesthetic difference’ has been used to distinguish the work of art from the ‘world’ (what one can simply call anything that is not a work of art) since the inception of aesthetics. The aversion of the classical authors towards the ‘Pygmalion Complex’ and Kant’s proclamation of ‘disinterested delight’ as pure aesthetic judgment was dissolved by Nietzsche’s Dionysian/Apollonian distinction.^{21 22 23} According to Nietzsche – much to the disgust of the classicists – true aesthetic bearing means moving the aesthetic border, ideally to the point where work and world are indistinguishable. The consequences as seen in Dada, Futurism, Surrealism, Viennese Actionism, Body art, Performance art, Service art and discussion of the ‘Expanded Field’ are well known.

Rhythm 0 can also be described as a work that constantly shifts from one side of the distinction between risk and danger to the other. What was inflicted upon Marina Abramović was at the same time the result of her decision to expose herself to the risk of being mutilated, and outside of her responsibility as she was the passive victim of some visitors’ vicissitudes she could not have foreseen. Of course, she offered the fork, the knife and the pistol, and by doing so she established a panorama of certain possibilities and took the risk that the risk could turn into danger.

The distinction I am trying to establish by following Luhmann’s theory of risk along the lines of risk/danger, decision-maker/person affected

20. Kristine Stiles, Klaus Biesenbach and Chrissie Iles (eds), *Marina Abramović*, Phaidon, New York and London, 2008, p 61.

21. See contributions in Ulmer Verband für Kunst-und Kulturwissenschaften (ed), ‘Der nackte Mensch’, *Kritische Berichte*, vol 17, no 3, 1989.

22. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in Manfred Frank and Véronique Zanetti (eds), *Schriften zur Ästhetik und Naturphilosophie*, vol 3, Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1996, pp 524, 530 and 547, where he deemed the inclusion of interest in aesthetic judgment as barbaric.

23. For a critical discussion of this now classic distinction, refer to Bernhard Lypp, ‘Dionysisch-apolinisch: ein unhaltbarer Gegensatz’, *Nietzsche-Studien. Internationales Jahrbuch für die Nietzsche-Forschung*, vol 13, 1984, pp 356–73.

24. In other and older terms ‘Entzweiungsstruktur’ (the structure of dichotomy). Joachim Ritter, ‘Landschaft – Zur Funktion des Ästhetischen in der modernen Gesellschaft’, *Schriften der Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität zu Münster*, no 54, 1963, pp 7–56.

25. Jacques Rancière, *Ist Kunst widerständig?*, Merve, Berlin, 2008, p 27: ‘Aesthetic difference always has to be created in the form of the “As-If”’. Luhmann prefers to distinguish the fictitious reality of the work of art from the real reality of the world.

(victim) can be found in this performance as the line that cuts right through it. The work represents itself as a unity of irreconcilable contradictions, as a unity of antagonistic terms.²⁴

In addition, by going back to the term of ‘aesthetic difference’, the work constantly shifts from one side of aesthetic difference to the other. These two sides may be described, somewhat tentatively and insufficiently, as the ‘As-If’ and the ‘Real’.²⁵ What happens in the realm of the As-If happens at the same time in the realm of the Real and vice versa. Essentially, the work deals with nothing but the point of aesthetic difference as the point of moral indifference.

It is symptomatic – in a sense that is explained below – that the work ‘collapsed’ after a short period of time under the immense tension between these two antagonistic facets. The artwork could no longer be framed by a monolithic and coherent concept about when it was a work of art and when it was not; where and when the borders between the As-If and the Real could be drawn. *Rhythm 0* in this perspective denied also any possibility to be consumed and categorised by a simplifying moralistic approach. Far from it, it kept the aesthetic difference open as a gap impossible to close by any moral consent. This, and not any kind of moral interpretation that humans turn into wolves as soon as the barriers of civilisation or other such regulations fall, is the point at which Abramović’s work becomes interesting with regard to the topic of risk.

To some degree, the work can be put in context with socio-psychological experiments like the Stanford prison experiment, 1971, and the Milgram experiment, 1961.²⁶ It becomes evident in works such as Artur Żmijewski’s *Repetition*, 2005, a re-enactment of the Stanford experiment, that works which *refer* to the problems raised within

social experiments are a lot ‘less risky’ than the *actual* risks of Abramović’s performance.²⁷ The trite horror and equally trite moral disgust on the part of the audience corresponds to the self-righteous exemption of the artist from the conflicts raised in his work. The fact that the press release to his 2009 exhibition at the Cornerhouse, Manchester describes Żmijewski as one of the ‘most consistently challenging, provocative and profoundly thoughtful artists working today’, relates well to the thesis that anti-normative rhetoric is more necessary, the less the work justifies its use.

V There are however, limitations to the applicability of a system-theoretical concept of risk to art, and they considerably qualify the statements about Abramović’s work above. Its limitations lie in the non-transferability of the conceptual opposition of risk and danger, as any notion of art that excludes the concept of decision does not make sense. However much coincidence, lack of subject, lack of art and so forth, are rhetorically presented – thinking of art as being void of any underlying decisions is as absurd as suggesting that any work of art could be meaningless. For that reason, the element of danger drops out of the coupling of terms. Art is contingent in the sense that it is possible but not necessary. Therefore it cannot be linked to danger, which represents something unavoidable, inevitable and beyond the reach of any decision-making powers.

The elimination of antonyms from a coupling of terms is a more than remarkable phenomenon from a system-theoretical point of view, which points to the status of the issue under consideration.²⁸ When the term risk is applied to the concept of art, the recursive application causes the term to lose its complementary antonyms. This indicates the categorically singular position of art. With the help of the term risk, it becomes

26. In the Stanford prison experiment volunteers were assigned roles as prisoners or guards to study the ‘psychology of prison life’. The two-week experiment ended after only six days because of the effects on the participants. Lead researcher Philip G Zimbardo recorded that: ‘In only a few days, our guards became sadistic and our prisoners became depressed and showed signs of extreme stress.’ Philip G Zimbardo, ‘Stanford Prison Experiment’, www.prisonexp.org, accessed 8 Feb 2010.

27. Repetition, while based on the Stanford experiment, operated according to different ethical rules. And, while the re-enactment initially followed the course of the original, it ultimately resulted in quite a different outcome; concluding when the guards and prisoners rebelled against the project itself.

28. Luhmann, *Einführung*, p 175.

29. Arthur C Danto, *Die Verklärung des Gewöhnlichen*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1991, p 130.

30. Niklas Luhmann, *Schriften zu Kunst und Literatur*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2008, p 199.

31. As above, p 142.

32. As above, p 257.

clear what art is in the world: neither being one with it nor being different from it. The work of art represents the marking of aesthetic difference, the unity of the distinction between work and world in the form of the work.

This circumstance supports the hypothesis that art is an autonomous system. If one describes art as ‘fictional reality’, it becomes possible to articulate to what extent it is not only something, but about something.²⁹

*[Works of art] obviously have an ambivalent relationship to reality; however this ambivalence is nothing but the effect of their form. On the one hand, the work of art places itself as a fictional entity outside of reality. On the other hand, it is in itself and also with its audience a very real entity. This means that art ... configures reality as twofold. It splits reality by its form so that the effects give us the possibility of distinguishing between two sides: between the real reality and the fictional reality.*³⁰

We also stand to gain the opportunity to withdraw ourselves from the construction of the antagonism between art and reality that shaped the term autonomy in critical theory. From a system-theoretical point of view, the antagonism is dissolved in the term ‘work’ with it being the implementation and realisation of society, the unity of distinction between art and reality, work and world.³¹ The fictional reality of the work of art in the mode of the As-If represents the reality of the observation that ‘order develops from contingency. And if there is a function of art in modern society, then perhaps it is to communicate how this works and that it works under any circumstances.’³²

Leonhard Emmerling, Director, ST PAUL St, AUT University, Auckland.

ARTIST PAGES

NICK AUSTIN
MAHMOUD BAKHSHI
RICHARD BELL
JOHANNA BILLING
MARTIN BOYCE
GERARD BYRNE
SHAHAB FOTOUHI
ALICIA FRANKOVICH
SHILPA GUPTA
SHARON HAYES
ROBERT HOOD
MARINE HUGONNIER
SHIGEYUKI KIHARA
LARESA KOSLOFF
LEARNING SITE
JORGE MACCHI
ALEX MONTEITH
TOM NICHOLSON
MIKE PARR
PHILIPPE PARRENO
GARRETT PHELAN
BUNDITH PHUNSOMBATLERT
OLIVIA PLENDER
WALID SADEK
TINO SEHGAL
MICHAEL STEVENSON
TOVE STORCH
ZHENG BO



NICK AUSTIN

Born 1979, Whangarei,
New Zealand.
Lives and works in Auckland,
New Zealand.

*But how can we hope to save ourselves in
that which is most fragile?*¹

All manner of ephemeral objects and substances dwell in Nick Austin's dusty, painted grounds. Smoke, rain, envelopes, odd socks, spare change, matchboxes, cigarettes and tissues are layered over corrugated plastic, paper plates, cloth and sheets of newspaper. In a world that privileges the new, where things are outmoded long before they fall into decay and ruin, Austin looks to the perishable and insignificant, things forgotten in the rush, slight, overlooked, not precious, easy to lose, not thrown out but not really kept either.

Things happen in Austin's anaemic paintings and somnolent sculptures – new forms emerge out of other forms, materials become something other than what they were, all at their own sedate pace. Paint layered on sheets of newspaper, sometimes dense and at other times speckled and translucent, obscures the medium's information-value, opening up space for digression, reflection and incidental results: pages of an open book morph into birds in flight, pieces of string become drops of rain. The effect of these transfigurations is not drastic or dramatic; they engender a small wobble or hiccup in our perception and cognition, akin to the uncomfortable feeling one has after looking at a word for so long that it appears unfamiliar, misspelt, foreign. As does: does.

*Were I to attempt to describe even the most
minuscule fraction of noteworthy events that
befall me when travelling about my library,
I should never finish.*²

Austin reads a lot of books but his work is not academic or textual, it does not refer to

1.
*Italo Calvino, Six Memos for the
Next Millennium, Patrick Creagh
(trans), Vintage Books, London
and New York, 1993, p 6.*

2.
*Xavier de Maistre, Voyage
Around My Room, 1794; Stephen
Satarelli (trans), New Directions,
New York, 1994, p 64.*

3.
*Nick Austin, 'Poem for a Nerd',
unpublished, 2009.*

Left:
*Ye olde age 2009,
acrylic on glass, frame,
private collection,
courtesy of the artist and
Gambia Castle, Auckland.*

literature. Rather, Austin gives visual form to an otherwise abstract, ineffable quality that is not inherent in language but can be summoned by it and experienced in the act of reading. Austin channels this sensation into isomorphic compositions, borrowing from the logic of ideograms, crosswords, puns, jokes and concrete poetry. The transition – with its hidden ingredients of digression, distraction, fatigue, comprehension, incomprehension, repetition, remembering, misremembering, word-association and so on – is necessarily awkward and always incomplete. Austin's work moves in the non-space between the two processes of 'reading' and 'looking', it at once resists becoming fully concrete and evades re-capture by language.

*Poem for a nerd
Two words,
actually there's nine.*³

The modesty, slowness and economy of Austin's practice stands both in opposition and as antidote to the demand that art be fundamentally special; born of a mythical flash of inspiration. Renderings of the utterly contingent, Austin's soft-edged, blurry forms hover on the borders of abstraction, ready to dissolve into milky voids and watery oblivion, while his perishable materials disclose the latent threat of dissolution. Austin's works make no claim to Modern painting's ideals of timelessness, universality or transcendence; on the contrary their power lies in their insignificance, their ephemerality, their ability to escape.

Sarah Hopkinson, freelance writer, Auckland.



MAHMOUD BAKHSHI

Born 1977, Tehran, Iran.
Lives and works in Tehran.

I like to tell people that Mahmoud Bakhshi is an honest artist. Although he is certainly praiseworthy in character, I don't mean honest in the conventional sense, that is to tell the truth, rather, his artistic practice provides a sincere portrayal of Iran that translates as plain, honourable, direct. Recent years have witnessed a proliferation of artistic experimentation by Iranian artists, the arrival of a healthy growing market, and layer upon layer of confused interplay between tradition, politics, social impulse and a 'new' supposition of the critical and avant-garde. Bakhshi navigates convolution by aiming towards the real, the absolute. His multi-media installations and sculptures pare down the maze of cognitive layers by offering glimpses of personalised observations and telescopic bullet points, weeding out the misinformed expounder on the outside.

In *Untitled (from: rosegarden)*, 2008 – an installation of 64 postcards of flowers, photographed by the artist in his studio and captioned according to plant species, location and date – Bakhshi offers up a complex interpretation of how Iran is advertised to the outside world. The surface logic lies somewhere between reference and simulacra, but stripped down it is an unaffected meditation on beauty and its value. In the more melancholic *Industrial Revolutions*, 2008–10, household appliances and mechanical objects commingle with political and religious symbolism, and are further livened by interactive communication. On the one hand, these converted technologies provide a comic elaboration on commodity fetishism, while on the other hand they feed our ecological dream-notions of recycling. On the part of the artist, the conflict is more entangled in the quotidian,

therefore his interpretation of the situation in Iran is at times impulsive or impassioned, but never deceiving or sublimated. His candidness holds great weight.

In a debate surrounding Bakhshi's work and contemporary Iranian art in general, a friend asked me if I think artists are moving towards collective consciousness and may finally launch a movement that could stand upright on its own. In the Western art-historical tradition genealogies of art criticism and aesthetics are as advanced as the art itself and critical discourse is in most cases cross-cultural. What happens then when an artist is born in a country that has witnessed three revolutions in the past 100 years, and in the last 30 years participated in a bloody and devastating eight-year war, pitted itself in a nuclear showdown and created a nation of frustrated and resentful youth? Where does Bakhshi fit in and how can he authentically rework representation, form, and image in the environment of contemporary practice? It seems near impossible to historicise or to project. Rather, like the poet, acutely aware of mortality and the frailty of time, Bakhshi reflects on his present, however regretfully or critically. In his recreations, the adventure lies in a total integration of the artwork into the economy of the real and the subversion of commodities. Only then do the auto-referential codes we usually use to overanalyse dissolve into confrontation, truthfully and without pretence.

*Morning breeze, its
fragrance will exhale
The old world will once
again youthfully sail.*

*Tulip will bring a red
cup to the meadows*

*Narcissus' eyes from
poppy will grow pale.*

*When would
nightingale put up with
such abuse*

*In the chamber of the
rose cry and wail.*

*I traded the temple for
the tavern, fault me not*

*Prayer is long and
stale, time is frail.*

*Leave not joy of the
now till the morrow*

*Who can vouch that
the morrow, the now
shall trail?*

Hafiz
(c1325–c1390)

Left:
*Sunsets (maquette) 2010,
tin plate cylinders, speakers,
from the series:
Industrial Revolutions,
courtesy of the artist and Khashtoo
Gallery, Los Angeles.*

Leila Khashtoo, Khashtoo Gallery, Los Angeles.



RICHARD BELL

Born 1953, Charleville, Queensland, Australia. Belongs to the Kamilaroi, Kooma, Jiman and Gurang Gurang peoples. Lives and works in Brisbane, Australia.

Since the early 1990s, Richard Bell has established a reputation as Australia's *baddest boy* who aims to shock with public actions and politically provocative artworks that leave audiences laughing in one eye and crying in the other. His video trilogy, *Imagining Victory*, 2008–10, is no different. In these three videos, Bell layers complex issues utilising a brilliant strategy of interwoven narratives, a back-and-forth play or battle, between indigenous and white Australians that emphasises the country's glaringly contradictory race politics.

In *Scratch an Aussie*, 2008, the artist overturns political and social norms by masquerading as a black Sigmund Freud who psychoanalyses racist white Australians who recline on a sofa in gold lamé bikinis – like exoticised 'others'. They complain about the loss of personal property (iPods, house keys and other everyday objects) and their feelings of victimisation. Out of concern for his white patients, who 'seem to have the weight of world on their shoulders', Bell seeks out therapy for himself, and is analysed by Australian Black Power leader Gary Foley. These different sessions are interwoven throughout the video, juxtaposed with racist jokes about Aborigines and word associations that reveal the unconscious racism

within Australian culture: if you *scratch a (white) Aussie*, racism is always just beneath the surface.

In *Broken English*, 2009, Bell investigates indigenous politics, asking why Australian Aborigines appear to lack a vision for their own future. His quest for answers takes him first to a re-enactment of the arrival of the British in Australia, this time rewritten to depict Aborigines as welcoming participants in their own subjugation. Bell roams the streets of Brisbane in search of answers, as well, asking locals questions that result in varying and oftentimes disturbing responses. Do Aborigines have a fair go in this country? Do you reckon that Australia was peacefully settled? What do you think about Aboriginal people? His continued search for answers brings Bell to a VIP fashion opening at Brisbane's Gallery of Modern Art, where he attempts to hob knob with the rich and famous, and challenge them about indigenous politics, with dismal results. As counterpoint to this glitz and glamour, Bell also visits the remote indigenous community of Cherbourg, interviewing the residents all of whom argue that land rights, acceptance, justice and tradition are of the highest priority when asked the question, 'What do we [Aborigines]

Left:
Scratch an Aussie
(production still) 2008, DVD,
courtesy of the artist and
Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

Above:
Broken English
(production still) 2009, DVD,
courtesy of the artist and
Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

want?' All of these scenarios are interwoven within the video with the Black Power diatribe of Gary Foley and Bell as they play chess for the ultimate prize: an empowered future.

The Dinner Party, a new work to be produced in late 2010, will complete the trilogy. In this final video, the artist psychoanalyses Australia's 'Chardonnay socialists' during a dinner party in an opulent home overlooking Sydney Harbour. Inevitably, under Bell's direction, the party discussions will descend into what Bell sarcastically calls 'The Abo Discussion', where negative stereotypes about Aborigines are often unconsciously perpetuated, even by the most well-intentioned white Australians. As with the previous two videos, parallel narratives are interwoven: Bell's close friends discuss the same subject over backyard barbeques; while Bell and Foley truck a statue of Captain Cook from Queensland to Sydney to toss it, symbolically, in to Botany Bay.

Maura Reilly, Senior Curator, American Federation of Arts, New York.



JOHANNA BILLING

Born 1973, Jönköping, Sweden.
Lives and works in Stockholm,
Sweden.

This Is How We Walk on the Moon documents a group of young Scottish musicians as they attempt to learn to sail for the first time, navigating a boat out of Edinburgh's harbour, past the Firth of Forth, and on into the open sea. Produced in 2007 by Swedish artist Johanna Billing, the project reinterprets cellist Arthur Russell's 1984 composition of the same name. More than homage or straightforward cover, Billing's project is a meditation on the concepts of process, learning and repetition. The emphasis is shifted, from Russell's poetic vision of walking in space ('every step is moving me up'), to an illustration of the very process of learning itself: to the very *this* in *This Is How*. The film thus registers the newness of experience, or, as curator Natasha Conland has described, something of the *risk* inhered in adventure, a quality of the unknown at once both unsettling and exhilarating.

Like many of Billing's other films, *This Is How We Walk on the Moon* favours a certain directorial remove. The footage appears to be unscripted, filled with moments of seeming inactivity, lulls between gusts of wind and water. Barely visible emotions flicker across the actors' faces, their actions and gestures shot in quick, fleeting cuts, as glimpses of eyes and gloved

hands alternately convey their uncertainty and determination. These moments are punctuated by a series of sketches that hint at the structure of the film – in one slide, a strong diagonal line bisects areas marked as library and harbour, suggesting a relationship between the two locations portrayed in the film: the metaphorical distance between learning and doing.

Billing's looped films are frequently scored by minimal reinterpretations of esoteric pop songs. Through the vernacular of pop, these quotations often suggest uncertainty, progress, melancholy and loss. This lends a vague sense of nostalgia and indecision to many of Billing's films, an atmosphere that has been likened to the formative experiences at kindergarten, community music schools and sports clubs, all products of the Swedish social welfare state of Billing's youth in the 1970s and 1980s. *This Is How We Walk on the Moon* literalises these institutional connections as the film is presented as an installation: simple wooden benches are arranged around a projection screen in an architectural style highly suggestive of those found in classrooms. Indeed, through their referencing of quasi-institutional settings, and through their own awareness of their repetitive structures, many of Billing's films can be read

Above:
This Is How We Walk on the Moon (stills) 2007, DVD,
co-produced by the One Mile
programme, Collective Gallery,
Edinburgh, courtesy of the artist
and Hollybush Gardens, London.

as *architectural* – the portrayal (and creation) of spaces where learning and looping play out. Billing's films thus represent a structure for visually mapping the social onto a given space.

This Is How We Walk on the Moon points to these expressly social dimensions of the unknown qualities of adventure, suggesting the simultaneous feelings of exhilaration and uncertainty that accompany our encounters with the unknown. Indeed, linking the variety of 'sites' (global, social, cultural) where Billing chooses to conduct her social experiments is the motif of voyaging, setting sail and of journeying beyond what each of us already may know instinctively or recognise from a particular distance. A poetic sensibility is felt throughout: it takes a balloon to get to the ball hanging in the sky.

James M Thomas, art historian and curator,
San Francisco.



MARTIN BOYCE

Born 1967, Hamilton, Scotland.
Lives and works in Glasgow,
Scotland.

From one angle, much of Martin Boyce's practice can look like a series of assaults on modernist icons. Established classics of twentieth-century design have been adulterated with found scrap material or shards of pop cultural ephemera, sawn into pieces, warped into new shapes, and even set on fire. The result, however, is not to cancel the objects themselves or dismiss their significance. Rather Boyce reconfigures this found language and its aesthetics to speak about lived experience as well as rational production, to uncover the ideological assumptions that the forms encode and to reformulate their broken utopianism on new terms.

Boyce's installations use the context of art to critique the principles of functionalism, to expose the underlying social assumptions and the new formalisms produced in the name of efficiency. At the same time, surviving fragments of the modernist utopian impulse are reanimated, gothically twisted and productively mutated by their encounter with social reality. Boyce's works seem to treat the familiar urban landscape of corporate offices, private homes, and public parks as modern ruins, sites of beauty and decay whose ultimate meaning or purpose is divorced from their ostensible function. Taken together, they can be seen as searching for a new aesthetic, or a poetics, in the lost promise of high modernist design.

