



**THE  
UNQUIET  
WORLD**

## THE UNQUIET WORLD

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**THE  
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JULIANA  
ENGBERG**

At the moment the world seems restless and edgy and uncertain and full of white noise and static. *The Unquiet World* represents this sense of disturbance.

The exhibition settles momentarily on a number of global places where political, environmental or social unrest occurs. I guess you could call these 'trouble spots', but I would prefer to call them 'places in process': some for better and some for worse. While there is trouble, there is also a tremendous willingness on the part of the artists in this exhibition to be part of a repairing, problem-solving process. Importantly, there is a sense of urgency to get information out beyond the mediated and regulated places of network media and sanctioned releases.

Artists have a tremendous ability to make connections with people. Because they are unofficial, and at the best of times open to discovery, they allow us to witness a very personal account of things that are often obscured by the restrictions of commercial interest, government interventions and policy, and so forth.

Artists have always performed this function to some extent, but certainly the group of artists in *The Unquiet World* has a strong link to the idea of art and life that spreads through most of modernity and gained special force in the socially engaged practices post-1968.

Some people have asked if the works in the exhibition are a return to 'social realism'. I would answer 'yes', in a way, but I think there is still a lot of subjectivity in these works and that's what makes them potent. I would be cautious about using a term like 'social realism' because I think, now that we know how prone things are to editing and manipulation, the 'realism' part of that phrase is somewhat up for grabs... but these works are certainly very socially real.

A good many of the works in this show comment on the role media plays in depicting the world in disruption, and about the way this depiction can sometimes over-saturate and even diminish our response to the issues covered. To me, art, if compelling, cuts through media saturation. In certain ways that's what differentiates art from other forms of visual transmission. Salam Pax is a good example of this. He uses visual dislodgings to make us aware of the constructed aspects of his video diary. This means we have reason to remain alert and aware and to remain open with enquiry. Conventional TV and film-making try to make information seamless, make it normalised, so that you do not notice the manipulations. Art operates in a very different way.

Even while encountering the bleaker aspects of humanity's struggle with itself, art can operate with humour - and in this exhibition I particularly like Kamal Aljafari's work for its inherent humorous poetic, which draws people to it. Sandra Johnston's little monitor works about memory and 'the Troubles' in Northern Ireland are quite lyrical, Lida Abdul's works are quite provisional, Salam Pax's video diaries are hugely playful, Gittoes's GI guys get under your skin... the list goes on.

There seems to be a great willingness on the part of exhibition visitors to sit with a number of these works, which are often quite dense, and to stay with them. One of the works people most comment upon is Ursula Biemann's *Black Sea Files*, and that's a big project which takes quite some time to work through.

Thanks to all the artists and authors for their contribution to an exhibition and catalogue that open discussion and debate about this world that is restless and unquiet. JE

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Not all houses welcome you home. Some lie in ruins; reminders of devastated memories. You drag others along behind you, hoping that in this awkward baggage a sense of belonging will follow. Still others are burdensome; houses that never allow you to leave, not even in exile.

In her moving image works, Afghani artist Lida Abdul lays bare 'the unhealable rift' of exilic experience.<sup>1</sup> Abdul is currently without a home-base, moving frequently between Afghanistan, Germany and the United States. Her practice reveals the exile's struggle against the rip of displacement. In works such as *The White House* and those in the House series, the domicile becomes a metaphor for the unhomeliness of exile. But the rough texture of Abdul's 16mm films transferred to video leaves no doubt in the mind of the viewer that in her work we are witnessing real life. The labour and concentrated effort that characterise Abdul's performative actions convey an urgent need to heal a shattered sense of home.

In *The White House*, a large-scale wall projection, Abdul is pictured whitewashing the ruins of a dwelling on the outskirts of Kabul. Her large wooden paintbrush is heavy and the rubble beneath her sandalled feet, treacherous. Abdul's task is not an easy one. Some places are hard to reach, in others debris hangs precariously from what could once have been a ceiling, swaying under the pressure of brush and paint and always threatening to fall. The ground literally moves beneath her feet as she bends to cover up the rubble that now carpets this ruined home. In the distance, people go about their business, driving purposefully past while Abdul carries on with her housekeeping. No-one slows to observe her labour. There is a matter-of-factness about her movements that lends a sense of the ordinary to this intensely moving scene.

Gaston Bachelard, who famously described the house as a site of daydreaming and a shelter for dreamers, has meditated upon the role housework plays in making a home. In carrying





out domestic activities he finds 'a sort of consciousness of constructing the house, in the very pains we take to keep it alive, to give it all its essential clarity. A house that shines from the care it receives appears to have been rebuilt from the inside ...'<sup>12</sup>

But what happens when there is no longer any inside? When the protective shell is in ruins and the furniture whose polish would once have lent warmth and intimacy to a home has long since been destroyed? In whitewashing this dwelling, Abdul has deliberately turned her back on rebuilding, at least in the traditional sense of post-war reconstruction. Instead, through her labour she works towards a different kind of return, one alive to the impossibility of homecoming. Whitewashed, the white house recedes into the surrounding landscape, no longer a reminder either of the home it once was or of the unhomely ruin it had become.

The need for the security of home is greatest in the face of loss and displacement. Like others living in exile, Abdul suffers the burden of attempting to make herself at home everywhere she goes. In the five short, looped films that constitute the *House* series, as in *The White House*, the emotional and psychological recourse to homemaking is made manifest through physical effort. Abdul drags, pulls, yanks and carries a miniature, dollhouse-like abode through the streets of Los Angeles. In general, Abdul is mindful of her charge, carefully navigating the rough topography of the inner-city bitumen. Only in *House 5* does she allow it to ricochet from side to side and career into the sharp corners of brick buildings. It is unclear if the fate of this dwelling is the result of simple neglect or deliberate damage. At times Abdul appears to be trying to outrun her battered abode. But house and exile are irrevocably bound together, unable to escape the damage they inflict upon each other.

Abdul's determination to keep moving as she struggles in the face of the awkward weight of her load is at once awe-inspiring and distressing. Is her effort motivated by desperation

or wilfulness? Perhaps the assumption of this burden is one way of wresting some control over the imposition of exile. Perhaps in these works the house is a symbol of hope. Nevertheless, there is, in this series, an overwhelming sense of the precariousness of Abdul's American 'home': her grip on the flimsy tie that binds her to her adopted abode is forever threatening to loosen.

Reminiscent of Adorno's 'living-cases ... [dwellings which are] devoid of all relation to the occupant', Abdul's houses declare the exile's ongoing displacement and permanent homelessness.<sup>3</sup> Even as she labours over them, these useless shelters seem to mock her efforts, insisting: 'This is not your home!'. Their period architecture does not reflect her history. Their inhabitants, who stand on the miniature verandah—whether to welcome or rebuff is unclear—are not her family. In exile, Abdul is denied her own home and burdened with someone else's house of dreams. AM

<sup>1</sup> Edward Said, 'Reflections on Exile' in *Reflections on Exile*, Granta, London, 2001, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1969, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> Theodor Adorno, 'Refuge for the Homeless' in *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a damaged life*, Verso, London/New York, 2005, p. 38.

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*Thus it happens in matters of state; for knowing afar off (which it is only given a prudent man to do) the evils that are brewing, they are easily cured. But when, for want of such knowledge, they are allowed to grow so that everyone can recognise them, there is no longer any remedy to be found. - Machiavelli*

*Visit Iraq* borrows its approach from magazine-style television, based on vox-pop, door stop investigative journalism. Hearsay, speculation, suspicion and conspiracy theories write a script that, like much that purports to be current affairs programming, makes news out of the flimsiest of premises.

*Visit Iraq* opens with a brief 'portrait' of one of society's outsiders: the citizen with a grievance against the omnipotence of the forces of government. This self-appointed modern heretic, Kafkaesque in his torment and disposition, is permitted his moment in the media spotlight through the camera. His claims, written on thousands of sheets of paper, supported by gathered ephemeral evidence, and his vigil outside the edifice of the government offices whose inhabitants thwart him daily, establish an unsettling overture to the main business of this short film. There is no denying that this is an individual who is uneasy and, we are forced to think, perhaps a little deranged. But the question remains. Did his agitated state of being form as a result of his treatment from government, or is it a symptom of his own internal debate? Either way, it announces a filmic tone of paranoia.

Kamal Aljafari takes us to a business district of Geneva, Switzerland where the office of Iraqi Airways appears as an abandoned site. The empty office, like a modern ruin offering itself up as evidence of a past civilization, is investigated by Aljafari's filmic gaze. The soft, worn leather upholstery of the round, booth-shaped waiting lounge is panned over, revealing the little cushion hills and troughs upon which the shadow of Arabic sign writing undulates, as if cast over a desert plain. A Hollywood-style portrait of a young, handsome Saddam Hussein



hangs in its gilt frame, with its glass reflecting the merchant world of the Geneva street. Cables and office equipment, now dishevelled and scattered on the floor appear like ancient items from an archeological dig. Part of a wooden crate, which once housed fine cognac, exists as a testament to the opulence of a lost, but possibly decadent civilization.

The harsh blink of fluorescent light lends a sinister effect to the scene. Such a light, in film language at least, generally suggests interrogation under duress. The ancient, fallen empire, as represented by the ruin, is now the suspect: the culprit who has absconded.

Aljafari switches from archeologist to sociologist and embarks upon his investigation into the sudden disappearance of the Iraqi Airways business – which, it would seem, has done a bunker. Yes, it is confirmed by local tradesfolk, they were there one day and then *phiff*, gone. But still, as the shop owner reports, the bills are paid, and so the lights are on at night; the rent is kept up, so that is not an issue. Still it is strange.

From one to another Aljafari seeks answers: from the local men's apparel trader; from the women sitting at the café; from the students who wander past daily. The sheer fact that he asks about the abandoned office gives license to the good citizens of the town to finally vocalise what they had secretly held close. *They were always talking in groups*, suggests one; *I don't know what they were up to*, offers another. *It makes you wonder*, opines yet another. And that loudest of community laments: *they kept to themselves*.

The spectre of terrorism - plotting, secret cells, networks, 9/11, and other acts of mass violence - hangs like the long shadow of the afternoon over this enquiry. Although none will say it, most who are asked see the possibility of the Iraqi Airways office as a front for sinister activity. They try to remain

open-minded, but fear has crept into their world. And not only fear, but a kind of vicarious excitement at the possibility of being in the midst of a drama that converts their little spot on the globe into a potentially international place where things happen.

Aljafari's *Visit Iraq* is not just about the kind of paranoia and speculation that can be aroused by the most mundane events around us - such as the closure of a failing business, probably due to the fact that no-one wanted to visit Iraq post the American invasion. Aljafari's film is equally about the ways in which media hypes a story, breeds an angle, sets up a premise for its cast of spectators and bit part players to act out. It is about context and how, in the shifting circumstances of an unquiet world, even the prosaic can be turned into a mosaic of intrigue. JE

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For this exhibition, *The Unquiet World*, Marianne Baillieu presents an installation which she has called *The Faith*. In a grey, enclosed room there are three tables of different heights covered with spent tubes of oil paint. On one table the glistening metallic tubes form a layer almost one foot deep and on another the metaphoric mass of tubes seems to have caused the table to collapse. While these tubes are the literal residue of her painting process, which has 'produced over one thousand paintings', they are also like discarded crusts, empty shells or even cadavers whose souls have been released by the very act of painting and found their way onto her canvases – not here in the exhibition but in a different world, somewhere else.

There is also a soundtrack to *The Faith* – an arcane compendium of sacred music from different religions. These are songs sung by a single voice – a chant of a Gyoto monk, a song of Hildegard of Bingen. Even Aboriginal and Sufi songs are included. What is most striking in this scene is the absence of the artist and her paintings. But as she says: "Me' is the essence that I try to lose ... I strive after something more abstract than myself." This is the hidden subtext to her installation.

