

Curator Juliana Engberg  
Project Managers Olivia Meehan and Angela Brophy

## **Visual Arts Program**

Worldwide attention has recently focused on the rise of conceptual art practice which emerged to challenge the traditional concepts of visual art as pictorial, painted and sculptural. This year's Visual Arts Program brings together a number of outstanding projects by leading international artists who each pursue the ethos of conceptualism in new and extending ways.

**Turner prize winner, Martin Creed** will create a new work exclusively for Melbourne International Arts Festival at the **Australian Centre for Contemporary Art**. **Creed's** works, which have won acclaim from critics all around the world are disarmingly empty, or deceptively full, and explore the physical and philosophical conundrums of being noisy or quiet, zen or zestful, visible or invisible. Playful or serious. Following the credo of less is more, and understanding the fullness of silence, **Martin Creed** continues the investigations commenced by composer and conceptualist, **John Cage** and combines this with a regard for the poetry of the Duchampian ready-made in an installation made sublime, light, wondrous and open.

Also at the **Australian Centre for Contemporary Art**, internationally acclaimed Australian artist, **Callum Morton** creates a huge scale new commission. **Morton**, known for his reinventions of the heroic moments of modernism to be re-encountered will create a project that jumbles our sense of modernity and place. Using a fun park of aesthetics and a sense of the fantasy utopia this new sculptural installation and architectural extravaganza presents a new world order of post humanity made real. Think 007, imagine mini golf, hide from *The Shining*, remember L'Avventura. Consider Corbusier and needless to say Neimymmer. Welcome to Tomorrow Land, today. Fasten your seatbelts as **Morton** touches you down into the belly of the fun-park that has become our post-Venturian, Ur-history existence.

At **Gertrude Artists Spaces**, **Daniele Puppi**, one of the most dynamic and exciting young artists to recently emerge from Italy will make a site situational project. **Puppi** makes place and space kinetic and active. He causes architecture to reverberate like a drum played with the whole body. He makes videos that swallow space whole to re-image it as a site of effort and exhaustion. **Danielle Puppi's** energetic work takes us to the next level of engagement with video through a sculptural redefinition of moving image. Simple, sparse and powerful, **Puppi's** acoustic enters the nervous system to put the room in the body in a reverse strategy of minimalism. His actions and efforts restore the dynamic of the world to itself.

**Daniele Puppi's** works belong inside the tradition of 20th century European art, which can be traced through Burri, Manzoni, Klein and Fontana.

At **Anna Schwartz Gallery**, the Festival presents **Fiona Tan's** acclaimed work **Saint Sebastian**. A work that explores the erotic and exotic. **Fiona Tan's** remarkable visual essay on suspense, sensuality and the coming-into-being that is enacted as part of the ritualised ceremony of Saint Sebastian in Kyoto, Japan, is riveting and all absorbing with its observation of the details of a delicate wisp of hair, an eyelash bashfully lowered, the throat, erotic and poised. Blinking concentration, slight perspiration. The anticipation. In this work **Tan** has encapsulated the captivation of beauty, colour and eroticism.

Cannes' finalist **Van Sowerwine** presents a majestically scaled mise-en-scène on **Republic Tower**. **Sharper than a Serpent's Tooth** continues **Van Sowerwine's** examinations of childhood. **Sowerwine's** characters with their doll-like appearance and large eyes convey cuteness, passivity and vulnerability. This harmless exterior belies a more sinister truth conveyed by the violence of a situation and stance.

Celebrating Melbourne's wonderful and diverse smaller art spaces, this year's Visual Arts Program is also proud to co-present projects at **CLUBSproject** and **Spacement** galleries. At **Spacement**, artist provocateur, **Xu Zhen** attempts to arouse and unease his audience, testing their personal boundaries and the workings of social conventions. **Xu Zhen's** work questions reality and existence; investigating the sensory notions of the body. Described by writer Monica Dematte as both beautiful and violent, his work encapsulates the essence of contemporary Chinese art, whilst maintaining a transitional narrative that is public, inherently political and deeply

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intimate. **CLUBSproject**, Melbourne's most active Artists' Run Space, collaborates with the French collective **3015** to present a massive season of new film and video works **MIXmedia Trip**. Over 20 new works will play continuously at the Clubs venue. Including new works by Bernard Gigounou, David Ortsman, John Marriot, Nicolas Dufranne, Augustin Gimel, Messieurs Delmotte, Valerie Paviat, Pascal Lievre, Julien Previeux, Brigitte Zieger, Teemu Maki and Pirjetta Brander, Thierry Lagalla, Patrick Andre, Jérôme Ruby, Nicolas Berthelot, Axel Claes, Laetitia Bourget, Philippe Charles and Liisa Lounilla.

Curator **Juliana Engberg** says, "This year's Visual Arts Program takes you on a journey from the ethereal to the erotic as we encounter the space around and between things. Sexual initiation is alluded to, fantasy finds a home; architecture becomes sensual and sometimes simulacrum. Hard and soft are played off, one against the other, in projects where walls are mutable plays of light, and where transparency becomes solid. Domestic spaces are intense and drama-filled. Public space becomes a private theatre of transgressions."

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