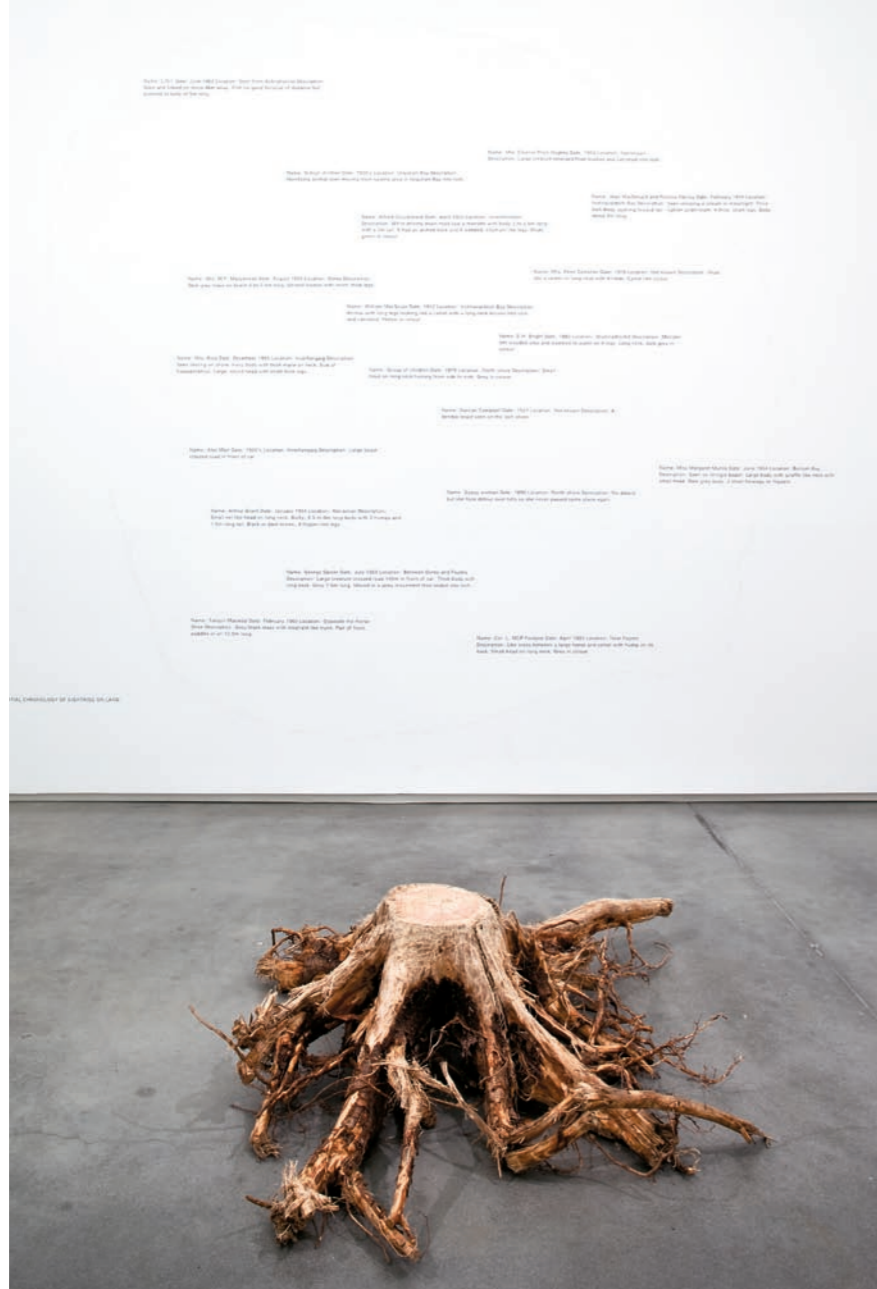
Boyce offers neither an image of contemporary dystopia, nor a nostalgic lament for better times. Instead, his work seems to adapt or rethink existing forms in light of specific relationships or experiences, finding moments when the modernist promise of order, rationality and contentment, can coexist with its negation.

Left:
When Now Is Night
(detail) 2002,
fluorescent light fixtures,
wallpaper, photograph, mask,
steel bed frame, shelving unit,
installation view:
When Now Is Night, Art
Unlimited, Art Basel 33, 2002,
courtesy of the artist and
the Modern Institute/
Toby Webster Ltd, Glasgow.

Many of Boyce's works use or disrupt the form of the modernist grid. One early sculpture proposed that the ubiquitous striplights of contemporary office architecture might collapse into the form of a modernist design classic, the Rietveld Hanging Lamp: a breakdown of the expedient structure that disclosed a utopian aesthetic precursor. He has discovered potential alphabets in the functional geometries of corporate architectural details, and reimagined them as encoding fragments of text. The installation *When Now Is Night (Web)*, 1999, took the rational form of the grid – the grid of city streets, of office blocks, of identical lighted windows, of cubicles and strip lights – and turned it into a film noir landscape, a gothic web of shadows and expressionist angles.

As if anticipating the functionalist recuperation of the symmetry of the spider's web, perhaps in light of the recent trend towards biomorphic architecture, *Some Broken Morning*, 2008, goes one step further. The form of Boyce's strip light web is incomplete, broken as the title suggests. Its new form reasserts itself as sculpture rather than as a potential alternative design for lighting infrastructure. This is not American singer-songwriter Lee Hazlewood's velvet moment of clarity, but a double dysfunction, making a new dark spot in the otherwise already disturbed fabric of the contemporary corporate gothic. Keeping the lights on is corporate parlance for preserving essential business operations in times of financial trouble. With the recent global financial crisis in mind, *Some Broken Morning* seems to depict the breakdown as a gap in the web, a potential line of escape.

Will Bradley, art critic and curator, Oslo.



GERARD BYRNE

Born 1969, Dublin, Ireland.
Lives and works in Dublin.

Gerard Byrne's is an art of time travel. Whether essaying oblique responses to the history of theatre, photography, museum display or popular media, his work embraces anachronism in ways that are at once rigorous, revelatory and absurd. Since the 1990s he has been making video installations whose scripts are found texts from other eras: a discussion among science-fiction writers about life at the close of the twentieth century, published by *Playboy* in 1963; a symposium on 'new sexual life styles' from the same magazine in 1973; an improbable dialogue between Frank Sinatra and Chrysler mogul Lee Iacocca, concerning the 1981 Imperial automobile. In these works, Byrne's intention is not to adduce our historical distance from such moments, but to put history in motion, to restage its dispersal among printed pages, photographs and moving images.

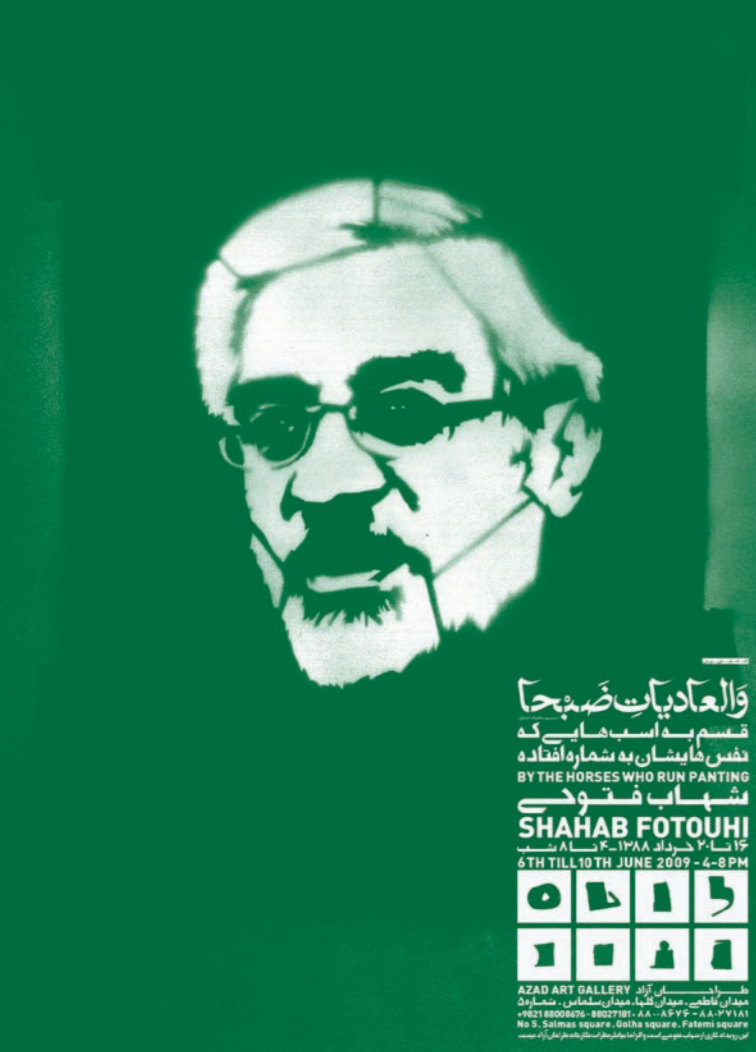
Byrne's series of works on the history and mythography of Loch Ness is an enigmatic and comic addition to this tendency. His texts, photographs, audio recordings and slide installations seem to mirror the epistemological paraphernalia arrayed for decades around the implacable loch and its apocryphal tenant. The monster exists (or does not exist) precisely at the confluence of word and image: that is, in the gap between the verbal or written report of a sighting – with its curiously poetic amalgam of fact and metaphor – and the sparse mysteries of the photographic record. Byrne presents the loch – or what appears to be the loch – brushed by minute disturbances: a wave, a shadow, a tiny Icarus splash. But the texts he reproduces are, in comparison, vastly overburdened with meaning. The surrounding terminology is dryly insistent – witnesses provide 'analysis',

Left:
Case Study: Loch Ness (Some possibilities and problems) (detail) 2001–8 (ongoing). 16mm film, black and white and colour photographs, slide projection, wood, text, audio, installation view:
Momentum 12: Gerard Byrne, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, 2008–9, courtesy of the artist, Lisson Gallery, London.
Photo: © Charles Mayer Photography.

'avowals', 'testimony' – while the accounts themselves are awash with analogy: 'goat-like in appearance... this was no whale... a camel... a hedgehog... a serpent with a horse's head'. The protean creature seems composed entirely of similes; it has its being only at the moment it can be compared to something else.

As Byrne knows well, the first spate of sightings of the monster – this after intermittent reports over decades – occurred at a time when the relationship between text and image was especially charged. As Walter Benjamin was to write just a few years after the height of the Loch Ness craze in 1934, the combination of photograph and printed caption was the privileged medium of the day: cheaply reproduced in popular newspapers and even more widely dispersed than the cinema. In this, it paralleled the automobile, which for the first time allowed the middle class in Britain to traverse their own country in search of its most picturesque views and peculiar anecdotes. The British public, in other words, had embarked on the age of mechanical reproduction and at the same time embraced the idea of their landscape's mysterious past. *King Kong*, 1933, was on cinema screens, Nessie in the pages of the *Daily Mail*, and the century poised between deep prehistory and unknowable future. Byrne's work returns us to that media-saturated moment by the loch's edge, and reminds us that we live now in its spreading wake.

Brian Dillon, author, freelance writer and Research Fellow, University of Kent, Canterbury.



SHAHAB FOTOUHI

Born 1980, Yazd, Iran.
Lives and works in Tehran, Iran
and Frankfurt, Germany.

For the current generation of Iranian artists, politics is what pop culture was for post-war American artists. During the past three decades, Iran's public sphere has been dominated by a kind of aestheticised politics featuring visual propaganda and organised mass rallies. The problem for contemporary Iranian artists is in differentiating their work from this mode of cultural production without becoming apolitical. To rewrite Joseph Kosuth's formula, all Iranian art (after the '79 Revolution) is political (in nature) because art only exists politically.¹

This is the situation Shahab Fotouhi is working in. His approach is to give form to parody. In June 2009, before the disputed presidential election, he turned Tehran's Azad Gallery into a centre for opposition campaigners. The work, entitled *By the Horses Who Run Panting*, exposes the inevitable confrontation of art and politics in Iran. Azad claimed that the gallery was temporarily closed down because of a law which forbids art institutions from 'intervening in political affairs'. However, the campaigners could still use the building because another law allows citizens to use their properties in political campaigns.² The gallery became a centre for intense political debates involving high-ranking politicians chaired by Fotouhi. Here, by extending his artistic problematic, Fotouhi transforms a call for artistic innovation into a demand for political change.

In *Route* and *Aerial Appendix*, 2010, the parody lies in determination of the works' form by the logic of propaganda. It can be seen to pay homage to the return of Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the 1979 revolution, from exile. Reconstructing the journey that the Ayatollah travelled en route to his first speech after returning, Fotouhi

Left:
By the Horses Who
Run Panting 2009,
performance documentation,
courtesy of the artist.

1.
Joseph Kosuth 'All art (after
Duchamp) is conceptual (in
nature) because art only
exists conceptually.' *Art After
Philosophy and After: Collected
Writings, 1966-1990*,
The MIT Press, Cambridge,
Massachusetts, 1991, p 18.

2.
In an ironic twist, the building
actually still retained a gallery
function because the opposition
candidate, Mir-Hossein Mousavi
and his wife are also painters and
their works 'decorated' the walls.

3.
This 'being on the verge' is best
symbolised in the experience of the
reformist movement from 1996 to
2004, which followed the bloody
years of the 1980s. However,
these eight years of liberal reforms
were followed by the emergence
of Ahmadinejad. Ahmadinejad's
second-run victory was followed by
the Green Movement.

appears as an epic-poet in the service of the Islamic Republic. However, Fotouhi's pick of an unlikely subject for an epic, and its relocation into the gallery space lends a critical distance which is absent from the propaganda of the public sphere and subverts the work's epic form.

Like *Route* and *Aerial Appendix*, several of Fotouhi's other recent works also expose hidden contradictions within the foundation of the Islamic Republic from the revolution of 1979. In these works, Fotouhi denaturalises the state by deconstructing its self-image. In *Repeat after Me*, 2008, the first national anthem of the Islamic Republic is dismantled. Made in Switzerland, he asked people to sing one line of a Persian lullaby before a camera. Fotouhi later told them the truth about the lyrics. The final video is frequently interrupted with blank spaces where some participants decided to withdraw their contribution.

Thus, Fotouhi's works give themselves over to the icons of the Islamic Republic, but in doing so they present the history of the icons' construction. His homage to icons therefore becomes iconoclastic.

Fotouhi's works are at the same time representative of a specific mode of political subjectivity whose history in the West did not last long after May 1968. As a result of an ongoing struggle between totalitarianism and total liberation in post-revolutionary Iran, for artists like Fotouhi who live 'on the verge of two totals' the possibility of universal emancipation has never ceased to be imminent.³ It has thus turned into a determined aspect of their subjectivity.

Hamed Yousefi, cultural and political critic,
London and Tehran.



ALICIA FRANKOVICH

Born 1980, Tauranga,
New Zealand.
Lives and works in Berlin,
Germany and Melbourne,
Australia.

Poetry, according to Jean Genet, is ‘the break (or rather the meeting at the breaking point) between the visible and the invisible’.¹ The work of Alicia Frankovich enacts a poetry that hums with the invisible energy and potential of the living body. In durational performances, Frankovich has used harnesses and pulleys to pull against her self-imposed restraints or, as in *A Plane for Behaviours* at Artspace, Auckland, 2009, making the curator hoist her into the air in order to open the door for visitors to the gallery. Her sculptures and installations use informal materials to evoke past performances or future bodily actions, becoming silent, bold characters in themselves. Straps become imbued with pelvic thrusts, spoons with the mouth that enveloped them, cloth with the body it temporarily housed. Frankovich’s work confronts us with our own flesh, the body that is for her, ‘material, gestured and gendered’.

Her practice combines the sexual body politic of Carolee Schneemann and Genet, with a touch of Louise Bourgeois’s suggestive material presences. While not relating to a particular narrative, it is at the same time a story we are all familiar with – or, as Stuart Morgan once put it, ‘Thrown into being, we become only too aware existence involves flesh.’² The elements that make up her physical assemblages take on some of the allegorical presence of myth, but do not glorify or eulogise. Instead, their frank corporeality and hesitant lifelike qualities make us deal with them as an intimate and mundane interaction. They alter the way we move our eyes, walk around the room, show our companionship or hide our embarrassment.

For the Auckland Triennial, Frankovich presents us with an indoor fountain that has taken on

Left:
Piston 2009,
found objects, hook,
ball from Milan,
courtesy of the artist and
Starkwhite, Auckland.

1.
Author’s translation, ‘la rupture
(ou plutôt la rencontre au point
de la rupture) du visible et de
l’invisible’, Jean Genet, *Oeuvres
Complètes, part II*, Gallimard,
Paris, 1951, p 19.

2.
Stuart Morgan, ‘Body’ in Ian
Hunt (ed), *What the Butler Saw*,
Durian Publications, London,
1996, p 242.

our own cyclical life patterns. A collection of seemingly random objects are gathered to suggest a body – a body of work, a body of play, *the* body that carries within it *our* body. Two glasses of water sit expectantly on a table, for this being, or us, to consume. A vessel of water moves up and down with the hushed rhythms of breathing, another appendage slowly relieves itself. The liquid flowing through this spring is simultaneously air, blood, urine and the water we drink and bathe in.

Mikhail Bakhtin, the analyst of carnival and myth in fiction, coined the term ‘heteroglossia’ to describe the polyphonic tussle of language amongst the bodies that inhabit a narrative: the characters, the narrator, the author. For Frankovich, it is a multiplicity of bodies in motion for which we might borrow from the Greek *kinisi* or the Latin *agitare* (to move or put in motion) and quietly term a ‘heterokinesis’ or a ‘multi-agitantis’. She carefully posits an assemblage within which co-exists different tempos and types of movement, both real and possible, from peaceful stillness to violent bursts, as a chorus of corporeal potentialities.

Chris Fite-Wassilak, writer and independent curator,
London.

SHILPA GUPTA

Born 1976, Mumbai, India.
Lives and works in Mumbai.



Enter a darkened room and you hear disorientating sounds: whispers, the patter of raindrops, fluttering wings, plaintive singing about the joys of flight interspersed with snoring. As your eyes adjust to the gloom, you see the outlines of a dark shape hanging in mid-air. It could be a black cloud or a slumbering beast, casting shifting shadows upon the floor.

This is the experience Shilpa Gupta has in store for us with *Singing Cloud*. Consisting of 4000 black microphones, suspended from the ceiling and fitted with 48 multi-channel audio devices, the ‘speaking speakers’ – as Gupta dubs this glistening, looming mass – make up Gupta’s major contribution to the Triennial.

Both *Singing Cloud* and its companion piece, a split-flap display board, were initially conceived for *While I Sleep*, Gupta’s solo exhibition at

Le Laboratoire, Paris, in June 2009. The fruits of a year-long project which included extensive research into what she terms the ‘psychology of fear’, they were made after conversations with Harvard psychologist Mahzarin Banaji and political thinker Noam Chomsky. Gupta met Banaji shortly after the infamous Bombay bombings in November 2008. The artist and psychologist conducted tests on a pair of twins to investigate genetic predispositions towards fear. For Banaji, our unconscious (connected as it is to the ancient memory of our cells) is responsible for roughly 90 per cent of deep-rooted racial and religious prejudice.

Consequently, the indistinct contours of Gupta’s high-pitched ‘speakers’, float somewhere between dream and nightmare: *Singing Cloud* voices our longing for freedom ‘I want to fly, high above the sky’, a girl sings, while

ambiguously chanting ‘Jesus, Ram, Allah’. ‘Is it so easy to separate the fight for freedom from the impulse to protect it through violence?’ Gupta asks. Meanwhile, the flap-board resembling airport arrival and departure boards, spells out society’s tussle with terror. Noting the spread of violence towards the metropolis ‘NEW ROUTE CITY CENTRE NEW YORK’, it also records the uses and abuses of technology ‘I SEE A BOMB FALL... AND CAN FEEL NO PAIN’ and the unfeasibility of calculating loss ‘YOURMINEOUR DEAD’.

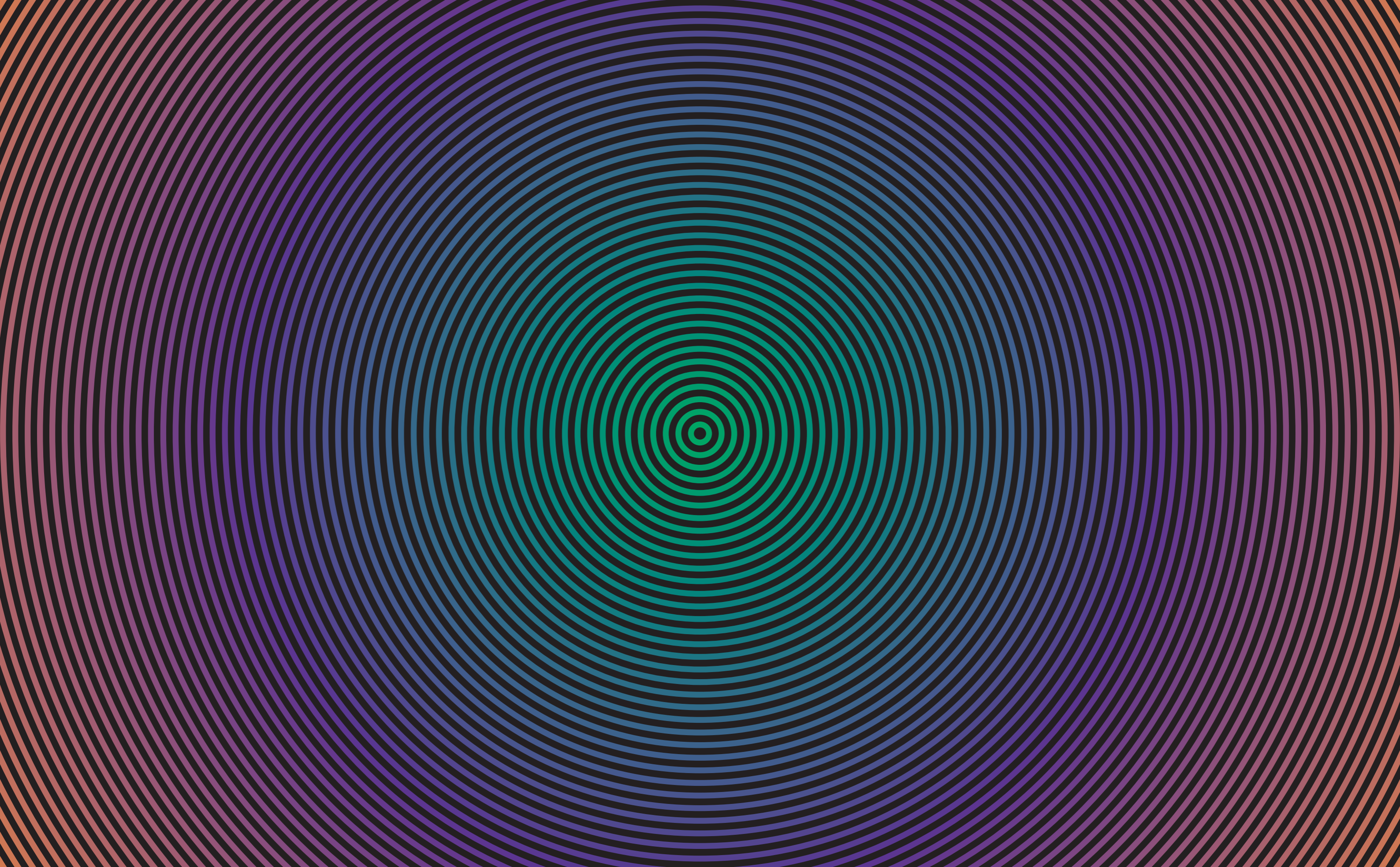
One of India’s most sophisticated video artists, Gupta is also famous for using unconventional mediums for socio-political ends – soap, liquid simulating blood and viewers’ bodies, to name a few. *Shadow 3*, 2007, is an interactive video projection that traces the shadows of spectators onto a white wall. As we move about,

Above:
Singing Cloud 2008–9,
microphones, wire frame, audio,
installation view: *While I Sleep*,
Le Laboratoire, 2009,
collection of Louisiana
Museum of Modern Art,
Humlebæk, Denmark,
courtesy of the artist and
Yvon Lambert Gallery, Paris.
Photo: Marc Damage.

our shadows encounter the grey silhouettes of indistinct objects. Our shadow-selves are tempted to control these ‘items’, but they cleverly elude us. As the ‘game’ continues, they topple onto the heads of our dark doubles, burying the latter beneath piles of shadow-stuff. *Shadow 3*’s video game-like universe underscores the perils of power and greed. Gupta is often at her best when her criticism is laced with playfulness, making her a natural choice for a Triennial on risk and adventure.