'Installation,' declared the Czech artist Jiri Georg Dokoupil, 'is what plumbers do!' It was an amusing aphorism for one of the leading proponents of neo-expressionist painting in the 1980s to make in a climate when there was an insatiable 'hunger for pictures'. But this appetite for paintings waned as installation art came back with a vengeance and quickly became the new orthodoxy into the 1990s and beyond. However, Marianne Baillieu did not jump on this international bandwagon as it rolled into town, she was already on it. Her very first solo exhibition in 1983 at Reconnaissance in Melbourne had been an 'installation' rather than simply a suite of paintings.



As the founder of Realities Gallery in Melbourne in the 70s she represented Roger Kemp, Fred Williams and George Baldessin and was one of the first to show the Aboriginal artists from the Western Desert. But when she decided to become a full-time artist herself in the early 80s she gravitated towards a younger generation of artists rather than her own peers (even though Roger Kemp was one of her artistic mentors), showing with Yull/Crowley in Sydney, Kayrn Lovegrove in Melbourne and Bellas in Brisbane. While she was comfortable with the idea of art as 'installation' or as 'event', painting was her primary focus. And her paintings are abstract and highly distinctive – a kind of whirling chaotic calligraphy that echoes some of the gestural aspects of Fred Williams but also the spontaneous mark-making of Tony Tuckson and Cy Twombly.

There is also an affinity with the kinaesthetic nature of Emily Kngwarreye's output in the way both artists seem to think with their paintbrushes – how the gesture in their work often gives rise to the thought and how they both paint without any preliminary plan or design and without hesitation. 'I am the conductor of something that moves through me,' says Marianne.

The titles of Marianne's works and exhibitions often refer to 'angels', 'morphic fields' and 'pranas' beckoning to possible worlds and principles beyond the visible, the mundane and the everyday. Indeed her interest in Tibetan Buddhism took a more concrete form when she proposed and set in motion, together with her partner Ian, in 1991 the first of 3 worldwide simultaneous 'prayers for peace' organised under the auspices of the Dalai Lama. These 'prayers for peace' were events (the other two following in 1994 and 2003) on a massive scale comparable to Christo's public events, like the recent *Gates* in New York's Central Park or even to the *Baltic Way* in 1989, a kind of proto-Fluxus event in which two million Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians joined hands to

form a continuous human chain across the three Baltic States to successfully (as it turned out) challenge the power and authority of the USSR.

Marianne has also travelled over the decades into remote regions of the world – from the Quinkan caves in Northern Australia, to the Kalahari Desert, to Nepal, Tibet and even to Inner Mongolia. What is she seeking in this restless and often solitary movement across the face of the earth? Enlightenment? Epiphany?

I sense a dislocation from 'place' – an absence of belonging. This is also evident in her paintings which are curiously lacking in what one could call a 'motif', unless of course one sees her marks as representing 'the invisible energy field that exists all around us.' As Marianne notes 'there is no empty space anywhere.' Nevertheless this is in stark contrast to both Fred Williams's and Emily Kngwarreye's highly energised marks which are rooted in a very specific sense of 'place' – indeed their paintings are representations of landscape.

The Swedish painter, Richard Bergh, wrote in 1896 that 'the landscape, that tract in which we live, affects our lives, not just in the superficial sense of enforcing on us certain fixed living conditions, but also the purely suggestive influence it has on our soul. That drama which daily is in front of our eyes puts its mark on our inner being... Every landscape is a state of mind.'

These words come from the catalogue for the exhibition *Dreams of a Summer Night: Scandinavian Painting at the Turn of the Century*. Purchased as a present for her father, Jørgen Dalhoff, the book was never sent, for Marianne in a wild frenzy of paint and emotion, had painted over each page, both text and images in her characteristic calligraphic swirls. Bloated and violated, the book no longer made a suitable present but it did become the source for a series of

collaborations between Marianne and myself – the resultant painting exhibited as *To the Fatherland* at Yuill/Crowley in Sydney in 1988.

Questioned about her deeply felt reaction to this catalogue, Marianne answered that it was the distance between 'what was proper and beautiful in Northern Painting' and her own work – 'the difference between the way I should have been and the way I am' and the fact that some of the images, particularly to do with sickness, loss and death struck a deeply personal chord with her. My own feeling is that she was also expressing the psychic rupture from the Northern landscapes (both geographical and cultural) of her birth. For Marianne is a child of the diaspora. Born in Stockholm of Danish parents, then quarantined alone in a polio clinic at the age of five for several months, she moved with her family to Nelson in New Zealand when she was 10. The remainder of her childhood was spent in New Zealand until as a young adult she moved to Melbourne where she now lives and works.

I believe that Marianne's paintings, while on one level 'seek the sacred in a modern world of the secular', they are also about personal displacement, loss, dislocation and a kind of exile of the soul. But painting can be a path to healing and art itself an act of redemption.

As Ian Baillieu puts it in the following phrases of his poem titled Marianne: 'she sees before the dawn ... feels the undertow of far-off forces, the swell of the king-tide surging over the sea wall' and 'then renouncing reason ... she embarks alone in her frail craft.' IT

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There is more than one way to map the desire lines of world oil geography: pipelines, tanker routes, derricks, and refineries; trans-national interests, military objectives, classified zones and security areas; sex traffic and undocumented migration. And artistic fieldwork and video essays.

Ursula Biemann's video work, the *Black Sea Files*, maps these and other desire lines that coexist along the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, the largest of the Tran Caucasian development projects initiated to transport oil from the Caspian Sea to Western markets.<sup>1</sup> Her work comprises ten videos, or files. Each documents a different aspect of the pipeline's construction – from the history of the region, through its relationship to the West and the labour and technical expertise involved in the transportation of oil, to the displacement of Kurdish communities, the trafficking of women and changes to traditional local industries. The files combine material drawn from sources including news media, technical data and other background information, as well as interviews and footage collected by Biemann assuming the role of an 'embedded artist' and as she followed the trajectory of the pipeline in 2003-2004.

*Black Sea Files* follows the same route as the BTC pipeline, but it is the narratives that intersect, diverge from, disrupt and exist alongside official representations that inform the files' bulk. These side-events of global oil extraction and transportation reveal this region's complex social geography. Working 'in the field' - '[w]ithout press pass or gas mask. Without any license to record images...' - Biemann was rarely permitted access to key events and sites of industry. Instead, she 'was continually diverted to secondary scenes ..., wandering around the lesser debris of history.'<sup>2</sup> In this debris, left in the wake, and out-of-frame of newsworthy events, are to be found alternative narratives of oil extraction; ones far more complex than their poor, current affairs relation.

Narratives, like pipelines, are structures of desire.<sup>3</sup> Biemann's decision to compile files and not to present a work more detached from her personal experience in the field, reveals her own desire to construct an open narrative that reflects the often happenstance nature of her research process: 'the file seemed the appropriate structure for bringing a minimum of order into a complex web of interrelations.'<sup>4</sup>

*Black Sea Files* may not be rigidly ordered, but it is highly edited. Biemann skilfully employs tactics familiar to contemporary audiences of news and current affairs programs - scrolling text, voice-overs and footage from the field reminiscent of live-to-air broadcasts. In this way, she reveals the constructedness of such narratives. Shown within and alongside interviews with Azerbaijani farming families and fishermen operating out of Ceyhan, the news media becomes one of multiple oil narratives.

Editing as the shaping of a visual narrative is another subject of the *Black Sea Files*, one as important as the construction of the BTC pipeline and the human side-events that problematise the route's apparently uncomplicated, cartographic line. In *FILE 4*, Kurdish exiles burn the waste paper they have been recycling in Ankara as an act of resistance to another forced displacement, this time from their adopted metropolitan home. In an adjacent frame, we witness Biemann in a studio recording the work's scripted voice-over. She asks: 'What does it mean to take the camera into the field, to go into the trenches? ... How to resist producing the ultimate image that will capture the whole drama in one frame? How to resist freezing the moment into a symbol?' In fact, Biemann has effectively disrupted the single frame by splitting the image before the viewer. There can be no frozen moment or ultimate image in the *Black Sea Files* because each file is comprised of two television monitors, synchronised and installed beside each other, but screening different pictures.



Biemann's editorial technique provides an opportunity for her to question, with the viewer, her own complicated role in the field. She may be behind the camera, but Biemann's gaze is neither omniscient nor invisible. To some places she is denied access, in others her questioning is met with a passive-aggressive resistance borne of incomprehension. Curiosity and concern can be lost in cross-cultural translations. Thus, in seeking to interrogate the trafficking of women, who travel along the same route as crude oil, Biemann exposes the threatening relationship between prostitutes and their pimps but also reveals the obstacles confronting women searching for common ground and a conversational space.

There are no uncomplicated exchanges in the *Black Sea Files*. Instead of the symbols often associated in the West with the politics of oil extraction and transportation, Biemann's films remind us of the human scale of decisions made by transnational corporations and supported by world powers. They demonstrate the extent to which the omissions of the 'corporate imaginary' shape the visible desire lines of official image-making as much as do stock-in-trade broadcast footage of heavy-weight political handshakes and bird's-eye views of burning oil refineries. From the field, Biemann brings us not only reports of talks, presidential addresses, crude oil prices or local insurgents, but also indications of competing understandings of land use, successful acts of non-violent resistance and the apparently inevitable and ongoing displacement of communities living and working in the wake of oil. AM



<sup>1</sup> Biemann's work is part of a larger interdisciplinary research project, *Transcultural Geographies*, which involves media analysts, social anthropologists, human geographers and artists, and is concerned with the movement of peoples throughout South-eastern Europe, the Balkans, Greece, Turkey, and the Caucasus. Anselm Franke, ed. *B-ZONE: Becoming Europe and beyond*, Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin and ACTAR, Barcelona, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 57.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the miniature, the gigantic, the souvenir, the collection*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1993, p. ix.

<sup>4</sup> Anselm Franke, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 27.

