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Enjoy

Editor: Jessica Reid
Designer: Jayne Joyce

Enjoy Public Art Gallery
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Introduction

The year 2005 was marked by some significant achievements for Enjoy, most notably the change of space to its current location a little further down Cuba Street. The move was something which had been conceptualised years before, but had always seemed like a pipe-dream. When a rent hike was imminent it became clear that finding new premises was a necessity and the shift became a reality. Enjoy at its new residence of 147 Cuba Street is a light and bright space with a high stud and polished wooden floors. With a larger office, more storage space and superior facilities, no longer do we need to ask local cafés to fill up buckets of water to mop the floor, or take paintbrushes home to wash. The new site has also provided novel architectural challenges and considerations for artists to work with: the wall of windows makes the gallery interior visible from the street a storey below and on a sunny day the space is flooded with light, a feature which can't be ignored. The new location has also brought about an increase in foot traffic and contributed to a general energy and optimism for the gallery's future.

In 2005 Enjoy also celebrated its fifth birthday; no small feat in the fickle world of artist-run initiatives. Gallery Manager Melanie Hogg and I curated a celebratory exhibition, *Playing Favourites*, to mark the occasion, where we selected some of our best-loved artists from throughout New Zealand and showcased their work. The anniversary was also signalled by the release of our retrospective catalogue, a well-received publication of images, nostalgia, opinion pieces and critical essays. It is with a great sense of pride that we can now look back and see how far we've come.

For the first time in its history, 2005 saw Enjoy programme a full year of exhibitions at once. While remaining mindful to not become staid in this predictability, the capacity to plan ahead a year in advance led to an increased efficiency and professionalism with which the shows turned around. In recognition of our programming, this catalogue covers the full year of exhibitions of 2005, start to finish. You are offered the chance to revisit shows you might have seen, or experience for the first time what you might have missed. I'd like to thank all the writers who contributed to this catalogue, the artists for giving them something to write about, and of course designer Jayne Joyce, without whom nothing Enjoy does would look so good.

I hope you like it.

Jessica Reid,
Writer/Publicist, Enjoy Gallery
2006

Hunt

Karen Adams, Sonia Bruce, Gabe Mcdonell, Angela Meyer

Curated By Angela Meyer

MICHAEL HAVELL February 16 - March 4 2005

01

Do we often think of our bodies at specific locations, mapped onto the surface of the earth, yet not articulated from one moment to the next? Movement of our bodies, in temporal and physical space is momentary. Yet movement is also continuous. The 'terrain' we cover is as consistent and persistent as our body moving across physical dimensions.

Mapping is a process whereby presence can be marked out, certain points clarified, articulated and finally brought to bear. Locations on a map can then become environments. For what is a map but an abstracted representation, a visual coding of a specific site? And what are these sites if not houses, homes, landscapes, landmasses, and landfills? They reflect presence and absence, being, going to and from, feeling safe, not feeling safe, comfortable, and uncomfortable. As Laurence Simmons suggests, viewing is far from an objective experience when it comes to artistic representation. When we view something:

> it should not be forgotten that the frames of genres are also presuppositions held as much by the spectators of the paintings as by the painters of them. Looking at the land through the frame of genre makes the land able to be perceived.[1]

Think about a dog barking for instance. Think about its associations: dogs barking on a property, on a territory, which is in turn marked

1 Laurence Simmons, 'Bridging the Wild: Prospect and Refuge in Eighteenth-Century New Zealand Landscape Painting', *Landfall*, Issue 204, November 2002, University of Otago Press, Dunedin, p. 98.

by the presence and absence of bodies, which then delineate a location as an environment. Barking could conceivably be a signifier of a specific location, a house for example. 'Black Velvet' (2005), a sound installation of a dog barking, could be all of these things, but it is not. It is a sound installation of a dog barking at the SPCA. It is itself abandoned; it has no environment from which to exist, but that of its temporary location at an animal shelter. From this perspective this creature could be mapped as well, it is the recorded sound of a dog, at a specific place in time, at a specific location. It records not just an event; it records a place, the Wellington SPCA. It was obviously recorded at a specific time, and thus places this dog at a location, at a certain time, just as it places the artist.

The presence of the artist is felt in 'Out of place with punctuality and precision' (2004), as well. It consists of two photographs, each detailing the specific location, length of time it took to get there [2], and finally the documentary evidence that the artist has provided to depict the event. Walking, then, becomes a significant act. By detailing and producing a visual record of each walk, where the route has been decided via a tourist guide made by local councils, the artist, while documenting her own walking experience, has relied on mapped out situations to establish a context for the project.

Significance stems not just from how we determine a situation and what we perceive when we experience an environment, but also from how we characterise that experience. In the works of Karen Adams, what we are privy to is not a single moment. Information is received via coding of the event depicted. What we are viewing is a representation of a process. This process has a beginning point and an end point. We are provided with locations, for example: Shelford to Cambridge. We know that the walk covers a certain distance: 13.2 miles (notice the use of decimal and empirical systems). The date: 28th of August 2004. Length of time taken: 8 hours and 30 minutes. And we receive further information: 'In a further 160 metres, go over M11 foot bridge, the top of which offers a panoramic view of the landscape'.

With 'The Cold Front' (2005), by Angela Meyer, the viewer is confronted with a map spreading across the walls of the gallery. That the work is constructed with 20,000 dressmaking pins alone is impressive. It traces across, from one wall, traversing the floor, over onto the opposite wall. But what is it a map of? The title is abstracted enough to make identification of a place challenging. Rather the impression is that it refers to the weather, a front. So a meteorological event, a front, pushing across a landmass, affecting conditions on the surface of the earth, making its presence felt, establishing an environment. Weather is a constant. It is always present, conditions may change, but only in relation to the way it transverses the surrounding area. Weather, when mapped out, is detailed according to the ways in which it travels across a landscape. It is a reminder of how change is present always. Right now, for instance, the weather outside is

2 Walk 39 - Manningtree round walk (Essex and Suffolk) 9.3 miles, 31 July 2004, 6hours 30minutes.
Walk 26 - Shelford to Cambridge 13.2 miles, 28 August 2004, 8hours 30minutes 'In a further 160metres, go over M11 foot bridge, the top of which offers a panoramic view of the landscape'.

Top: Karen Adams (2 colour photographs), Out of place with punctuality and precision, 2004

Above: Angela Meyer, The Cold Front (20,000 dressmaking pins), 2005

Images by: Dean Shirriffs and Loretha du Plessis

Sonia Bruce, Untitled, 2005
(installation, A4 paper, thread)

sunny. Last night it was raining and cold. The same place, but my experience of it is defined in conjunction with climate. If I were to look at a weather map I would see that the atmospheric conditions represented merely act as a visual guide. If I looked for a long-range forecast I would know that where I am now may indeed be sunny and clear; but that it is subject to change.

Sonia Bruce's paper construction 'Untitled' (2005) is perhaps harder to contextualise. But the paper itself seemingly moves from one point to the next. A succession of one piece of A4 paper to the next with holes coming outwards from the surface of the paper. Moving upwards and then downwards as if measuring a specific movement like a graph. As it is static, the work incorporates a visual representation that seems entirely problematic. How does the work operate? On a specifically formal level it is exactly as seen. It hangs from the ceiling, held gently in place by thread, each piece of paper connected to the next, each piece displaying the same hole through the middle; a triangular-edged absence. One could say that the pieces of paper are simulacra of one another. But each location defers to the next; it is shape that evokes progression. So by creating a work from paper, and enacting a certain type of progression, one notices that from beginning to end the paper appears the same, but nonetheless depicts a kind of visually coded representation of movement. The shape and feel of the work refers to a process. Such an interpretation, however, does not account for the almost explosive hole making its way through the work. Or even that it has the look and feel of a disjointed event. The paper is in succession, but it is not clear: bits here and there are slightly lodged out of place, contact between each sheet is not exactly ordered. Each sheet is held in place by thread and has been placed in that order by the artist.

I want to offer an observation which is both about the *Hunt* show itself, and about the condition of topographical art; to invoke landscape, topography, a mapping impulse, is to invoke a system of visual representation that is far from subtle in its purposes, goals and methods. Topography is conditioned by a need to perceive the world, or at least a part of it, according to a precise visual schema, offset by a negotiated representation of space, and supplemented by text and image, graph, map, and the location of coordinates. Furthermore, topographical rendering is facilitated by a need to construct a detailed account of the land determined not only via geographical objective reality, but also a subjective reality, through which desire, and fear, foresight and forbearance are literally mapped, coded, into the translation of physical space and placed into a two and three dimensional construction of an idealised space. This may seem like a diversion, after all, these works evoke the topographic as it pertains to art, and are not exactly landscapes (though Adams' 'Out of Place with Punctuality and Precision' could easily be considered as such). Topography indicates a desire to depict and interact with environments, environments that are susceptible to a remote presence, idealised. Yet topography is also scientific, objective and descriptive. What I would like to explore in the act of representation in topographical art is that very wrought moment of expressing the outside, and making it internal. Laurence Simmons, in 'Bridging the Wild', describes this moment as an attempt to 'valorise the body as an agent of cognition', thereby acknowledging the 'reflective role of a landscape as a kind of 'bodyscape''. Meaning, in representations of landscape or topographical images, even maps, is at least partially constructed by our own experience, our own bodies in space and time.

The Bomb

Avangard and PinkPunk

Curated By Marcus Williams

SARAH MILLER March 8 - 18 2005

02

As a former Soviet Bloc state, Estonia is currently going through a time of enormous political and social upheaval. Based in a country with an emergent capitalist economy, socio-politically situated between both a Western consumer society and the world of the former Soviet Union, Estonian artists Avangard and PinkPunk come to New Zealand both as representatives of current art practices in that region and as highly astute, perceptive artists in their own right. This socio-political awareness extends to the use of the performance medium as well as to the content of the work in itself. Performance becomes a direct way to appeal to a public that perceives art and the art establishment as not only elitist, but also a luxury in a society that is still attempting to find its feet economically. Knowledge of the situation in which Avangard and PinkPunk are producing work helps to develop a depth of understanding when considering their practice.

A unique aspect of the works presented at Enjoy Public Art Gallery was the ability of the artists to maintain their engagement with this situation while achieving universality in their work. I was interested in the ways each piece was engaged with by a New Zealand audience, and in that audience's understanding of political and social issues, while maintaining the specificity of the situation of its production. This shifting of meanings is achieved across sites both global and local. Thus, the first piece discussed here changes meaning in its

movement from behind the Iron Curtain to a country that has long been anti-nuclear, while the second piece finds its meanings shift even between Wellington's Parliament and railway station.

THE BOMB

> Soviet propaganda used to demonize Ronald Reagan,
> so for us as elementary school children he seemed to be a
> raging lunatic who wanted to destroy the world. He was the
> boogieman of our childhood. Our scared teachers used to
> tell us... the nuclear war will begin
> before you grow up.
>
> **PinkPunk/Avangard, 2004**

This piece by Avangard consists of a series of images, shown in succession and accompanied by a melancholic theme song. The images are photographs of plastic models of nuclear explosions, familiar mushroom cloud shapes, caricatures of media images. These models are placed in a variety of settings; in school playgrounds, bathtubs, in front of Soviet propaganda posters, at airports. The effect is to draw attention to how hollow the threat of nuclear war has become. In this new context the mushroom cloud would perhaps 'look good in your living room or backyard.' The images remind the audience of the photographs of kidnapped garden gnomes sent back to the gnomes' owners for ransom. Although these are static images, there is a performative element in the way in which the photographs are staged, with series of images creating vignettes within the overall presentation.