Yet, as Gupta’s *Cloud* drifts between aesthetic effects – chimerical shadows, heightened sounds conveying poignant messages – and political criticism, she consciously avoids providing escape routes from our shared responsibility.

Zehra Jumabhoy, Assistant Editor, *ART India* magazine, Bombay.





SHARON HAYES

Born 1970, Baltimore, USA.
Lives and works in New York,
USA.

'My own most darling lover', begins Sharon Hayes in *Everything Else Has Failed! Don't You Think It's Time for Love?*, a five-channel audio installation based on her 2007 performance. The tenderness in Hayes's voice emanates from commanding speakers facing five posters depicting the artist's silhouette. Previously, a deliberately androgynous Hayes spoke into a microphone to an unidentified lover during a working week, in front of the United Bank of Switzerland, New York. Hayes inflects the length of the lovers' separation with the war on terror's *longue durée*, entwines their pain with war's betrayal of citizenship, and observes a quotidian scene of address, steeped in and inattentive to invasion abroad.

These 'love addresses', as Hayes calls them, borrow from political oratory, including Martin Luther King's 1967 denunciation of the Vietnam War and love letters by prominent gay and lesbian figures such as Radclyffe Hall. Testing genres of public and intimate address, the airing of critical politics and suppressed personal histories in corporatised public space refuses the prescribed use of space, resonating instead, with feminism's critique of the divisions between the public and private. Hayes's misfired 'you' – her queer address to an unnamed beloved,

dispersed into an accidental public – interpolates those electing to listen, de-structuring the given unity of site, concern, speaker and audience that designate legitimate speech.

Everything Else Has Failed! Don't You Think It's Time For Love? invokes a protest image from late 1960s Berkeley, which Hayes encountered when researching countercultural and civil rights movements. Against the Left's melancholic recollection of past revolutions, Hayes's anachronistic citations untether history to pressure the present, itself a place and interval of speech in the vicissitudes of democratic struggle.

Recently, Hayes's love addresses considered the ambivalence of aggregating the body into the body-politic, employing the scene of protest in *I march in the parade of liberty, but as long as I love you I'm not free*, 2007–8. For *Revolutionary Love 1: Your Worst Enemy* and *Revolutionary Love 2: Your Best Fantasy*, 2008, she wrote love addresses for Democratic and Republican National Conventions leading up to the American elections. Volunteers – 'flamboyantly queer people or those who are prepared to play the part' – were invited to read them in unison. Citing a photograph of a dyke impertinently wearing a sign 'I Am Your Best Fantasy / I Am

Left:
*Everything Else Has Failed!
Don't You Think It's Time
For Love?* 2007,
audio installation, speakers,
spray paint on paper posters,
installation view: the
Yokohama Triennale, 2008,
courtesy of the artist and Tanya
Leighton Gallery, Berlin.
Photo: Kioku Keizo.

Right:
*Everything Else Has Failed!
Don't You Think It's Time
For Love?* 2007,
performance documentation,
United Bank of Switzerland,
New York,
courtesy of the artist and
Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin.
Photo: Andrea Geyer.

1.
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak,
'Use and Abuse of Human
Rights', *boundary*, vol 32, no
2, Spring 2005, p 136. While
Spivak has used this term since
the late 1980s primarily in
relation to a scene of teaching
(in the humanities and the
classroom), more recently she
has used it to describe broader
persuasions of consciousness-
raising and translation in efforts
toward sociopolitical change.

'Your Worst Enemy' at the 1970 Gay Liberation Parade in New York, Hayes recalls the gay power movement's radicality, when present conditions of articulating sexual and civil rights require critically queer assessment.

The euphoric, hundred-strong voices scrutinise the contours of erotic desire, describe iterations of political change in love's temporality; and mime a demonstration's litany of demands, whereupon the pronoun 'I' shifts into the plural 'we'. Transitting the singular to the collective, *Revolutionary Love* maps the affect of addressing power, its fleeting coalition, an 'army of lovers', supplement the Conventions' official collectives, protests and political parties.

The persistence of love mimes a crucial operation of thinking democracy: what Gayatri Spivak calls an 'uncoercive rearrangement of desire' that deconstructs the passions moving us to political action, our vulnerability to address throwing up new relations, subjects and spaces as necessarily *desirable*.¹

Jeannine Tang, art historian, doctoral candidate at Courtauld Institute of Art, London and Critical Studies Fellow at the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program, New York.

ROBERT HOOD

Born 1973, Dar es Salaam,
Tanzania.
Lives and works in Christchurch,
New Zealand.

A few years ago Robert Hood, described himself as an ‘unnatural optics intuitive guide’. Cloaked in the language of self-help evangelism and the sales pitch of the better-living charlatan Hood so often deploys, the utterance still offered considerable purchase. Especially given that at the time, Hood’s practice was increasingly being conflated with a sense of bricolage which saw him cobbling together rice bubbles, glitter, tin foil, plastic shopping bags and crudités.

One of Hood’s most pertinent works in this period, is the video work, *Calling New Age Power (remix)* which Hood showed at the Physics Room, Christchurch in 2006. Focusing dead centre on an operating food blender, he dropped a multitude of ingredients ranging from marshmallows to engine oil, dishwashing detergent to spaghetti into the blender, which evolved over the short

run of the film into a convoluted slurry, barely able to be contained. The point was, of course, that this mulch became a kind of primordial slush in which everything is up for grabs.

A more recent body of work features heaped car windcreens that have been salvaged from auto-yard’s obsolescing piles. Arranged as hap-hazard compositions of the accidental, these piles, pried open the solemnity of the windows’ cracks and fissures, recasting the personal history of misfortune in leviathan proportions. Compositionally, the heaps’ own tragic dissolution as they failed to support their own weight added a conspiratorial sleight. Hood has returned more fully to this sympathetic vein in his irreverent co-option of Walter de Maria’s *Broken Kilometer*, 1979 as *The Wrecked Kilometer*, 2009. Refashioned using broken road markers,



Above:
Leap into the Driveway 2009,
colour photograph,
courtesy of the artist and
Jonathan Smart Gallery,
Christchurch .

Hood’s recreation of de Maria’s iconic arbitration of the metre, becomes instead a dystopian topology of misfortune. Each marker’s distorted presence witnesses a circuitry of the wayward, truculently marking a catalogue of errors.

Hood has similarly mimed art history in other works, transforming Yves Klein’s *Leap into the Void*, 1960, into a gesture of suburban malaise. In his reinterpretation, the heroics of Klein’s promethean gesture fade into a quintessentially middle-class setting in a leafy New Zealand suburb. Against the picket fence enclave of Hood’s backyard, he offers an emblem of escape into oblivion.

Another significant body of works are Hood’s ‘ectoplasmic’ collages in which he takes record covers and posters, excises their heroes eyes,

inserts a billowing plastic bag from their mouth and then shrink wraps them in plastic. In doing so, he robs the base appeal of consumer capitalism, regurgitating the shamanistic ploys of a pop culture industry, turning celebrities like Elvis, John Wayne, Tupac, and Kurt Cobain into mock shrines. Hood sabotages their last breath legacy through the plastic supermarket bags that materialise from their iconic and yet mass-produced images. This provocation relies entirely on society’s reticence before such cultural excess, an excess, which nonetheless enables Hood to compose such elaborate tableaux from the material that surrounds us.

Harold Grieves, freelance critic, Christchurch.



We wouldn't be able to shoot a panorama...



MARINE HUGONNIER

Born 1969, Paris, France.
Lives and works in Paris and
London, England.

The last ascent of the so-called 'golden age of alpinism' was made in 1865 by Englishman Edward Whymper on the previously unconquered Matterhorn in the Swiss Alps. Whymper's successful but ultimately tragic climb was the culmination of several years of attempts by the increasingly obsessed mountaineer.¹ Whymper's success inspired a flurry of interest in the Matterhorn and surrounding alps. By forging a path to the summit and tasting the omniscient perspective afforded by this high-stakes vantage point, he helped to open the way for the tourist industry that sprung up around the mountain.

Emerging in the wake of nineteenth-century pioneers and explorers like Whymper, tourism developed in tandem with film-making to feed the European public's appetite for new visions and new frontiers. Marine Hugonnier, enacting the traveller's impulse to encounter remote lands, shot her trilogy of films *Ariana*, 2003, *The Last Tour*, 2004 and *Travelling Amazonia*, 2006, across three continents: in the formidable landscape of northern Afghanistan, the Matterhorn National Park and Brazil's Amazon rainforest. Hugonnier uses her films as a vehicle to explore the mutual product of cinema and tourism: the transformation of the world 'into a collection of points of view, into merchandise and a spectacle.'²

Hugonnier's *The Last Tour* is set in the fictional near-future when the Matterhorn National Park is soon to be completely closed to visitors. The subject of the film is a packaged experience – a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to take a hot air balloon tour around the iconic jagged peak. Shots of the balloon's shadow drifting across the pristine, frozen landscape produce a visual void, like the empty space the closure of the park will create on the map. The possibilities inherent in this reinstated terra incognita are positioned in opposition to the synthetic excesses of an age with nothing left to discover. We are now in an era in which the craggy profile of the Matterhorn's summit is already familiar by the time the actual site is visited, and where wild deer are shadowed by ghostly half-memories of their lurid alter egos in Disneyland's 'Matterhorn Bobsleds' ride.

Hugonnier handles images carefully, as if they are explosives. Using a medium that shoots and captures reality, reconstructing the world into an illusory version of itself, she is attentive to the power of the camera's lens to select, frame and edit, to create a seductive distortion.

Ariana, *The Last Tour* and *Travelling Amazonia* are each constructed around a void: a missing

Left to right:
Ariana (still) 2003,
16mm transferred to DVD,
courtesy of the artist and Max
Wigram Gallery, London.

Travelling Amazonia (still) 2006,
16mm transferred to DVD,
courtesy of the artist and Max
Wigram Gallery, London.

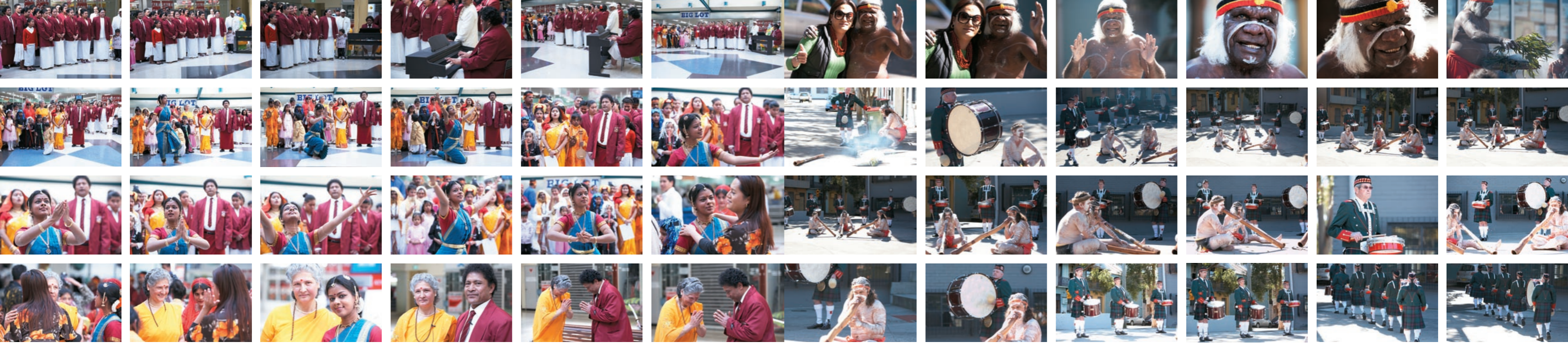
The Last Tour (still) 2004,
16mm transferred to DVD,
courtesy of the artist and Max
Wigram Gallery, London.

1.
After successfully reaching the peak of the Matterhorn, four members of Whymper's party were killed on the descent. They fell to their deaths when the rope linking them to the three other climbers in the group snapped. The mountain is today regarded as one of the deadliest in the Swiss Alps.

2.
Marine Hugonnier, *The Secretary of the Invisible*, Max Wigram Gallery, London, 2008, unpaginated.

shot, an invisible location, an absurd goal. Intercut with blank, black screens, Hugonnier's films refuse smooth cinematic illusion, instead becoming meditations on the political implications of the act of looking. By withholding the panoramic overview of the landscape in *Ariana*, or by allowing the travelling shot in *Travelling Amazonia* to disappear anti-climactically into the gloom of the Amazon dusk, Hugonnier refuses to re-enact the totalising gaze of military surveillance or the imperial perspective of the conquistador. The mountaineer's view from the summit is replaced by a blank screen, a pause for reflection, and the possibility of quietly pioneering a new mode of seeing.

Anna Parlane, Curatorial Assistant to the 4th Auckland Triennial and Marylyn Mayo Intern, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland.



SHIGEYUKI KIHARA

Born 1975, Upolu, Samoa.
Lives and works in Auckland,
New Zealand.

Shigeyuki Kihara's on-going collaborative project *Talanoa: Walk the Talk*, 2009–, invites religious and ethnic communities across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand to collaborate on dance and music improvisations presented in public space. The first of these collaborations presented Auckland's E-Pac Chinese Lion Dance and Dragon Team with the Otahuhu and District Scottish Highland Pipe Band in a joint concert.¹ The second event had Auckland Samba work with the Anuanua Cook Island Performing Arts group.²

The term '*talatalanoa*' has routes in many Pacific Islands cultures. In Samoan, it incorporates concepts of conversational interaction. Specifically, *talanoa* describes communication between people or groups in which the exchange of ideas on mutual territory provides a process for working together through discussion. In migrating concepts of *talanoa* geographically to Australasia through performance, Kihara seeks to investigate interactions and integrations of discrete cultural forms in a multicultural society. Literally, Kihara's performative experiments outline how grass root communities can 'talk' to each another.

Such a bringing together of seeming difference has been the major focus of Kihara's own work.

Kihara's role in the *Talanoa* performances is deliberately remote, preferring to position herself as a cultural conduit and as each event's performance catalyst. As in her own photographic series, her role here is as a mediator between diverse human performances. The *Talanoa* performances occur in open spaces and as unique events. Her video documentation is a raw report about each event reflecting the style of community access television. For Kihara, the mutual connection becomes a real-time encounter of discovery for grass roots communities.

Her work is concerned with how such communities including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, navigate life in New Zealand. She regards local ethnic groups emphatically as the 'the secret jewel of Auckland' in contrast with the media's attention to a 'mono-cultural Pākehā perspective'. Ultimately, her melding of communities engages the space of integration for different cultures, by weaving their music and dance together. The collaborative performances in each instance define the cultural politic of *Talanoa*.

She considers the 'art' in the event as bringing dance and music performances into a relational

Left:
Talanoa: Walk the Talk III 2009,
documentation of performance
by the Samoa Congregational
Church Minto, Mukti Gupteshwar
Mandir Hindu Society and
Shigeyuki Kihara,
commissioned by Campbelltown
Arts Centre, Sydney,
courtesy of the artist.

Above:
Talanoa: Walk the Talk IV 2009,
documentation of performance
by Muriniri Australian
Aboriginal Music and Dance,
Ingleburn and Campbelltown
Highland Drummers and
Shigeyuki Kihara,
commissioned by Campbelltown
Arts Centre, Sydney,
courtesy of the artist.

1.
Performed at Khartoum Place,
Auckland on Sunday 19 April
2009.

2.
Performed at Freyberg Place,
Auckland on Friday 24 April
2009. Kihara has continued
this project in Australia.

3.
Shigeyuki Kihara, in conversation
with author, November 2009. All
quotes are from this conversation.

dialogue rather than some ethnic hybrid. The *Talanoa* performances are intended as innovative 'social experiments where the "walk" together becomes the performance and where multiculturalism goes further into an inter-cultural mixture.'³

The artist's rationale for *Talanoa: Walk the Talk* is Kihara's own ethnicity. Of Japanese and Samoan parentage, she comments 'people often say to me that it is a "strange mix", my question is "what is the right mix?" – the *Talanoa* performances venture to answer this very provocation'. The process, preparation and performance of each group's collaboration reflect Kihara's identity as a mixed-race artist. She has championed cultural exchange and mutual collaboration in her own artworks because she recognises that 'grass roots communities genuinely want to know and understand each other.'

Ron Brownson, Senior Curator, New Zealand
and Pacific Art, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki,
Auckland.



LARESA KOSLOFF

Born 1974,
Melbourne, Australia.
Lives and works in Melbourne.

Laresa Kosloff's films witness active social events and the geometries of the built environment staged through the frame of the lens. The medium of Super 8 film allows Kosloff a direct process for recording motion that is inflected by its properties as miniature format film stock. It is Super 8's capacity for articulating a particular pace and movement in monochrome that produces a remove from the specificity of time and place in her films. By confounding our ability to analyse the work's temporal and spatial index, she creates a foil to unthinking apprehension. Instead, she helps us to encounter the actions of filming and watching, and the activity taking place on the screen, as something of uncertain but evident value.

In her film *Stock Exchange*, 1998, selected for the Triennial, she presents us with a carefully

framed simple panning shot of the exterior horizontal and vertical planes of the stock exchange building in Melbourne. Freed from our grounded bodies and the orienting tasks of vision, the lens facilitates the roaming of our mind and eyes in a new appraisal of all that is moving in front of us. The camera's fluid mobility slows apprehension and our bodies are let loose from that measured perspective that grounds or elevates our vision in strict relationship with known space. Though we might surmise that the camera is in a lift, it does not disrupt the pleasure of our new mobility, nor diminish the fascination created by our ability to watch the various social exchanges taking place on screen, 'in camera'.

In *Trapeze*, 2009, and *St Kilda Rd*, 2010, the culture of the city's spectacle is caught and

occasioned by the act of filming. Kosloff captures short clips of urban gymnasts. In these city contexts, we watch via the agency of her filming a select social unfolding. The people that move in and out of the frame appear somnambulant, as if performing their collective action in a preserve of space outside of real time. For over ten years, Kosloff has filmed these incidental sporting events, performances and spaces. Transferring the fragile celluloid images to video, she has formed a singular archive of urban social activity where collective memory and imagination is restored and made real.

Kosloff is dedicated to inducing in us a thoughtful onlooking, of how it is that we watch, in the common spaces of the public realm. As documents of the trained and untrained body in situated action, Kosloff's films demonstrate

Above:
Trapeze (stills) 2009,
super 8 transferred to DVD,
courtesy of the artist.

risk-taking as a sporting, work or leisure activity and describe the body and its movement in urban space as the subject of her focus. Yet, the question remains – who is the work for? Standing in front of her films, we are made acutely aware of our watching and the stillness and separation of our viewing. Could these carefully distanced works with their studied casualness mask a future intent? Perhaps they reveal a critical yet empathetic awareness of our equally performing selves to an audience in a temporal zone other than our own.

Andy Thomson, artist and Associate Professor,
AUT University, Auckland.



LEARNING SITE

Formed in 2004. Core members are Rikke Luther, Copenhagen, Denmark and Cecilia Wendt, Malmö, Sweden.

Developed by Rikke Luther, Learning Site's work for the Triennial comprises a self-composting edifice that rises between the street entrance and first floors of the exhibition space. The title, *The House of Economy*, refers to the accumulation of wealth as the ultimate adventure of a world that is politically held together and socially pulled apart by forces of capital. A building that parasites itself as an organic process in slow and continuous collapse, *The House of Economy* is a host body for an ecological system of disintegration, consisting of mushrooms and mycelium that feed on clay and straw. In part inspired by termitaries, in part by the decayed architecture of deregulated financial markets, it forms an allegory of the entropy of architectural and economic systems. It is surrounded by images, including Joseph Gandy's paintings of the Bank of England as a ruin (based on those originally commissioned by the Bank's architect Sir John Soane) and a text written by the writer Anthony Iles.