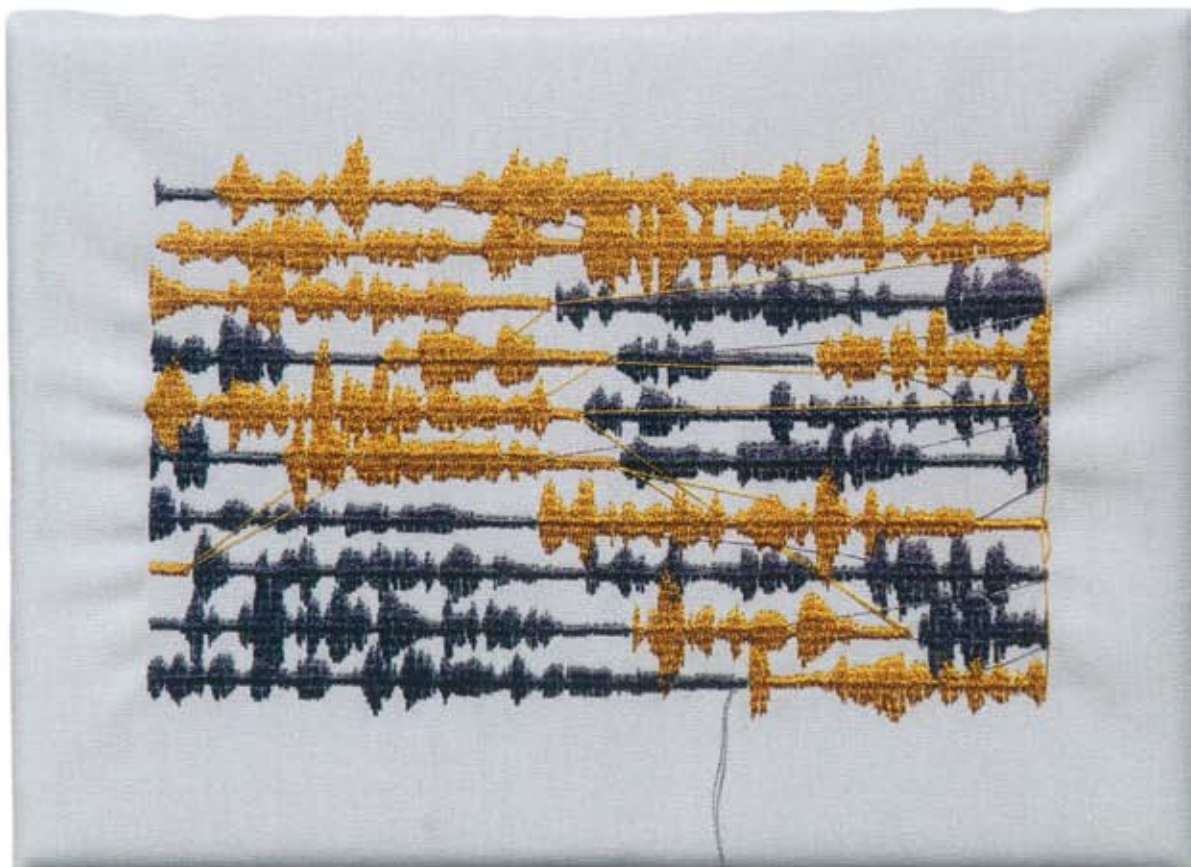
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**Artist's note:** In thinking about the idea of an unquiet world, my mind turned from the sounds I hear to the sounds I make - and in particular the sounds I make that, thanks to modern technology and obsessive governments, produce a sense of disquiet in me. In my Chicago apartment my couch is covered with a lovingly home-made quilt and I sit or lie on it as I make my phone calls to friends and family in Melbourne. Invariably we hear a click on the line and make jokes about the FBI or CIA listening in, noting that this American government assumes it doesn't need a warrant for such activities. Suddenly my home of hand-made quilts and baked apple pies becomes a site of potentially suspicious undertakings. *13 captured telephone conversations - all one minute long* considers the relationship between this kind of intervention and the domestic space.

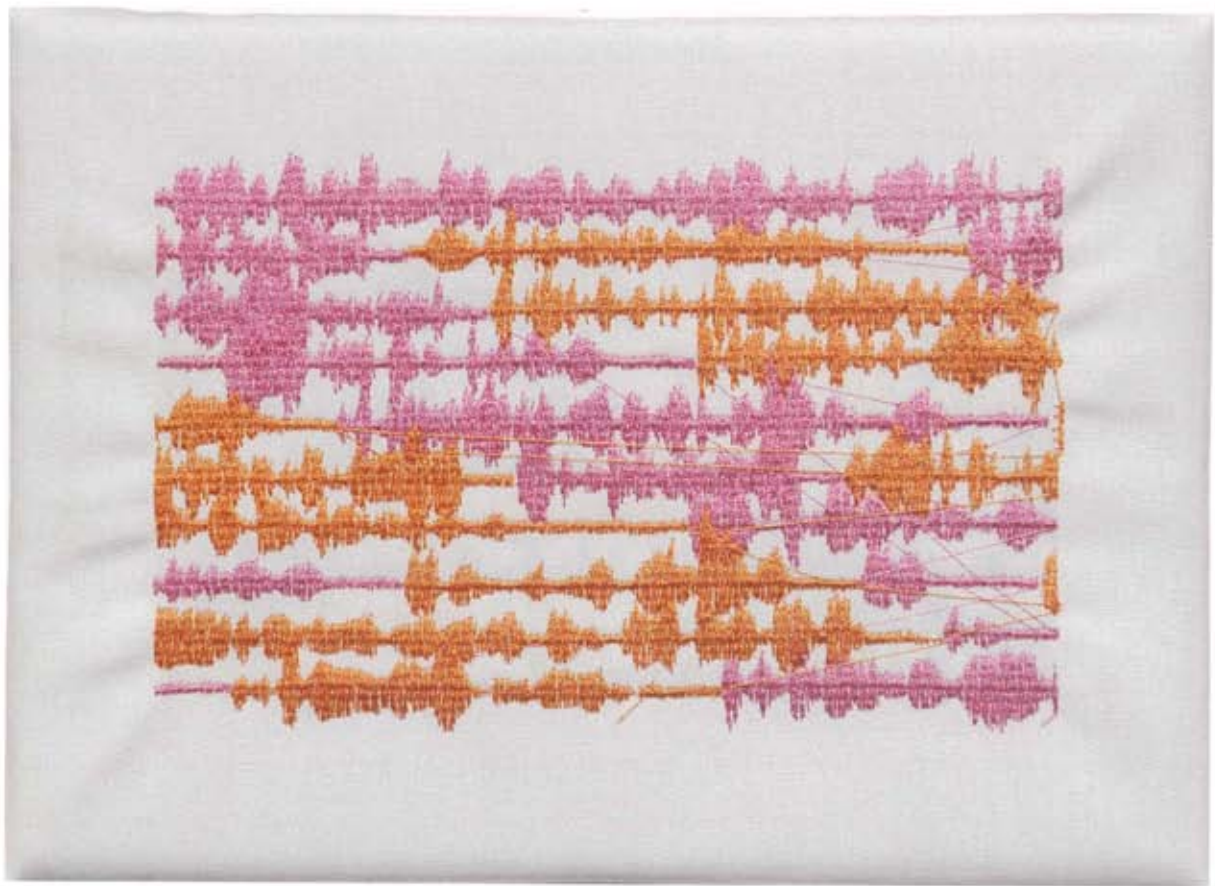
**Author's note:** I was asked to respond to the work of Louisa Bufardeci in the context of *The Unquiet World*. After some lengthy and engaging email exchanges with the artist, we agreed that it would best serve the project to compose a piece of fiction that seemed to work alongside Louisa's visual art, just as old technologies work alongside new, just as the pleasure of phone conversation runs simultaneously with the threat of its illicit observance, just as the desire to represent runs alongside a desire for the aesthetic: codes and patterns running side by side. I have chosen to set my unquiet world for Louisa's work in a parallel future.

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Midday, and clear hard light shot the many small windows into shards, a criss-crossed cutting of sunlight. Refracting, glinting, blinding, all acute angles in a pattern of knives and blades, the lobby's interior was an over-designed and unmanageable terrain. Ana squinted in annoyance. She adjusted her apertures. Across the lobby, flashing in bold orange letters, the *DayRead* pronounced its elevated warning, an extreme ozone alert for the entire afternoon. Then, noticing barriers at either exit, she turned on her heels and returned to the elevator.







It was annoying, the way the sensitivity of skin was both its best attribute - a reason for keeping it - and its worst inconvenience. She longed for that new skin that everyone was talking about, a fine mesh of digital neurons with the strength of chain-mail, resistant to extremes of temperature and radiation. Then she might have cleared security to venture outside. 'Outside': an antique construction from a time before all things great and small were stitched into, inserted between and interwoven with each other. The lobby was its own outside, palm trees swaying in the ventilation; she could have stayed there if she had so desired. But Ana was one of those troubled types, nostalgic about an era when time had meaning and was not simply all of a piece, a simultaneity to be dipped into at will. A time when the sun was not so hot and the world not so troubled. A time when the rumbling drone of endless wars could not be heard all the night, and through the year. Her habits were peculiar, as if downloaded from an obsolete version, an independent program running alongside her incredible technological strength. It was archaic, for example, the way she insisted on using the lobby monitor instead of her *Biofeed*. She wasted so much time and energy that way. And she took perverse pleasure in the fact. That too was archaic. But she wasn't the only one, others were doing the same. She'd even heard, through her *Facebook* friends, of people who had had their *Biofeeds* surgically removed. She would never do anything so extreme but she admired their bravura.

Back in her apartment, the a.c. was cranked high. Ana liked to imagine the 'A' and the 'C' glowing at the entrance to every apartment, cool as the Air Conditioning that shared her initials. Resigning herself to an afternoon indoors, she took out her sewing and started up the program. The under-rumble could be heard from every corner of her apartment. She was used to it now and it made a gentle rhythm with the sound of the sewing output. If she had known, she

might have associated the clickety-clack of the sewing machine with a typewriter. The sound of a typewriter was an ancient and lost thing. Ana had one old friend who dimly remembered learning about typewriters but that was all she knew of them.

The sewing machine clicked and moved forward, looping the coral-coloured thread into the adjoining turquoise. She composed her palette intently, intuitively, working from what might have been called her gut. She paused. She listened. For a brief period the rumbling had stopped. When it began again she continued. *Coral, turquoise. What were these names? Where did they come from?* She did not know. Her thoughts lingered for a nanosecond more. *What good etymology, but for a fantasy of origins?* She programmed magenta into the machine. As she sewed, she began to speak into the phone. She knew that these were the most secret places for exchange, and precisely because few people now used them, their ungainly mechanics almost obsolete, voice communication was under the radar, as they say. *What is radar?* she wondered in passing. But now was not the time for wonder, only for the temporary pleasure of speech, the timbre of voices connected to who-knew-whom. Perhaps it was true that these disembodied voices, voices from without the internet, were fabrications. They had no digital identification tags, no authorised access, only instead the tantalising purr and promise of conversation. Funny, it should seem so illicit, so risqué, to speak, just to speak.

The ghosts of sounds haunted her, the collective residue a faint hissing, like gas escaping a faulty valve, hovering at the calf level of her daily life.

*Ms Chronos, are you there? Are you listening? MM*



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*Avalon* has a powerful, threatening and brooding political darkness without being understated, but with an inyaface kind of declamatory, confrontational sense of defiance.

It's got a sense of controlled anger and a currency that is so 6 o'clock news about it; part Iraq, part Solomon Islands, part Parisian Arabic riots, part Lakemba/Cronulla unrest. It calls up the turbulence and uncertainty everywhere where systems seem to deliberately and calculatedly misrepresent people, or just collide, or where oppression reigns and we witness the remarkable breakdown of the social imagination.

Frustration explodes with riots and stones, overturned cars, columns of smoke, cities on fire - describing a set of predicaments heightened today to a new level of unbearable social tension, or perhaps tyranny.

*Avalon* operates nervously like an unrestrained radical critique of existing social and political institutions and orders, presented as bad faith... thrown into crisis where the dream is unable to be sustained because we are compelled and condemned to live out the inherent contradictions of the new world order of global capital.

This is not just a discourse on relational aesthetics, but I'm sure Nicholas Bourriaud would make a solid case to include it in his manifesto and that probably wouldn't be a bad thing as he seems to be rewriting a kind of left-wing treatise/social ideology post-Marx and reflects a certain dis-contentment in the silence against the fear and against the demoralisation. Like the new barbarianism suggested by Benjamin, who with the necessary violence will reduce what exists to rubble, but not for the sake of violence and rubble but for that of the way leading through it: destroying with an affirmative violence to trace new paths of life through their own material existence.





*Avalon* is done with the apparent simplicity of art... live art on video, performance as video art - blurring the borders of media and of reality... nothing other than the single action of throwing stones... endlessly... but aimed at you me the audience... deliberately bombarding us, me, you...

Nothing and no-one is safe or outside the stone-throwers' demands... We are not separate from this or their politic... and nor should we be. Nor are we distant from their bleak poetic that reflects the language of the street when there seems to be no alternative but to vent something... In the face of total political exhaustion when there seems to be no sense of opposition, when all that was radical seems to be only a memory... and conceived now only as abject, or as advertising campaigns for the chic - where fashion seems to recoup everything in its path for silence and no movement can be suffocating... a slow death of the human will...