The effect of living under the constant shadow of nuclear war had the consequence of weakening the power of this threat. This is perhaps a very human way of dealing with a situation that would otherwise cripple a person's ability to live their life. Marcus Williams writes that 'Nuclear war has been the possible, ultimate, apocalyptical danger for so long; the public can't take it seriously anymore.'

The work gains a new layer of meaning by its geographical relocation, moving from behind the Iron Curtain to a country that has long been staunchly nuclear free, and has never believed itself to be a nuclear target. For a New Zealand audience, the piece exemplifies the distance of the concept of nuclear war. The mushroom cloud of a nuclear explosion is an image that appears in a newspaper, in the movies or on television, but something that is merely a symbol of a distant destruction.

The irreverent attitude towards nuclear war that is so succinctly summed up in *The Bomb* becomes especially interesting when compared to works produced during the Cold War period that dealt with nuclear themes. One of the most prominent works produced in New Zealand that deals with concepts of nuclear war is Ralph

Stills from projection.

Images by: Loretha du Plessis and Dean Shirriffs

Hotere's work 'No Ordinary Sun' (1984), which was based on the poem by Hone Tuwhare. The central motif in this work is a large 'O', intended to represent 'the dark sun of a nuclear age'. For Hotere, symbols such as this O are charged with meaning, containing their own intrinsic messages that transcend the petty day-to-day. So while Hotere invests the O with all the Cold War fear of imminent annihilation, PinkPunk and Avangard show how the nuclear explosion itself has been stripped of meaning in its establishment as a universally recognised symbol. The comparison of these two works shows just how much this threat has become impotent through being over-sensationalised during the past twenty years.

Images by: Jessica Reid

FAIR DEAL

In this piece, two women stand in a public place holding a sign reading 'Give us money, we are pretty'. They are heavily made up and dressed in ball gowns or bridesmaid's dresses, layers of coloured tulle and amateur-dramatics satin. The signs bring this prettiness back to the world of monetary exchange. Like Advertising all over the world, the invitation to admire beauty is also the impetus to spend.

The piece is intended to draw parallels between the consumption of the shiny-brightness of the women, and the relationship of former Soviet Bloc nations to Western consumer societies. Like the performers, consumer society offers the possibility of reaching a further ideal through the expenditure of money. However, the extent of the effort made by the women draws attention to an absence of depth: the exchange is made at the most shallow level, money for a moment of aesthetic pleasure. Clearly this leads us to a discussion of the relationship between the artist and the art market, where the relationship of the public to the works is mediated on monetary worth. This has an added potency coming from a developing Capitalist society. The artists' practice is rooted in a background where art is a luxury, and from a society where there are a number of over-qualified artists and little capacity to absorb them and their work. It would be cynical to conclude that this situation is also the status quo in New Zealand, however there are certainly some parallels when considering public funding for artists and spaces.

Furthermore, this performance deals with concepts of beauty, of sexual politics and the construct of femininity. In the use of a stereotypical manifestation of 'pretty', the performers both reference constructs of femininity that are used to control women and their sexuality, but also acknowledge that this construction of femininity provides women with a sort of power. As the cultural theorist Penny Sparke notes, women also have a historical connection to these concepts of taste, and, by retaining this connection, challenge the modernist masculine aesthetic that would control women's sexuality by controlling and condemning 'prettiness'.

Like *The Bomb*, this performance has its roots in a specific Eastern European context but acquired a raft of new meanings for its Wellington audience. The format allows the piece to travel easily and has consequently been performed worldwide. Meanings shift depending on where the work is sited, both locally and globally. In the context of Wellington, the time and place the performance was undertaken created emphasis on various aspects of the work, in both a political and social arena. The first performance was staged prior to the exhibition opening at Enjoy. Notably, the effect of having a large motivated audience intensely watching the performers in the middle of Cuba Street highlighted just how much this was a performance, something to be observed and analysed. The second performance was at Parliament, where the performers were treated like protesters by Parliament security and the public alike. This treatment highlighted the political nature of the work, especially in terms of the relationship between the government and the art establishment in New Zealand (and more specifically Wellington) where the art establishment is supported insofar as it makes the local and national government of the day look good, and does not threaten the wider public. The final performance was at the Wellington railway station, a major thoroughfare known for its buskers. PinkPunk therefore became commuter entertainment, with 'prettiness' serving the masses in the same way that art institutions are expected to serve the greater public, where aesthetic pleasure is given in return for cash.

....

The work of PinkPunk/Avangard gains its potency from its paradoxical ability to draw attention to the political and social situations of a larger international community through commentary on the socio-political situation of their own country of origin. In *The Bomb,* Avangard examines the way that the concept of nuclear destruction has become meaningless by using the symbol of the mushroom cloud as a kind of kitschy ornament, merely a semaphore. 'Fair Deal' examined the relationship between Western consumer societies and emergent Capitalist societies, constructs of femininity and the way in which art is produced and consumed. Although PinkPunk and Avangard are very much rooted in a specific socio-political context, the work presented in Wellington achieved a new level of meaning from its relocation.

Soliloquy

Sandra Schmidt

AMY HOWDEN-CHAPMAN March 23 - April 8 2005

Entering Sandra Schmidt's show ***Soliloquy***, I was immediately drawn toward the central work, a reconstruction of an East German housing estate rendered from toy parts. This work feels like a soliloquy: constructed from memory, and seemingly levitating between two parallel white planes, the work acts like a story told in a single breath. It is only possible to negotiate the work from its borders, to look at it, circling it; it is not a conversation, it's a single sustained description by the artist, a memory of a time and place.

Images by:
Dean Shirriffs and Loretha du Plessis

03

The dominant nature of the central work is, on closer inspection, built up from thousands of tiny units. The housing blocks are constructed from tiny plastic beads melted together. Each individual bead is still identifiable and the blocks have the appearance of pixellated three-dimensional sketches. The housing blocks stand independently, but are carefully arranged across the expanse of a white tabletop. The relation of the blocks to one another seems to have been transcribed from a map of a site. The blocks, all nearly identical in form, are placed at a similar distance from each other, and at certain angles give the sense of being arranged to most effectively balance space and community for the inhabitants, or to maximize sun.

However, the reconstruction of the blocks differs from an architectural model in a number of ways. The arrangement was constructed entirely from memory. With this in mind, it's interesting to consider at which point accuracy was waived, and the model began to reflect the gallery space. Schmidt can point to a window in one of the blocks: 'This was my bedroom window,' she says. It is exactly the same as all the other windows, but instantly that block seems to jump out, to have a special prominence, and I begin to consider the personal nature of the structure as well as its social narrative. How far away is it from the original?

With the knowledge that the work was created from memory, certain questions arise. What has been left out and why? There are no roads or model people; there is no sign of nature. All that we are shown is the form, the shells of the buildings. They are isolated for us and although they may first read like a miniaturised version of the real, they easily become fictional, independent of a real urban landscape. The buildings hover in their own place; they have no sense of relationship to the wider area, and any information that might relate their position to a real geographical area is absent. The only means we have of orientating this structure in the real world is through the personal narrative Schmidt reveals around it.

This sense of an unsecured floating narrative is enhanced by the tight visual boundaries created by the two flat planes; one acting as a table surface on which the forms are placed, the other suspended in parallel above the collection of buildings. In this way, the models do not appear directly in the physical space of the gallery but in a formal island. The planes act as a three-dimensional screen on which nostalgia is replayed; an arena of memory that we have been invited to observe. This separation from the 'real' acts as an interesting comparison between the buildings and apartment blocks seen outside the gallery window. The planes,

which the work hovers between, could be seen as an island of East German ideology, suspended amongst a sea of New Zealand housing. National myths, the stories we are told about state housing and New Zealand's continuing obsession with owning your own home, are held up for examination by this work, which manages to eloquently tell the story of a childhood behind the Iron Curtain. As Wellington becomes increasingly dense, low-cost apartment buildings sprouting at every corner, we begin to question who is in charge of monitoring the overall design of the city. The uniform suburb of *Soliloquy* raises timely issues. What are the ideal boundaries for suburbs and cities? In a world where sustainability is an increasingly important aspiration, and where a denser city uses less energy, do we have to balance uniform utilitarianism against American-style suburban sprawl?

The choice of tiny toy beads as the material for the construction of this structural memory gives the exhibition the feeling of a dystopian Legoland. There is also a sense of naivety and the vast time it must have taken to construct may have become a time of nostalgia. It must have been a repetitive task of masproduction and yet Schmidt gives the process an optimistic spin: 'I like to free objects from being utilitarian, give them an increase in value.' So tasks of works become playful. The construction of the houses conjures up remembrance as she tries to get the same 'value and dignity for cheap materials.' However, there is a sharp intervention in the piece that acts to curtail the nostalgia trip, a device that also causes the viewer to second guess whether it is an accurate reproduction, a depiction of memory, or a story that is still being told. Flames in the same plastic bead arrangement break up the monotonous grids of the buildings' windows. These small patches of colour burst out like explosions on some buildings and engulf several floors of others, giving the entire work a sinister air at first glance. Although the pixellated renderings vaguely recall images of the Twin Towers or the carnage of kindergarten bombings, in this context the colours react against the monotony and formality of the buildings and seem like a visual burst of excitement. Fire is a force of destruction, but also a source of heat and comfort. Schmidt does not see fire as a retrospective day-dream fate of her childhood dwelling, but rather a way to introduce a natural element and visual variation into the otherwise stale forms. In context with Schmidt's other works, the burst of flame loses its malicious twist, and becomes part of the artist's process of deleting and cutting down images. The fire, like cartoon blasts of red and yellow, gives welcome relief, the only sign of anything living, natural or organic in what would otherwise be a stylistic wasteland

Schmidt talks of childhood living in the buildings as uniform but happy. Space was confined: her childhood room, two metres by four metres, was small enough you could reach out and touch the walls. 'You knew that your room was identical to your neighbour's room, that the rooms were filled with furniture identical to your neighbour's

furniture. It was a community of Formica tables and yet', emphasises Schmidt, 'it was happy and warm. Everyone was united in the simple fact that they had a roof over their head.'

The second part of the exhibition moves away from the floating impersonal external space and into a small corner of the gallery doused with dated wallpaper, and decorated with scribbled-on magazine pages and a collection of images. One is the childhood face of Schmidt grinning out at us from a black and white photo. Though there is a contrast between exterior and interior setting, the way spaces are constructed, transcribed and deleted is considered again. There is a map in which all the place names have been scribbled out, there are altered images from tourist brochures, upturned postcards, and images where the central object, an iceberg, has been overridden by permanent marker. It is possible to imagine that this corner is a reconstruction of Schmidt's small childhood room. Perhaps these images stuck to the wall are spaces of the future, vast lands to explore, lands where you could reach out your fingers and feel nothing but contours of the empty map reaching out infinitely in every direction.

There is a sense of continuity in the way space is dealt with. Space is not described, but played with. Things are remembered and understood through their re-rendering of form. All unimportant information is discarded under ink or through flames. Schmidt's *Soliloquy* tells stories of space that she has transformed, and we are invited to build our own memories within them, to consider if we are in hostile environments, or warmed by the way Schmidt has given the materials around us a new life and significance.