Learning Site's concerns – the meeting between environment, culture, labour, property rights, informal architectures, social and monetary economies – call for a diversity of approaches which are connected by artistic means. This is their number one lesson: the re-imagination of

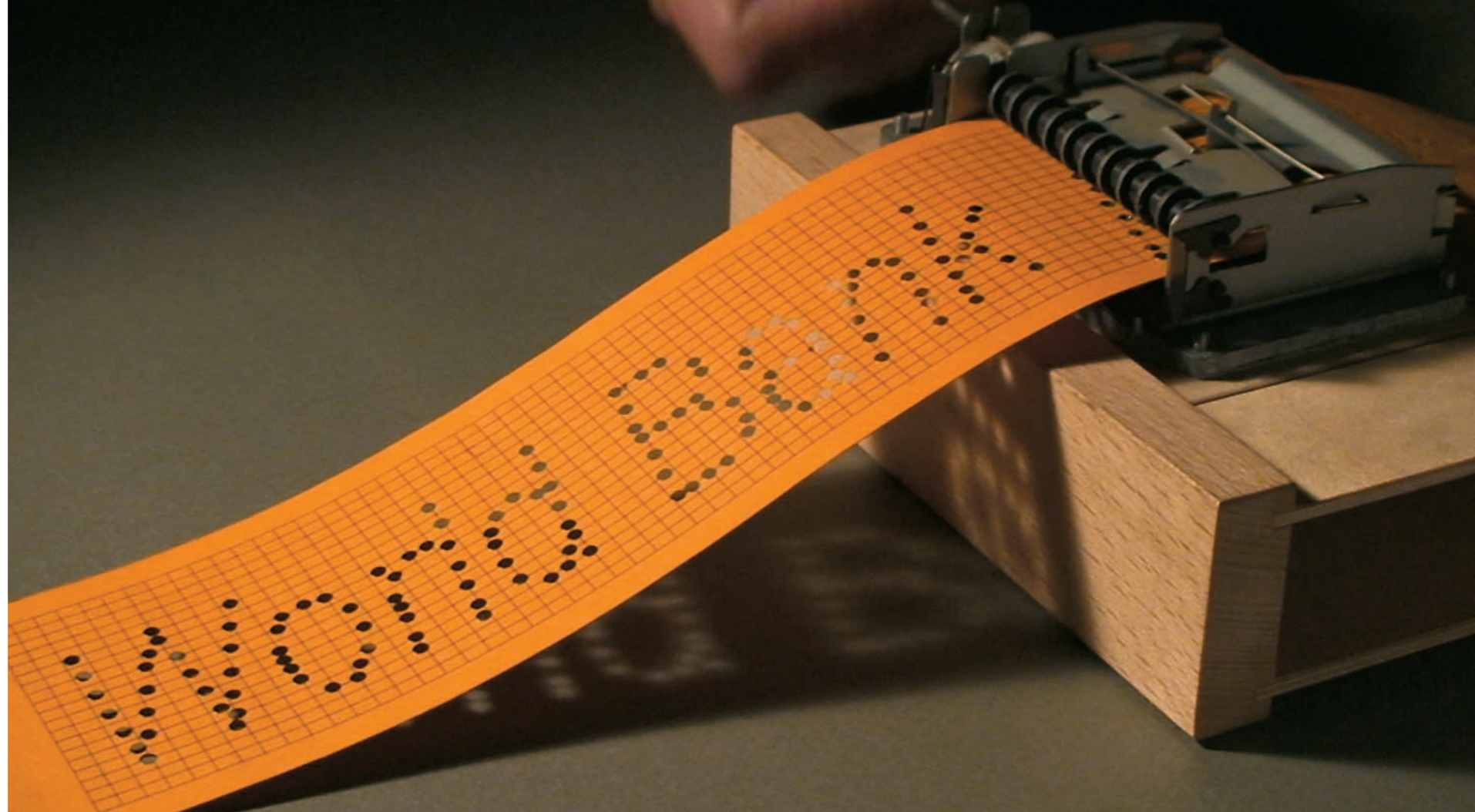
social space, as presented in the work's combination of fascination, indignation and analysis.

Though *House of Economy* has an allegorical-critical slant, while maintaining a historical perspective, Learning Site's practice has also seen them embedded in specific local contexts. Working with Julio Castro in *Collected Material Dwellings*, 2005, Learning Site's avowed didacticism turned into a Constructivist poetics of the social arena. The *Dwellings* were first set up in the outskirts of Monterrey, Mexico, where the local economy is largely driven by self-employment and collecting of discarded materials. Connecting these facts to the area's difficult housing situation, Learning Site developed habitations made of used plastic bottles. Filled with sand and sewn together with metal wire, they can be used as building blocks that are comparable to concrete in strength. Covered with mortar, these plastic bottle walls can be made to resemble any regular building material yet cost approximately ten times less. More than a proposal for a housing solution, the *Collected Material Dwellings* also have legal implications: in poor areas, such low-cost houses that appear to be difficult to demolish could help their occupiers claim ownership of unoccupied land.

Above:
The House of Economy
2010, drawing,
courtesy of Rikke Luther
for Learning Site.

Learning Site's interest in self-organisation becomes an aesthetic strategy that reflects back on their workshops, dwellings and ecological models as representations and embodiments of thought experiments. This is a structurally speculative approach that differs from art activism's more functionalist orientation. Consequently, Learning Site's experimentalism delivers counter images to what we thought we knew about the city, asking new questions where we previously only had premature answers. The result may or may not be *solutions* in the strong and operative sense of the word. However, what matters foremost is being able to break open concepts and habits and ask questions in different ways.

Lars Bang Larsen, curator and critic, Barcelona and Copenhagen.



JORGE MACCHI

Born 1963, Buenos Aires,
Argentina. Lives and works in
Buenos Aires.

If we thought of men as objects, Jorge Macchi could probably be either a lie detector or a device to develop film. A tool that helps us interpret or see things differently from the way we do at first. Maybe even a camera that prompts us to experience light as a progression of images replicating the world around us – something it is not. He'd be the kind of machine that never ceases to be a mystery even if we could understand its mechanism; transforming everyday things so that they show a previously unknown side.

Jorge Macchi has been making work that unfolds unexpected meaning in the everyday for more than a decade. Photographs, sculptures, installations, videos, collages or gouaches, his works are made up of found objects, texts and images so ordinary they would go unnoticed

except for the fact that Macchi turns them into something surprisingly more complex and dramatic. Ghostlike, they gain the force of apparitions, of images we believe can manifest when we're half asleep or emerge in a second, for a second, in the corner of our eye. Born of music sheets, pieces of old furniture, broken glass, maps, the image of cars passing by, they become austere evocative pieces that invite us to attend to a phenomenology from which we are usually withdrawn.

In Macchi's works, the immaterial has a precise form; the fleeting is trapped; the marginal is centred; the unique doubles; the rigid loosens and expands. In *Still Song*, 2005, for example, the rays of light that propagate from a disco mirror ball have made violent holes on the wall and in *Parallel Lives*, 1998, the unconceivable

Above:
12 Short Songs (still)
2009, DVD,
courtesy of the artist
and Galleria Continua,
San Gimignano, Beijing,
Le Moulin.

takes the form of two pieces of glass that exhibit the same exact fracture. It feels time has gone backwards and stopped so that the objects defy their own fate.

The video projection *12 Short Songs*, 2009, included in the Auckland Triennial, combines two recurring motifs within Macchi's practice: newspaper headlines and the mechanism of a music box. Watching it, viewers find themselves reading lines such as 'World faces "total" financial meltdown' or 'World Bank predicts devastating global poverty'. These headlines are perforated into sheets which are passed through a music box triggering crystalline, anodyne melodies strangely but undeniably inscribed in the harsh reports. While the work evokes the technology of old-style news cables, of sounds almost lost, Macchi combines the crude and the dreamy to an uncanny effect.

Jorge Macchi's pieces are bitter-sweet. Neither sad nor joyful, they exist like nostalgic proofs of a world unnoticed, of a longing, of possibilities otherwise gone. By juxtaposing the material and immaterial, the banal and poetic, our quotidian logic is shattered in favour of the contradictory and make-believe. If we had to describe what takes place with a few words – and as we often hear Macchi declare – we would simply say that *something strange happens*. I would add: it might not be real, but it's true.

Alejandra Aguado, independent curator,
Buenos Aires, Argentina.



ALEX MONTEITH

Born 1977, Belfast, Northern
Ireland. Lives and works in
Auckland, New Zealand.

Alex Monteith is not a body at rest. A phone call is likely to find her en route to Blacks, Graveyards, Bluehouse or Indicators, to name a few favourite breaks. The waves call, the search is on. For Monteith, the landscape is not a field for picture-taking but a scene of action. How many artists would jump into the ocean from a helicopter during a shoot, as Monteith did for *Red Sessions*, 2009–10? Her monumental screen works eschew traditional documentary points of view to highlight the ‘techniques of the observer’, and to confront us with cameras and agents in motion.¹

Visiting the famous Taranaki surf break at Stent Road, the casual viewer might only notice dark wetsuits against the grey water and sky; the soft, Sugimoto-like tonal gradations having little correspondence with the adrenaline surfers experience out in the ‘lineup’. Monteith’s *Red Sessions* brings the human activity to the fore, as the artist wrapped local surfers in red lycra surf vests and captured the scene in a multi-camera panorama shot in a single synchronised take with diegetic sound. The performance and resulting projection explores the technics of relations between human surfers and the Taranaki coast; between perspectives from land and sea.

In 1969, Christo and Jeanne-Claude wrapped the coast of Little Bay, Sydney in one million square feet of fabric. Their subtle intervention dislocated our sense of ‘naturalness’ and displaced the economic eye which consumes that wave-swept coast as ‘landscape’. This activist mode of discovery aligns with Donna Haraway’s conception of scientific research: the researcher intervenes in waves of force, creating ‘diffraction’. When waves spread out after passing through a narrow gap or across an edge introduced by the researcher, interference between the constituent waveforms becomes perceptible. ‘A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather, where the effects of differences appear.’² The physical intervention does not lead directly to an outcome, but is a way to discover the dynamics of a situation.

Similarly, Monteith’s use of the brightly-coloured surf-contest vest to experiment with aesthetic form both lifted and refracted the performative dynamics of the freesurfing session at Stent Road in unforeseeable ways. The hegemony of the black wetsuit reflects the identifiably masculine, perhaps even Calvinist culture, which has historically dominated surfing.³ The bleak New Zealand sky, cold summertime water and

Above:
Red Sessions (still) 2009–10,
4-channel synchronised video
installation with stereo sound,
courtesy of the artist.

1.
Jonathan Crary, ‘Techniques of
the Observer’, *October*, no 45,
1988, pp 3–35.

2.
Donna Haraway,
‘The Promises of Monsters:
A Regenerative Politics for
Inappropriate/d Others’, in
L Grossberg, C Nelson and
P A Treichler (eds), *Cultural
Studies*, Routledge, New York,
1992, p 300.

3.
Daniel T Jenkins, ‘A Protestant
Aesthetic? A Conversation
with Donald Davie’, *Journal of
Literature and Theology*, vol 2,
no 2, 1988, pp 153–62.

gruff stares from suspicious locals at the average ‘serious’ surf break hardly seem to reflect the sport’s Pacific heritage. While deconstructing the dress code was not the focus of Monteith’s project, a lightening of mood was palpable as the red vests diffused through the lineup.

Relational aesthetics in its canonical form attempts to evoke a better world through the construction of a defamiliarised, utopian space of engagement. Monteith’s collaborative works share a certain elegance of form with that tradition, but her role as an organic aesthetician brings to mind Suzanne Lacy et al’s ‘New Genre Public Art’, where ‘communities’ are not imagined but are materially located in specific places and patterns of being together. Where the globalised biennale circuit inaugurates the cowboy practitioner of social sculpture, Monteith seems more at ease working in collaboration with communities she knows well. Her last ride will always be a return.

Danny Butt, Lecturer, Critical Studies, Elam School of Fine Arts, National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries, University of Auckland.

TOM NICHOLSON

Born 1973, Melbourne,
Australia. Lives and works in
Melbourne.

Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills left Melbourne in 1860 on an expedition to cross Australia from South to North. Their departure is memorialised by a monument in Melbourne's Royal Park, while their deaths – which seem the result of a series of miscalculations and Burke's violent contempt for Aboriginal people – figure in a national pantheon of heroic failure. They missed the rendezvous with a camp that was to replenish their supplies and tried to emulate the local Aboriginal use of a flour made from nardoo sporocarps.¹ They did this without first roasting the sporocarps, which would have neutralised the thiaminase in the plant, an enzyme which debilitates the digestive system. Consequently, Burke and Wills spent their last days eating the nardoo cakes, feeling utterly bloated but dying of starvation.

1.
Marsilea drummondii, also known as nardoo or the desert fern, occurs in large areas of Australia. Its most dramatic existence is in central Australia, where it appears in great masses in the wake of the desert flooding. As the floodwaters recede, the nardoo dries, forming great fields of intense red across the desert. The spores remain in the ground for up to 30 years, awaiting the next inundation. See Naomi Brydon, 'Marsilea drummondii', in *Growing Native Plants*, Australian National Botanic Gardens, Department of the Environment and Water Resources, Canberra, 2004, pp 46–8.

2.
Tom Nicholson, email correspondence with author, November 2007. All quotes are from this correspondence.

In *Monument for the flooding of Royal Park*, 2009, Nicholson invites us to imagine 'a vast carpet of incandescent red' nardoo plants covering a portion of Royal Park.² This intervention aspires to visualise, rather than commemorate the event: it eludes the metaphoric while putting in its place a spectral co-extensivity. The work converges the oxymoron of filling up while depleting – Burke and Wills's 'bloated emaciation' – and a paraphrase of the current system of consumption, of how the financial metaphor of credit operates – Burke and Wills's, but also our self-devouring hunger.

The action of disseminating the spores across the barren expanse of Royal Park, against the vista of the skyscrapers in Melbourne's financial district, invokes both the monument's claims to eternity and the contours of an undetermined

future. At the intersection of these strands lies the historiographic model of a future that does not come, but somehow is: an impregnable version of the present, a dispute between equivalent forces. It is tempting to enquire if this might be the future that financial credit institutes, the selves of indebtedness that arise in a pre-empted, perfectly measurable historical course. Or, if the monument does not always happen on credit.

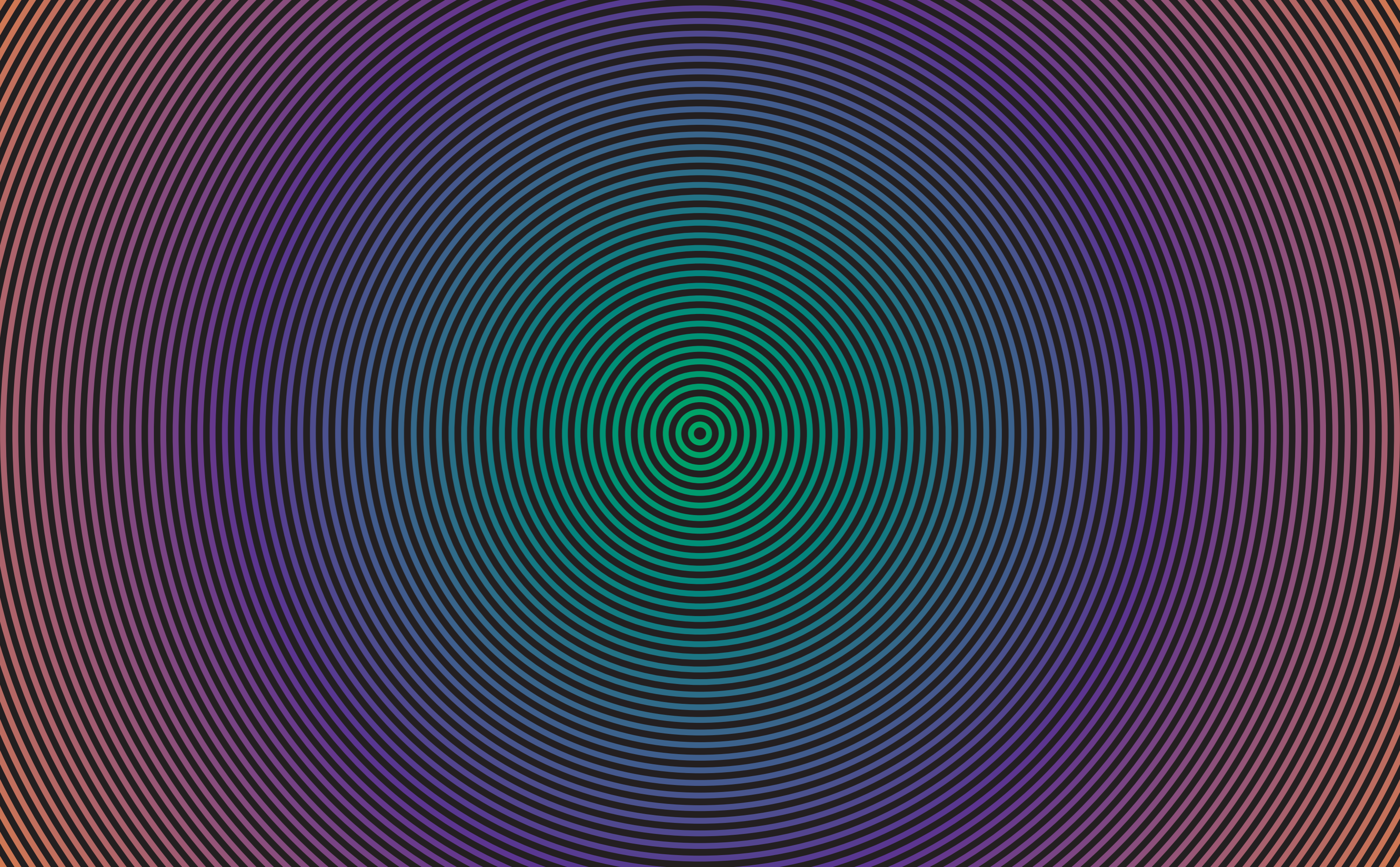
As in other works by Nicholson, the accumulated meaning that the monument relies on is suspended right before oversimplification occurs, before the verdict that would transform it in a collective Freudian slip, in a mirror image for the deformities of propaganda. Collections of documents and the vectors that would index them only add up to a condition of co-presence where each is each other's implacable revision or delay.

Above:
Nardoo flag wave 2009–10,
digital print on adhesive vinyl,
courtesy of the artist and Anna
Schwartz Gallery, Sydney.
Imaging: Christian Capurro.

Monument for the flooding of Royal Park confuses the end of Burke's adventurous expedition with its beginning, translating it as a voyage into an alterity other than geographic. It also outlines the object for any discourse of sustainability. The red incandescence that does not burn, the consumption that empties itself out, the convex lessening – these can be read as inverted science-fiction tropes, designed to dismember the metaphors or allegories of our current condition. Burke's orgiastic, overabundant self-destruction is the inverse of how an alien beast would negotiate its spatial and existential condition vis-à-vis its screaming victims. The War of the Worlds is internal, triggered by progressively convoluted rapports between consumption, residue, ruin and accumulation.

Mihnea Mircan, curator, Bucharest, Romania.







MIKE PARR

Born 1945, Sydney, Australia.
Lives and works in Sydney.

All three works chosen for this year's Auckland Triennial arise out of the earliest phase of Mike Parr's career in the 1970s. As these works attest, Parr's art practice is essentially a hybrid of live art and time-based media forms. It is an art which doesn't simply produce an effect as the end-point of the work or an affirmation of the artist's identity. Rather, it interrogates artistic presence using the process of art making as a tool of inquiry into how identity, character, subjectivity and personality are formed. Presence and identity are therefore not concrete but function within the process of art's production. They are considered as processes, entities built out of time.

Three Weeks Annual Leave, 1971–2, should not be read as a window onto the artist's identity or as an autobiographical gesture, but as a durational structure in which the ritual downing of tools becomes an opening into the means of identity formation more generally. The performance of professional and social activities gives way to familial rhythms. Quotidian activities and characterisations are suspended in a properly liminal time-space of the beach holiday, an experience familiar to just about everyone in this part of the world. The root problem that the work poses has to do with the time it takes for the psycho-social coordinates of the self to evolve. Duration is therefore a key concept for this analysis of Parr's work as it determines both the thematic parameters of the work and its structure.

Pushing a video camera over a hill, 1971, is typical of the way in which Parr frames and disrupts the artist's presence in the work. He uses a variety of visual language and media to extend the work's

Left:
Pushing a video camera
over a hill (still) 1971,
16mm film,
courtesy of the artist.

symbolic range and destabilise its specificity as body art. Apart from the transfer from video to 16mm film and back to video again, there is no post-production airbrushing of this piece. It documents an action in real time and positions the viewer in a direct relation to the artist's action. This in itself consists solely in the explicit creation of a point of view: in this case of moving through a field of grass. In this work, the video camera is not simply a choice of medium, but part of what the work is about.

For those who only know of Parr's controversial performance art actions or his self-portrait project of dry point etchings, these early works show an important feature of his practice. Parr has always made extensive use of alternate imaging systems: film, video, photography, web casting, etc, both in performance events and the installations which develop from them. The three works in the exhibition (the third being *Facts About the Room*, 1970) consist of traces, objects and images that function as a time/space template, a chronotope of the early 1970s. In this sense, they form a continuum with the work that follows after, with the enormous sprawling opus of one of Australia's truly great innovators and risk takers.

Dr Edward Scheer, Associate Professor in Theatre and Performance Studies and Deputy Head of the School of English, Media and Performing Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

PHILIPPE PARRENO

Born 1964, Oran, Algeria. Lives
and works in Paris, France.



Philippe Parreno's marquees signal to visitors on arrival that they enter an altered portal.¹ Implementing a *Wonderland*-style threshold through his dropped entrance and tinseltown flourish of electric lights, Parreno comes as close as ever to reminding us that an object is not the end of the journey, rather the beginning of a scene about to be set.

The first of the marquees was made for the exterior entrance to his 2006 solo show at Esther Schipper Gallery, Berlin, and included a neon floor plan of the gallery on its front panel where signage would typically sit. This example, along with the grand portal on the front of the Guggenheim exhibition *theanyspacewhatever*, 2008, recall through their intensity of light and grandiosity the thresholds of another era when visitors to the cinema or stage expected to be transported elsewhere. Parreno's recent, smaller

Above:
Marquee 2008,
acrylic glass, steel frame,
light bulbs, neon tubes,
courtesy of the artist and
Esther Schipper, Berlin.

1.
Christine Macel notes that
Parreno's first Marquee, was
'inspired by the marquees which
hang over the entrances to
American movie theaters that
advertise film titles and the names
of the stars against a luminous
background.' Christine Macel,
'Voice Over: Corpus of Works',
in Christine Macel (ed) with
Karen Marta, Philippe Parreno,
Pompidou Centre and JRP Ringier,
Paris and Zurich, 2009, p 204.

scale interior marquees, plot pathways through the exhibition space in a ghostlike allusion to an absent point of cognition – like the light bulb that hovers over the head of a cartoon character at their moment of revelation.

Perhaps the most significant and compelling aspect of the marquees, is that they are in object form, conceptualisations of Parreno's interest in the 'exhibition as medium'. As a portal or entrance, the object naturally leads elsewhere – either to what is inside or what is absent. Parreno reminds us that an object reveals itself through its exhibition, in a sense through its staging. He describes the exhibition as a 'journey through space', not necessarily an actualised space or a real-time eventuality, but one which generates the illusion of collective possibilities and desires. There is a powerful emancipatory force within his marquees that signals a freedom

for one's own journey within an exhibition of promise, reminding us that the often theorised space of an exhibition still allows individual trajectories.² And, although Parreno often begins within a 'territory of reference' – to things people find familiar – it is as a conjurer he hopes to unleash his 'art'.³

The development of the marquees sits alongside several collaborative projects in which Parreno has explored what in his words is a 'polyphonic' approach to the exhibition subject. In the movie *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait*, 2006, made with Douglas Gordon, and the exhibition project *Il Tempo del Postino: A Group Show*, 2007, co-curated with Hans Ulrich Obrist, he uses the mediums of film and exhibition to split time and differentiate the multiple perspectives of a subject. In *Zidane* this occurs largely through the use of multiple

2.
Maria Lind, in the catalogue
accompanying his multi-venue
retrospective 2009–10, writes
'If we can imagine emancipatory
impulses imbued with magic we
are probably coming closer to his
work, in which doing and reflecting
tend to happen at the same time.
Here performance and analysis
are simultaneous operations,
emersion and distance go hand in
hand without collapsing into each
other.' Maria Lind, 'The Who and
the How: Thoughts on Philippe
Parreno's Work', in Macel (ed),
Philippe Parreno, 2009, p 105.