It seems that the work represents the poetry of the only responsibility left that has any meaning at all and can be as simple as it is confronting.

In a strange way it is almost pathetic in the context of the technologies of militarism of power, of smart bombs and star war strategies or the increasing global trend to use military force to secure the interests of the corporate state, whether in Africa, China, The Philippines, Iran, North Korea or perhaps even Australia... where the new ideology of legitimization justifies pre-emptive strikes.

Something as dumb as a group of people throwing stones stands as a kind of leitmotif of the post '68 generations' attitude to affecting democracy... or at least reflects the potential of people to retain dignity - that last but vital sense of social rights that are outside the control of the state... Throwing stones gains new significance in this context and a significance that itself becomes not only the subject of the

video work but the moral responsibility for everyone in order to retain the right to dissent ...begging the question: how I, we, can continue to live in this reality, and whose reality is this anyway...? That appears to be the intrinsic value of the work, which, with a sense of determined desperation, confronts a fear that now seems to be embedded in every aspect of our social condition - thank you very much John Howard, George Bush, Tony Blair. Your right-winged, belligerent and offensive views have reconfigured our world and you know what, it's not so nice anymore, and your bastardised rhetoric on democracy and global security for the future has very little to do with anything other than protecting your own interests and the interests of global corporate economies at the expense of people you me I and I hate to think of their impact in relation to the serious questions of increasing world poverty and the impending ecological disaster that is racing towards us...

*Avalon* seems to draw a line of resistance - a line that we all need to consider sooner than later. Sorry about the rambling prosaic but the work made an impact upon me and it was kinda unexpected in relation to its difference to your individual practices and presents a strong case for the value of collaboration and collective practice... collaboration seemed to have opened up a new space... a political space for you guys to work collectively where a different notion of risk was encountered, a risk embedded in the idea of the difference that can only be realised through the unconscious collective or reinvented through the collaboration. NT

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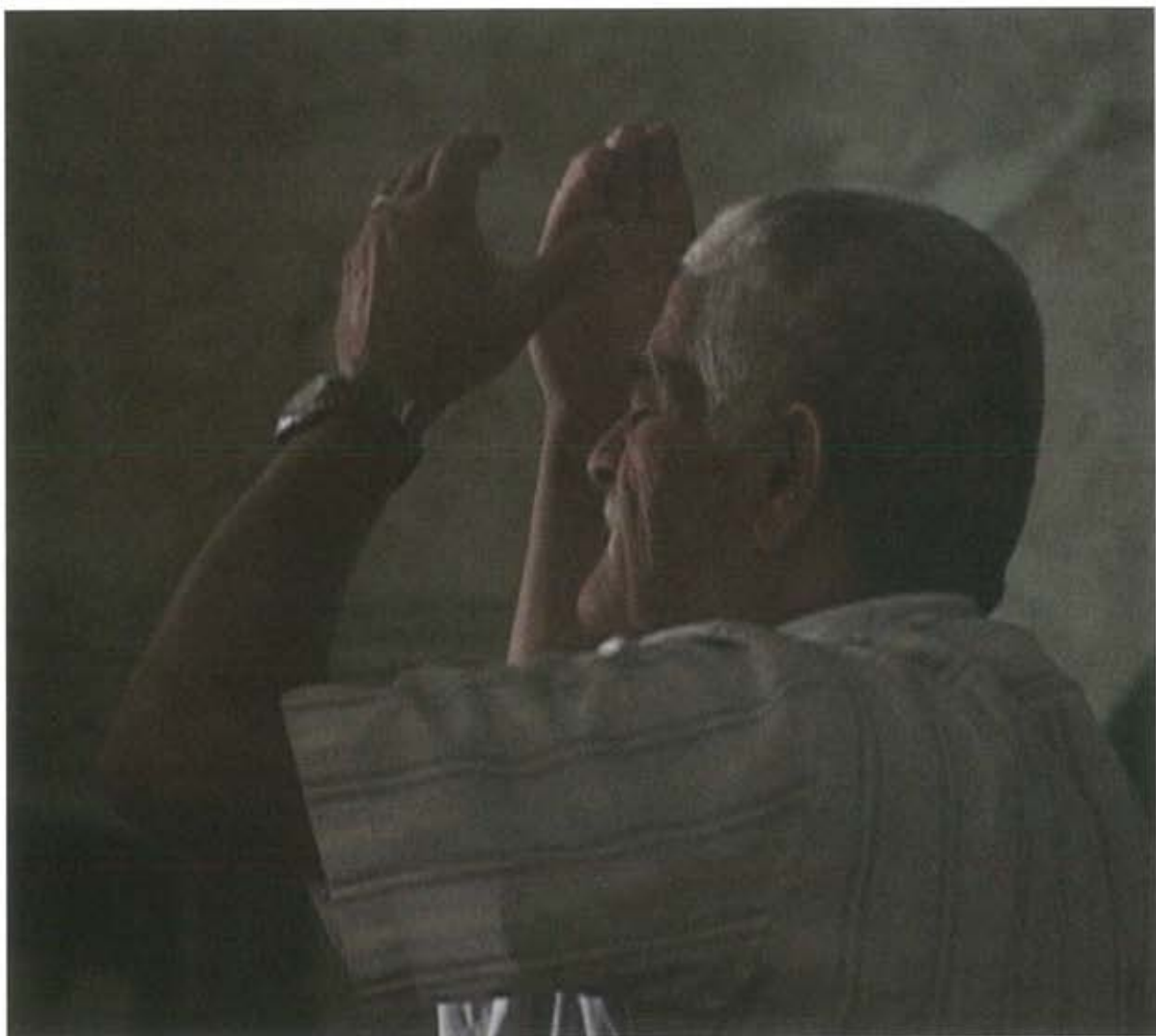
Nathan Coley is often drawn to study places of meaning, particularly through the agency of architecture. Places used for worship, or for some form of devotion or belief system have become sites of investigation for him. Sometimes he has found these sites in the architecture of a culture and society, at other times he has made buildings that signify these beliefs and meanings.

Coley's fascination with built forms and the emotional connection they have for people includes a study of pigeon coops and their architectural design features; a set of interviews about the concept of what might constitute a sanctuary; a mapping of churches in Münster, Germany; the erection of a 'prop' saloon on top of a building in Christchurch, New Zealand; and the placing of a model of the façade of a 'show home' in various locations around Scotland. Memorably, Coley hand-made miniature cardboard models of every place of worship in Birmingham and Edinburgh in projects titled *The Lamp of Sacrifice* over a period of months, and then destroyed them.

Of course, many more projects than these make up Coley's list. But linking them all is Coley's interest to discover the kind of emotional, one might also say, spiritual, investment we make in and take from built forms.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Coley has been attracted to study the holy sites of significance in Jerusalem including the Wailing Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Temple Mount. These places of huge emotional, spiritual and territorial importance for pilgrims of various faiths accrue a kind of power through the agency of the people that use and visit them.

Coley's visit to the Holy Land led him to discover the psychological phenomenon known as the Jerusalem Syndrome: a heightened condition of spiritual intoxication



which compels people to behave in feverish, excitable and unpredictable ways, including shaving their hair, wearing whites robes and washing their bodies, or taking on the personas of biblical characters, such as John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary.

In fact, Coley's twin film presentations are much more mundane than the descriptions of the Syndrome might suggest. He documents a straightforward interview with Dr Moshe Kalian, District Psychiatrist of Jerusalem who has diagnosed cases of Jerusalem Syndrome, and speaks about those afflicted by this altered state of mind. Coley's other film is a study of the Wailing Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Temple Mount, and the pilgrimage that takes place in and around these specially significant sites. The film documents the daily lives of local people in Jerusalem as well as revealing the behaviour of tourists.

At the Wailing Wall pilgrims rub their heads against the stone, they murmur and mutter and rock back and forth, they internalise their meditations, they bang their heads against the wall and push small pieces of prayer paper into its crevices. Others set up tables with scrolls and books and stand entranced in proximity to the Wall. Women are no-where in evidence.

Around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Temple Mount, the long lines of tourists, men and women, are less prone to jittery, obsessive-compulsive behaviours. They are a throng of tired, disoriented types, on a mystical tour without specific manifestation. They wander around with tourist brochures and books and consult tour guides and follow the trail as requested.

But it is the Wailing Wall that holds a special power over people. Jewish, Christian and Muslim pilgrims alike are affected by its entwined significance – its promise of an

unbroken line between God and the Jewish people, its meaning as the Al-Buraq Wall for followers of Mohammad, and its significance as a relic of Herod's Temple in which Jesus was said to have preached – making the Wailing Wall a site of contested yet compulsively joined history and meaning.

Coley takes us to the loci of religious convergence where individual and emotional disquiet is required to dislodge its clear co-joined history. Coley's films indicate the madness of history and reveal its sites of disagreement, where each religious group sees its own vision and version of history. JE





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George Gittoes's 2004 film *Soundtrack to War* examines the recent American-led invasion of Baghdad, Iraq. It is not only the military incursion that interests the artist – although his chief subjects are American soldiers – but also the infiltration of American popular culture into a bastion of another, far more ancient civilisation. This is a place where gangsta rap echoes through Uday Hussein's former palace while an Iraqi thrash band rehearses in a suburban basement. Through the medium of music, from hip-hop and heavy metal to gospel and country, a sequence of painfully young men and women discuss their experiences in a city that is to them at once completely alien and oddly familiar, its menaced air and bombed-out buildings reminding some of their own mean streets in Miami, Los Angeles or New York.

As Gittoes points out in his film, *Soundtrack to War* is not a documentary but a musical, its narrative carried along by rap lyrics and songs, many written and performed by the soldiers and civilians themselves. This strategy was devised to access the peers of these soldiers at home, who appeared to have no interest in or understanding of what was going on outside their own neighbourhood. This is a demographic that gets its information from VH1, MTV and the internet, from tunes downloaded onto iPods, or from the street. What Gittoes understands is that the much-trumpeted apathy of the young is somewhat missing the mark; they have moved into other arenas, forming their own channels of communication. One has only to view the rap battle near the end of the film to realise how perceptive and eloquent the soldiers can be in describing and analysing their situation.

Music provides some penetrating insights, but it also forms a buffer, helping build an imaginary universe of gods and demons. Pumped up by testosterone-fuelled anthems, the soldiers launch into battle like the Wagner-heralded helicopters in *Apocalypse Now*. Under-prepared and over-armed for the intricacies of urban combat, the soldiers





freely admit the indiscriminate nature of the early days of the invasion, mowing down Saddam's forces and civilians alike. Yet while some seem detached from the action, talking as if they are operating inside a computer game, others admit to the gruesome reality. 'Death is not like the movies,' says one, relating the stench, the fear, and the fact that people take a long time to die, even when their guts are falling out. His talk recalls George Orwell's reminiscences of the Spanish Civil War: 'Bullets hurt, corpses stink, men under fire are often so frightened that they wet their trousers'.<sup>1</sup>

Orwell's writing uses gritty truths to skewer the propaganda emanating from the media and both sides of politics as they shaped information to suit their own ends. Through such fogs of obfuscation and self-justification, a broad outline of war may possibly be grasped, but its ambiguities and complex ethics are rarely conveyed. Gittoes, too, goes into the field and experiences conflict first-hand, from Cambodia to Somalia to Nicaragua, telling stories of cultures in crisis from an artist's viewpoint. His partisanship is a sense of injustice rather than a particular political colour, and to these ends, he has avoided taking on the mantle of a sanctioned 'war artist'. His official dealings and commissions are strategically planned to enable the greatest access to certain sites, situations and equipment from which he can produce the highly-charged work he wants to make.