Untitled (Pictures, Objects, Enjoy, Cuba St, Wellington, 2005)

Ella Bella Moonshine Reed

MELANIE HOGG — April 13 - 29 2005

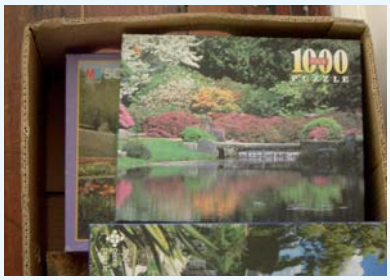
04

We don't usually encounter each other personally, audience and administrators. Our messages to you arrive in your inbox or as flyers in a café and though we welcome you, or on occasion chat, we coordinate from the sideline as you enjoy the art. Ella Bella Moonshine Reed arranged for the flyer invitation to *untitled (pictures, objects, Enjoy, Cuba St, Wellington, 2005)* to be an Emerald City green. This seemed to me, an Enjoy employee, to imply hopeful curiosity about Enjoy and a desire to pull the curtain aside to reveal the humble operators behind Oz, whilst empowering viewers to realise the significance of their role. With this project Reed posited both Enjoy gallery minders and audience as integral components. Addressing the locational and institutional site, the roles and relationships of artist, facilitator and audience were manipulated in the creation of a reflective functional space.

Images by: Jessica Reid and Ella Bella Moonshine Reed

Our office, usually tucked away at the far end of the gallery, was relocated to the main gallery space, facing the entrance door. The ratty folders, ancient computer and dilapidated office set up, was meticulously cleaned and then reassembled. At the start, it was ordered and sparkling. However, as we continued with our everyday operations, we failed to maintain this initial tidy aesthetic. Papers were strewn, phone books piled up, folders were left lying ajar, and general detritus recognised our activity as we adjusted to being on show.

In public spaces we often presume notions of ownership, and, although a simple shift, regular Enjoy visitors found the renovations slightly disorientating. This new arrangement prompted a reappraisal of the gallery environment. The gallery sitter became the first point of contact making interaction obligatory, rather than optional, and our role as facilitator blatant. Intrigued by the set up, our conversations primarily described the other aspects of the installation as we became acquainted with one another. Those unwilling to participate remained perplexed or detached and the fundamental process of negotiation in both relationships and our engagement with artworks was explicit.



Another role, and a more palatable one for some, that gallery sitters adopted for the duration of the project was that of crystal seller. Carefully arranged on a brown velvet table in front of the office area was a range of small, individually chosen crystals, each with their own colour, form and healing properties. This kind of display is not out of place on Cuba Street with Christopher's Crystals a mere block away and street vendors a familiar sight. All for sale at $2, despite their varying purchase values or worth, the crystals were popular souvenir trinkets, drawing on the social milieu of the area, Reed's own hippy background and familiar notions of financial exchange.

To one side of the office, a monitor silently looped a series of landscape images. Each still image remained just long enough for the viewer to reach boredom before skipping to the next. Gentle and calm, the views changed in no particular sequence from falling snow to spring fields, to riverside or hill. Devoid of figures, the images engendered a sense of anticipation. A chair opposite the office desk provided a good vantage point for this, set at a distance to ensure any lengthy discussion with staff was uncomfortable and thus holding the viewer in a waiting area.

Stacked in a box by the door, was a collection of jigsaw puzzles. It was unclear whether they were arriving or departing and they were available for purchase only if enquiry was made, though none ever was. These were old favourites, idealised representations of the land or tourist shots. Obviously completed during holidays or winter evenings, unlike those taped together in secondhand shops, they were not guaranteed to be complete. These brought to mind the monitor images, another collection of settings that an avid puzzle collector would find potentially challenging or enjoyable to reassemble, and emphasised the open nature of the show.

In contrast to the central space, the area the office usually occupied became a tranquil reading spot. This was a cozy haven in which to catch the afternoon sun, equipped with many domestic elements including an aluminium chair, a stack of books and large pot plants. It was peaceful, contemplative and responsive to the overly

sanitised nature of many gallery spaces. With an outlook onto the rear of the building and café below, the audience was invited to relax and ponder from what is usually the staff window. Situated literally in the administrative space, viewers were made aware of their importance in the structure of Enjoy and the crucial role an audience plays for the running of any space.

The institutional framework of Enjoy underscored the exhibition. Although an artist-run space, with regular funding and support we are becoming increasingly established and structured. With the roles of administrators under scrutiny, the overall implementation of Enjoy programmes was brought into question and the subjective nature of such made transparent. In this way, institution and location were not utilised as content, but served as a crucial preliminary consideration.

And so each element of gallery etiquette was physically represented.[1] The opportunity for slow contemplation, to piece together ideas and narratives, to engage with or participate in a structured environment, and to purchase a work or memento, all laid out in the habitual clockwise circuit of the gallery space. In restructuring our relationships and the space, Reed forced us to question our assumptions, reflect on common practices, evaluate our respective roles and the place in which we dwell. Pictures, objects, institution and location encapsulated, without title.

[1] Thanks to Marnie Slater for discussing this idea.

A Process Of Bewilderment

Simon Denny & Tahi Moore

DANIEL DU BERN — May 4 - 20 2005

05

Notes on Grand Narratives: Simon Denny & Tahi Moore in conversation with Daniel du Bern

The following text is an edited transcript of a conversation between Tahi Moore and Simon Denny and myself, Daniel du Bern. The subject of our discussion was Moore and Denny's exhibition at Enjoy, *A Process of Bewilderment*.

Respecting the nature of these two artists' practices, the decision was made to move away from the conventional style of interviewing – of questions posed and answers given – instead pursuing a more open mode of discussion; furthermore, we have opted for a style of presentation that does not clearly distinguish between the different voices within this text. The order in which these extracts appear is not necessarily sequential and many passages have been revisited and revised during the course of this conversation.

Knowing how and where to begin is difficult. How does one go about discussing work that is clearly concerned with the expansive, the hyperbolic and chaotic? This is a conundrum. It is antithetical to begin in a selective manner. To single out aspects of the work for discussion, even with the desire to open things out, is a reductive process. Thus there can be no preamble here. The photographs accompanying this text will provide any description that may be required.

* * *

Structures are built at the point where nothing becomes something. As these structures expand and grow meanings become attached to them. Eventually these structures become saturated and new structures need to be made.

* * *

Some time back I met with a curator to discuss an idea I had for an exhibition. Prior to our meeting they had asked me to write a 'project

outline', in which to detail the conceptual basis for the proposed work. After numerous failed attempts at writing an outline for a project that was only in its conception, I deemed it appropriate to draw a diagram instead. In this diagram I detailed ideas and concepts of perceived significance; and through the use of scale, proximity and an array of lines and arrows, I tracked the various relationships existing between these ideas and concepts. It became somewhat convoluted and incoherent. The curator had little time for this diagram. From what I could gather they saw this as showing my inability to prioritise information. They did not see it as my desire to address the complexity inherent in reality, that things are riddled with contradictions.

* * *

Some people have responded in a similar way to my work. One viewer said there was too much to see, too much to look at and that you end up looking at nothing. When I have shown works that were simple and pared back some viewers perceived my work to have clarity, whereas they see my more expansive works as being only a muddle. I think this notion of 'the complexity of reality' is something hopefully built into my practice. The contradictory is always important. This show in particular had a lot to do with contradiction and hyperbole.

There were a lot of objects in this show. In making artworks from many constituent objects the responsibility of meaning is shared [...] On the back wall of the gallery there is a shelf, on this shelf there are biscuits, then there are bits of wood, then a little piece of plastic; this is an object sentence. The objects get turned into parts of a sentence, and sitting together they form an object paragraph. I like to think about communities of objects; where their relationship to one another is empathetic involving many objects in a work takes the stress of meaning away from The Single Mighty Object. This idea of shared responsibility is very important to us.

* * *

Life is a necessary component in our practices. Hyperbole – the muddle-of-the-too-many – is an interpretation of life. There is a lot to see and when you take it all in at once, I feel you become closer to understanding what is really there. I want to get closer to that. The act of participating with objects is central to the idea of making work about life – of building meaning in one's world. These are things we exist with, which are extensions of our situation. By doing things, by working around things, with objects and situations, we ourselves become clearer. Our being becomes more at ease through the act of doing.

* * *

If I really want the situations to work, then instead of building strategies for finding truth and working out life, I need to lie back

Images by: Loretha du Plessis and Dean Shirriffs unless otherwise specified

and wait. Lying back in the right way has become a serious affair for me.

* * *

I'm often confused by my work. I think a lot of the time that's why I make it. Especially with the videos, say for example the airbed infomercial. These were moments, situations and scenarios that didn't make any kind of sense. I found this very compelling. When I was editing them I tried to remove the extraneous material surrounding these moments. I was trying to bring out this stuff that made no sense, but I guess when it's on its own, it starts to form some kind of sense of its own, like it has an internal language.

* * *

We have often taken to writing parallel texts that work to confuse as much as to inform. We are not used to talking lucidly about our strategies, we are more used to reflecting the confusing nature of our artistic enquiry in our texts.

* * *

Who's confused by your work? Is the audience or is it you? I don't find your work confusing as much as mystifying. You notably employ bewilderment as a strategy and this makes it be known that your work has no intention of providing a reductive clarity. And because I don't expect such clarity from your work I don't judge it using such criteria as a result. If I did then I'd probably be very confused, but I don't, so I'm not.

Artists' writing is often used as a form of parenthesis, which informs peoples' perception of the work, like a tinted lens. I disagree with you when you say these parallel texts are reflective of your work. Writing has a tendency to simplify things. I think you have resorted to this way of writing because you are in need of writing that is not definitive or categorical.

* * *

I avoid definitive statements because of the shifting ground of the work. When I would revisit work, it would have changed, and become something else. The writing, however, would then be at odds with what the work seems to say.

* * *

I think I've developed a kind of poetic shorthand, largely as a response to my artist statements at art school. They tended to make me cringe a bit when I read them afterwards. They always showed up a kind of arrogance. And I'd make these broad statements that seemed to be so true at the time. But a week later, I'd realise that they were glib, or bullshit; or even worse, they were true. But to say these things in a statement was like shouting out things at people that they already knew.

I really like Fellini's statement in an interview, when he is asked what his movie is about. He responds by saying that he is sorry, but that he really doesn't have anything to say and that he makes the movies purely for his own pleasure.

I think for me making art is a lot like that. I don't think that the kind of art I've been making says too much. I think it does things. I don't think it talks about life so much as being a part of my life, just like sleeping or being in love. That's both with making art, and looking at it.

With the lights in my videos, where they explode and fill out the screen, making it all white: I was trying to describe something about how I give things meaning and draw them into my life (already I'm breaking my own rules about not being illustrative.) I was trying to describe the idea of things starting out being nothing. Then they seem to develop significance and meaning. In the end this kind of truth might come out and envelope you, like your whole life makes sense. Then a moment later it's back to normal and you remember your wife wanted you to sort out the plane tickets you forgot to book or something. I imagine this with surfers, and the world sometimes exploding into light and this pure truth as you go through the half pipe. As an example, I remember looking at a big red canvas. There was also a circle on the wall, like if someone had spray-painted over a disc, leaving this round sunburst. It was like someone had accidentally stared at the sun for too long. I started to feel as if the literary artist implied in the work had been searching for the truth, and had found these holes in their mind's eye. The holes and the Solaris on the wall were like the truth that had come too near and could

Image: Courtesy of the artists

not be known; either because it was too terrible or it was really just nothing. I guess a lot of people think the truth would burn like the sun. I think that life is nothing, so I have to make it.

Making art's important in a large part because it's making life.

* * *

Maybe those videos aren't that descriptive. I think that they're still doing their thing, which in this case is mythologizing. I really feel that mythology is as vital as breathing. I think the six o'clock news tells us pretty much fuck all. It's real function, and this is my theory, is that it provides a mythology about the world. That offers a way of thinking about it. So when we think about things we don't go insane, we just think, "Oh, he's so terrible" or "They're really dealing with the problems in the world." And we feel that thing are ticking along rather than there just being this great mess of stuff that has no meaning or plan.