3.
The phrase 'territory of reference'
comes from Liam Gillick, 'A
Single Piano Note and a Giant
Snowflake', Parkett, no 86,
2009, p 151.

4.
Philippe Parreno, edited interview
with Hans Ulrich Obrist, 'Time
Travel: A Flickering Existence', in
Macel (ed), Philippe Parreno, p 22.

camera perspectives, and in *Il Tempo* through replacing the architecture of an exhibition with a stage on which artists present acts.

By re-mapping the linearity of our typical viewing experience Parreno works at encouraging our multiple engagement with subjectivity – so that a single note can echo with different sounds. In perhaps the clearest analogy of his intentions Parreno has said, 'Reading is also a physical state; it demands a particular attention, a floating attention. The moments where you disconnect from reading, when you start dreaming are very pleasant. You are at once inside your head imagining things while you're being spoken to.'⁴

Natasha Conland.



GARRETT PHELAN

Born 1965, Dublin, Ireland.
Lives and works in Dublin.

Garrett Phelan has described his overarching and still unfolding project, *Formation of Opinion*, 2003–, under which most of his art activities of the past six or seven years are subsumed, as ‘an exploration in four phases of how morals, values and principles enter into our society’.

Phase 1 was presented under the general rubric ‘Reception of Information’. It included a series of darkly delirious site-specific drawing installations in locations in Ireland and Spain, as well as a month-long independent FM/online radio station. On a wavelength situated between the two main Irish public service networks *Black Brain Radio* broadcast a barrage of material gleaned from articles, interviews, newspaper reports, books and online forums, which was regurgitated and relayed to the city of Dublin through the medium of the artist’s own voice as a continuous and deliberately distorted sound work.

Phase 2 addresses ‘Learning, Memory and Cognition’ through an ongoing series of broadcasts, performances and installations, consisting of 26 sound works to be presented over five years. Culminating in 2012 in archive form, it will be titled *At what point will common sense prevail?*

Dealing with ‘Successes and Failures’, the first work of Phase 4 consists of portraits of 11 Irish supermarket workers who went on strike in 1984 in support of an end to apartheid in South Africa. This project highlighted a group of ordinary workers whose politicisation was due to the circumstances of their working environment and whose exemplary actions have never been adequately acknowledged.

Left:
Another Good Man 2009–10,
pen on paper,
courtesy of the artist and
Mother’s Tankstation, Dublin.



Above:
*Selflessness in the Face
of Adversity 2009–10*,
pages from zine, pen on paper,
courtesy of the artist and
Mother’s Tankstation, Dublin.

Phase 3 of *Formation of Opinion*, provisionally referred to as ‘Actions’, is Phelan’s contribution to the Auckland Triennial. Sharing with Phase 4 a fascination with the recent history of political activism, its procedures are nonetheless more oblique. It chimes with the Triennial’s thematic exploration of ‘the possibilities for risk and adventure’. Dedicating this phase to the subject of ‘selflessness’, particularly as that quality manifests itself in the face of extreme adversity, Phelan has chosen several concrete examples as the basis for various works. One such case is that of Kenule ‘Ken’ Beeson Saro-Wiwa, the Nigerian author and television producer whose non-violent campaign against the environmental damage caused to his homeland by the indiscriminate dumping of oil waste by foreign companies ended in his execution in 1995 by the Nigerian military government. Another is Ireland’s Rossport Five, five men from County Mayo who were jailed in June 2005 when they refused to obey a court injunction forbidding them to interfere with work being undertaken by Shell Oil on land owned by three of them.

Phelan is notably reluctant to don the mantle of the ‘political artist’. His honouring of these activists proceeds rather by indirection in the form of a fictitious, if not fantastical, interweaving of strands from these two stories of protest. This fact-based fabrication is then dispersed across a range of disparate media, including screen-printing, animation, a zine and a mini FM broadcast sculpture. The specific flavour of the work owes something to the fact that all of these media have notable associations with the history of underground politics.

Caoimhín Mac Giolla Léith, critic and curator,
University College, Dublin.

BUNDITH PHUNSOMBATLERT

Born 1972, Bangkok, Thailand.
Lives and works in Rhode Island,
New York.

I get as much pleasure as anyone from this technology and its potentialities, but it seems to me that what this technology offers is precisely an enhancement of the body, not its replacement... There can be no liberation from the body, or from space, or the real... The cybernetic focus on the body is precisely a mode of signaling out and intensifying certain regions of the body, its stimulation to maximal degrees.¹

Invisible culture is a contemporary phenomenon that remains insistently unavailable to us for various reasons and in different ways. Some visual ideas are purposefully withheld, withdrawn, or suspended to vividly represent the complex and dynamic relationship of seeing and knowing. Other visual effects are inaccessible because we do not possess the instrumentation to see infinitesimal or immense, and often formless, things and aggregations. What cannot be apprehended is an increasingly absorbing and distracting conundrum – and a tactically deployed trope of some contemporary artists.

Bundith Phunsombatlert imagines a bird that has inexplicably flown into a space. Even if it is perpetually unobservable, there is palpable, if episodic, evidence of its presence. As witnesses,

we try to make sense of this striking ambiguity – and a chronically deferred desire to know what may be constitutively indiscernible. Phunsombatlert enigmatically and sensitively misleads so that what seems unsettled, unreachable, and unknowable actually reveals other unanticipated effects, environments and experiences.

Suspended overhead in an open space, an orderly, grid-like arrangement of bird swings rest at the level of the human heart. As people enter the space they approach one of the swings and a sensor activates its subtle movement, as well as avian-like sounds that are artificial echoes produced by ambient technology. The invisible bird, apparently disturbed and flustered by a human presence, flies to another distant, less vulnerable perch.

The virtual and the real, the imagined and experienced, the material and inchoate are the intersecting axes that participants navigate in this work. Phunsombatlert entices viewers into spaces where their physical presence, heart rate, body temperature, or calculated or random movements become catalysts for technological processes that unfold in logical sequences of curious scenarios. He issues an ambiguous

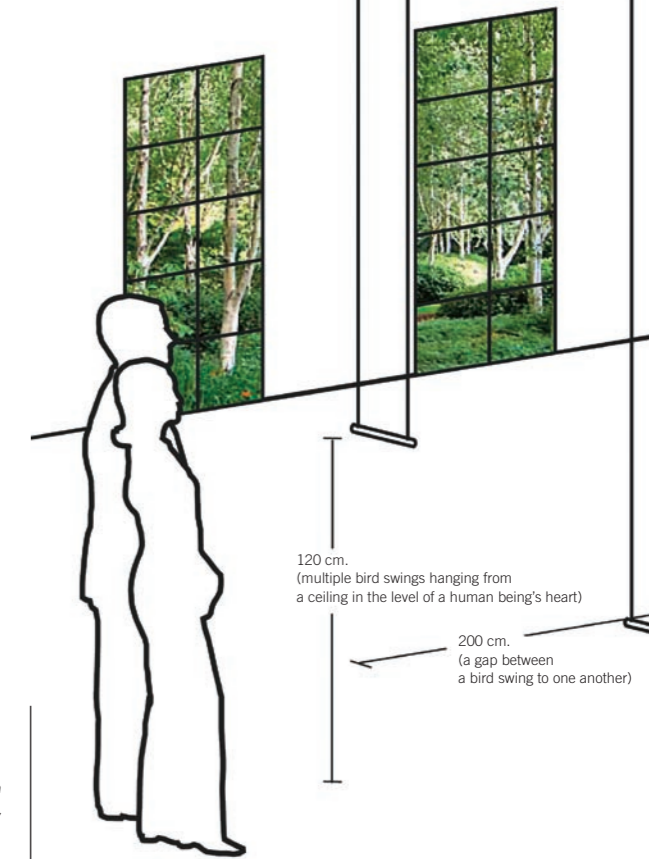
invitation to participate so that what initially seems self-evident, inexplicably unfolds into an expansively open-ended and undetermined experience of one's body – its agency and effects – in the world.

The quest is not driven by what viewers imagine might exist, but by the presence of their bodies to viscerally engage both virtual and physical worlds. The bird's ambivalent presence triggers insistent and urgent questions regarding our somatic presence, perception and activity in the world. Phunsombatlert describes a 'sensory incompleteness' of being observed while observing that *The Room with a Bird* persistently re-enacts.

The thing and the body are correlates: both are artificial or conventional, pragmatic conceptions, cuttings, disconnections, that create a unity, continuity, and cohesion out of the plethora of interconnections that constitute the world... Technology is that which ensures and continually refines the ongoing negotiations between bodies and things.²

Patricia C Phillips, independent writer, curator and Dean of Graduate Studies, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island.

Right:
The Room with a Bird
(concept drawing) 2010,
poem and sketch of installation
including servos, loudspeakers,
amplifiers, PIR sensors,
microcontrollers,
courtesy of the artist.



The Room with a Bird

Inside the room, there is a bird.
Nobody knows where the bird came from.
The bird might not find a way out of the room,
or maybe, the bird really wants to stay in the room – we never know.
In fact, the room is empty, and the bird is invisible.

The way people sense the bird is only by listening to the sound of the multiple bird swings that hang from the ceiling in the room. When people come close to the swing the bird is on, the bird leaves the swing and moves to another one. As long as people move, the bird moves.

As a person, I do not need to find the bird.
As a visual artist, I need to keep the bird invisible.
As a media artist, I may need to find out what the bird looks like, and where the bird is going, or I may not.

Using a 'window' outside the room,
I want to bridge the gap between people and the invisible bird.

Bundith Phunsombatlert

²
Elizabeth Grosz, 'The Thing',
in Grosz (ed), *Architecture from
the Outside*, p 182.



OLIVIA PLENDER

Born 1977, London, England.
Lives and works in London.

The young heroine Lena divides her time between sexual experimentation and political fact-finding, interviewing people on the streets of Stockholm about class, gender, and the validity of nonviolent protest.¹

This is how Olivia Plender describes the 1967 film *I Am Curious (Yellow)* by Swedish director Vilgot Sjöman in her *Artforum* "Top Ten". It seems a good introduction to Plender herself, not that she follows Lena's lifestyle, but she does divide her time between rigorous analytical research and a keen pursuit of the experiential and non-rational, be it worldly or esoteric. Plender has a long-standing interest in non-conformist movements, in their greater or lesser successes, while not glossing over their moral ambiguities. Her work has set itself the task of debunking myths adhering to the art world and the machismo of the artist figure, (such as the genius, masterpiece and mythical destinations such as the avant-garde or the bohemian), or to exposing the patriarchal power structures of Britain. She uses the antiquated and declamatory rhetoric of the Victorian era to gently point to Britain's retention of empire attitudes and colonial condescension today. Rather than creating a didactic work, pointing out the injustices of British political, social and cultural life, in her comic *The Masterpiece*, 2005, she creates the character of the bohemian artist, or the Prince of Tourists, spokesman for 'our beneficent King-Emperor' in *What Is England? An Illustrated Historical Lecture* by Olivia Plender, 2009, which begins:

Let us not be satisfied with the liberation of Iraq or the subjugation of Iceland, but let us subdue Wembley Park; let us conquer Hackney Wick; let us compel Epping Forest to submit to the yoke of improvement.

1. Olivia Plender, 'Top Ten', *Artforum International*, vol 44, no 8, Apr 2006, p 128.



Above:
'A True Draft of the Whale as it was seen in the River Thames' 2009, from: *Aadieu Adieu Apa*, printed poster, courtesy of the artist.

Left:
Set Sail for the Levant 2007, printed board game, courtesy of the artist.

The rhetoric is Victorian, but also in the style of more recent political speeches by Barack Obama, Martin Luther King and Winston Churchill, she uses three examples to drive home her points in a hypnotic and mesmerising rhythm.

What is England? forms a part of Plender's recent solo show *Aadieu Adieu Apa (Goodbye Goodbye Father)*, Gasworks, London, 2009, which marks an end and a beginning for Plender. She produced five posters using this declamatory mode, combining prophetic announcements with items from recent or historical news. In one poster imitating a seventeenth-century handbill, the whale that washed up in the Thames in January 2006 features as 'A True Draft of the Whale as it was seen in the River Thames'. The illustration shows a pastoral London, the river winding through grassy rolling banks with the incongruous spectre of Canary Wharf towering in the background. The text also links the whale's appearance with 'The City' (London's financial district), citing the whale as an awful prophecy of the financial crisis that preceded it 18 months later. It reminds us that whales were traditionally seen as beasts of warning, signalling with their submerged bulk approaching subterranean (or subaqueous) forces of change.

Bringing together the antiquated with the very current but equally unfathomable misadventures of the capitalist city, is symptomatic of Olivia's move to put her own 'paternal' influences of rational analysis aside. This combination of historical research, literary style and an increasingly intuitive approach, enriches her politically and socially engaged practice.

Rosalind Nashashibi, artist, London.

وليد صادق (تولد ١٩٦٦)
 كوزو أو كاموتو مقيم ببيروت الكبرى
 ٢٠٠٩-٢٠٠٨

Walid Sadek (b. 1966)
 Kozo Okamoto resides in Greater Beirut
 2008-2009

كوزو أو كاموتو (تولد ١٩٤٧ - توفي ١٩٧٢، ١٩٨٥، ٢٠٠٠)
 سماع دوارّة الريح بنعم
 حوالي ٢٠٠٩

Kozo Okamoto (b. 1947 – d. 1972, 1985, 2000)
 To hear a weathervane say yes
 c. 2009

WALID SADEK

Born 1966, Beirut, Lebanon.
 Lives and works in Beirut.

You may have seen that one photograph, published in local dailies of the Al Turk building in the district of Tareek Al Jadeedah in Beirut, where on the eighth floor members of the Japanese Red Army were allegedly apprehended on 18 February 1997. Do you remember the man in the foreground pointing an accusing index finger at the building? It is that finger which goads me to write this letter and tell you of an asymmetrical dialogue with Kozo Okamoto: words of mine answered with long unquiet silences. For how else would he and I converse? Having died twice even thrice, his voice is inaudible to me and his words infinitely slow to arrive. His first death, you may not remember, occurred on 30 May 1972 at Lod Airport in Tel Aviv. Unlike his two comrades who did commit suicide having depleted their ammunition, he surrendered and consequently over-lived his stated task to terrorise the enemy and die while doing it. Imprisoned, he drowned in interminable torture; his world unmade. Pictured, in 1985, high on the shoulders of fighters from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command, following a successful exchange of prisoners with the Israeli government, he was already twice dead. Then on the night of 17 March 2000, when it was announced that only he and none of his four comrades would be granted political asylum by the Lebanese government, a crowd of protesting activists gathered close to the residence of Prime Minister Selim El Hoss and wept. They wept for the four, but not for Okamoto, who alone in his latest asylum would die for the third time. Made legitimate, he was finally deflated and left to wither in indifference. This, his third death, is his most devastating thus far, for never will he again erupt across our defenses. The disquieting cipher he was, entangled

Left:
 Kozo Okamoto Resides
 in Greater Beirut 2008-9,
 wall labels,
 courtesy of the artist.

in the complex histories of this region, could irk the writing of facile official histories, even muddy crystal definitions of a resistance fighter. No more. Okamoto is an object made forgettable. That is unless it is still possible to retract the accusing index finger and listen to his demand.

Walid Sadek

Like the writer of a detective novel Walid Sadek gathers clues and disperses them again over the land underfoot. He argues that meaning is to be found in the folds of the corpse, not at the grave nor in the slough of argumentation that sometimes follows death. The corpse itself does not produce meaning however, instead an explosion of meaning happens when one's eyes are redirected at those around the corpse. Meaning is therefore not born of a face to face, but rather of the contiguity of living bodies congregating around a corpse not yet relegated to memory.

Fadi El Abdallah, poet and writer, Paris.

TINO SEHGAL

Born 1976, London, England.
Lives and works in Berlin,
Germany.

What lies before you? Tino Sehgal, *Instead of allowing some thing to rise up to your face dancing bruce and dan and other things*, 2000

Without providing the traditional frame for an artwork Tino Sehgal's work is demanding for the observer. In fact, it questions the entire position of the innocent bystander. In the case of *Instead of allowing some thing to rise up to your face dancing bruce and dan and other things*, 2000, one is confronted with a person slowly moving on the floor. It is bewildering, at once alarming yet somehow graceful, peaceful. We take a position in relation to this person and their strange activity, not simply as we literally stand before them but also ethically and morally. How do we understand them and what they do?

In this way, Sehgal imparts responsibility onto the viewer. In fact, he makes us more than a viewer. We are implicated in determining what lies at our feet. There is no technological artifice such as a plinth, screen or frame suggesting set parameters for the work. Rather the content of the piece, where it begins and ends and what it is about, is greatly determined by how we choose to view it and, in turn, understand it. Each individual confronted with the work produces his or her meaning. It will look slightly different every time and for each person. For this reason, Sehgal resists all documentation of his work. A photograph or film of the work would limit its potential. It is specific to each individual's experience.

Traditional framing would rob us of some of our power and imaginative capabilities. In making our productive capacity so central

to his work Sehgal not only points to an old truism about beauty, that power lies with the beholder, but also touches on an important point about individual agency in society at large. To some extent responsibility lies with us, we cannot rely too heavily on experts and should question the idea that things are how they seem; that knowledge and the world are fixed. Things, people, institutions and societies are constantly and ever so slowly transforming before us. Sehgal not only asks us to take a stance but also highlights that we are positioning ourselves even when we are not totally aware of doing so. Our actions have consequences.

How you answer the question of what is lying at your feet in reality determines what is before you. Reading a catalogue text is also choosing a particular approach to the world and is one way to make sense of it. Perhaps this is where Sehgal is most poignant within the context of the 4th Auckland Triennial, *Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon*. The work seems to claim that even simply in trying to understand the world and choosing the means by which we do so, through texts or otherwise, we become responsible. We are actively involved in choosing how to see the world and thereby how it looks. Sehgal demands that we become aware of our own strange and empowering activity as the producers of meaning. His work would not exist without it.

Louise Höjer, artistic director and writer, Berlin.



MICHAEL STEVENSON

Born 1964, Inglewood, New Zealand. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Fact, Fiction and Forecast. In *On How Things Behave*, 2010, Michael Stevenson plays the part of the 'fabulist' or teller of tales. In this, his second exploration of film's time-based sequencing, Stevenson emphasises art's connection with the craft of storytelling. This short film, told in six parts, emerges as a fable which combines the ethos of scientific enquiry while engaging the language of a morality play.

Part one introduces the character of Man – probably short for the German Manfred – but it was as Man that he lived as a hermit and artist on the coast of Spain. His story gains mythic potential in its retelling and so Man becomes universal 'Man', through which unfolds other universal truths and unknowns.

Man's story is also the foundation story in the film, which Stevenson introduces through a tracking shot of Man's faded mural on the shoreline. While he lived in extreme conditions, Man is described here as a survivor and sea urchin in the mode of Robinson Crusoe. His character is ostensibly a parody of the modern artist, through which Stevenson inverts the often positivist terms of contemporary art's 'resourcefulness and sustainability'. Instead, Man's particular breed of 'found object' resourcefulness is rendered as a universally understood tale of poverty. Stevenson lays bare the irony of how art's mirage of value and very real risks might be retold in the general language of madness and despair. The narrative alludes to Man's paranoia that the forces of nature are against him. He is killed finally by an oil spill. Merging documentary account with the style of the fable, it is ultimately impossible to determine fact from the work's fictive tone.



Above:
Books from 'The Library of Man' collection, courtesy of Museo del Alemán, Camelle, Camariñas.

Left:
On How Things Behave (still) 2010, HD and 16mm transferred to DVD, courtesy of the artist and Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington.

In the subsequent parts of the film, Stevenson moves increasingly into the folly of the 'reasonable'. He follows with the story of Isaac Newton, one of the most influential scientists and a 'sound man', who nonetheless lost his fortune in one of the earliest accounts of wide-spread economic crash – the bursting of the South Sea Bubble in 1720. The narrator then draws a line between the terms of risky investment via the South Sea Company's collapse, to introduce a more recent account of the highs and lows of economic advancement via merchant bankers in New Zealand's euphoric stock market of the 1980s. Removed from its original documentary source, the banker's story has tones of fantastical excess, revealing how the pursuit of financial rewards affects reasoned logic.

Humanity's blind spots are inferred variously in the film through the appearance of sunspots, literally black spots that appear to block the light of the sun, and the subject of historical speculation and investigation. They allude to our attempts to predict the unknowable, and accordingly the final three parts of the film focus on scenarios of 'probability'. These are unanswerable riddles: how can we know the sun will rise tomorrow?; how can we be sure an emerald is green?; and, in the final part set in the realm of science fiction, 'how do we prove that all things are not one'?

On How Things Behave may be Stevenson's most provocative work yet. In it, he seems to ask 'how can so much fiction emerge from truth'?

Natasha Conland.



TOVE STORCH

Born 1981, Århus,
Denmark. Lives and works
in Vienna, Austria and
Copenhagen, Denmark.

The Adventure of Illusion. When facing one of Tove Storch's sculptures it is quiet – completely quiet. There are no vociferous political slogans, interactives or adventurous bangs for your buck. Silence. All the real action takes place in your inner world.

In Storch's works the form presents a minimal and tight concept, where she examines the conventions and borders of sculpture. From this perspective she is a minimalist of the old school, but there is more going on than purely formal questions and sculptural shifts. The works contain a kind of poetry, and here we return to the silence of Storch's ambiguous sculptures.

On the outside and from a distance, the rectangular showcases appear tight and solid. On closer inspection, the harmony is disturbed and it is clear that their presence carries a secret, an untold fate of an unknown object that never quite reveals itself. The sealed form is all at once a prison, a coffin in dissolution, a lump of ice cut out of the past – a searching thought in the spectator. Thus, Storch's work initiates a process where a thought wanders from the artist and obtains a new reality in the beholder. And it is in this interaction between surface and interior, the tangible and the intangible, that displacement occurs in meeting with Storch's sculptures, and through that, the adventure.