Gittoes's work became politicised in the late 1960s - the era of the civil rights movement, Vietnam, Marshall McLuhan and Guy Debord - and it still carries a number of aspects of that historical moment. Its sense of urgency, its belief in the role of the artist as social agent and commentator, and its desire to reach into a wide cultural sphere have remained consistent in his paintings, drawings, photographs and films. Since the Yellow House days of the early 1970s, Gittoes has disseminated his work to broad and varied audiences through television and radio, sidestepping the usual art world


channels and their limited scope. *Soundtrack to War* was screened on VH1 and the ABC, is available on Amazon and in Wal-Mart, and its entrée into the music world has plugged the artist into another vast sphere of popular media.

This is worth mentioning, as the power of *Soundtrack to War* lies not only in its brilliant premise or heightened sense of realism, nor its use of the documentary form so prevalent in mainstream cinemas and art galleries alike. It is also in its strategic positioning for maximum access to large and captive audiences, conducting, in a sense, its own infiltration mission. However, while its tone is strident and its images confronting, as 'political art' its intent is surprisingly gentle: probing the humanity from young soldiers who are both, and neither, heroes and villains; and giving a face to the anonymous citizens of a beleaguered city, who can sing the Bee Gees while telling of the horrors of Abu Ghraib. Gittoes laconically coaxes his subjects to express themselves, to bring art to this dark place, and then brings these stories back home - which, as both the Americans and Iraqis tell him, is where they want to be. RS

<sup>1</sup> George Orwell, "Looking Back on the Spanish War" (1942) in *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays*. Penguin, London, 2003, p. 158

**FAITHFULNESS IS  
A SOCIAL NOT A  
BIOLOGICAL LAW**





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A NAME MEANS A LOT JUST BY ITSELF.<sup>1</sup> But names can give too much away. They can hem in a narrator and overpower a complex narrative. They can suggest one position where there should be many.

Jenny Holzer's texts give voice to the unnamed subject. In so doing, her work reveals other powerful means of identification: the tone of a voice, the description of another, the response in a viewer. Holzer's voices position the viewer as cipher. The speaking pronoun 'I' ducks and weaves, shifting from one position to another in a way that compels the viewer to question her own place within this exchange. Who are the I, you, she and we? And how do they relate to me? Within these exchanges, everyone has an active role to fulfill. Everyone is responsible.

Of her texts, Holzer has said: 'I always try to make my voice unidentifiable ... because I've found that when things are characterized they tend to be dismissed.'<sup>2</sup> Holzer eludes identification in her work by speaking from multiple, shifting positions. She compels attention by translating intensely personal observations into universal platitudes and presenting them at immense scale in public places. Her *Truisms*, scrolling text projected onto ACCA's northern face, double back on themselves, they contradict each other but only so far as to bring into question the possibility of uncontested truths. HIDING YOUR EMOTIONS IS DESPICABLE but OFFER VERY LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF because HOLDING BACK PROTECTS YOUR VITAL ENERGIES. LABOR IS A LIFE-DESTROYING ACTIVITY and THERE'S NOTHING REDEEMING IN TOIL but MANUAL LABOR CAN BE REFRESHING AND WHOLESOME. EVERY ACHIEVEMENT REQUIRES A SACRIFICE and WE MUST MAKE SACRIFICES TO MAINTAIN OUR QUALITY OF LIFE but MOTHERS SHOULDN'T MAKE TOO MANY SACRIFICES. EVERYONE'S WORK IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT but PEOPLE WHO DON'T WORK WITH THEIR HANDS ARE PARASITES. The truth is never simple. That's why it matters.

Sometimes, when your voice is unidentifiable, you can speak more freely of multiple and difficult truths. The *Lustmord* works document sex killings from three different positions, those of the victim, the perpetrator and the observer. Although the works were created in direct response to the brutality of the Serbian-Croatian conflict in the former Yugoslavia, their subject is considerably more complex. Holzer confronts positions we are for the most part afraid to rest our gaze upon; the positions that official discourses of war and conflict allow us to ignore. At a time when talk of weapons technology has taken the place of concern for the innocent victims of war, *Lustmord* provides a timely reality check. Like other human relationships, war is brutalising. It is dirty and, like murder, has its sexual side.<sup>3</sup> It offers guilty pleasures, and not just to its perpetrators. Observers are also implicated in the dehumanising events of war.

Although in these works the speaking subjects are not formally identified, these photographs of text written onto skin undermine the usual distance between a viewer and the atrocities of war. Each skin receives the capitalised text, written in either black, blue or red pen, in different ways: blue ink bleeds into fine cracks, blurring the text's rigid lines; sun spots punctuate a straight-up statement; goose bumps ripple the skin around a chilling assertion; sunburn itches under the pressure of a pen; or blue veins reveal themselves beneath the healthy glow of an unsullied skin.

Seduced by the warm tones and soft down of feminine bodies, the viewer is drawn into the chaotic exchange of violent action. At once witness and cipher, and privy to the internal monologues of both victim and perpetrator, the observer must make a space, and take a stance. But where? Holzer's texts reveal the complexity of each subject position without trivialising or making excuses for indefensible actions. A victim gleans some scant power by withdrawing and relaxing control. I WILL NOT PREDICT HOW YOU WANT TO USE ME. WITH YOU INSIDE ME COMES THE KNOWLEDGE OF MY DEATH.

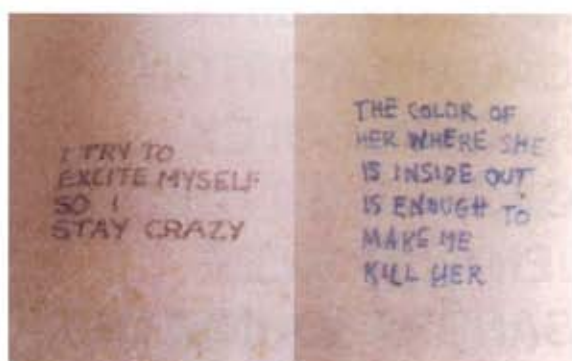
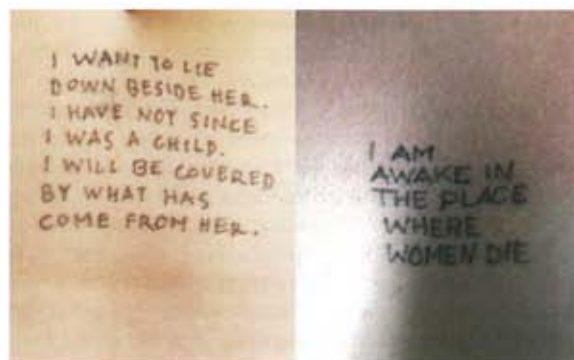
She speaks in the past tense - MY NOSE BROKE - before she exits the narrative. A perpetrator works hard to whip up his own cruelty. I TRY TO EXCITE MYSELF SO I STAY CRAZY. This is a violation more sinister than violence stemming from a pathological psychology. It demonstrates a calculated desire to humiliate and dehumanise, to ravage in response to, not in spite of the devastated body. SHE HAS NO TASTE LEFT TO HER AND THIS MAKES IT EASIER FOR ME. NOW THAT SHE IS STILL I CAN CONCENTRATE.

YOUR AWFUL LANGUAGE IS IN THE AIR BY MY HEAD. AM

<sup>1</sup> Jenny Holzer, *Truisms 1977-79*

<sup>2</sup> David Joselit, et al. *Jenny Holzer*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, 1996, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Original quote: 'MURDER HAS ITS SEXUAL SIDE' from Jenny Holzer, op. cit.





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While Sandra Johnston is probably best known for her performance work, video and photography have played a part in the realisation of projects and the documentation of her practice to date. Now she is concentrating on the moving image and does not figure in front of the camera. The recent series of videos constitute her first fully realised work to bring to the fore the ways in which the formal aspects of the medium act in relation to more representational content to produce meaning. There is a quiet urgency in her current direction. In this mode, the new work offers a timely critique of what is now archival television news and press photography as well as the established history of art, Northern Ireland, and 'the Troubles'.

Johnston's reflections on art and politics say much about what she and similarly-minded contemporaries appear to agree is a problematic process - where the mediation of reality becomes an appropriation of reality. Ownership, a concept central to the idea of social investment and civic life is, of course, an important part of envisioning better times after the bad. The authorship of the artist, as an alternative to the commercialisation of news and history towards some economic or sectarian advantage, is also at stake in Johnston rethinking what the social contract looks like in Northern Ireland these days. It is certainly obvious that the commercial redevelopment of Belfast's city centre has been a highly contested issue for artists in recent years. The iconography of the conspicuously corporate re-imagining of Northern Ireland's cities and towns is that of the consumer-citizen. An initial period of speculation on what would replace the idioms and ciphers of Northern Irish art - imagery consistent with the impact of violent conflict on civilian life - has given way to debate about what a post-ceasefire vernacular in art from Northern Ireland is or should be now.

Johnston's new videos strategically re-appropriate existing written, film, and video material and juxtapose them with previously unrecorded recollections. They are as a counterpoint to the sensationalism of the media archive and the exaggerated





corporate vision. A boy, unseen on screen, wants to know which television station will be showing the footage being filmed. The camera records his question: 'What side will it be on Mister?' We understand the scenario because the camera has also recorded the voice one of the crew – a man with an English accent – as he directs the camerawork. Meanwhile, the voice of a child is heard explaining how his mother had speculated that the filming was for television. It becomes clear that the archive footage represents a selection of viewpoints taken to illustrate the aftermath of an accident. The central images are of the mangled remains of a fence, a child's bicycle, and a baby's pram. A couple of shots later, among the same twisted railings, a small bunch of flowers has replaced the bicycle and the pram, and a crowd has gathered where before there had been none. In addition to the pictures: erratic snatches of sound, silences, voices, accelerating car engines, dogs barking, bicycle bells ringing, and a helicopter. On screen, text explains that what happened was the result of a car chase and crash involving police, an IRA member, gunfire, and a collision with a family group.

Video images by the artist are accompanied by a voice-over by peace campaigner, Mairead Corrigan Maguire, describing the events of August 10, 1976. She explains why it is important to remember and why no monument exists on the spot. The shooting dead of the driver resulted in the immediate or subsequent deaths of four members of the narrator's family.

As rain falls on the windows through which the camera videos, the images become less and less viable as sources of forensic or evidential information in contrast to the objectifying catalogue of unaltered television archive shots that begin this work.

While Mairead Corrigan Maguire speaks, the visibility of the items and activities in the images become more obscure. Colours separate from the umbrella from which they originate. It is a common enough occurrence that the 'optics' or public perception of a situation is argued to be of greater importance

than whatever the reality may be. It would be wholly wrong to reduce Johnston's treatment of the image to a literal or literary metaphor. The status of the photographic or video image has its own immutable logic in Northern Ireland where a culture of surveillance latterly took a mannerist turn: the rhetoric of veracity accorded to the photographic image as evidence in the decommissioning of paramilitary arms has never yet been authenticated by actual photographs or videos.

In the course of her videos, Johnston sets up emotional scenes through their aesthetic structure: the memory of a particular colour remains bound up with a journalist's personal confusion and shock at realising how the failure of empathy could be measured in the failure to act; a cross-community mediator describes as surreal a sequence of comically anachronistic incidents during a riot; a woman remembers systematic military transgressions, her father, domestic colours and textures, and her unspeakable shame having seen her mother's suffering upon the loss of her husband.