I really hope that the videos operate a bit like the TV, and do a bit of mythologizing. But the mythologizing in the video's case is more about things being really messy and not making sense. So I think the coloured lights are more about "what the fuck is that?" or things just spilling out of the world into your head and then back out of your head into the world in a big mess. I think we're always trying to make sense of the world, but maybe it can just be a big mess a lot of the time.

* * *

The other thing I think is going on with the lights, at least thinking about it now, is emotions. I have a lot of emotions that I know I shouldn't have, and a lot that I just don't want. I spend a lot of effort trying to get rid of emotions I don't want.

* * *

One most effecting affecting aspects of this body of work is its pace. There were moments where things seemed instantaneous, where time collapsed in on itself and the light became divided into a spectrum of pure colours. And parts where things just went along as they did unaltered, where things would grow or rot. And moments where time stood still and nothing happened.

* * *

I have an idea that there is no time and space. Time is measurement of movement. Space is perception of differences. So the space between my hand and my face would be the energy it took for them to come in contact. Which is to say that objects in themselves are nothing, but the way they relate to each other and the situation is everything. A lot of the elements in the work can be quite tenuous if seen as individual objects. They often have potential that is barely seen. The way they form together becomes a lot more visible than if they stood out by themselves. There is activity that develops out

of the movement through and between these things. I think the pace, the timing and the editing becomes essential to the work.

* * *

As you have suggested there is no clear delineation between representations and actual objects within your work. And the way that the two of you work and show is equally unclear. You are not making work as a collaborative pair, there are divisions, but they are not rigid or definite. I see it as encouraging. I sometimes wonder if art such as this should not be seen in galleries or museums, but rather in houses, shops, restaurants or parks. When I see them in galleries I get preoccupied with the notion of artifice. I question as to whether or not they are real, regardless of whether it bares any relevance to the work. In my mind there is a clear division between art and life, where life equals reality and art equals fiction. And by this logic I feel art is inherently fraudulent. *Real* art is truncated and dis-empowered by this reasoning and I am resistant to it because of this.

Try to imagine a world where art is considered to be as real and concrete as science or current affairs.

* * *

I have been having real problems with videos in galleries. I edit videos at home and watch them on the TV. That always seems the best place to view them, as if it's their natural environment. The same goes for objects that are made or found. I've stopped believing in a certain idea of art altogether. I think that there's stuff that's trying to be art, stuff that looks like art, and then there's stuff that does something. Often Its hard to tell where something lies on this scale.

* * *

'It is uniquely art (of a certain kind) that can be a tool with which to imagine, and imagination becomes a tool to rethink... or to picture a different state of the world and to try and create it. Such an art is rarely overtly political in its content or instrumentally related to actual social change. Instead, it lays out a claim to a version of certain intimate but shared experiences and asks complicit viewers to draw their own imaginative political implications. At best, it is appropriately small-scale, unpretentious and common in terms of its ambition and address.' Charles Esche

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We are becoming increasingly religious with our art making and as people-artists. Belief and attitude are conveyed through the way we work with, and think about objects.

We believe that responding to things in the first person is very important. We do not feel that art is a tool for bettering oneself or society, but that the process of making and watching is a necessary activity for us.

We do not wish to say anything; we are curious and want to know. Often the knowing has more to do with feeling, and less to do with knowledge. We are impressed with the profundity of the everyday. Objects in themselves are full... We need to harness that potential through processes of arrangement and manipulation. I suppose these are fairly basic strategies for sculptors.

We make sense of the world by shopping, breaking and feeling. First we find something of interest and then we have to make this apparent to others. To make work for us is to filter our experience.

The activity of making tends to dominate other areas of our life. Even when we consume, we don't switch off. We are still making this into something and renovating it into the fluidity of the mess, out of which grows our meaning.

The End Of Water

Shay Launder

JESSICA REID — May 25 - 10 June 2005

06

Ideas for banners for The End of Water

Image: Courtesy of the artist

In advance of her exhibition, *The End of Water*, Shay Launder provided the gallery with a series of ideas she had had to appear on banners. Some were optimistic, motivational slogans. They expressed urgency and neediness. Others were like relationship catch-phrases, what lovers might say to one another, clichéd because of their universality. Some were more poetic and fantastical, childlike in their simplicity, like a fairy-tale, they spoke of dirt, water, and the sun. Here are some of my favourites: Headlong into the Future, Gravity Must Be Worked On, Drowning Methods and Accidental Speech, The Honesty and Generosity of the Future, Water for Sadness, I Surrender, New Societies, The Forested Desires of the Future, Please Forgive Me, Before It's Too Late, Preparing Ourselves for the Future, The Sun's Noise.

I sensed something floating in these words that I felt but couldn't describe or define, connecting these images and phrases. I expected that the exhibition would reveal these connections and clarify my thoughts. However, *The End of Water* was probably one of the more oblique exhibitions I've encountered. Its multifarious components seemingly marked a winding, whimsical trajectory: fairy lights lit up the gallery's fire exit steps, like a heavenly staircase marking a way out, or possibly a way in. A crowd of unmarked green bottles fermented Ginger Beer that intermittently and explosively popped

their cork stoppers up to the ceiling. Two images of cats, kitschy found posters, were displayed upside-down with foresty tree tendrils oozing over them in painted-on white fluid.

The space for most of the show's duration was quite sparse, so unfamiliar, freshly painted and new, and while this confounded some viewers, it was as if Launder wished to make a feature of the space itself. For the exhibition opening Launder had invited opera singer Natalie Moreno to perform. Her ghostly crystalline voice welcomed in the gallery audience like a mythological siren. This welcome or calling in to the space was particularly apt as this was the opening of the first exhibition in Enjoy's new space and many Enjoy regular's first view inside.

Instead of the usual artist talk exhibitors are required to give, Launder opted for a felt mitten making evening instead. Large saucepans of lentil curry and rice were brought in and kettles of tea were brewed. Bags of brightly coloured wool were unpacked and spread across the floor. Launder demonstrated the technique of matting and soaping the wool, spreading it to a thin fabric that was then cut to the required shape and size of a hand. The floor was covered in soapsuds and cheerful banter filled the room. This interactive activity, combined with the hearty food on such a chilly, wintry evening developed a warm atmosphere between strangers as they compared projects, asked questions and mused on each others skill.

But despite Launder's lyrical forays, it became apparent she had a more sobering message in her work too. In one corner a monitor was set up for the evening, which was to remain for the rest of the exhibition. Videos could be selected and watched on various topics relating to global development and the preciousness of the world's resources, the scarcity of clean water in particular. The videos were a bittersweet reminder of the disparity between the situation we were enjoying and the one 'out there' in a world with problems. Of any part of the exhibition, however, it was the conviviality of the mitten making which struck me the most. The instant sense of 'togetherness' showed an optimistic way forward, childlike in its simplicity, but which inspiration could be taken from too. Rather than trying to decipher or unravel the meaning of the works, it seems best to take that sense of something from it: this amorphous, floaty and perhaps confounding feeling of something which could resonate with a group of people on a cold midwinter night.

HUMDRUM

Campbell Kneale

THOMASIN SLEIGH June 15 - July 1 2005

07

This morning I decided to come into uni to write this catalogue essay. I was just sitting down at the computer when the fire alarm started up. It was massively loud. Outside, the sound was split and scattered by the walls, every building around me was buzzing. The firemen came. I sat in the cold and waited for them to switch off the alarm (incidentally, someone had burnt some Vogels they'd been toasting which set the whole thing going). The quiet came back abruptly and stayed.

Images by: Jessica Reid

It struck me when I sat back down that this is the type of experience that Campbell Kneale's music feeds off. The unexpected, the transient and the mundane. The humdrum if you will. Everyone's life is made up of these small, insignificant moments. I never would have expected a fire alarm to go off when I arrived here today, but it did, and there was a certain beauty in it. There was a certain beauty in sitting next to a funny lady from the history department upstairs who had a highlighter pink plaster on her glasses (she, it turns out, was the infamous Vogels toaster). There was a certain beauty in watching the confused security guard in his purple polypropylene and several kilograms of keys. And there was a certain beauty in the heavy fire engine and its fluorescent firemen.

Situated in the new Enjoy space, ***HUMDRUM*** absorbs this kind of unexpected but essentially everyday activity. There has been much critique since the 1960s of the exclusivity of the gallery space. The 'White Cube' as it has been termed, has been criticised as an elite and restrictive environment, which fosters a questionable cultural hierarchy. Not so in ***HUMDRUM***. With the translation of Kneale's practice into Enjoy the activity of people wandering about on Cuba Street invades the exhibition. The gallery goer is encouraged to sit down for a while, read a National Geographic, or just watch the world go by out the big window. The shuffle and shift of the sound around you becomes a soundtrack to the disconsolate hipster walking by, or the wagging Wellington College student. The installation, both the artistic practice itself and the environment it finds itself in, accentuates the nuances of everyday life.

Perhaps nothing is more everyday than National Geographic magazines. In ***HUMDRUM*** the visitor is invited to sit down in the chair and peruse the handy stack of National Geographics found next to it. These publications are so familiar: nearly every family seems to have had a subscription, which results in shelves and boxes full of back copies, growing dusty in the garage. By having exclusively National Geographics, rather than swanky arts and popular culture magazines, Kneale further accentuates the commonplace, the images and sounds that we might hear and see regularly but never give much thought to.

The installation has much in common with the French curator Nicholas Bourriard's concept of Relational Aesthetics. In his characterisation, much of art of the 1990s' was very interested in breaking apart the austerity of the gallery experience and introducing an essence of what he calls 'conviviality' into art viewing. The effectiveness of artists' attempts to introduce uninhibited interrelations into the gallery has since been criticised. The claim has been that these activities reinforce the hierarchies that they purport to do away with. However, in ***HUMDRUM*** I feel there is certainly a sense of encouraging interaction and 'conviviality' in the exhibition space. You are invited to sit down in the chair in the centre of the room, and simply hang out for a bit. Watch the world go by. Read a magazine. You need to spend some time with the installation, become comfortable with it. This is in contradistinction to the usual gallery visit, which usually involves a quick scan around and then leave.

When you do spend time with the installation you become aware of the tiniest things, the smallest blips in our lives that Kneale is concerned with in the construction of his layered recordings. The smallest sound is able to change the flow of a whole piece. Or conversely, the smallest sound can simply be washed over and ignored. In ***HUMDRUM,*** each clutter and drone is at the same time both integral and expendable. In a traditionally conceived piece of music each stage of the piece is significant in terms of how it is affected by what comes before it and what comes after it. Here, in

the *HUMDRUM* installation, each sound is constantly in flux. It is never positioned in a single continuum of music, but instead its noise is always negotiable and always changing. Listening to the installation is to hear a random interplay of sound. Each moment is completely different from the next. Each second is therefore individual and unique, and at the same time it is lost. Gone forever in the web of sound which subsumes it.

We are talking about BIG and little. Kneale's installation here at Enjoy, and his other musical practices, revels in the disjunction between grandiose and banal. Indeed, often these distinctions meld to become the same thing. Kneale says in an interview:

> I've always sought to find inspiration in my location. Currently that location is suburban Lower Hutt. Suburbia has a nasty reputation for being a congregation point for soullessness but I have come to disagree. I have seen brief glimpses of a very deeply ingrained spirituality here, not connected with any obvious religious affiliation, but connected with the big patterns of human existence. Work, sleep, travel, children, hospitality, home decorating... I find the mundane beautiful and very grand.

HUMDRUM is undoubtedly very grand. Even given the motley collection of speakers dotted unceremoniously about the room, the duration of the sound is simply epic. It is sustained and unremitting. There is the sense that these noises existed before you and they will exist after you. They seem to disregard the listener, they don't begin and end in relation to you. Instead, they could just go on and on and on whether or not you are there at all.