It is an engaging meeting where you automatically end up drifting in a perceptual gaze. And this is intentional. You are gently trying to articulate what you have just encountered. You are on an inner adventure. But unlike guides in the real world Storch is silent, leading you with small steps, and with her finger beckoning across

Left:
Untitled 2009,
silicone, cloth, metal,
magnets, lacquer,
courtesy of the artist.
Photo: Anders Sune Berg.

art history, outside the usual categories and into the distant corners of the explainable. Storch actively approaches the inexplicable. Through the reflections her works initiate, she questions the human perception of form, time and space. These are complex ideas revealed in physical form, creating presence and an almost bodily experience, a kind of spatial awareness, at their most compelling.

In Storch's work the material has the ability to seduce, but also to address the complex, to make an idea physical in a very simple and condensed language. With few means she gives language to the nature of form, space and senses. An existential meeting where we encounter ourselves and our limits of speech.

Storch is a contradictory and searching artist. And if you walk closer, then you will see traces of time in the meticulously executed work, discover that what you thought was solid is hollow, the formally tight is staggered. The works appear an insolvable problem. An irresolution in which content is generated by virtue of the bare materials that her works deliver and the viewer's ability to complete the adventure.

Matthias Hvass Borello, Master of Arts in Modern Culture and Cultural Communication, art editor and critic, Copenhagen.

ZHENG BO

Born 1974, Beijing, China.
Lives and works in Beijing.



Collaborative Imagining for Social Evolution: Karibu Islands, the Virtual Space between Reality and Ideals. Chinese artist Zheng Bo interlaces video, sound and text to explore social issues faced by the underrepresented from their own perspectives. His video series *Karibu Islands*, 2004–10 (ongoing), facilitates discussion on the issues of queer freedom and social equality in his homeland. Ushered by the internet and China’s burgeoning market economy, queer online networks have given members virtual spaces of privacy and freedom, but have not resulted in collective responses to socio-economic problems. Zheng answers the challenge of creating an interface between the queer on- and offline communities with a three-piece video work *Karibu Islands*, an imaginary place invented in collaboration with more than two dozen queer and straight participants.

His first video *Karibu Islands: the Vanguard of Human Civilization*, 2004, shows that in the

Karibu Islands, time moves in reverse, countering the obsession with advancement. People are born old and get younger, their lives ending in infancy. Some people suffer from ‘time split syndrome’ (TSS), a confusion about which year, month, and day it is, and it requires a medical treatment consisting of confinement in a massive walled interior with no clock. This compulsory rehabilitation indicates that *Karibu Islands* is not imagined as purely idyllic. In a clip from this video, a girl shares her (fantasised) experiences in *Karibu Islands*, accompanied by Chinese and English subtitles that each translates her speech slightly differently. The ‘space’ of the discrepancy between her speech and the subtitles can be understood as a metaphor for slippages between ideals and reality of *Karibu Islands*. Indeed, *Karibu Islands*’ ‘fictionality’ coheres not through nonexistence, but in its porous virtual space where reality and fiction influence and collide, and where a person’s experiences and hopeful futures are deeply intertwined and negotiated.

Constant incongruities and divergences mirror the gap between social realities and queer people’s desires.

While the first video introduces us to the *Karibu Islands*’ complex time reversal, Zheng Bo’s second work (from 2005) imagines fluid, multiple histories through reversed footage from the individual lives of John F Kennedy, Andy Warhol and Buddha. By presenting these historical figures’ intimate moments with their family and friends, the artist invites viewers to reflect on their own lives in reverse: if time moved backward, how would you re-imagine yourself and your relationship with others on a communal level?

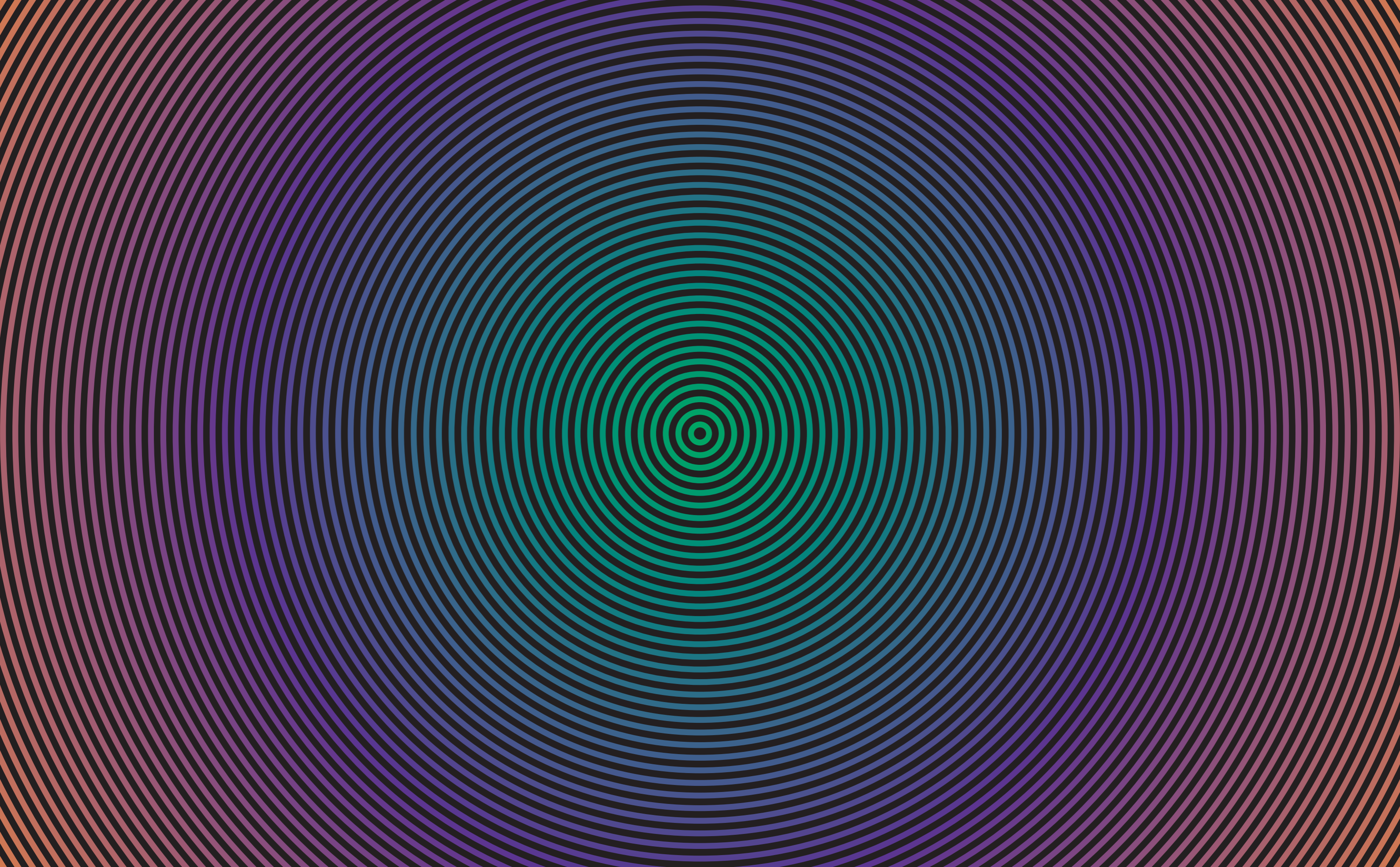
Directly confronting the queer issue in China, Zheng Bo used this question to open his project to dialogue for the third video (from 2008), inviting members of the queer and straight communities to offline discussions. To help the

Above:
Karibu Islands
2004–8 (ongoing),
videos, texts, discussions,
installation view: the 3rd
Guangzhou Triennial, 2008,
courtesy of the artist.

participants imagine ‘their’ *Karibu Islands* and make their new identities more palpable and real, he employs the platform of a virtual birth certificate. Here, the dissatisfied gay community projects their hopes and dreams onto the *Karibu Islands* interface, which gradually fashions them into an alternative time-space reality – building the constructive seeds for positive social changes.

By manoeuvring the tension between idealism and reality to foster social evolution, Zheng explores art’s potential as creative social media. Zheng Bo’s *Karibu Islands* continuously regenerates collaborative imagining of a more diverse and tolerant society, thereby challenging the existing social order.

Hyejong Yoo, PhD Candidate, Cornell University,
Ithaca, New York.



*ARTIST
BIOGRAPHIES*

NICK AUSTIN

Born 1979, Whangarei, New Zealand.
Lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand.

Nick Austin's paintings and sculptures combine objects and materials lifted from everyday life. He spins poetry from the most banal of things: newspaper, bricks, found pieces of wood, odd socks, loose change. Made with a lightness of touch and an evasiveness that prevents easy interpretation, Austin's works juxtapose the material properties of eccentrically aligned objects with the possibility of their poetic significance. Despite maintaining a sculptural focus for his Master's, awarded by the University of Auckland's Elam School of Fine Arts in 2004, Austin's delicately brushed acrylic-on-newspaper paintings have become a central feature of his practice.

The award of a Creative New Zealand New Works Grant in 2007 resulted in Austin's solo exhibition *On Appetitb*, Artspace, Auckland, 2007. This major exhibition provided an opportunity for him to extend his sculptural grammar with works like *Panadol*, 2007, an exploration of the benign material and chemical buffers with which we insulate ourselves. A member of the Auckland artists' collective *Gambia Castle*, Austin's background is in exhibitions staged by innovative artist-run galleries such as *Special Gallery*, Room 103 and *Cuckoo*. His recent exhibitions include *Retirement*, *Galerie Daniel Buchholz*, Cologne, 2009; *Mystery Rope*, *Neon Parc*, Melbourne, 2009; and *Hold Still*, a collaboration with *Kate Newby* for *One Day Sculpture*, Auckland, 2009.

MAHMOUD BAKHSHI

Born 1977, Tehran, Iran.
Lives and works in Tehran.

Mahmoud Bakhshi's work directly engages with the political and social issues of contemporary Iran. Drawing on familiar motifs from his home, Bakhshi explores the seemingly arbitrary boundaries and real divisions that inform national identity. After graduating with a BFA in sculpture from *Tehran University*, Bakhshi has contributed to numerous exhibitions in Iran and internationally. Exhibiting in his home country has caused him to develop a complex range of means to encode any critical perspective. His 2006 solo exhibition, *Mahmoud's Driving School* at *Tehran Gallery*, presented a blackly comic translation of the diagrams used to teach right-of-way rules at intersections. Cheerfully coloured cartoons showing red, yellow and blue vehicles negotiating a crossroads were captioned with horrifying descriptions of imminent violence: 'The blue truck has right of way. It carries 150kg of explosives and will stop opposite a hospital in the next street.'

Iran is an ancient empire whose borders have expanded and contracted throughout history. Bakhshi's work explores contemporary Iran's relationship with this history, as it intersects with both the perceptions of its citizens and those perpetuated by the West. In 2004 he was included in the 11th *Asian Art Biennale*, *Dhaka*, Bangladesh and received second prize at the 3rd *Tehran Sculpture Biennale* in 2002. Recent international exhibitions have included *Raad o Bargh*, *Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac*, Paris, 2009; Iran: *New Voices*, *Barbican Centre*, London, 2008; and *Lion under the Rainbow: Contemporary Art* from *Tehran*, in association with *D.ART*, Athens, 2008. Exploring issues topical to the current political climate, Bakhshi interrogates the rhetoric of nationality.

RICHARD BELL

Born 1953, Charleville, Queensland, Australia.
Belongs to the *Kamilaroi*, *Kooma*, *Jiman* and *Gurang Gurang* peoples.
Lives and works in Brisbane, Australia.

A self-proclaimed propagandist, Richard Bell has established an international reputation for his acerbic wit and provocative voice, which probes into issues associated with race relations in Australia. Working across painting, video, performance and installation, Bell freely borrows from other artists, periods and cultures. His work comments on power relations within the art world, the appropriation of indigenous ideas and wider discussions about the legitimacy of the European colonisation of Australia. Bell's career has been characterised by concurrent accolades and controversy: his selection as the winner of the 2003 *National Telstra Indigenous Art Award* was overshadowed by the T-shirt, bearing the slogan 'White Girls Can't Hump', that he wore to accept the award. The furore was exacerbated by the publication of Bell's Theorem: *Aboriginal art - It's a White Thing*. This manifesto outlines Bell's stance on the exploitation of indigenous art in an industry largely controlled by non-Aboriginal individuals and institutions.

More recently, Bell has worked on two major video works *Scratch an Aussie*, 2008, featured in the 16th *Biennale of Sydney*, 2008, and *Broken English*, 2009, screened in the solo exhibition *Richard Bell: I Am Not Sorry* at *Location One*, New York, 2009. Bell's recent solo exhibitions also include *Richard Bell: Provocateur*, *University of Queensland Art Museum*, 2009 and *Richard Bell: Positivity*, *Institute of Modern Art*, Brisbane, 2006. His confrontational social and political commentary has also appeared in *Terra Nullius*, *ACC Galerie*, Weimar and *Halle 14*, Leipzig, Germany, 2009. A member of the indigenous artists' collective *ProppaNOW* which examines and confronts the positioning of Aboriginal people and culture within Australian society, Bell works to unsettle prevalent ideas about indigenous politics and cultural histories in Australia.

JOHANNA BILLING

Born 1973, Jönköping, Sweden.
Lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden.

Working mainly with video and group performances, Johanna Billing is known for her investigations into collaboration and collective experience. Hovering between staged fiction and documentary, her films are a record of untrained performers participating in artificial situations set up by the artist. A project produced between 2002 and 2004, *You Don't Love Me Yet*, was based on Billing's interest in pop music as a vehicle for shared experience. She invited over 100 musicians from diverse musical backgrounds to reinterpret the 1980s song of the same title by troubled American psychedelic rock musician *Roky Erickson*. The resulting versions of Erickson's plaintive song about unrequited love dwell on ideas about repetition and rehearsal, and the varied results of learning and performing as a group.

Billing's work *This Is How We Walk on the Moon*, 2007, which features a vivid contrast between a cold-climate sailing lesson and a highly poetic musical score, was included to dramatic effect in *Documenta XII*, Kassel, Germany, 2007. Recent solo exhibitions include *Forever Changes*, *Museum for Gegenwartskunst*, Basel, 2007; *Keep on Doing*, *Dundee Contemporary Arts*, 2007; and *Magical World*, *Saint Louis Art Museum*, 2007. She has also been included in prominent group exhibitions such as *Here We Dance*, *Tate Modern*, London, 2008; *Amateurs*, *CCA Wattis*, San Francisco, 2008; *Belief*, *Singapore Biennale*, 2006; and *Delays and Revolutions*, in the *Italian Pavilion*, 50th *Venice Biennale*, 2003. Billing's works explore the intricacies of group dynamics and are often cause for meditation on idealism and democracy within community settings.

MARTIN BOYCE

Born 1967, Hamilton, Scotland.
Lives and works in Glasgow, Scotland.

In recent exhibitions Martin Boyce's sculptural installations have invited the urban spaces of pedestrian subways, car parks, playgrounds and streetscapes into the public art gallery. In so doing, he reconfigures their utilitarian order so that the individual structures appear poetically realigned and menacing. He creates eerie futuristic landscapes, not by drawing on popular myths of science fiction, but by starting with the modern – steel, neon, glass, concrete – and undoing its function by design. His titles typically exemplify this shift, implying an abstract storyline totally remote from the form or function of the objects, as if excerpted from a foreign narrative. They often address an inclusive audience – you, we – as in *We are Resistant*, *We Dry Out in the Sun*, *You close your eyes and imagine you are floating*, 2004, an installation of poolside sunbeds and neon umbrellas.

For his most recent major project *No Reflections*, 2009, as the Scottish representative for the 53rd *Venice Biennale*, Boyce re-viewed the internal architecture of the *Palazzo* through the lens of early modern proto-Cubist design. In an installation including floor tiles, chandeliers, room-dividers and bedroom furniture, Boyce collapsed the interior and exterior space echoing the labyrinthine nature of Venice, creating a heightened sense of displacement and abandonment. In almost every work made by Boyce over the past five years, he has referenced a found photograph of concrete trees created by the sculptors *Joël* and *Jan Martel*. Captivated by these monumental, neo-Cubist curiosities, Boyce continues his succession of references to the ambitions and icons of modernist design albeit in a everyday vernacular.

GERARD BYRNE

Born 1969, Dublin, Ireland.
Lives and works in Dublin.

Gerard Byrne's film and photographic installations engage us with the recent past, often to describe a 'future' sensibility. Using source material ranging from interviews with philosophers through to lifestyle magazines of the 1960s and 1970s, Byrne restages scenarios using actors and events alienated from both their original period and our own. His interest in the technique of 'defamiliarisation' through imagery poses questions to the viewer, and forces an active engagement with the work. In Byrne's works, even documentary material appears mysteriously composed and fictionalised.

As Nicholas Baume has commented Gerard Byrne recognises 'that the properties of film and photography – such as framing and light – can be as expressive of time and place as their subjects. In this way he plays with our sense of period and context, fashioning work that we can never be exactly sure of.' His long running project *Case Study: Loch Ness*, (Some possibilities and problems), 2001 – 10 (ongoing), begins with the legend of the *Loch Ness monster*. Combining film, text and photography, the installation invites us to consider the status of myth and reality in the advance of new media. Byrne has a vigorous record of international exhibition making. In 2007, he represented Ireland at the 52nd *Venice Biennale* and his recent group exhibitions include: *Slow Movement*, *Kunsthalle Bern*, Switzerland, 2009; the 7th *Gwangju Biennial*, South Korea, 2008; *50 Moons of Saturn*, the *Torino Triennale*, Italy, 2008; and *Revolutions: Forms that Turn*, the 16th *Biennale of Sydney*, Australia, 2008. He had his first major solo exhibition in North America, *Momentum 12*, at the *Institute of Contemporary Art*, Boston, USA in 2008.

SHAHAB FOTOUHI

Born 1980, Yazd, Iran.
Lives and works in Tehran, Iran
and Frankfurt, Germany.

Shahab Fotouhi's practice draws upon a variety of visual media to generate attention and speculation around social and political occurrences. His work often obliquely criticises the system of governance in his native Iran, specifically the utopian values of Iranian national politics. A recent large sculptural work, *Study for Nuclear Bomb Shelter*, 2005–6, directly critiques the development of nuclear power in Iran and the bomb's supposed aid to power. However, the Pop art character of the work redirects the 'straight' politics of the message. The mushroom cloud looks more like a psychedelic toadstool than an ominous image of an exploding bomb and the rainbow ladder beneath harks back to hippie culture of the 1960s.

In June 2009, just prior to the now infamous Iranian presidential election, Fotouhi returned to Tehran to undertake an exhibition. His decision to turn the exhibition space into a campaign headquarters for opposition candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi blurred the relationship between art's passivity and political action, while also making a very real comment on the politics of consent in Iran. Fotouhi is currently studying at the Städelschule in Frankfurt, Germany. His work has been seen in recent exhibitions including *Too Much Pollution to Demonstrate*, Apex Art, New York, 2005; *Ethnic Marketing*, Azad Gallery, Tehran, 2007; and his video *Direct Negotiations* was screened in the Bidoun Video Lounge, Dubai, 2007. In 2009, Fotouhi was included in the 11th International Istanbul Biennial.

ALICIA FRANKOVICH

Born 1980, Tauranga, New Zealand.
Lives and works in Berlin, Germany
and Melbourne, Australia.

The sculptures of expatriate New Zealander Alicia Frankovich often look more like an apparatus or aftermath to an event. Trained as a gymnast, Frankovich centres her practice around performance. She explores the rigorous discipline of gymnastic training: its aspiration to achieve perfect bodily control or the inversion of this ambitious goal in the form of failure or physical collapse. She constructs precarious structures which extend the capabilities of found objects and simple mechanisms. Frequently referencing the spare constructions of early twentieth-century artists like Russian Vladimir Tatlin, Frankovich's sculptures also often double as the equipment which suspends or supports her body during her performances. In January 2009, Frankovich produced *Lungeing Chambon*, a performance in which she and curator Hannah Mathews were positioned in a tensely suspended network of belts and chairs. Commenting on the power dynamics of the art world, a movement by one participant within this delicately balanced construction also affected the other.

Frankovich's recent solo exhibitions include *A Plane for Behaviours* at Artspace, Auckland, 2009 and *Super Segue* at Artspace, Sydney, 2009. She has also participated in *Picturing the Studio*, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2009–10; *The International Prize for Performance*, Galleria Civica di Arte Contemporanea, Trento, Italy, 2008; and the *Busan Biennale*, South Korea, 2006. Frankovich's work often puts her in perilous positions: dangling from heights, relying on the physical strength of others or physically entangled in her own constructions. In this, she negotiates the tension between endeavour and compromise.

SHILPA GUPTA

Born 1976, Mumbai, India.
Lives and works in Mumbai.

Shilpa Gupta's application of new media technologies in her works reveals an interest in how the now all pervasive media affects our understanding of the world. She sees technology as an extension of body, mind and life lived, and there is typically an alert political consciousness inherent in her explorations. Using new media's ability to create cause and effect scenarios, Gupta invites the viewer to participate in a series of choices which reveal the default political assumptions at the core of most popular media. Ongoing works like her photographic and performative series based on the proverb of the three wise monkeys, *Don't See Don't Hear Don't Speak*, 2007–9, and more recently *Threat*, 2009, explore the psychology of fear and prejudice in a bid to critique the social injustice of globalisation. She believes firmly in the space of art as a site for individual freedoms, and uses the largely accessible forms of new media to entice non-art audiences who are familiar with its 'mass production' and distribution.

For the major recent project *While I Sleep*, Le Laboratoire, Paris, 2009, Gupta worked alongside a psychologist on the reception of images. This project resulted in a major new sculptural work *Singing Cloud*, 2008–9. Gupta has shown in numerous biennials, including most recently the 7th Gwangju Biennale, 2008; the *Yokohama Triennale*, 2008; the 3rd Seville Biennial, 2008; the 15th Biennale of Sydney, 2006; and the *Liverpool Biennial*, 2006. Among her many group exhibitions are the *New Museum's* first generational triennial *Younger than Jesus*, New York, 2009 and *The World Is Yours*, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, 2009.

SHARON HAYES

Born 1970, Baltimore, USA.
Lives and works in New York, USA.

Sharon Hayes works in installation, video and performance, using the language of protest to explore the relationship between public politics and the formation of individual identity. For her ongoing work, *In the Near Future*, 2002–, Hayes stages solo protests in public locations, bearing placards with slogans taken from past demonstrations. This abrupt and confrontational insertion of historical fragments into the present reveals the patchiness of collective memory, undermining our certainty of the coherence of our current socio-political landscape.