Johnston's videos share characteristics that have been termed anti-archival in relation to photographic practices, where the indexical reference is absent or occluded by otherwise photographic means. Johnston's approach to these scenes sometimes gives the impression that the pictures have been distorted and that the playing time is not always necessarily right. Sometimes it is merely an effect of the original technology or the transfer from analogue to digital media that appears to falsify 'real time'. The conspicuousness of the materiality of the filming and video processes in the sourcing and editing of these works links the artist to a set of aesthetic values historically invested with an oppositional sensibility. Sandra Johnston proposes and delivers a critically lucid view in stark contrast to the redundancy of the standard-lens ethos of official culture. VC

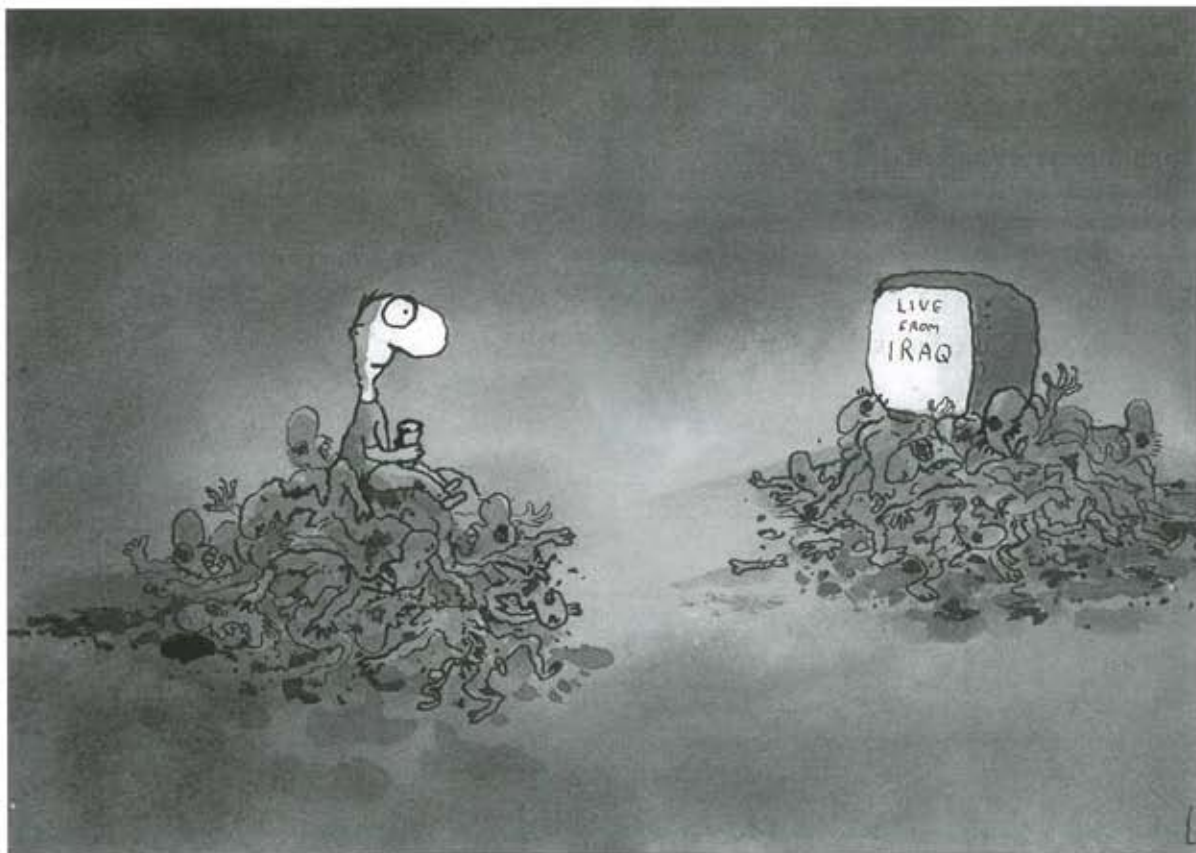
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If truth is the first casualty of war then art might be the first ambulance to arrive at the scene – at least we can hope so, now that journalism seems to be losing interest in the subject. For art, more than most human impulses or sensibilities, would seem to be by its nature, eternally at odds with war and the mass-mindedness through which war is set in motion. Surely that which is personal and creative can never be reconciled with what is collective and destructive.

Yet there are peculiar and anomalous things to consider – like the famous British regiment called the Artists' Rifles (perhaps a comment on the English art world) or the eerie public silence of so many artists during the events leading up to and surrounding a recent illegal and brutal invasion by their government and (in many cases) their benefactor. And there are certainly those who would insist that all's fair – not only in love and war – but also in art – the world-weary shrug of emotional and moral flatness (or perhaps sheer perversity) that renders strong experience meaningless and all opposites the same.

Then there is the classical, though rather musty, Mills and Boonish view; that war itself is an art form – a destined, sacred and glorious ritual which gives meaning and divine honour to otherwise banal humanity. And maybe, when you think about it, 'the shock of the new' is a phrase just as applicable to military activity as to paint on canvas – although 'shock and awe' might be more properly related (I would like to think) to certain public artworks than to the American military tactic of raining missiles down upon a city full of innocent civilians.

To confuse the matter further, there are the many who regard the reporting of warfare on television as a form of entertainment, in the same way that Goya's *Disasters of War* has been, for some, an exquisite and delectable pornography: an actual advertisement for the advantages and thrills of military life.





\*  
SACRED  
TEXT  
FOR  
THE  
DAY

TO every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

2 ~~A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;~~

3 A time to kill, ~~and a time to heal;~~ a time to break down, ~~and a time to build up.~~

4 A time to weep, ~~and a time to laugh;~~ a time to mourn, ~~and a time to dance.~~

5 ~~A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;~~

6 ~~A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;~~

7 A time to rend, ~~and a time to sew;~~ a time to keep silence, ~~and a time to speak.~~

8 ~~A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.~~ (Eccl. 1:9)

But in spite of the rampant arch perversity of the modern world it is still possible, if not now necessary, to innocently contemplate where art may be most vitally located in relation to militarism – the ‘monstrous exotic’ as the poet, Walt Whitman, called it.

In the aftermath and ashes of war, art as spiritual manifestation may spontaneously emerge in response to trauma. If trauma can be defined as a gap in the continuity of experience or the destruction of a segment in life’s ongoing thread of meaning, then war in its pain, chaos and insistent futility – far from bestowing meaning on banal lives – is massively traumatic to its physical survivors and reduces sanity and meaning to rubble as surely as it destroys buildings and cities. It obliterates, not only life, but intelligent life also.

It is reasonable, therefore, to wonder if, by means of war, the destruction of sensitivity and all that is unique, personal, and humane, is one of the deeper and less obvious primal intentions of the militarised state: the need to brutalise and dominate as a way of reducing societies – both the ‘enemy’ society and ‘our’ society – to the same spiritually devastated level as that of the war-makers, who fear the vitality, the integrity and the intelligence of peaceful, creative humanity – the artist being an eternal archetype of such.

Yet the chaotic and resounding incoherence of war in the psyche of its victims, and in the lineage of entire cultures, is a trauma that can be approached and sometimes made bearable by art in its various expressions. Music, literature and imagery – not only in the spontaneous making, but also in the mute beholding – are often the only means (apart from love) by which sense, or a valid substitute for sense, can be imaginatively made from the maddening experience of war and its fragments. When all of the retributions and justices have been done and have failed, art may offer some small measure of redemption or, if you like, may be the most successful revenge possible for the individual, and the only answer to the monstrous, overwhelming catastrophe of war.

This is art in the wake of war, but what of art as a conscious and proactive countermove to the impulses that would crush it: the latent or manifest war mentality and militarism – and the accompanying matters of Eros and Thanatos which move so intensely and delicately in the spirit and blood of the artist in particular?

If the artist is, as has been claimed, the prophetic voice who somewhere ‘speaks the grief of the people’ then it could be expected that the artist would be most unquiet, disturbed and expressive when the surrounding culture silently conforms and subjugates itself to the purpose of war and all its lies and atrocities?

A war of survival may be one matter, but a war of imperial and political ambition inflicted on a distant powerless people is another. For at that point a huge moral trauma and a great corruption is at hand, and the artist’s unique clairvoyant imagination must surely understand the dire consequences and sense the fatal disintegration that this entails for the spirit and soul of all concerned, including subsequent generations and the natural world.

The artist is nothing if not expressively independent, and is surely free to speak loudly in a way that a journalist or a scholar, enslaved by professional life, cannot or dares not do. Society expects this of its artists and should demand it in the same way that plumbers are expected to keep the pipes flowing.

Shall the artists then act upon their intuitive gift and upon what is truly the defining element in an artist’s blood? Shall they express what is repressed (art’s most authentic and brilliant purpose) – or shall they abandon this unquiet world forever and sink across the border to accept citizenship in the silent modern state where war seems normal and necessary and art seems weird and pleasantly, reassuringly pointless? ML



LIDA ABDUL  
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SUSAN NORRIE  
SALAM PAX  
SIMON PERRY  
PETER TYNDALL

Twilight is a transitional time; that stretched interlude after the sun has set but before day gives way to night. Its light deceives. Outlines lose their definition, movements become more fluid, shadows shift and sounds betray invisible secrets. Twilight is a metaphorical moment. It speaks of an end - of youth, strength, action - but intimates, too, a subtle new beginning. It is a time that can be charged as much with anticipation as with melancholy. Light fades but darkness holds its own powerful potential, as well as the promise of another day.

Susan Norrie's most recent moving image work, *Twilight*, is a looped DVD presented as a large-scale wall projection. It focuses on the Aboriginal Tent Embassy located opposite Australia's Provisional or Old Parliament House in Canberra. Filmed from within the Embassy, Norrie's work presents a narrative that spirals outwards from the campfire centre of this other provisional structure. As she goes she incorporates images of colonial devastation and Indigenous protest.

A small, almost incidental domestic television is positioned amongst the Embassy tents and alongside other everyday living apparatus. It screens archival footage of nuclear tests orchestrated by British and Australian governments and carried out near Indigenous communities at Emu Field and Maralinga in the South Australian desert between 1952 and 1963. Here, the mushroom cloud symbolises the disregard of powerful governments' for already vulnerable communities, as well as their disrespect for a fragile global environment. But Norrie's placement of this footage within the domestic space of the Embassy's living community tells a complex narrative of cultural survival. Not only a site of active protest, this camp is a place in which traditional knowledge and skills can be passed on to each new generation.

Throughout its thirty-four-year history the Tent Embassy has persisted under the shadow of actual and threatened dispersal. Initiated in protest against the Australian Government's failure to





recognise Indigenous land rights, it first appeared on the lawns in front of Old Parliament House on Australia/Invasion Day in 1972 and has endured in its present, semi-permanent form since 1992. Recently, 'No Camping' signage was installed in the area by the Federal Government and plans have been laid to erect on the site a permanent, but static memorial to Australia's Indigenous population in place of the living Embassy. As yet no residents have been forcibly moved on.

In the face of the Government's continuing refusal to adequately address land rights issues, the Tent Embassy seems to exist in the transitional zone of a permanent twilight. There is, in Norrie's work, a real sense of stasis or, perhaps more accurately, of two distinct flows of movement, one elliptical, the other linear. Within the camp, Norrie's cinematic eye spirals gradually outwards, returning to the same areas, the same colours and textures, but from different angles and in changing lights. Outside the camp, her gaze pans at a smoother and slightly heightened tempo – moving at ground level through native to exotic foliage, trodden earth to manicured lawns, impermanent structures to solid and symmetrical architecture – before looping back to the communal campfire.

In *Twilight* the close proximity, yet irreconciliation of these two jarring rhythms is everywhere in evidence. Fountains, boulevards and uninterrupted vistas of centres of colonial power can be glimpsed from within the more haphazard camp. On the outskirts of the Embassy, a young Aboriginal man ritualistically tends a fire before a memorial that honours Australian soldiers who died in battles fought elsewhere. The fluid, sweeping movement of his arms and the smoke he tends, as well as the desaturated hue of his pink, hooded windcheater contrast to the regular angles and rectangular bulk of the war memorial. In such complex, contrasting images, Norrie conveys a sense of two cultures frustrated in their mutual desire for an uncontested sense of home.