In juxtaposition to the eternal, unending sound of *HUMDRUM* there is what Kneale no doubt would call the 'beautifully mundane'. This is the detail which sits among the sludge of the drone. This installation has an affinity with the domestic. The tiniest chirps, scratches, and clunks are infinitely recognisable as the noise of everyday life. They are the noises of going into the kitchen and getting a cup of tea, or the click of pushing buttons on the remote. It becomes clear when listening that this installation is as much about a grey Tuesday morning as it is about an existential questioning of spatial and sonic realities. And the beauty of it is that you can take your pick.

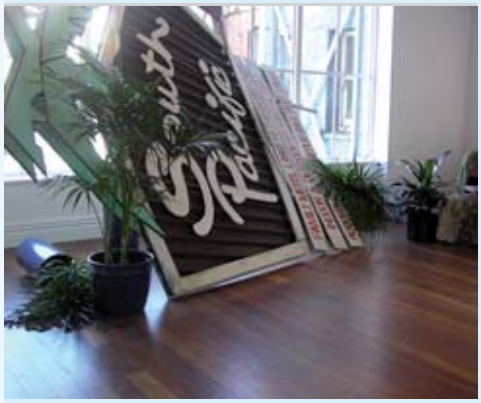
Playing Favourites

Enjoy's Fifth Birthday Show

JESSICA REID — July 4 - 9 2005

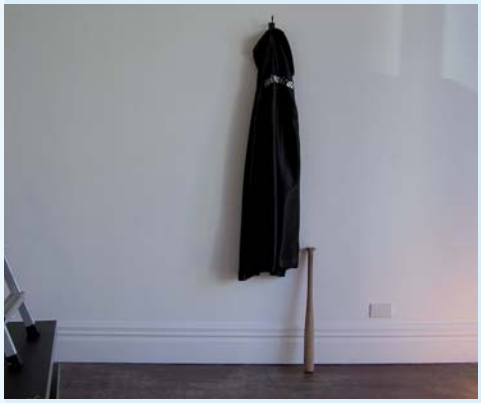
08

Melanie Hogg and I took on the rather daunting task of curating Enjoy's fifth birthday show. Perusing the archive of past shows, we both felt the weight of history upon us. How could we neatly sum up and package the diverse breadth of involvement of tens of artists, curators and co-ordinators who have contributed to Enjoy's history over the last five years? We agreed that the 'best of' retrospective style of curation, an artificial (but perhaps necessary) practice employed by large public institutions when dealing with an extensive collection of work, was not in keeping with Enjoy's aims to further innovative and experimental modes of working. We also agreed that an identity-defining show was a redundant exercise; this being so successfully achieved in the New Zealand artist-run-space exchanges, in which Enjoy took part in 2003 and 2004. So, throwing expectation to the wind, our resulting concept was *Playing Favourites*, an unashamedly biased selection of our favourite artists, both new and familiar to Enjoy, hailing from across the length of the country. The participating artists were Dan Arps, Liz Allan, Gary Bridle, Ros Cameron, Bekah Carran, Fiona Connor, Jade Farley & Gwen Norcliffe, William Hsu, Douglas Kelaher, Jason Lindsay, Leah Mulgrew, Kim Paton & Louise Tulett, and Sriwhana Spong. The work ranged in size and media from Fiona Connor's huge and meticulously mimetic 'South Pacific Motel Sign' to the bright Enjoy-red helium balloons of Kim Paton and Louise Tulett's work 'Provisions for Cuba Street'.



Images by: Kim Paton

Clockwise from top left:
'Provisions for Cuba Street' by Louise Menzies and Kim Paton, work by Jason Lindsay, Douglas Kelaher, Gary Bridle, 'South Pacifific Motel Sign' by Fiona Connor.



To further complicate things, a different person was assigned each day the task of re-curating the show. We invited Emily Cormack from the Adam Art Gallery and artists Tao Wells and Jason Lindsay (who emailed hanging instructions from Auckland) to be guest curators, and Melanie and I curated a day each as well. Curators were given free reign to do as they saw fit with the work, which could be to exclude or privilege one or many works over others. The exhibition concept allowed the guest curators the opportunity to explore the extent and purpose of their role. Artist Tao Wells, who curated the Thursday hanging of the week, interpreted the curator's role as that of advocate. He selected the DVD work 'Welcome H' by Jade Farley and Gwen Norcliffe for two evening screenings. Proudly standing behind his choice, Tao could be seen on Cuba Street handing out flyers and 'selling' the show to the public passing by.

The ever-evolving nature of the exhibition brought in many visitors for repeat viewings, eager to see what had changed from day to day. Up for only one day each, you had to be quick to see each curator's interpretation. We were also fortunate enough to play host to two music performances, The Gladeyes who charmed their first Wellington crowd at the exhibition opening/birthday party and MHFS whose free-noise closing performance on Saturday morning relaxed and soothed the hangovers of the 'gallery picnic' participants.

Playing Favourites was a fun and sometimes chaotic experience, much like the experience of being involved with the running of a space like Enjoy. Melanie and I would like to thank all the participating artists and visitors who showed their support, for this show and over the last five years.

Everything I Know at the Top I Learned At The Bottom

Marnie Slater

JESSICA REID July 14 - 29 2005

09

Marnie Slater's solo exhibition at Enjoy comprised several elements playing with gallery and public intervention, spatial transformation and artistic collaboration. At the opening the labels on the beer bottles were replaced with a mysterious insignia, the gallery viewer walked into a room darkened by venetian blinds to a box of plants growing, assisted by a 'growth light', in the shape of that same symbol. The feeling was of something sinister going on. I talked to Marnie about her show, and asked her how it related to her wider artistic practice.

Images by: Jessica Reid

JR: In the writing for the press release for your show, you described *Everything I Know at the Top I Learned at the Bottom* as your first 'solo' show. You were however also keen to emphasise the role Daniel du Bern and I played in the exhibition by crediting us on the flyer. Was this an intentional ploy to confuse the role of collaborators and artist as director?

MS: The choice to intentionally articulate what would seem like contradictory strategies was an important part of my approach to the exhibition. My way of working increasingly involves multiple parties in the conceiving and realising of projects. These 'collaborations' are most often employed because of a perceived lack in the work that I cannot or do not desire to fill myself. Often there is an urge to give over bits to others; with *ΣIKATTILATΒ* the collaboration and resulting allocation of authorship became particularly complicated. The presence of you and Dan was central to the exhibition, both as

residue (image and text) and as fellow 'authors'. But your presence was highly mediated by the assertions I chose to make.

For instance, Dan had used the text 'EAT SHIT DIE' initially as a set of three works on paper. For *ƐIKATTILATƁ* I asked if these words could be painted on to the exterior windows of Enjoy, viewable from the street below. I talked with you and Melanie about the possible public offence the text could cause, and it seemed fitting that you, as a 'collaborator' in the project and also as an employee of Enjoy, took the flack from the only 'public' who chose to complain.

JR: Yes the reaction was, although not intended, expected by you. I think I was surprised that there wasn't a bigger reaction. The windows of Enjoy are quite a shopfront for the gallery and Cuba Street, which they look out to, gets a lot of foot traffic. After talking about it with you, I think I came to interpret it as more of a comment on mortality, or the futility of our whole life cycle rather than an aggressive instruction. It's also nothing worse than a lot of the graffiti you see around, but I guess people interpret meanings differently when the writing appears so considered and becomes recognised as a statement representing the gallery and the building, rather than as a particular artist's work.

I think there was cheekiness and cynicism present in your show. I think this was outlined from the title - laughably arrogant, self-important - but then was continued through into things such as the 'happy' light you used at the entrance too. It expressed a cynicism towards the whole 'self-improvement' industry. What immediately came to mind were self-help books (like the book you took the show's title from) and audiotapes, 1980s greed and consumption and late night infomercials. But then I wonder if art comes into this too. Is making work a process of self-improvement?

MS: The windows of Enjoy face out, not just onto the car park but they are also in direct view of one of Cuba Street's more expensive places to eat. After the opening my family went there for dinner and asked their waiter what his customers had been saying about the text. He implied that most just laughed it off as being symptomatic of the particular part of town and, when told it was art, thought nothing more of it.

With *ƐIKATTILATƁ* I wanted to employ the gallery as a site where a kind of approach or position was frozen in the process of being both done and undone, with being presented and undermined simultaneously. There was a kind of posing and posturing to the project, an assuming of an exaggerated identity, which was played out in the title of the show, the flyer image, the nouveau-riche foyer, the re-branding of the beer bottles at the opening, the 'offensive' statement on the windows. I wanted that exaggerated identity to exist as both my role as an individual author and also as a concept capable of encompassing and masking the collaboration; where the agenda, not the praxis, being presented was unclear and the flexibility of your chosen role within

any resulting meaning became more ambiguous. Contained within this desire to explode the manifestation of identity is an interest in how objects and languages are communally systematised to confirm a sense of self.

JR: I was wondering if you could talk more about some of the influences of the formal elements of your show? Why you chose some of the elements; the prop-like set up of the unfinished wall, the governmental office feel of the venetian blinds, the faux marbling painted on the plant box...

MS: Some of the objects within the installation borrowed from a vocabulary of the commercial and existed within the gallery as sculptural copies - mostly made, assembled and surfaced according to how I observed them existing outside the gallery or my studio. My research process for these copies was incredibly loose and most often the resulting object looks similar, but I have no interest in having things made in strict accordance with existing commercial specifications. Like the inclusion of other prefabricated elements, the blinds were chosen simply because they were the 'blindiest' blinds I could imagine.

The wall (between the gallery and the office) in *ƐIKATTILATB* was unfinished, frozen in the process of being finished. It was one of those opportunities that come up during the development of a project as the gallery was building a permanent partition wall anyway. It was a way, similar to the portrait of you, to introduce the politics of gallery collaboration into the show (as negotiating with the gallery to leave the wall unfinished for the show was required).

I think in my recent work there is a desire to explore public galleries as sites for public display and involvement/provocation. Within this is an interest in the visual manifestations of institutional infrastructure and how this can be tampered with or altered in relation to a gallery visitor's expectations and experiences with an object or within an environment. I am interested in how a gallery (in terms of staff as well as architectural schematics and installing mechanics) can become more involved in how a work is conceived of, exhibited, and engaged with.

JR: Yes, often there is a high level of staff involvement in a work shown at Enjoy. Even if it's just describing or talking to the public about an exhibition has a huge impact on the way the work is read. In your show there was my specific involvement in the photograph at the entrance, but there was also gallery sitter involvement in trying to encourage people to go outside and view the window writing from the roof and the attention required for tending to the plants, watering them daily. So there was a large performative as well as interactive element.

MS: Yes, and I think there is a specificity to the gallery as a site that I only began to consider after my work was no longer exclusively

made for an art school context. As an interior, galleries have a range of features that are very particular to perceived notions of how they are used. Walls, floors and ceilings are employed in ways that are antithetical to how we 'normally' use interior domestic or commercial spaces. In a way, galleries offer liminal or transgressive possibilities for spatial experience and exploration. Then there are also the people (such as you and Melanie) who work at a gallery, making sure the place ticks over on a pragmatic level, but also making it an exciting, engaging place for people to come hang out. I am interested in what I see as sometimes contradictory experiences of galleries. Artspace (in Auckland) for example, has a staffed office removed from the main body of the gallery, my work 'We Are All Professionals Here' (2005) attempted to address that separation by providing a live audio feed from the office to a small space at the opposite side of the gallery. Despite the huge proliferation of video and sound work, galleries remain quite static places. There are staff and visitors but, on face value, their presence is not necessarily integral to the work operating. Galleries have always been active places for me; I remember gallery sitting at SHOW in Wellington and being told by a visitor that the conversation between myself and a friend was interrupting her looking at a drawing. Later that afternoon we used the gallery to improvise a dance routine involving the gallery step ladder!