Her 2008 exhibition at the Tate Modern, London, *9 Scripts* from a *Nation at War* revisited historical intersections of the personal with international politics. An earlier work, *Symbionese Liberation Army*, SLA, *Screenings* #13, 16, 20 and 29, 2002, explored the creation and erosion of memory. Hayes re-enacted *Patty Hearst's* taped message after her 1974 kidnapping by the *Symbionese Liberation Army*. By 'respeaking' *Hearst's* message or, as in another work, *Ronald Reagan's* address to the nation, Hayes raises questions about authenticity and the voice of personal communication in public politics. Hayes' recent exhibitions include the solo show *I march in the parade of liberty*, but as long as I love you I'm not free, *New Museum for Contemporary Art*, New York, 2007; *Freeway Balconies*, *Deutsche Guggenheim*, Berlin, 2008; *Documenta XII*, Kassel, Germany, 2007; and *Media Burn*, *Tate Modern*, 2007.

ROBERT HOOD

Born 1973, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
Lives and works in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Incorporating found and collected abstracts of youth culture, Robert Hood has developed a practice that is focused on the suburban streets. Hood has a keen eye for the democratising effect of street culture and so draws curious parallels between the leftovers of consumer culture and the forms of high modernism. In a down-home homage to American minimalist *Walter de Maria's* *Broken Kilometer*, 1979, Hood made *The Wrecked Kilometer*, 2009, from collected road markers. With stacks of used car windows and photographs of 'burnouts' or tyre marks made by 'boy racers' on the lonely back roads of Canterbury, the lazy commerce of fuel and vehicle detritus lingers in his work. Hood's sculptures and installations become both a critique of consumption and a sensitive reflection on how the material world might be improved.

Hood's work has been exhibited in the annual new artists show at Artspace, Auckland, 2006, various artist run spaces nationally and most recently in a major solo show *Cognitive Pathological Rolled Oats Rotational Vacuum Idle Axis Error Index Consumer Runtime Stimulus Dada Glue*, the *Physics Room*, Christchurch, 2009. This exhibition included remixed elements from his recent projects alongside newly salvaged materials highlighting the waste, catharsis and potential for transformation through a shifted context.

MARINE HUGONNIER

Born 1969, Paris, France.
Lives and works in Paris and London, England.

Underneath *Marine Hugonnier's* long standing interest in anthropology and its influence on cinema is a curiosity with the world and the visual tools for understanding it in the modern era. Her film trilogy consisting of *Ariana*, 2003, *The Last Tour*, 2004 and *Travelling Amazonia*, 2006, is surprisingly unassuming and discrete, despite her interest in cinema's spectacular gaze. It has been said that Hugonnier uses the tools of anthropology to develop a conversation with another time and place, and question how we develop relationships with this time through imagery. In the trilogy she variously explores the power of the militia's gaze, the tourist's gaze and finally in *Travelling Amazonia*, 'that which inspired the gaze from the outset'. While re-engaging with the conventions of 'discovery' Hugonnier reminds us that perspective itself is an invention. Ultimately through her navigation of the history of perspective she seeks an alternative to our contemporary age of grandiose spectacles and the theatrics of mass culture.

Hugonnier's solo exhibitions since 2007 include *Konsthall Malmö*, Sweden; *FRAC Champagne-Ardenne*, Rheims, France; *Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain*, Geneva; *Kunsthalle Bern*, Switzerland; *Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo*, Turin; and *Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst*, Gent, Belgium. Recent group exhibitions include *Modernologies*, MACBA, Barcelona, 2009; *Beehive on a Stick*, Artist Space, New York, 2009; *Then the Work Takes Place*, *Kunsthauus*, Graz, Austria, 2009; *A Question of Evidence*, *Thyssen Bornemisza Fondation*, Vienna, 2009; *Pipe*, Glass, *Bottle of Rum: The Art of Appropriation*, MoMA, New York, 2008; *Panoramicas*, *Museo Tamayo*, Mexico City, 2008; *Badlands*, MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts, 2008; *Untamed Paradise*, *Museum of Contemporary Art*, Vigo, Spain, 2008; *Pensee Sauvage*, *Frankfurter Kunstverein*, Germany, 2007; and the *52nd Venice Biennale*, 2007.

SHIGEYUKI KIHARA

Born 1975, Upolu, Samoa.
Lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand.

Shigeyuki Kihara is a multimedia and performance artist whose work explores the shifting nature of identity. Born to a Buddhist Japanese father and a Catholic Samoan mother, and with an upbringing split between Indonesia, Japan and Samoa, Kihara is uniquely positioned to recognise the fluid and performative character of ethnic and gender identities. In her 2005 solo exhibition at Sherman Galleries, Sydney, Fa'a fafine: In the Manner of a Woman, Kihara mimicked colonial photographs of sensual Samoan women. Subverting the cliché of the 'dusky maiden' and modern myths of the South Pacific, Kihara used this series of staged photographs to explore her own identity as a fa'a fafine, the 'third gender' of traditional Samoan society.

Kihara's recent exhibitions include Shigeyuki Kihara: Living Photographs, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2008–9; Flower Power, Centro Ricerca Arte Attuale, Verbania, Italy, 2009; Masquerade: Representation and the Self in Contemporary Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2006 and the 4th Asia Pacific Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2002. In a 2009 residency at the Campbelltown Arts Centre, Australia, Kihara produced two more instalments of a performance project initially commissioned by the Auckland City Council. Talanoa: Walk the Talk uses the Samoan concept of 'talanoa' a process of discussion between parties to find a mutual ground, as the basis for a series of collaborative performances. Working with performance groups from diverse cultural traditions, such as the Mukti Gupteshwar Mandir Society, Campbelltown Community Pipes and Drums and Wuruniri Music and Dance, Kihara has staged live intercultural public performances in several Australian and New Zealand locations.

LARESA KOSLOFF

Born 1974, Melbourne, Australia.
Lives and works in Melbourne.

Laresa Kosloff combines an interest in comedic performance and the choreographed movement of sportspeople with an appreciation of the formal austerity of abstraction. Her films, installations and performances pair the discipline of training or ritualised movement with the poetics of the human body. Kosloff's solo exhibition Sensible World at Artspace, Sydney, 2009, consisted of four film works shot on the outmoded technology of Super 8 film. The films featured candid footage of informal performances of public 'sports': a group of rollerbladers, jog-a-thon competitors, urban trapeze artists and a laughing club meeting in a public park. Kosloff's Relative Straightness at Neon Parc, Melbourne, 2008, riffed off the tradition of slapstick, a genre which relies on a rigorously formal presentation of physical awkwardness. In 2006 she collaborated with artist Alicia Frankovich on The Velodrome Project, presenting a one-day public event at the Brunswick Cycling Velodrome which combined geometric sculptures and gymnastic endeavours by the artists. A barbeque, stadium seating for viewers and training sessions by the cycle club added to the festive atmosphere.

Kosloff was the recipient of a New Work Grant from the Australia Council for the Arts in 2008, and is currently working on her PhD at RMIT University in Melbourne. Her work has been included in Still Vast Reserves, Magazzino D'Arte Moderna, Rome, 2009; Ecstatic City Multiplex Program, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2008; and U-Turn, Glendale Art College, Los Angeles, 2007.

LEARNING SITE

Formed in 2004. Core members are Rikke Luther, Copenhagen, Denmark and Cecilia Wendt, Malmö, Sweden.

Learning Site began as an extension of Danish based collective N55 (founded in 1996). The group's primary interest is in examining the conditions of local economies and ecologies. Their work examines local conditions for sustainable architecture, design, green economies and education. Taking these structures as their starting point, they apply a mixture of experimental problem-solving and utopian thinking to existing systems. Their work embraces the poetry of alternative living, independent of any particular political era. The collective's workshops, dwellings and ecological models developed for biennials, university research centres and international exhibitions alike, are representative of a mixture of research, knowledge production and thought experiments.

In 2006, Learning Site developed Underground Mushroom Garden for the Singapore Biennale, a proposal for underground farming in an area of land scarcity. In Delhi, they developed Poster Dwelling: Land, Market and Economy for 48°C Public.Art.Ecology, 2008, which combined a structure for alternative dwelling with a series of educative workshops. They have been included in numerous international exhibitions investigating the relationship between art and ecology, including Weather Report: Art and Climate Change, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Colorado, 2007; Consumption Junction, Columbus College of Art and Design, Ohio, 2007; and Beyond Green: Towards a Sustainable Art, Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 2005–9. In 2009, Learning Site was included in Descent to Revolution at the Columbus College of Art and Design, which featured five international artist collectives who use urban and social spaces as a means of production and inspiration.

JORGE MACCHI

Born 1963, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
Lives and works in Buenos Aires.

Jorge Macchi moves comfortably between many media: video, film, paper, collage, painting, drawing, photography, light, sculpture, sound and performance. He often combines images and sound, such as in La Ascencion, his collaboration with musician Edgardo Rudnitzky for the Argentinean Pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale, 2005. Like other artists who emerged in Argentina during the 1990s, Macchi employs mundane objects in his work, but for Macchi these everyday objects are points of departure for poetic imagining or a moment of discovery. Working with found objects or clippings from newspapers, he uses chance or accidental associations to stimulate new readings of everyday life.

In Buenos Aires Tour, 2003, a book project made in collaboration with Rudnitzky and poet María Negroni, Macchi offers a portrait of an ephemeral Buenos Aires. A guidebook containing eight different tours, the paths of which were determined by the cracks of a broken pane of glass, Buenos Aires Tour foregrounds the way that chance co-writes urban narratives. Macchi's recent solo exhibitions include Last Minute, Pinacoteca do Estado, Sao Paulo, 2009; The Anatomy of Melancholy, Blanton Museum, Austin, Texas, 2007; and Jorge Macchi, Santander Cultural, in association with the 6th Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2007. Macchi has also been a contributor to Prospect 1 New Orleans, New Orleans, 2008 and the Yokohama Triennale, Japan, 2008.

ALEX MONTEITH

Born 1977, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
Lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand.

Alex Monteith is a film and new media artist who explores the impact and limitations of audio visual technologies. Part homage to and part destruction of filmic illusion, her works investigate the processing and mediation of vision through surveillance, internet and motion picture technology. Her representation of the historical struggle in Northern Ireland, Chapter and Verse, 2005, was shown at the Rencontres Internationales festival at the Pompidou Centre, Paris, 2007. In A/V Scenario, 2006, Monteith playfully revealed the extent of the equipment required to create a stock motion picture shot. Using a model car, she staged the classic post-crash shot of a car's spinning wheel in an endless CCTV feed.

Monteith, who completed her Doctorate in Fine Arts at the University of Auckland's Elam School of Fine Arts in 2005, is also a competitive surfer, holding the title of Irish National Women's Champion in 2001. She often collaborates with specialist practitioners to explore the idea of expertise in niche local communities, such as surfing, agriculture, boy racer car culture or motorcycle racing. Her solo exhibition, Need for Speed at St Paul St, Auckland, 2008, presented Looping manoeuvre with four motorcyclists, 2008, in which she worked with riders from the Taupo Motorsport Park. Monteith has recently contributed to the International Symposium for the Electronic Arts, Substation, Singapore, 2008 and You Are Here, Artspace, Auckland, 2008. She also received an Arts Foundation of New Zealand New Generation Award in 2008.

TOM NICHOLSON

Born 1973, Melbourne, Australia.
Lives and works in Melbourne.

Tom Nicholson's interests can be characterised as the balance between a real or fantastic quest for the fundamentals of free society – the right to education, speech or protest. His works often draw on these interests using a variety of media ranging from posters, actions and videos, through to book forms. An example of this is his After Action for Another Library, 1999–2006, exhibited in the 15th Biennale of Sydney, 2006. The work began as a response to the deliberate destruction of books and libraries during the Indonesian army's retreat from East Timor. Nicholson variously collected books for the Timorese, photographed the destroyed libraries and documented his collected title pages as his prospective library. Although the relationship between political action and documentation is central to his practice, he rarely presents a straight story of a historical event. Rather, Nicholson is interested in art's role as an 'out of time' event, itself a record of a past action.

More recently Nicholson has staged a series of banner marches at dawn or dusk with friends, family, artists, volunteers and community members, and small audiences of chance passers-by. Contrary to typical political actions, the group's message is unclear, instead of slogans they carry square banners with smiling faces drawn from advertisements. In this case there is no clear source for the action or root in political reality, rather Nicholson explores action itself and the process of collective participation. Whether real or imagined, Nicholson organises his material to provoke curiosity around possible actions rather than completed events. Nicholson won the Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture in 2008.

MIKE PARR

Born 1945, Sydney, Australia.
Lives and works in Sydney.

Mike Parr is one of Australia's foremost artists. He rose to prominence in the 1970s with his performance works. Often gruesome in their challenge to the limits of Parr's own physical endurance, his performances also test audiences with their passionately political stance. In *Close the Concentration Camps*, 2002, at the Monash Museum of Art, Melbourne, Parr had his lips sewn together in solidarity with refugees in Australia's detention centres. Such extreme physical feats seem to sit in contrast to Parr's more introspective installation, sculpture and print works. Nonetheless, an exploration of physical or emotional imbalance links much of his practice.

Parr has amassed an extensive exhibition history since emerging as an artist in the late 1960s. He represented Australia at the 39th Venice Biennale, 1980, and has contributed works to several biennales of Sydney including most recently the 16th Biennale of Sydney, *Revolutions: Forms that Turn*, 2008. Recent international group exhibitions include the Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, *Against Exclusion*, Moscow, 2009 and *Into Me/Out of Me*, PS1, Museum of Modern Art, New York and *Kunst-Werke*, Berlin, 2006–7. Parr's recent solo exhibitions include the survey shows *The Tilted Stage*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and *Detached*, Hobart, 2009; *Volte Face: Mike Parr Prints and Pre-prints 1970–2005*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2006; and *Cut Your Throat an Inch at a Time: A Survey of the Work of Mike Parr 1970–2005*, Newcastle Region Art Gallery, 2005. Parr's 2003 performance, *100 Breaths*, brought together his performance practice and a self portrait project he has been working on since 1981.

PHILIPPE PARRENO

Born 1964, Oran, Algeria.
Lives and works in Paris, France.

Philippe Parreno's work is concerned with the problems of picturing things. Often taking the form of film, installation or sculpture, his work explores the negotiation between reality and its representation. He is fascinated with hybrid forms and creatures: fairies, ghosts, ventriloquists, dop-pelgangers and robots populate his work. Parreno often collaborates with other artists. His 2006 collaboration with Douglas Gordon on the film *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* investigated the fictionalised reality occupied by the football player Zinedine Zidane for the duration of a single game. Zidane shifted the traditional narrative of sport documentary from the trajectory of the ball to the movements of a single player. Premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2006, the film used 17 35mm cameras positioned around the football pitch and NASA camera technology to create a spectacle of cinematography.

Often playfully theatrical, Parreno sees an exhibition space as a place where games can be played. His film *The Boy from Mars*, 2003, originally shown at the 7th Biennale de Lyon, 2003, was exhibited at Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York in 2005. Referencing the spy thrillers and murder mysteries of popular fiction, the film was presented in sealed packages that viewers were invited to take away, but which would self destruct 48 hours after being opened. These packages were shown on a swinging bookcase, which blocked the entrance to the gallery unless intrepid gallery-goers managed to find the secret lock mechanism. In 2009, Parreno's solo exhibition *Philippe Parreno: November* opened at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin and he participated in the 53rd Venice Biennale. He was also included in *theanyspacewhatever* at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2008–9.

GARRETT PHELAN

Born 1965, Dublin, Ireland.
Lives and works in Dublin.

Garrett Phelan is interested in how people become politicised in the face of adversity. He works fluidly across a variety of projects to articulate his ongoing interest in the formation of political opinion, producing work which is developed in a series of mostly audio tracks under the umbrella title *the Formation of Opinion*. His interest is in how we become politicised to the point of engagement, centring attention on the motivation and the development of a political identity. In 2007, he made a project on the *Dunnes Stores Strikers* who had received criticism in Ireland for their political stance. The *Dunnes Stores Strikers* simply followed a union directive not to handle South African goods, and were subsequently politicised, developing strongly held anti-apartheid values.

In his recent work *Battle for the Birds*, at *Mother's Tankstation*, Dublin, 2008 and *MIMA*, Middlesbrough, England, 2009, Phelan has more overtly fictionalised a personal political position. Here he is both bird activist and environmentalist engaging the use of multi-media tools, political banners and posters, radio sculpture and drawings which move between statements of environmental concern and earnest bird watching expeditions. Phelan has an active international exhibition history, including prominent inclusions in *Manifesta 5*, San Sebastian, Spain, 2004 and more recently *Getting Even*, Kunstverein Hannover, 2008 and *Nought to Sixty*, ICA, London, 2008. Phelan also has a strong exhibition history in Dublin where he regularly participates in art, radio and music events.

BUNDITH PHUNSOMBATLERT

Born 1972, Bangkok, Thailand.
Lives and works in Rhode Island, New York.

Originally trained in printmaking, Bundith Phunsombatlert began working with new media technologies in 2004 during a residency at the 12th International Symposium for the Electronic Arts in Helsinki, Finland. The introduction of new media, sculpture and installation elements in his work allowed his practice to extend beyond print's traditional boundaries. Phunsombatlert's work playfully satirises the consumerist obsessions of Thailand's burgeoning middle class urban population, but his critiques are equally applicable internationally. His *Ready-Made Human Products for Sale*, 2000, installed in a Bangkok shopping mall, presented 'amputated' photo-screenprinted facial organs of Thailand's most popular celebrities, individually presented for purchase on hygienic plastic. Commenting on cosmetic surgery as well as the illegal organ trade, the shopfront installation presented a fractured, identikit view of the glamorous figures of popular Thai celebrities.

Phunsombatlert is currently studying at the Rhode Island School of Design in the United States, after receiving a Master's in printmaking from Silpakorn University, Bangkok. His work has recently been included in the Athens Video Art Festival, Athens, Greece, 2009; the 3rd Guangzhou Triennial, China, 2008; and the *Freewaves 10th Biennial Festival of Film, Video and Experimental New Media*, UCLA Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 2006. Phunsombatlert's solo exhibition *On the Ball, The Game Has Begun, 'Beware Crossing the Grid'*, at Bangkok University Gallery, 2006, expanded his exploration of consumerism into the realm of politics.

OLIVIA PLENDER

Born 1977, London, England.
Lives and works in London.

Using a variety of media, from installations to graphic novels, Olivia Plender investigates belief and the creation of mythology in society. Her work is characterised by a collage of references: it incorporates elements of pulp literature, academic history, nineteenth-century spiritual movements and institutions like the BBC. In her solo exhibition *Information, Education, Entertainment at Marabouparken*, Stockholm, 2007, she satirised the broadcaster's self-stated mission to 'inform, educate and entertain'. Plender's remake of the 1960s BBC programme *Monitor* dismantled the popular media's representation of the artist. Combining an original soundtrack describing the lifestyle of struggle experienced by artists in bohemian 1960s Notting Hill with new footage of plush, champagne-quaffing events at the Tate, Plender questioned widely promoted romantic assumptions about artists.

With exhibitions like the recent *Aadieu Adieu Apa* (*Goodbye Goodbye Father*) at the *Gasworks*, London, 2009, Plender focuses on histories of British political formations and the theatricality of politics. In it, she unearths idiosyncratic slices of history which are positioned as a counterpoint to current attitudes. Plender's work *Machine Shall Be the Slave of Man, but We Will Not Slave for the Machine*, 2008, made for the 4th Tate Triennial *Altermodern*, 2009, also explored British political history with an examination of the early twentieth-century youth movement, the *Kindred of the Kibbo Kift*. Plender has been included in recent exhibitions *Mystic Truths*, Auckland Art Gallery, 2007; and the Athens Biennale, *Destroy Athens*, 2007, and curated *TINA, There Is No Alternative*, *The Drawing Room*, London, 2008.

WALID SADEK

Born 1966, Beirut, Lebanon.
Lives and works in Beirut.

Walid Sadek is a writer and an artist. His work uses a poetic language to confront the realities of life in post-war Lebanon. Over the past 15 years, Lebanon has witnessed a surge in contemporary art practice as a new generation of artists takes advantage of the precarious peace. Included in Lebanon's inaugural official presentation at the 52nd Venice Biennale, 2007, Sadek uses his work to insist on the continued existence of life in a country ravaged by war, while expressing the uneasiness of living alongside the residual traces of violence.

His work *Love is Blind*, 2006, was exhibited as part of the exhibition *Out of Beirut*, at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, 2006. This text-based installation consisted of framed captions for absent paintings made by Mustafa Farroukh, a prominent Lebanese painter of the twentieth century. Farroukh was highly regarded as a nationalist artist at a time when Lebanon was asserting its political independence. Sadek's work mourns the losses of his country while providing a testimony to the limits of visual art. His work was included in the influential *Home Works III Biennial* exhibition organised by Ashkal Alwan, Beirut, Lebanon, 2005, and in the previous year was featured in *Formidable Beyrouth! Centre pour l'image contemporaine*, Geneva. Sadek is Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture and Design at the American University of Beirut.

TINO SEHGAL

Born 1976, London, England.
Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Tino Sehgal makes art without making objects. Rather he produces live encounters in galleries between people, which he refers to as 'constructed situations'. In accordance with his opposition to the material excesses of contemporary society, Sehgal ensures that his art lives solely in the space and time of the present, and thereafter in the memory of viewers and participants. Neither reliant on physical objects, nor documented for reproduction or posterity, Sehgal's work radically questions the value of art production. Consistently mischievous and in many cases bewildering to the unwary gallery visitor, Sehgal challenges the materially overloaded art world by creating conversation pieces. With a degree of playful humour, he draws attention to the rules of behaviour and social exchange in cultural interactions through encounters with uncanny actions.

Sehgal's training in political economy and choreography informs his artistic practice. Existing quite literally in the eye of the beholder, his art makes use of the ability of dance to produce something and nothing at the same time. Sehgal represented Germany at the 51st Venice Biennale, 2005, with *This is So Contemporary*, a work which consisted of uniformed gallery guards dancing and singing 'This is so contemporary, contemporary, contemporary...'. Recent solo exhibitions include *This Situation*, Marion Goodman, Paris, 2009 and Tino Sehgal, Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Villa Reale, Milan, 2008. Sehgal has also shown work at the Yokohama Triennale, Japan, 2008; the 9th Biennale de Lyon, France, 2007; *The World as a Stage*, Tate Modern, London, 2007; the 4th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art, 2006; and the 3rd Tate Triennial, 2006.