Embassies represent the interests of nations beyond their national borders. Their ambassadors hold a delicate position - part diplomat, part messenger - and work always in the knowledge that their success is dependant upon the hospitality of a foreign power. Canberra's Aboriginal Tent Embassy represents the interests of disinherited nations to an inhospitable government.

Norrie's work is timely. Her narrative bares witness to the persistence of Indigenous activism and culture at a moment when the Embassy community is again under threat of official intervention. The architecture of this embassy may be flimsy, but there is a power to be found in its impermanence. Even if this does prove to be another twilight of the Tent Embassy, as it was in 1972 and 1975, we can be certain that its deceptively vulnerable structures will reappear here or elsewhere to shelter other communities drawn together in protest. AM

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SUSAN NORRIE  
**SALAM PAX**  
SIMON PERRY  
PETER TYNDALL

It's a long time since Bob Dylan held up hand-painted prompt signs in his 1965 film clip of the song *Subterranean Homesick Blues*. This informal, maverick gesture of protest and street poetry signalled a kind of ad hoc protest against officialdom and indicated the rise of a popular social movement in the mid-1960s in the USA.

In a kind of homage to Dylan's ethos of times changing and people taking to the streets with their own voice, Salam Pax opens one of his video diaries by announcing himself on hand-drawn placards. That he does so swiftly indicates that Pax is not only aware of a kind of popular culture grown out of America - putting immediately to rest the idea that a person from Baghdad might be quarantined from such social and cultural infiltration - but that he aligns himself in certain ways to the idea of regime change and dissent behaviour through pop-cultural reference.

In another introduction, Salam Pax sits on a bench typing on his portable PC. The camera spins around him revealing an architecture of some majesty. He sits in the courtyard of a gleaming white building with filigree details and arabesques. By visual reference, he quickly he introduces us to a Baghdad made not of rubble and committed to despair, but a city defined by culture and history and beauty, with a hopeful future. He sits amidst a regal place, another kind of white house.

In another introduction Pax shows us the freeway system of Baghdad. A slithering set of serpentine shapes similar to the downtown Los Angeles system. We glimpse a life of commerce and commonplace behaviour, with office workers and transport. Pax shows us Baghdad, the modern metropolis on its way somewhere, rather than Baghdad, a civilization in regression.



my name is

SALAM PAX



Pax takes us on a tour of shopping places with his mother; he follows the efforts of Yanar Mohammed whose controversial approach to addressing issues of feminism in the context of Islamic customs has made her the subject of concern for authorities and supporters alike. He tells us that when his mother wanted to install a microwave oven that the 'authorities' visited to investigate whether or not anti-government electronic communications technology was being activated. He goes into the destroyed streets and some days cannot film because of the distressing events of suicide bombings and military attacks. He takes us on detours to architectural highlights of Baghdad. He loves his country and he hates what is happening to it. And yet he is optimistic about change and wants the situation to be better for his family, his friends and his country. He analyses the probable successes and failures of the attempt to introduce democracy via elections. He draws charts to show us the religious make-up of the Iraqi population. He worries that change will be slow and maybe even impossible.

We learn a lot from Salam Pax, the self-styled, pop-culture-loving, gay, live-at-home, architecture-trained blogger. We glean much more from him than from the imbedded journalists who accompany the coalition of the willing into the zones of conflict.

Not everyone will like Salam Pax. His Western bias might be offensive to those who seek a fundamentalist Islamic point of view. To those who hold the Bush administration's view of an Iraqi people in crisis waiting for US salvation, his humour might seem flip and undermining. His gentle, gay demeanour might be viewed with hostility by those who are bigoted. But others will find a stoic humour, and a fond eye that makes a genuine contribution to our greater understanding about people in Iraq who are caught up in its evolution from Saddam Hussein's regime to the USA-led invasion, and the subsequent attempts to create a new governmental order out of chaos.

Pax is not immune to the horrors he encounters and he is often angry. He is also a proud Iraqi and he makes it possible to understand that the wish for change and improvement does not necessarily mean a vote for America. It means self-government and self-direction on the part of the Iraqi people.

Salam Pax came to the public's attention as a blogger, but now writes occasional coverage for *The Guardian* newspaper in the UK. You can still access some of his original stories on his *Where is Raed?* and *Shut up you fat whiner!* website. JE



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Simon Perry's mega-megaphone lies, discarded on the floor. Oversized and unwieldy, its usefulness is called into question. The sounds usually associated with this portable loud-speaking system – which is often enlisted by the ad hoc protest or union rally, or sometimes by the friendly marshals of children's sports and community events - have been replaced by snoring: a kind of spluttering, obstructive sleep apnoea kind of snoring.

Several ideas flow from Perry's un-portable object. The idea of the role of the 'media' in giving voice to community concerns, for instance, which has been found snoozing in the face of recent events. The loud hailer also refers to the instrument of the town crier, the original transmitter of news to the people of the village, or the means of raising alarm. The sounds of irregular breathing emanating from the object in this instance, may be the voice of the people slumbering rather than shouting its objection to a world in crisis.

Originally sited in Melbourne's newest public assembling space, Federation Square, Perry's public sculpture also makes reference to the recent emergence of a mass anti-war sentiment that was not heard by the Australian Government. In this way the dormant loud hailer becomes a metaphor for an apathy that has been created by a population's sense of hopelessness in the face of a deaf reception.

A more optimistic interpretation may be that it is the sleeping dragon of opinion restoring its energy to be better heard next time. JE





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## a compass of mind

Painted at the entrance to a traditional Tibetan Buddhist temple is an image known as the *Wheel of Life*.

Framed in the grip of a monstrous Lord of Death is the state of being known as *samsara*, the uncontrolled cycle of rebirth and suffering.

For one about to meditate ('to tame this mind of ours'), looking at this scene is intended as a timely reminder of the disquieting condition of self and countless others. For someone schooled in its symbolism, it also charts the causes of this predicament and, by the example of the Buddha and other accomplished beings shown outside, it serves as both a motivation and a means to move beyond *samsara*.



This exhibition was proposed to me as 'intentionally looking at the darker things in our current world'.

*The Unquiet World* sounds like the pervasive restlessness of *samsara*; and the intentional aspect of this looking at darker things reminded me of the early struggles of the Buddha and the confronting challenge of the *Wheel of Life*. From there to thoughts of the Four Noble Truths, the first of which is the Truth of Suffering, and to an artwork begun at Bodhgaya in 1988 as a tribute to this ennobling discourse.

It was at Bodhgaya, in India, that the Buddha achieved his enlightenment.

Raised as a prince, maintained in luxury and protected by his father from any knowledge of the darker things, Siddhartha Gautama was shocked when he eventually witnessed old age, illness and death. Shaken by this dramatic encounter, he determined to understand the nature and cause of suffering and to find a way beyond it. Inspired by the example of a spiritual practitioner, he abandoned his life of luxury and became an ascetic, for six years practising body-withering self-mortification. Neither extreme, of pleasures or privation, brought him the calm or wisdom he was seeking.

Only when he accepted a young woman's offering of a nourishing meal did he appreciate the importance of maintaining a healthy body while continuing to train the mind. In this way, he soon attained enlightenment; from this lesson in moderation, he thereafter taught the Middle Way, advocating a life of balance rather than of extremes.



At the top of this sketch, the proposal is described as 4 x 4 *Dependent Arisings*.

*Dependent Arising* states that everything that comes into being, including the darker things in our current world, and our experience of these, does so dependent on causes; and, that everything that so arises is impermanent and empty of inherent existence. At the core of Buddha's enlightenment is a profound realisation of dependent arising. From that insight arose the teachings on dependence, interdependence, karma, change and suffering.

At the bottom of the sketch is a line of four sets of ideograms. The proposed artwork is shown not yet fully determined but already as four sets of suspended (dependent) projection-spaces.

This simple ideogram - a defining outline with lines of support - has been the foundation of my work since 1974. It is the dependent frame of self, and of our every other projection. At its simplest it is 'something because...'. In 1975 I described the first exhibited of these as 'instruments to create a flash in the viewer'. They are intended to trigger, as the first of these did for me, an unsettling appreciation of dependence, interdependence, centrelessness, edgelessness, projection, appearance, illusion and delusion.

Just as, in another place, one might pause before the *Wheel of Life*; so here also, in *The Unquiet World*, one might regard this presentation in ways other than the solely aesthetic or art historical. For one who intentionally looks at this matrix of projection spaces - the rectangles for purifying breath; the rectangles for remembering attachments; the diamonds of respect for teachings of liberation; the interlaced diamonds and squares of wisdom (the ideograms of dependent arising) and of compassion (the yellow matrix of *The Love Dream*); the home-seeking label; the temporary wall; the floor above the earth, and so on - it is all, as always, a compass of mind: something in which to become lost, something by which to return home. PT

# LIDA ABDUL

Born in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1973, Lida Abdul lived in Germany and India as a refugee before moving to the United States. Her work fuses the formalist traditions she learnt in the US with the numerous aesthetic traditions - Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, pagan and nomadic - that collectively influenced Afghan art and culture. She has produced work in many media including video, film, photography, installation and live performance.

Abdul's most recent work has been featured at the Venice Biennale in 2005, Kunsthalle Vienna, Istanbul Modern, Museum of Modern Art in Arnhem, Netherlands, Miami Art Central, Centre d'Art Contemporain de Brétigny and Frac Lorraine in Metz, France. In 2004, Abdul was a featured artist at the Central Asian Biennial.

Recently she has been working on projects in Kabul, exploring the relationship between architecture and identity in post-war Afghanistan.

Website: [www.lidaabdul.com](http://www.lidaabdul.com)

# KAMAL ALJAFARI

Kamal Aljafari was born in Palestine in 1972. He graduated from the Postgraduate Program of the Academy of Media Arts, Cologne in 2003. His films include *Visit Iraq*, 2003, and the newly finished film *The Roof*, 2006, a personal meditation on home and displacement.

*The film Visit Iraq happened to me by chance, or so I thought at the time, as I came across the Iraqi Airways office in Geneva, all but abandoned, but still vacant: a shell of something that was full of pregnant questions. It's a film about what we make of absence, what we can pour into it. In hindsight, I realised that it gestured towards another emptiness. My engagement with this emptiness, a lack of place, and a perpetual feeling of being out of place, is something I have been working through since then.*

Recent exhibitions include: *Island Life* at S1 Artspace, UK, curated by Paul Rooney; and *A Picture of War is Not War* at Wilkinson Gallery, London, curated by Arnands Wilkinson.

Aljafari has received numerous awards for his work including, in 2005, the Stiftung Kunstfonds Fellowship, in 2004, the Friedrich-Verdenberge Visual Art Prize of the City of Cologne and the Jury prize at the Artimage Biennial Graz, and was nominated for the German Short Film Prize in Gold in 2003.

Anja Dorn, 'Vist Iraq / Über ein video von Kamal Aljafari' on the *Texte Zur Kunst* website ([http://www.textezurkunst.de/NR51/tzk51\\_Dorn2.htm](http://www.textezurkunst.de/NR51/tzk51_Dorn2.htm)), 2003.

# MARIANNE BAILLIEU

Marianne Baillieu was born in Stockholm, Sweden. In 1949 she migrated to New Zealand, where she completed her schooling and attended university. She moved to Australia in the 1960s. Shortly after, Baillieu founded Realities art gallery, which she directed until selling it in 1980 upon deciding to become a full-time artist. In her painting, Baillieu aims to express what cannot be verbalised or seen with ordinary vision: the energy or 'prana' of a subject.