Michael Morley

LOUISE MENZIES August 3 - 19 2005

Eight miles high and when you touch down
You'll find that it's stranger than known
Signs in the street that say where you're going
Are somewhere just being their own

Nowhere is there warmth to be found
Among those afraid of losing their ground
Rain grey town known for its sound
In places small faces unbound...

10

These lines from The Bryds' infamous classic 'Eight miles high' seem a little token when trying to get in the mood for thinking on the deep connection drug taking has had with popular culture during the twentieth century, however the dredging of such histories in Morley's most recent series of work advocates instead for a Mammon of opportunities. And while not everyone is familiar with the bodily experience of substance abuse, what is interesting to note and indeed what Morley shows us quite superbly is that everyone is familiar with the cultural language of such experiences.

Appearing like paintings made while high on any number of illegal aids, Morley's new works reach straight into the well-established relationship drug use and hallucinatory visions have with the visual arts. Replicating on canvas the kind of optical visions of grand sixties cultural products such as those of Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space

Odyssey or the fabric designs of Emilio Pucci, Morley's canvases invite you in with their amateur-like homage to psychedelia and the sixties dreams of art and freedom. And rightly so: wasn't art part of the way forward? A flick through the decades of the twentieth century shows an insatiable chasing of utopian ideas that only the eighties finally managed to quell, along with, a now much debated, belief in painting. Any hangovers of such modernist failings however are well heeled within Morley's project. This is a show of paintings that can rest comfortably on its references. These are humble works for now rather humble yearnings.

The paintings 'Midnight Cowboys' and 'The Lost Weekend' provide, literally, the central leaning focus of the show. As two large diptychs measuring in excess of two metres across, these sizable works offer two hazy takes on a notion of split perspective that is physically enchanting. Rendered in companion to the hallucinatory experiences of the protagonist in the two films referenced as captions for the work, these paintings offer up a conversation between forms and times tangential to their own placement. For the majority of the film, Jon Voight's character Joe Buck in Midnight Cowboy is a man struggling to find himself in sixties New York. Similarly, for Ray Milland in The Lost Weekend, the sense of personal travel is felt with increasing momentum towards a visual climax of both hallucinogenic visions and narrative resolution. In these stories, drug taking suggests journeys, and on many levels an offering of travel, both optically and historically, provides a consistency for this series of work.

One piece carries on another consistency of its own. Morley is well known for his paintings of turntables, reliably rendered with the needle mid-song and accompanied by a corresponding song or album title, for Enjoy there is one such lonely work at the end of the gallery. Playing silently the Palace Brothers' title track 'There Is No One What Will Take Care Of You', this text is at first a somewhat tangential find among all the cultural yearning of other generations present in the room. As a contemporary kind of answer to those myths so lightly present in the colourful stripes of 'Midnight Cowboys' and 'The Lost Weekend', 'There Is No One...' also strikes me as an odd choice, or perhaps a tempering offer to the more flamboyant referencing of the other works. This is sad and current music. Will Oldham, the songwriter referenced, is himself a heroic figure within contemporary American folklore. A prolific artist of the melancholy, here playing within a painting, the show starts to offer new time-place relationships. Sitting adjacent to the nostalgia and mythical yearnings of the sixties and seventies here is something that connects to a current cultural phase, interestingly still dripping with a sense of yearning.

Above: There Is No One What Will Take Care Of You

Images by: Jessica Reid

Midnight Cowboy (left), Lost Weekend

Previously Morley has stated that these turntable paintings are concerned with the possible recognition the viewer may or may not have with the musical reference given within this series of works. And in the ways in which the silence of viewing these works fills with the associations of the songs titled in these paintings, the new optical works that comprise the majority of this exhibition offer a similar space for cultural recollection. Artworks generally are attempts at relationship building of some sort and here this transpires through a series of cult and popular culture references offering us a chance to assemble our own personal connections and associations together with those of the artist. There is an easy and quiet triumph to these paintings, a celebration of what they know they are offering to us. These works tell stories of painting and drugs and popular culture in a way digestible and playful for those all those involved, stoned or otherwise.

Soft Serve

Nicky Campbell

KATE WANWIMOLRUK August 24 - September 9 2005

Ice creams shared between lovers? Kisses that draw blood.
A rejection that leaves the room tepid...
A parasite to a host, which loves the needing. A host to a parasite, which keeps holding on in spite of it all. They attach and then withdraw...
So suffocating, so co-dependent, growing fatter but less satisfied with each other with every encounter. How can it play out to an end? It stonewalls.

- Abstract to Soft Serve.

11

Inhabiting the Enjoy gallery space in August 2005, Nicky Campbell's work *Soft Serve* was a platter of subverted expectations. With its ambivalent title, *Soft Serve* suggests either the sweet and fatty spiralling ice cream, or a gentle serve when playing tennis. On the one hand the title connotes a fluffiness, something soft and sweet to be consumed. On the other it is an active soft serving, in terms of a loosening of theoretical constructs within the artwork. The words 'soft serve' establish an expectation of the work before we see it. However, these cuddly connotations stop at the title: the work itself is anything but cuddle-able. *Soft Serve* consists of a beautifully made, sleek and tar black ceramic leech half a metre long, a stark black shiny wall cast from an actual cliff and a real live leech in a jar.

Perhaps the title works to deflect the cold nature of the actual work with its coarse edges, its steely black surface and its seemingly perfect exterior. Instead of a picture-perfect image of lovers sharing a soft serve cone, the show rejects this insipid sweetness and focuses on the elements of their neediness.

Entering the gallery space we are protected from the outside, but the interior represents both security and confinement. By placing a cliff-like wall within a gallery, the visitor is dislocated. The imbued sense of threat in *Soft Serve* is perhaps influenced by the overwhelming fear of standing under a faux-cliff face with a slight overhang. (It was mentioned that the fake wall though intended for Enjoy gallery, had to be carted in through the window.)

The two dominant objects (stone wall and sculptured leech) in the room seems to be a representation of the two 'lovers' in Campbell's abstract for the show: 'host to a parasite'. So 'co-dependent' these objects are to one another. It is a snapshot of a lovers' feud. The distance between them, even if only two metres, suggests a narrative of separation and nostalgia. Those few metres create a relationship between the objects. The twist is that the cliff is a construction. We can walk behind it and see that it's made from various elements – high density urethane foam, criss-crossing framing timber, resin and fibreglass – exposing the artificiality of it all.

The everyday metaphor of a 'leech', a slippery slimy blood-sucking worm, is often applied to a person who clings, and drains. Through symbolic representation and the evocation of polar opposites, Campbell creates a love/hate element in her work. In turn, *Soft Serve* explores an ambivalent urge: to return to security, whether it is a person or a place, set against the need for freedom, to expand and explore.

In Campbell's artist talk she noted her interest in the idea of 'home'. *Soft Serve* can be viewed as exploring the ambivalent nature of home and the tensions that reside there. Such conflicts have been explored previously in contemporary art in context of postcolonial discourse. The artist Parmindar Kaur, for instance, explores the issue of home and subverts it. Kaur's beds, set three metres high, create nauseous scale shifts and distort our sense of the comfort associated with bed. A sense of danger related to 'home' is somewhat subtler and redirected in *Soft Serve*.

What is new and exciting about this work is that it doesn't present one meaning of 'home' but many, open for reshaping. Campbell doesn't so much subvert the idea of home but makes us contemplate the inevitability of capturing its essence. In *Soft Serve*, this 'home' can be associated with one's sense of belonging and manifests as a site for tensions to be explored. Home is a place where anxieties of security are fought out and where both safety and danger reside, according to critic Olu Oguibe in 'Fresh Cream'. Taking this into account, perhaps these tensions are played out in the relationship

Images by: Jessica Reid

between the leech and its home, in this case supposedly the stone wall. In the metaphor of a leech (at home) lie both sides of this tension, to suckle and to be repulsed, to drain versus to be drained, to become limp or to lack, to need and to hate the neediness. Here the leech's object of 'home' is the stone wall which is ultimately experienced as inhospitable, but the resin leech seems to be glancing back, nostalgically.

Campbell has created objects that speak of the undeniable longing of being with something, or someone, which inevitably ends with being shut out. She ultimately interrupts the safety net of home when the stone wall, which is the host/home is revealed as a fake. We can walk around the work, examine its mechanics. What we seek in 'home' is a comfort the work suggests as an elaborate romanticisation. Campbell's auto-paint shop alluring finish of the black larger-than-life leech contrasting with the real leech in the jar (not monotone, but with streaks of brown, white and black) is a window into the element of fantasy and illusion versus reality in the work as a whole. The wall looks like it belongs on a Lord of The Rings set where props are made as a substitute for reality, or even a substitute for fantasy, in other words, an idealised version of reality. In this way we can read the home as an image of problematic nostalgia. The narrative of the leech between home and home comer also plays out in relationships between couples, that is, the tensions between attraction and repulsion. There is a definite co-dependence evoked, and the cold stone wall that comes up to block our vision of anything else reminds us of the result when singles are prised from their couplings, cold and withdrawn into their separate spaces.

In terms of relationships there is an innate sense of longing and also suffocation. *Soft Serve* captures a snapshot of the temptation towards suction and the dissatisfaction we gain from co-dependence. Are we, just like the leech, addicted to the idea of safety and comfort, yet too scared of the sharp edges of the other person? Too scared to get too close? These pervading forces that *Soft Serve* surfaces, and makes us consider, gives the work an uncanny timelessness.

The element of push and pull in the work can be seen in the sense of movement in the resin leech and the stillness of the wall. The leech's ribbed body shaped as if in mid-movement seems to be looking back at the cliff wall. The rippling movement in the sculpture of the leech, with its ribbed and shiny surface, reminds me of a Slinky, that you let walk down the stairs. The extreme height of the wall and its narrowness induces vertigo makes us feel isolated and insecure. Campbell does not want us to feel at home in this space, we are to feel detached but vulnerable to it still. Yet the pervading mood of *Soft Serve* is one of melancholy, stone cold and careless, rather than a crude pessimism.

With a work that addresses the issue of security, *Soft Serve* does not deliver a comforting and idyllic image of home, but instead uses devices that make us question the cycle of desire, need and longing. Like the barren cell of a relationship gone stale, this work acts out the draining effects of an illusory security.

The pleasure in this exhibition is that it is quintessentially a work which celebrates attachment and detachment, it is honest and succinct. With its overhanging and distant ambience and the playful means to which the artist has explored a human tendency to cling in relationships, Campbell succeeds in putting across an edgy work that is really not a *Soft Serve* in the branded sense, not so sweet, and not so edible.

Repeat Performance 2005

Performance Week

JESSICA REID — September 12 - 16 2005

12

Following the success of Enjoy's inaugural 2004 Performance Week, we decided to do it again with *Repeat Performance 2005*. For five days Enjoy was dedicated to the exploration of contemporary performance art in its many forms. For 2005 we invited artists from within and outside Wellington to choose a performance of their own or from history to be re-performed. The results brought together theatre, music, acrobatics, mimed boxing, photography, narcoleptic episodes, amateur acting and some things which you just couldn't be sure were performances or not. *Repeat Performance* asked whether a moment in time could be repeated, whether the elements of chance often inherent to performance can be planned and replicated, whether the experience of a performance can be conveyed through residual objects and documentation, and questioned the results of orchestrating a performance from a different city. By directing stand-ins, paying homage to performance artists of the past or by using an already articulated performance as a starting point for re-interpretation, *Repeat Performance 2005* furthered Enjoy's commitment to experimental temporal art forms.