MICHAEL STEVENSON

Born 1964, Inglewood, New Zealand.
Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Michael Stevenson's sculptures, installations and films are based on exhaustive historical research. They rehabilitate often curious remnants of history through a process of mimicry and reconstruction. Selected to represent New Zealand at the 50th Venice Biennale, 2003, Stevenson created *This is the Trekka*, a work which presented the story of New Zealand's own all-terrain vehicle, made from flat sheet metal and Czechoslovakian parts bartered for agricultural produce. The work operated as a metaphor for provincial industry and staunch cultural independence during the Cold War.

Stevenson's exploration of unlikely intersections between economics, politics and art take on the air of conspiracy theories with their characters drawn from the glitterati of international politics, back-room dealing and high stakes risk-taking by peripheral economic players. A film made for the 8th Panama Art Biennial, 2008, was based on events which unfolded in 1979 on Contadora Island, near Panama City. The work updated Stevenson's recurring examination of the last Shah of Iran, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. At Art Unlimited, Art Basel, Switzerland, 2007, Stevenson presented *Persepolis 2530*, 2007 which investigates the Shah's 1971 celebration of the 2500 year anniversary of the Persian Empire. However, Stevenson's reconstruction of the celebration presented the decaying framework of the lavish tents erected to house the Shah's guests, as a statement about failed ambitions and economic mismanagement. Other recent exhibitions include *The Irresistible Force*, Tate Modern, London, 2007 and the *Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, Queensland Art Gallery, 2006.

TOVE STORCH

Born 1981, Århus, Denmark.
Lives and works in Vienna, Austria
and Copenhagen, Denmark.

While working in what Tove Storch describes as a minimalist tradition, her sculptural practice sensitively explores materials, space and light, transforming them from their known origins. Often simply constructed to stress the presence of material form, her objects are also illusory in their quality, to the extent that it is often difficult to define the basics of their weight, scale and concrete form. Storch uses illusion to raise questions about the nature of representation, taking her cue from the imaginary world rather than that of existing form and space. In 2008 she participated in *U-Turn, Quadrennial for Contemporary Art*, Copenhagen with her *Kolibri, or Hummingbird*, 2007, a mechanical form which reveals the image of a bird in motion. Her solo exhibition *Untitled*, metal objects I-VI, at *Overgaden*, Copenhagen, 2008, exhibited simple box constructions lying directly on the floor. Their immediate appearance is of a hard substance, heavy solid metal, but on closer inspection they are revealed to be extremely fragile: metallic coloured silk membranes stretched over light timber frames.

Storch graduated from the Royal Danish Art Academy in 2003 and has since been involved in a number of international exhibitions including the survey of young Danish artists *Enter*, Kunsthallen Brandts, Odense, 2008; *Urban Pedestals*, Helsinki, 2008; *Unfold*, Nettie Horn, London, 2009; and *Here Comes the Ocean*, Ferenbalm-Gurbrü Station, Karlsruhe, 2008. She was awarded an artist residency at FAAB, Sao Paulo in 2009 and the Klara Karoline Foundation award in 2008.

ZHENG BO

Born 1974, Beijing, China.
Lives and works in Beijing.

Zheng Bo's work investigates issues of freedom and equality from the perspective of sexual and ethnic minorities. Using a range of methods including video, performance and text, he challenges social norms and the preconceptions of mainstream culture. Zheng's work is often playful, combining fantasy elements with an underlying serious social comment. His tongue-in-cheek *Watch Porn, Learn English*, 2006, plays on his position as an outsider to heterosexual relations and to the English-speaking world. Another work, *Family History Textbook*, 2005, received a Prize of Excellence at the Hong Kong Art Biennial and Zheng also received the Juror's Prize from the 2008 Signature Art Prize at the Singapore Art Museum. Zheng is currently pursuing a PhD in Visual and Cultural Studies, University of Rochester, New York.

Zheng has recently participated in *The First Chinese Art Exhibition on Gender Diversity*, Beijing, 2009; the 3rd Guangzhou Triennial, 2008; and *Reversing Horizons*, MOCA Shanghai, 2007. He increasingly works in a participatory way, involving different groups in the creative process to facilitate dialogue. His major project *Karibu Islands*, 2004-10 (ongoing), imagines a fictional island where time is reversed. For the project Zheng invited groups of gay, lesbian and heterosexual people to participate in brainstorming sessions envisioning progress in a world where people are born elderly and progressively become younger, ending by returning to the womb. By reversing the order of the normal markers of a successful life, Zheng inverts hierarchies of value, critiquing personal relationships and also the rapid modernisation of China.



Above:
'First ride in a hot air balloon'
– Jean François Pilâtre de
Rozier and the Marquis
d'Arlandes are the first humans
to make a tethered ascent.
'Aeronautical machine 70 feet
in height by 46 in diameter,
which rose into the air in Paris,
with two men to the height of
324 feet on 19 October 1783'
[c1783], etching, Tissandier
collection, Library of Congress,
Washington DC.

LIST OF WORKS

dimensions are height x width x depth
details correct at time of printing

NICK AUSTIN

Reading and driving 2010
Flashe on denim and card, wood
320 x 6000 mm, overall
courtesy the artist and Gambia Castle, Auckland

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

MAHMOUD BAKHSHI

Sunsets 2010
tin plate cylinders, speakers
4000 x 4700 x 4700 mm
courtesy of the artist and Khastoo Gallery, Los Angeles

SHED 6

RICHARD BELL

Broken English 2009
DVD
16:9 ratio, colour, sound, 13:08min
Production details. Cast: Richard Bell, Gary Foley, Sarah Thompson, Rob Pilkington; Director/Editor: Suzanne Howard; Director of photography: Jason Hargreaves; Camera operator vox pops: Ian Mac; Sound recordist/additional camera: Lachie Simpson; Camera assistant: Alex Barnes; Online edit: Jarryd Hall; Soundtrack: David M Thomas, camera and equipment supplied by Matched Image. Many thanks to the people of Cherbourg. Thanks also to Matched Image for their generous support.

Scratch an Aussie

2008
DVD
16:9 ratio, colour, sound, 10min
Production details. Concept: Richard Bell; Directed and Edited by Suzanne Howard; Produced by Suzanne Howard, Richard Bell and Milani Gallery; Cinematographer: Mark Broadbent; Sound recordist: Chris Gillette.
courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

SHED 6

JOHANNA BILLING

This Is How We Walk on the Moon 2007
video installation
16:9 ratio, colour, sound, 27:20min
co-produced by the One Mile programme, Collective Gallery, Edinburgh
Production details. Featuring: Johnny Lynch, Emily Roff, Joe Collier, Jenny Gordon and Guthrie Stewart; Cinematography by Manne Lindwall and Johanna Billing; Sound by Pia Patté. Musical soundtrack arranged by Johanna Billing and performed by Johnny Lynch (vocals), Karl-Jonas Winqvist (vocals), Sara Wilson (vocals), Andreas Söderström (guitar and melodica), Christian Hörgren (cello), Henry Moore Selder (guitar and bass), Tuomas Hakava (guitar and organ); recorded by Tuomas Hakava in Up and Running Studio, 2007, except for the opening song 'The Western', written and performed by Woo (Independent Project Records, 1989). Original version of 'This Is How We Walk On The Moon' written by Arthur Russell (Point Music/Orange Mountain Music, 1984). Soundtrack mixed and mastered by Joachim Ekermann, Make Wave. Title cards design by Åbåke. Recorded on the Firth of Forth and at Port Edgar Marina, South Queensferry, Edinburgh. Co-produced by the Collective Gallery's One Mile programme, lead artist Kate Gray, co-ordinators Kate Stancliffe and Siobhan Carroll, production assistant Jill Brown, with support from the Scottish Arts Council Lottery Fund and The Paul Hamlyn Foundation and by Documenta XII with support from IASPIS, International Artist Studio Program in Sweden. courtesy of the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

MARTIN BOYCE

Eyes Like Leaves 2010
painted steel, brass
275 x 175 x 35 mm

Some Broken Morning 2010
fluorescent light fixtures
13970 x 15630 mm

Suspended Fall 2005
powder coated steel, altered Jacobsen series 7 chair parts, wire
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist and The Modern Institute/Toby Webster Ltd, Glasgow

ST PAUL ST

GERARD BYRNE

Case Study: Loch Ness (Some possibilities and problems) 2001–10 (ongoing)
black and white and colour photographs, 16mm film (9min), wood, wall drawing, text, audio
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist and Lisson Gallery, London

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

SHAHAB FOTOUHI

Aerial Appendix 2010
found video footage transferred to DVD
colour, sound

Lighthouse 2010
iron, lamps
3800 x 2000 x 1800 mm

Route 2010
neon tubing
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

ALICIA FRANKOVICH

Gestus 2009
paint, board, artist's own mini skirt, found image with pencil impression, newspaper, glue, nails
1250 x 950 mm

Lover 2010
coat hanger, neon
780 x 410 mm

Piston 2009
found objects, hook, ball from Milan
480 x 124 x 120 mm, suspended height variable

Revolution (Martini Fountain) 2010
Martini Rosso, pool lining, tray, pump, piping, fixtures, silicon
height variable x 2550 x 3500 mm

Woman 2010
bags from Pergamon Museum, wire
1900 x 650 x 650 mm
courtesy the artist and Starkwhite, Auckland

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

SHILPA GUPTA

Singing Cloud 2008–9
microphones, wire frame, audio
1525 x 4570 x 610 mm, audio 9:30min

Untitled 2008–9
split-flap display board
218 x 1800 x 250 mm
commissioned by Le Laboratoire, Paris
courtesy of Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

SHARON HAYES

Everything Else Has Failed! Don't You Think It's Time For Love? 2007
audio installation, speakers, spray paint on paper posters
5 posters 600 x 508 mm
courtesy of the artist and Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

ROBERT HOOD

Leap into the Driveway 2009
colour photograph
250 x 300 mm

Making Useful Useless 2010
shredded Toyota Corolla DX 1994 car (aluminium 5.8% steel 67% plastic 7.7% other waste 19.5%, engine oil, brake fluid, radiator fluid, transmission fluid, engine coolant, windshield washer fluid); colour photographs, audio and documentation (registration and warrant of fitness stickers, speeding ticket infringement notice and Cook Strait Ferry ticket)
dimensions variable
courtesy the artist and Jonathan Smart Gallery, Christchurch

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

THE FOURTH AUCKLAND TRIENNIAL: LAST RIDE IN A HOT AIR BALLOON



MARINE HUGONNIER

Ariana 2003
16mm transferred to DVD
16:9 ratio, colour, sound, 18:36min
Production details. Shot on location in Pandjshêr Valley and Kabul, Afghanistan, August and October 2002. Camera: ARRI SR3. Aspect ratio: 1:85. Director of photography: Tom Townend; Editor: Ida Bregninge; Sound: Aurelien Bras; Executive producers: Julie Gonssard; Process: Éclair, Joinville, France ; Grade: One Post, London, UK; Post Production: Frontline Television, London, UK. Produced by: Max Wigram Gallery, Film and Video Umbrella in Association with Chisenhale Gallery, London. Supported by: the National Touring Programme of Arts Council, UK. Sponsored by: Marion and Guy Naggar, Alan Djanogly.

The Last Tour 2004
16mm transferred to DVD
16:9 ratio, colour, sound, 14:7min
Production details. Shot on location in Zermatt and its surroundings, Switzerland, February 2004 and Disneyland, Los Angeles, November 2003. Camera: Aaton A-minima. Aspect ratio: 1:85. Director of photography: Tom Townend; Editor: Ida Bregninge; Sound: Cristian Manzutto; Music: Sebastien Roux; Executive producers: Renaud Sabari / APC, Paris, France; Process: Cinedia, Paris, France; Grade: Transat, Paris, France; Post production: Transatlantic video, Paris, France. Produced by: Galerie Judin, Zürich, Switzerland, Dundee Contemporary Arts and Villa Medicis hors les Murs, Paris, France.

Travelling Amazonia 2006
16mm transferred to DVD
16:9 ratio, colour, sound, 23:52min
Production details. Shot on location in Itaituba on the Trans-Amazonian highway, Amazonas, Brazil, August 2005. Camera: Aaton XTR +. Aspect ratio: 1:85. Director of photography: Roberto Thome De Oliveira Filho; Editor: Helle le Fevre; Sound: Cristian Manzutto; First assistant: Diana Baldon; Executive producers: Amanda Rodrigues Alves and Thomas Mulcaire; Process: Casablanca, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Grade: Diamond, London, UK; Post production: Frontline Television, London, UK. With: anonymous teenagers, Antonio Jose de Perez, Marcio Mello, Orlando Portela Pereira, Jose Rigonato Pereira da Silva. Construction: Jose Francisco Marcelino, Antonio Gonçalves Lima, Francisco Clesio, Jose Matias Souza, Adeilton Vieira da Conceição, Paulo Roberto Agra. Produced by: Arts Council England, Max Wigram Gallery London, Maritha Hummer Bradley and Nogueras Blanchard Gallery, Barcelona, with the help of: Ministerio Do Meio Ambiente, Instituto Brasileiro Do Meio Ambiente, E Dos Recursos Naturais Renovaveis – IBAMA. Thanks to: Cordelia Mello Mouraõ, Tunga, Goeffrey Parsons, Clare Carolin, Eyal Weizman, Matthias Fayos. courtesy of the artist and Max Wigram Gallery, London

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

SHIGEYUKI KIHARA
Talanoa: Walk the Talk I 2009
performance by Otahuhu and District Highland Pipe Band, E Pac Chinese Lion and Dragon Dancers and Shigeyuki Kihara
DVD
colour, sound, 21 min
commissioned by Auckland City Council

Talanoa: Walk the Talk II 2009
performance by Anuanua Cook Island Performing Arts, Auckland Samba and Shigeyuki Kihara
DVD
colour, sound, 21 min
commissioned by Auckland City Council

Talanoa: Walk the Talk III 2009
performance by Samoa Congregational Church, Minto, Mukti Gupteshwar Mandir Hindu Society and Shigeyuki Kihara
DVD
colour, sound, 21 min
commissioned by Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney

Talanoa: Walk the Talk IV 2009
performance by Muriniri Australian Aboriginal Music and Dance, Ingleburn and Campbelltown Highland Drummers and Shigeyuki Kihara
DVD
colour, sound, 21 min
commissioned by Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney

Talanoa: Walk the Talk V 2010
performance by Sydney Cook Island Dance Group, Australian Yau Kung Mun Association and Shigeyuki Kihara
DVD
colour, sound, 21 min
commissioned by Gallery 4A, Asia-Australia Arts Centre, Sydney Festival

Talanoa: Walk the Talk VI 2010
performance by Ruapotaka Marae Kapa Haka Group, Haere Mai Taiko Japanese Drummers and Shigeyuki Kihara
commissioned by the 4th Auckland Triennial, *Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon*
7pm, Shed 6, 11 March 2010
courtesy of the artist

ARTSPACE / SHED 6

LARESA KOSLOFF
St Kilda Road 2010
super 8 transferred to DVD
4:3 ratio, black and white, 1:56min

Stock Exchange 1998
super 8 transferred to DVD
4:3 ratio, black and white, 2:20min

Trapeze 2009
super 8 transferred to DVD
4:3 ratio, black and white, 0:26min
courtesy of the artist

ARTSPACE

LEARNING SITE
The House of Economy 2010
earth, straw, gelatine, wood, mushroom mycelium, booklet, vitrine with research material
dimensions variable
courtesy of Rikke Luther for Learning Site, with a text by Anthony Iles

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

JORGE MACCHI
12 Short Songs 2009
DVD
16:9 ratio, colour, sound, 9min
camera, lighting and editing: Gustavo Quinteiro, sound editing: Edgardo Rudnitzky
courtesy of the artist and Galleria Continua, San Gimignano, Beijing, Le Moulin

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

ALEX MONTEITH
Red Sessions 2009–10
4-channel synchronised video installation with stereo sound
16:9 ratio, SD DVD, 50min, 3000 x 20000 mm
Production details. Surfers: Grant Atkin, Tor Baily, Danny Butt, Hamish Christophers, Ben Plummer, Drew, Mike and Ange, Jarrod Hancox, Michael Harrison, Jackie Keenan, Justin King, Stacey Lamb, John Lambourne, Chris Luke, Yoichi Maeda, Carl Manzor, Motu Mataa, Alex Monteith, Tam Norris, Bruce O’Carroll, Jeff Piper, Jess Terrill, Fernanda Toscani, JT, Daniel Whiston, Sam Whitley, anonymous surfer. Location assistance, Stent Road, Rocky Rights and Pungareu, Taranaki, Aotearoa New Zealand: Stella Brennan, Jon Bywater, Danny Butt, Fiona Clark, Te Miringa Hohia, Sarah Munro, David Perry, Rachael Rakena, Natalie Robertson. With the support of Govett Brewster Art Gallery, Elam School of Fine Arts and The University of Auckland, Local Time, Solar Circuit Australia New Zealand 2009, Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki.
courtesy of the artist

SHED 6

TOM NICHOLSON
Monument for the flooding of Royal Park 2009
inkjet prints from an artist’s book
design with Brad Haylock

Andrew Byrne and Tom Nicholson
Music for an imaginary launch (Monument for the flooding of Royal Park) 2010
audio
looped recording of composition for four prepared pianos and voice
piano: David Shively, Stephen Golsing, Richard Carrick, and Alex Waterman; voice: Anna Schoo

Nardoo flag wave 2009–10
digital print on adhesive vinyl
imaging: Christian Capurro
courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

SHED 6

MIKE PARR
Facts About the Room 1970
an imagined performance, stencilled lettering on wall
dimensions variable

Pushing a video camera over a hill 1971
performer, 16mm camera and sound: Mike Parr
Moore Park, NSW, Australia
4:3 ratio, black and white, sound, 7:26min
Commencing at the base of a hill push an activated video camera up the slope and over the top of the hill down to its base on the other side. Maintain the same angle and area of view and the same focal length. Push the camera at an even rate without stopping. Record the sound of the noisy grass. Black and white. Sound. No editing. Originally shot on video camera and repeated with 16 mm camera.

Three Weeks Annual Leave 1971–2
carousel wall projection
shot on 3.5mm black and white negative rolls, reversed out onto positive film
Brisbane, Glass House Mountains and Fraser Island, QLD, Australia
performers: Mike Parr, Felizitas Stefaitsch; photographer: Felizitas Stefaitsch
courtesy of the artist

THE GEORGE FRASER GALLERY

PHILIPPE PARRENO
Marquee 2008
acrylic glass, steel frame, light bulbs, neon tubes
620 x 2300 x 965 mm
courtesy of the artist and Esther Schipper, Berlin

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

GARRETT PHELAN
PHASE 3 – (ACTIONS) 2009–10
installation with broadcast radio sculpture, zines, animation, screenprints, sound
dimensions variable

Actions – Flyers 1–10 2010
screen print on paper
278 x 207 mm

Actions Sculpture 2009–10
PVC, paint, amplifier, cables, speaker, transmitter, radio, plaster, paint, aerial, mp3 player
2050 x 1900 x 300 mm

Another Good Man 2009–10
projected animation
colour, 6min

Selflessness in the Face of Adversity 2009–10
24 page zine, assorted pens and pencil on paper, zine holder
zine 297 x 210 mm, zine holder 930 x 350 x 520 mm
courtesy of the artist and Mother’s Tankstation, Dublin

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

BUNDITH PHUNSOMBATLERT
The Room with a Bird 2010
servos, loudspeakers, amplifiers, PIR sensors, microcontrollers
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

OLIVIA PLENDER
Set Sail for the Levant 2007
printed board game with cards, dice, gold currency and lead counters
1000 x 700 x 700 mm

‘A Female Matricide’ 2009
‘A True Draft of the Whale as it was seen in the River Thames’ 2009
‘Advertisement for an Absurdist Play on the Theme of England and Iceland Being at War’ 2009
‘Nutmegs’ 2009
‘At Least Once a Month...’ 2009
From: Aadiou Adieu Apa 2009
printed posters
841 x 594 mm
courtesy of the artist

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

WALID SADEK
Kozo Okamoto Resides in Greater Beirut 2008–9
room installation, pencil drawing, wall labels
3000 x 5000 x 5000 mm
courtesy of the artist

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

TINO SEHGAL
Instead of allowing something to rise up to your face dancing bruce and dan and other things 2000
constructed situation with dancers
533hrs
courtesy of the artist

ST PAUL ST

MICHAEL STEVENSON
On How Things Behave 2010
HD and 16mm transferred to DVD
16:9 ratio, colour, sound, 15:43min
commissioned by Objectif exhibitions, Antwerp and the 4th Auckland Triennial
Production details. Script: Mark von Schlegell, Ben Carter and the artist; Camera: Volker Gläser; Sound: Titus Maderlechner; Voice: Susanne Märtens; Editing: Yvonne Mohr and the artist. Thanks also to: Thilo Gödel, Cornelia Schmidt-Bleek, Fritz Schmidt-Bleek, Bio Schmidt-Bleek, Serjoscha Stevenson, Pablo Fernandez Fanego, Pedro de Liano, Antonio Diaz, Casa do Alemán, Camelle, Natasha Conland, Mai Abu ElDahab, Etienne Wynants, Annamarie Michnevich, Raphael Danke, Heike Baranowsky.
courtesy of the artist and Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

TOVE STORCH
Untitled (black hole 1) 2010
mixed media
dimensions variable

Untitled (black hole 2) 2010
mixed media
dimensions variable

Untitled (black hole 3) 2010
mixed media
dimensions variable

Untitled (unknown object #7) 2010
metal, cloth, silicone, magnets, paint
2200 x 1200 x 750 mm

Untitled (unknown object #8) 2010
metal, cloth, silicone, magnets, paint
2400 x 1300 x 600 mm
courtesy of the artist

SHED 6

ZHENG BO
Karibu Islands 2004–10 (ongoing)
video installation, texts
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

ARTSPACE

EXHIBITION VENUES



**AUCKLAND ART GALLERY
TOI O TĀMAKI**
12 MARCH TO 20 JUNE 2010

Cnr Lorne and Wellesley Streets
Auckland
+ 64 9 307 7700
www.aucklandartgallery.com



ARTSPACE
12 MARCH TO 1 MAY 2010

Level 1
300 Karangahape Rd
Auckland
+64 9 303 4965
www.artspace.org.nz



ST PAUL ST
12 MARCH TO 20 JUNE 2010

AUT University
School of Art and Design
Level 1 WM Building
40 St Paul St, Auckland
+64 9 921 9999 ext 8313
www.stpaulst.aut.ac.nz



**THE GEORGE
FRASER GALLERY**
12 MARCH TO 20 JUNE 2010

The University of Auckland
Elam School of Fine Arts
25a Princes Street, Auckland
+64 9 367 7163
www.georgefraser.auckland.ac.nz



SHED 6
12 MARCH TO 20 JUNE 2010

Former ARC Depot
90 Wellesley Street West
Auckland
www.aucklandtriennial.com