On the first day, two performances by Daniel Malone were re-performed in the gallery, *Doing Lines* and *Punch Drunk. Doing Lines* continued throughout the whole day. The concept was simple: on a wall draw a line as long as the pencil you are using. Repeat. As

the pencil gets blunt, sharpen it. As the pencil gets shorter, so do the lines you are drawing. *Doing Lines* was a tag-team effort, with each viewer to enter the gallery offered the opportunity to take a turn at drawing lines. It was a more time and energy-consuming activity than initially anticipated, which resulted in one bleary-eyed visitor frantically trying to get to the end of the pencil before it was time to close the gallery. *Punch Drunk* saw Marnie Slater stand in for Malone, as she donned boxing gloves and repeatedly punched herself in the face before an audience. Between each 'round' of boxing, Marnie took a swig of Malibu and juice, had lipstick applied to her and kissed out the words 'Once is never enough' on the gallery walls.

On Wednesday, Bryce Galloway organised six couples to read, record and act out a transcript taken from an evening at home he'd had with his partner when Nick Cave was playing in town. The performance *The Night of the Nick Cave Concert* played out like an amateur version of Waiting for Godot encapsulating the boredom and frustration of being stuck at home when it feels like something more exciting is happening elsewhere. Each couple's take on the reading was slightly different, stretching from hammed-up to deadpan versions, some trying to give a natural, fluid reading of the script while others embraced the futility of such an attempt.

Thursday evening saw Amy Howden-Chapman and Biddy Livesey perform *Piano for Falling Man*. The pair harnessed themselves to the gallery ceiling and, working on a pulley system, raised and lowered each other upside down directly above two synthesizer keyboards. The blacked-out gallery and spot lighting cast dramatic shadows against the wall behind. Each bodily movement had a mechanic decisiveness, which complemented the preset drum machine beats and keyboard drones of their accompanying music.

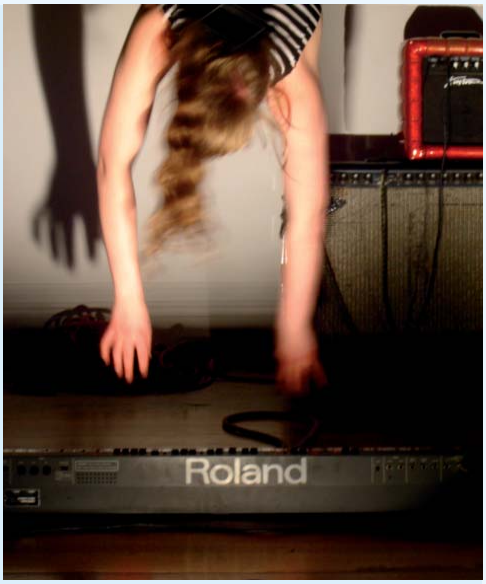
On Friday night, Chris Cudby as *Golden Axe* gave a lo-fi multimedia performance incorporating a smoke machine, ultra-violet light, projected found images off the internet and some of his own music on keyboard. Other images Chris had produced himself in rainbow colours using the rudimentary computer program Microsoft Paint. The performance was a disorientating sensory overload of colour, sound and light.

Other performances were presented in alternative ways. Like all performance documentation, a deal of faith is required of the audience to believe the veracity of the performer's claim. Louise Tulett and Shay Launder displayed documentation of a performance where, we were told, Louise had continuously crossed back and forth across a busy Wellington road, non-stop for ten minutes. The missing element of the audience actually being there added intrigue to the work. Not nearly as much intrigue, however, as was generated by Sean Kerr's claim that for his performance *SHUTEYE* he would have 'spontaneous, undocumented narcoleptic episodes'.

Top: *The Night of the Nick Cave Concert*, Bruce Galloway, performed here by Caroline Johnston and Owen Mann

Above: *CARPARK* by John Borley

Images by: Jessica Reid



Images by: Jessica Reid

Top row: ***Piano for Falling Man,*** Amy Howden-Chapman and Biddy Livesey. Middle: ***Punch Drunk,*** Daniel Malone, performed by Marnie Slater and Melanie Hogg. Above: ***Golden Axe,*** Chris Cudby; ***Doing Lines,*** Daniel Malone, performed here by Jessica Reid

These were to be performed from Auckland where he lives and so were unable to be verified. Little was given away too about John Borley's performance *CARPARK*. Viewers were notified that this would occur on Cuba Street, at lunchtime, everyday. Reports were given of people meeting in the car park next to the gallery, sometimes the same people, sometimes a sole figure waiting on a seat. Was this a performance? We were left asking. With no sure way to find out, I found myself staring at the passersby from the galley windows questioning the naturalness of their movements and observing their interactions.

What constitutes Performance Art is still a rich area of exploration, even forty years on from its heyday of the sixties. It is an investigation that is sure to continue and is therefore guaranteed an ongoing place within Enjoy's programme.

13

Schlock! Horror!

Mike Heynes

JESSICA REID — September 21 - October 7 2005

A statistic which is frequently quoted, if not completely accurate, is that Wellington now has more cinemas per head of population than anywhere else in the southern hemisphere. Older cinemas have decided to upgrade and renovate, add more screens or move to a new location. The rebirth of the suburban cinema has influenced this trend and pushed the goal towards quality over quantity. Now catering to a mature, baby-boomer market, this means good coffee, matching décor, spacious armchairs or even couch seating and paninis and gelato in place of popcorn. For Mike Heynes, creator of *Schlock! Horror!* this signals the end of a golden era, of a style of filmmaking itself as much as the film viewing experience. Heynes' work mourns the end of the lowbrow, cheap, easily digestible films he remembers from his childhood and in particular films of the horror genre. Animator Heynes claims that it is Peter Jackson's Bad Taste (1988), which is the director's greatest achievement. Bad Taste was reportedly made solely in the weekends over a period of five years, the director teaching himself filmmaking by reading magazines. No major international backers were required for this Jackson film, and Heynes believes it is all the better for that fact.

Schlock! Horror! replicated the sad and tired warehouse of a film production company gone bust. One wall was covered in a beige, seventies design wallpaper, props and costumes strewn on the floor. The exhibition combined film props, miniature diorama sets, end-of-line faux-merchandise and looping trailers for nonexistent films. To make a point of the lack of computer-generated trickery, Heynes displayed the props used in the shorts alongside his film projection. On closer inspection of some of these props, it became clear that Heynes has become adept at using whatever materials he has at hand. The work 'Ugly Dog' managed to be unsettling, wavering between humourous and grotesque, despite the fact it didn't hide the method of its construction. Among the materials used, one can spot wool and human hair, paint, glue, a water balloon, plastic fangs and dolls' hands.

The work immediately brings to mind Patricia Piccinini's hybrid creatures (minus the slick production), in particular her 'The Young Family' (2002/2003). The mother creature of Piccinini's family has humanoid hand feet, which have a creepiness present in their similarity, not their differences, from our own hands and feet. Similarly, Ugly Dog's size and shape that recalls a real cat, and its 'feet' made from toy doll hands which reference the human body, are what make it so grotesque.

In the corner of the room a small mountain of popcorn was piled high, something which has recently become an anachronistic trope of the film-going experience. It filled the gallery with its stale buttery scent. A disembodied mechanical hand stuck out from the popcorn, desperately groping at the floor or to opportunistically catch a passing visitor by the ankle. The mechanical hand, true to the shoestring ethos of the exhibition, worked only sporadically, lying dead for hours until briefly rearing into action again.

Continuing in the theme of bygone film going practices, a stack of cardboard 3D glasses was arranged on the window sill. These anaglyph red and blue spectacles are a leftover of cinema's golden era of 3D films in the nineteen fifties, which was also briefly revived in the late sixties. 3D films, a marketing gimmick which attempted to compete with television's increasing popularity as an entertainment form, were plagued with problems. The films frequently sacrificed engaging narratives in order to stick to the technical requirements of their production, which were often unconvincing in their results. In ***Schlock! Horror!***, however, Heynes reveled in the gimmick's downfalls. The slightly off-register blue and red shadow effect of one of the film trailers was reminiscent of the old 3D films, even starting with the traditional instruction on screen to 'Please now put on your glasses'.

A rollicking soundtrack accompanied the trailers with music played by local bands and musicians: The Garden of Timeless Wonder, Friendly Barnacle, Dragstrip, John Douglas, Mister Pudding, The Idle Suite, and The Rocking Whores. The screeching, relentless repetitive guitar rhythms reflected Heynes' irreverent punk attitude towards filmmaking.

So ***Schlock! Horror!*** was a swansong for a time gone by, when filmmaking to the young impressionable mind seemed tantalizingly within one's own capabilities and reach. ***Schlock! Horror!*** nostalgically celebrated this time in all its messy, flawed glory.

Images by: Jessica Reid

Special At Enjoy. First Year Show

Nick Austin, Andrew Barber, Joy Chang, Tim Chapman, Xin Cheng, Chae-Hyon Cho, Wonmok Choi, Clara Chon, Fiona Connor, Simon Denny, Daniel du Bern, Julien Dyne, Tamsen Hopkins, Stacey Lim, Jason Lindsay, Tahi Moore, Jo Schlatter, Rebecca Searle and Sanam Vaziri.

JESSICA REID — October 12 - 28 2005

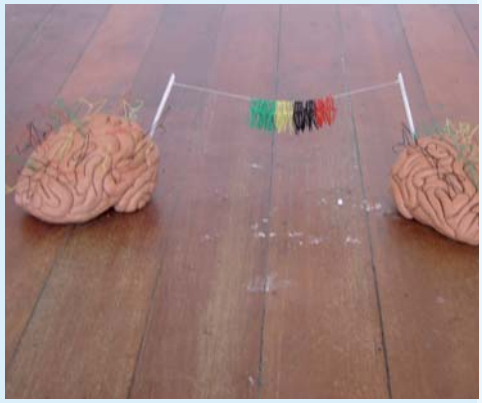
14

Intrepidly, I started art school just after I turned eighteen. I had moved to a big city in which I knew no one. Still, I was as much excited as I was frightened at being alone: I had romantic notions of spending all my waking hours slaving away at an easel, becoming an alcoholic in a dark garret, growing old, growing thin, being poisoned by paint fumes, dying young. That, or all day taking hallucinogens and looking at the afternoon sun through the trees and shafts of light breaking through the clouds. Just by being there I dreamed I would become a different person: great, or at the very least tragic. This is the view Colin McCahon looked out at, I would say.

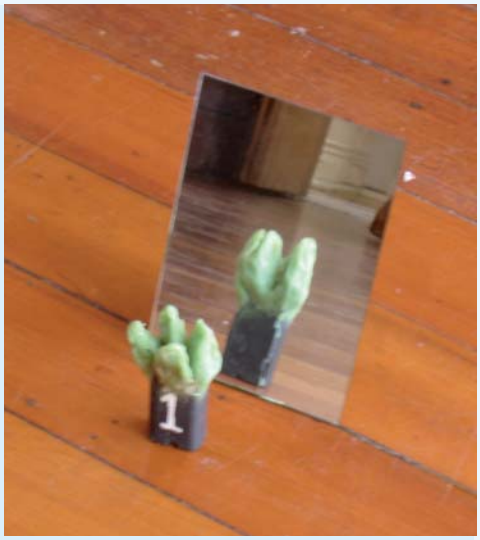
Instead I found myself slap-bang in the middle of what I wanted to avoid: mediocrity. Discovering that there were seventy nine other students who had exactly the same dreams was deflating, not comforting or inspiring. I soon discovered our studios were neither new enough nor decrepit enough. They were cheap and industrial but not artfully dilapidated. New to be owned by the art school, they didn't have illustrious ghosts. From the rooftop though, where we had weekly drinks, vegetarian barbeques and early morning sketching classes, if you squinted, the silhouetted skyline could maybe almost be New York, or what I imagined New York to be.





Images by: Jessica Reid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I remember one of the first assignments we were given. The brief required that we make a work examining our identity. Art to most of us was about symbols and every thing meant something else. We had to take a pragmatic approach; we had tables to work at and so a lot of our work was table-scaled, hand-sized, portable objects. I didn't have the material staples which come with living at home; the jam jars for washing brushes, holey tea towels to use as rags, the bundles of newspaper, worn toothbrushes and old cutlery. Everything I used I had to buy new and seemed weirdly synthetic.

For my work I photocopied and enlarged my hands to about ten times their size. I traced Wellington street maps on to them so they looked like abstracted veins. I backed them onto corrugated cardboard and glue-gunned them to bent metal coat hangers. Using clay and papier-maché I made a huge coffee cup for my hands to hold, and suspended it from the ceiling with fishing line. The inside of the cup was painted red, like blood pooling inside from my road map veins. Like many other student's work, it was quickly, roughly made, was cringingly clichéd and was a sculpture that only looked good from the front. I'm not really sure now what this work had to do with 'my identity', but there was something charming about its ridiculousness and brave in its stupidity.

I think I destroyed most of my first year work at the end of the year, saving myself from ever having to look at it again. The first year of art school was like a rite of passage, of being disappointed and becoming more realistic. But some of the most successful graduates since managed to keep their enthusiasm and romance towards art making alive, and when I think back I feel happy and homesick.

Spellbound

Terry Urbahn

PIPPA SANDERSON — November 2 - 18 2005

15

> Playing for the high one, dancing with the devil,
> Going with the flow, it's all the same to me.
>
> Motörhead, 'Ace of Spades', 1980

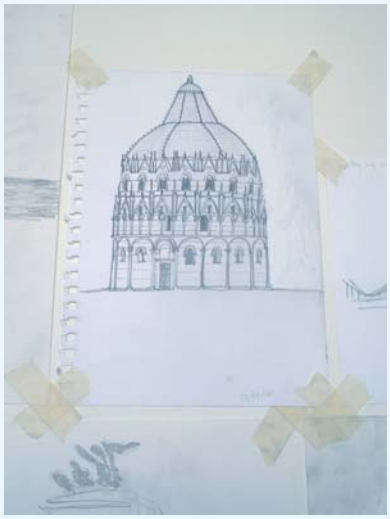
> A failure is a man who has blundered but is
> not capable of cashing in on the experience.
>
> Elbert Hubbard

I think in *Spellbound* Terry Urbahn is becoming hippy. Actually this persona was starting to emerge like an involuntary belch in 'Trunk Rock' (2003), taking a swipe at what Robert Leonard characterises as 'twig art' of the '70s and '80s that 'celebrated some authentic Pakeha past' . We see Terry the Hippy fully formed in 2006, participating in *Smoke Signals*, a group show at the Hirschfeld Gallery in Wellington. Urbahn's installation had the bewigged and sunglassed artist sitting amongst plaster tree-mountains adopting a hippy-guru pose. All this is strange because Urbahn is definitely from the punk side of the tracks and this informs most of his past work. His best-known work, *The Karaokes* (1998) starred the artist reliving his punk band youth, performing a cover version of 'Peaches' by English punk band The Stranglers. His work personifies punk's DIY amateurism, a position that provides an antidote to hippy utopianism.

Images by: Jessica Reid

In *Spellbound* Urbahn couples art and performance with ritualistic spell casting, presenting both as strategies to deal with failure and fascination. But there is a paradox prowling around this exhibition as it slips from one allegiance to the other, in danger of tipping the whole show off its axis.

On the one hand there is Urbahn, the traveller from down-under who, no matter how well-worn the path, how many times the story has been told and retold (in a uniquely down-under repetition compulsion), is still knocked sideways by the uncanny displacement of seeing in the flesh often cited but never seen places. That person is awestruck, impressed, humbled - perhaps aware of having reached 'an authentic Pakeha past'. On the other, there is the canny artist, one who makes things in response to life's bringings, and who is used to doing it with tongue in cheek, hand over the mic, stumbling over his failures with flair. These two characters battle it out, and their struggle is played out in the tenuously matched mind-map of installations that make up *Spellbound*.



The first thing that strikes you upon entering Urbahn's makeshift world is the noise. Heavy metal chords clash with sonorous spell incantations, emerging from adjacent monitors. The hub of the show is a tenuous web of connections emerging from the video mosh-pit of plastic bottles tossed by the bifurcating Tiber River where the parted waters meet in the slipstream of the Tiber Island. Moving maniacally to a tumbling riff provided by metal band Motörhead, the band's occult leanings link the head-banging bottles to the conversation going on between the paintings in the adjacent wall-mounted video. The tumbling together mirrors the jumbled gathering of parts of which this show is constructed.

Urbahn animated paintings he videoed in the Louvre with spells fished from the Internet, the contemporary artist's recycling bin. The spells evoked for Urbahn 'Europe's oldness', a kind of medieval mindset, which, in a casual collapse of time, he put in the mouths of Renaissance narrators. As an example of things that people resort to in order to cover up failure, the spells succeed beautifully. But they activate more than a laugh. The distorted computer-generated voices recite love potions for the impotent, money-making for the broke, spells 'to make you less noticeable' which 'may not work'. The effect see-saws between an irreverent teenage giggle and a disconcerting alienation at the disembodied voice of technology reciting New Age wish lists. The feel is that of a teenage séance conducted in a deserted house, part fascination, part skepticism.

As the camera pans across a painting showing cavities of Christ's body being probed by a doubting Thomas, those cavities are echoed in the cardboard and plaster castle which dominates the centre of the gallery, its interior lit by pulsing Christmas lights like a department store fairy grotto. Looking like a teenage ritualistic object, the sculpture has Urbahn's familiar 'punk' DIY aesthetic,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hastily but artfully constructed. Are we invited to doubt the authenticity of Urbahn's experience, his reproduction of it, or his sarcastic/mocking position?

For instance, he creates a mockery of the celebration of consumerism on which tourism rests, the proof of conquest: 'I was there', 'I owned that site/sight'. His sources are purloined, ready made, or cheap. He is interested in the detritus, the out-of-frame or hastily framed (a Polaroid of the artist as Mona Lisa peeks out between the two video monitors - a Duchampian cover version which took precisely 6 minutes 6 seconds according to the wall-drawn time-scale punctuating the show).

When Urbahn does wade into the mainstream, he flounders, and lets us know it. His attempt to faithfully draw famous sites from memory is an unintended example of failure in process. Finding his memory unreliable, Urbahn had to resort to family snapshots in which the buildings took second place to render his awkwardly earnest pencil sketches. They look like bad high school drawings, but time consuming, a testament to effort and good intentions. Displayed like a slap-on wall fresco the drawings take up a whole wall with unframed, barefaced cheek.

The paradox running through the show occurs as the awestruck response becomes a failed cover version. *Spellbound* teased the viewer with the possibility of a transformative experience, and gave us a makeshift facsimile of the artist's trip. Rather than presenting a tourist's trophy room, Urbahn staged an amateurish cover version of Europe. It was endearingly and unexpectedly authentic.

Thanks to Terry for the interview, and Bryce Galloway and Matt Couper for the conversations

[1] Robert Leonard, Terry Urbahn catalogue, unpaginated. *Trunk Rock* was the title of a Terry Urbahn show at Bartley Nees Gallery in 2003. It featured faux organic plaster-twig-and-fairy-light structures similar to the *Spellbound* castle.

[2] In his pre-Motörhead incarnation, lead singer Lemmy was in a hippy-styled band enacting Stonehenge rituals and druidic chants.

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At Home (In Transit)

Vivien Atkinson

JESSICA REID

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Vivien Atkinson is a woman who has done a lot of travelling in her life. For almost twenty-five years Vivien never lived in one place for more than eighteen months. This itinerancy has formed the basis of much of her research and artistic practice. Global mobility is a concept with particular relevancy as much recent critical theory has explored ideas around travel with regard to tourists, exiles, immigrants, expatriates, refugees and the notion of location determining identity. Edward Said used his own experience of growing up a refugee to formulate his arguments relating to Western perceptions of the Middle East, the plight of Palestinians and their need for a homeland. Atkinson's work references this territory, questioning assumptions of geographically bound identity. Maps, atlases and place names, the signifiers of place and travel, have become motifs of her practice.

While Atkinson's experience would sit to one extreme end of the spectrum, Western society as a whole has seen a shift towards greater global mobility in the last twenty years with international air travel becoming more affordable. Itinerancy has been reflected in the growth of other industries as well such as professional movers and relocators, immigration and passport services and the storage industry. There are now over a hundred self-storage facilities in New Zealand, which account for almost 200,000 square metres of storage space. This means that people are paying to have their

Images by: Jessica Reid

possessions, their 'stuff', held in transit, either long-term or temporarily, not necessarily to be used or accessed, but just to be there, accumulated and kept.

While on one hand the accumulation of possessions and objects can provide a reassuring comfort, as they contain memories and acquire sentimental attachments, it can cause a great deal of anxiety. Walking into Atkinson's exhibition *At home (in transit)*, this anxiety is palpable. A collection of professional movers' boxes is artfully strewn across the gallery floor and I at once feel an overwhelming desire to order and unpack them. The different names and logos of the moving companies tell a story of Atkinson's travel. Some boxes are sealed, some are ajar and spew packing materials: scrunched newsprint and shredded maps. Some of these materials, brown packing tape and paper, are the residue of *Who am I Where am I*, where Atkinson employed a professional mover to continually wrap her for the duration of the performance, was repeated to accompany this exhibition. Adding to the confusion, a tangle of wires link and loop between the boxes. These signal the cacophonous sound recordings emanating from within – what sounds like the pilot of an aeroplane reporting to his passengers, a taxi driver speaking in a foreign indecipherable language, ominous hums and fuzzy feedback.

On further investigation, I see that some of the boxes contain bed pillows, a symbol of domesticity, comfort and safety. In neat, fine stitches the outline of single words have been sewn in human hair onto the pillows. There are four pillows in total with words sewn in hair in different languages, one reads 'Home'. The white cotton of the pillow is translucent like an eyeball, bloodshot with capillaries. Looking closer I can see that these are in fact the roads from maps painstakingly cut from their surrounding land, resting under the pillow cover surface. The maps are of places that Atkinson has lived, but the roads out of context are meaningless, like the blur which distant memory creates. One thinks of veins, and the warmth and sweetness associated with home is undermined by this visceral reminder of our bodies, which grow and degenerate, constantly changing too. The hair takes on greater poignancy when I later learn that it is a combination of Atkinson's own hair and her daughter's. Carefully and lovingly fashioned on the pillow, something not expendable or disposable, but to be treasured and passed down through generations.

Perhaps because *At home (in transit)* was staged in early summer, and I noticed the days getting longer and the sun reaching higher in the sky, and the clean, otherworldly, almost heavenly atmosphere created by Atkinson fogging-out Enjoy's wall of windows, my impression was of the exhibition as resoundingly quiet. This is unusual for an installation employing sound samples and loops layering over each other. One felt the need to tip-toe around the boxes, crouch over to admire the impeccable handiwork and decipher its meaning. While simultaneously evoking the mental haze and anxiety that being uprooted and moving can impart, Atkinson had created an installation of calm beauty, a peaceful sanctuary where one could take some time to reflect.