Major exhibitions include: *Possible Worlds*, solo exhibition at the Belas Milani Gallery in Brisbane, 2002; *Morphic Fields*, solo exhibition curated by Jenefer Duncan at the Monash University Gallery in Melbourne, 1997; *The Situation Now - A Survey of Non-Objective Art*, LaTrobe University Art Museum, Melbourne, 1995; *The Living Mandala* (Guest Curator), National Gallery of Victoria, 1992; *The Sublime Imperative*, curated by Simeon Kronenberg, ACCA, Melbourne, 1991.

In 2000 Baillieu was selected for the Arthur Boyd Bundanon Trust Residency and was a Highly Commended finalist in the Blake Prize, Sydney.

Ross Moore, 'The Anonymous Flash', *Morphic Fields* exhibition catalogue essay, Monash University Gallery, April 1997, pp. 4-6; Susan McCulloch, *The Encyclopaedia of Australian Art* (revised edition), Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, April 1994, pp. 63-64; Ross Moore, *Universal Being* exhibition catalogue, Karyn Lovegrove Gallery, 1992; Simeon Kronenberg, *The Sublime Imperative* exhibition catalogue essay, ACCA, Melbourne, 1991, pp. 4-5; Ross Moore, *Advance Australian Painting* exhibition catalogue essay, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1988, pp. 82-85.

# URSULA BIEMANN

Born in Zurich, 1955. Ursula Biemann is an artist, theorist and curator who has in recent years produced a body of work on migration, mobility, technology and gender. In a series of video essays and books she has focused on the gendered dimension of migrant labour, from smuggling on the Spanish-Moroccan border to migrant sex workers moving from the East to the West. In all of Biemann's work there are 3 interlinked dimensions: an understanding of how complex geographical location is to identify, the degree to which new technologies are shifting our understanding of the relations between places and the dimension of gendered subjectivities through which these movements are lived out. Her focus has recently shifted to the correlation between the global flow of resources and that of human migrations.

Biemann's curatorial projects include *Geography and the Politics of Mobility*, Generali Foundation, Vienna, 2003; *Stufft at the Migros Museum*, Zurich, 2003; and *Kültür*, Shedhalle Zurich and Istanbul Biennial, 1997. Her videos have been awarded with the Prix Palmariés at the *Biennial of Moving Images*, SI-Gervais Geneva; the *Medienkunstpreis* at ZKM Center for Art and Media; and the *Viper International Video and Media Art Festival*.

Website: [www.geobodies.org](http://www.geobodies.org)

Ursula Biemann, 'Black Sea Files' in *B-Zone, Becoming Europe and Beyond*, ed. Anselm Franke, Actar, 2006, pp. 16-95; Ursula Biemann, 'On Smugglers, Pirates and Aroma Makers' in *Bare Acts, Sarai Reader 05*, Sarai Media Lab, Delhi, pp. 145-149; Ursula Biemann, 'Writing counter-geography/Ecrire une contre-géographie' in *Appel à Témoins/Call for Witnesses*, La Quartier, Quimper, 2004, pp. 41-62; Ursula Biemann, 'Remote Sensing - Visual Geographies of Gender', *Tourisms*, Fundació Tàpies, Barcelona 2004, pp. 269-283.

# LOUISA BUFARDECI

Born in Melbourne, 1969. Louisa Bufardeci's practice is centred around the representation of information. She has based many works on statistical data, forms of mapmaking and coding. More recently she has explored time as a statistic representable with soundwaves.

Recent exhibitions include *Starter Pistols*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, 2006; *Visionary Projects* (with Emma Balazs), VersionFest, Chicago, 2005; *Make It Modern*, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Melbourne, 2006; *Your Sky*, Gigantic Art Space, New York, 2005; *Daily Care Center*, Galeria Noua, Bucharest, 2005; *Cycle Tracks Will Abound in Utopia*, ACCA, Melbourne, 2004; *PUBLIC/PRIVATE Tamatanui/Tumataiti*, 2nd Auckland Triennial, Auckland, 2004; and *Skin Quartet* (with David Young), Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, 2003.

Bufardeci has received numerous grants, awards and residencies including: Gordon and Anne Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship; School of the Art Institute of Chicago Second Year International Student Scholarship; Arts Victoria Arts Development Grants; Arts Victoria Export and Touring Fund Grant; Asialink residencies in Delhi and Mumbai; and Australia Council residency, Los Angeles.

Louisa Bufardeci is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne.

Mark Titmarsh, 'New Voyagers: Psychogeography and time' in *Photofile*, No. 75, Spring 2005, pp. 32-33; Cynthia Troup, 'The Scope of Governing Values' in *PUBLIC/PRIVATE Tamatanui/Tumataiti*, 2nd Auckland Triennial, Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand, 2004; Cynthia Troup, 'Surveying Skin Quartet', *Melbourne International Arts Festival Visual Arts Program*, October 2003; Joel Crotty, 'Brave new world of sight and sound', *The Age*, October 15 2003; Ry Haslings, 'We're walking all over it', *The Paper*, Edition 28, 2001; Stuart Koop, 'Louisa Bufardeci at Anna Schwartz Gallery', *Art/Text*, Spring 2001, pp. B2-3.

# ÇERKEZ FUSINATO MORTON

Avalon is the first collaborative project by Mutlu Çerkez (born 1964), Marco Fusinato (born 1964) and Callum Morton (born 1965).

Their respective works have been included in:

Mutlu Çerkez: *NEW05*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2005; *Fieldwork: Australian Art 1968-2002*, Ian Potter Centre, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2002; *6th Istanbul Biennial*, Turkey, 1999; and *Sao Paulo Biennale*, Brazil, 1998.

Marco Fusinato: *Mutlu Çerkez Marco Fusinato*, AGNSW Contemporary Projects, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney, 2005; *Veza/Connections: Contemporary Artists from Australia*, Hdlu, Zagreb, Croatia, 2002; *Arts+Music*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2001; and *TM/MF*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2000.

Callum Morton: *11th Triennale India*, New Delhi, 2005; *PUBLIC/PRIVATE Tamatanui/Tumataiti*, 2nd Auckland Triennial, New Zealand, 2004; *Face Up*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany, 2003; and *Signs of Life*, Melbourne International Biennial, 1999.

Mutlu Çerkez is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne.

Marco Fusinato is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne.

Callum Morton is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Roslyn Oxley 9 Gallery, Sydney.



# NATHAN COLEY

Nathan Coley, born in Glasgow, 1967, investigates the social aspects of our built environment through a diverse range of media including public and gallery-based sculpture, photography, drawing and video.

Coley's practice is based in an interest in public space, and explores how architecture comes to be invested, and reinvested, with meaning. It reveals that claims to public space are made by groups of people who have different ideas on how it should be used, and how the buildings they erect manifest that group's values and beliefs.

Nathan Coley graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 1989 and has recently held solo exhibitions at Haunch of Venison in London, Cooper Gallery, University of Dundee and The Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh. His work relating the trial of the Lockerbie bombers was included in *Days Like These*, a group exhibition at Tate Britain in 2003. His work is currently being exhibited as part of the *British Art Show 6*.

Fiona Bradley, Susanne Gaensheimer, *Nathan Coley - There will be no miracles here*, Fruitmarket Publications, Edinburgh, Locos+, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2004; Natalie Rudd, 'Nathan Coley' in *Days Like These: The Tate Triennial of Contemporary British Art*, eds. Judith Nesbitt, Jonathan Watkins, Tate Britain, 2003; Natalie Rudd, 'In the City' in *Fabrications: New art and urban memory in Manchester*, eds. Natalie Rudd, Helen Hills, UMM, Manchester, 2002; Magda Kardasz, *Szczesliwi outsiderzy z Londynu i Szkocji/Happy outsiders from London and Scotland*, Zacheta Panstwowa Galeria Sztuki, Warsaw, British Council, London, 2002; Elisabeth Price, *small Gold Medal*, Book Works Ltd, London, 2001.

# GEORGE GITTOES

Born in Sydney in 1949, George Gittoes is an exhibiting artist, filmmaker and photographer. He has been working on the theme of cultures in conflict since the 1980s. Gittoes has worked in many regions including Afghanistan, China, Philippines, Russia, Middle East, regions of Africa, Northern Ireland and Nicaragua.

Gittoes's work emerges from his frequent trips to the front line of human crisis and working face to face with both combatants and victims of conflict. He devised, filmed, directed and produced *Soundtrack to War* as a result of his travels in Iraq during some of the most tense moments of its recent history.

Website: [www.gittoes.com](http://www.gittoes.com)

'Gittoes in Iraq' on *60 Minutes*, Channel 9, Australia, June 1 2003; Sasha Grishin, *Australian Printmaking*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 2001; Bernard Smith, Terry Smith & Christopher Heathcote, *Australian Painting 1788 - 2000* (4th Edition), Oxford University Press, 2001; John McDonald, *Federation; Australian Art and Society 1901-2001*, National Gallery of Australia, 2000; Laura Murray Cree & Nevill Drury, *Australian Painting Now*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 2000; Nevill Drury, *Contemporary Australian Painting: Images 3*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1999; Don Featherstone (producer), *I Witness: The Art of George Gittoes*, ABC-TV Australia, Arte Europe, 1999; Gavin Fry, *George Gittoes*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1998; Bernard Smith, *Modernism's History*, UNSW Press/Yale University Press, 1998.

# JENNY HOLZER

Born Gallipolis, Ohio, 1950. Over the past 30 years, Jenny Holzer's largely text-based, conceptual works have been featured in public spaces, museums and art galleries. From street posters to LED screens, photographs to light projections, Holzer is renowned for texts that offer social and cultural commentary. Works such as *Truisms*, *Mother and Child* and *Lustmord* interrogate sexual politics and violence, and reveal the complexities attending all intimate relationships.

Permanent installations of Holzer's work can be found at 7 World Trade Center, New York; Bundestag, Berlin; Museo Guggenheim Bilbao; Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg; and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Her light projections have been recently shown in Vienna, London, Dublin, Miami, Washington DC and New York City.

Recent solo exhibitions include: XX, MAK, Vienna, 2006; *Jenny Holzer: Archive*, Chaim & Read, New York, 2006; *Night Feed*, Galerie Yvon Lambert NY, New York, 2006; *Jenny Holzer*, Kukje Gallery, Seoul, 2005; *Hot Pink (with Lady Pink)*, Monika Sprüth Philomene Magers, Munich, 2005; and *Jenny Holzer (with poetry by Henri Cole)*, Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, 2004.

Robert Storr, *Jenny Holzer: Redaction Paintings*, Chaim & Read Gallery, New York, 2006; Maurice Berger et al., *Jenny Holzer: TRUTH BEFORE POWER*, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz, 2004; Henri Cole, et al., *Jenny Holzer - Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin*, The American Academy Berlin and Nationalgalerie Berlin, Berlin, 2001; Marie-Laure Bernadac, *Jenny Holzer*, capcMusée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, 2001; Michael Auping et al., *Jenny Holzer: Monterrey 2001*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Monterrey, 2001; Peter Schjeldahl et al., *Jenny Holzer: Xenon*, Inktree Editions, Künstnacht, 2001; David Josell et al., *Jenny Holzer*, Phaidon Press Ltd., London, 1998; Noemi Smolik, ed., *Jenny Holzer: Writing*, Schriften, Gantz Verlag, Stuttgart, 1996.

# SANDRA JOHNSTON

Born in Newtownards, Northern Ireland, 1968. Since graduating from the MA course in Fine Art at the University of Ulster, Belfast, in 1992, Johnston's practice has centred on producing site-reactive performance actions and installations. This approach was initiated from the daily experiences of living in East Belfast prior to the first paramilitary cease-fire. It gradually developed as an enquiry into the complexities of how women's presence was perceived within paramilitary territories, and the media spectacle of violence.

Subsequent solo and collaborative projects, created in Ireland and internationally, have continued to explore possibilities for responding to the functions and sensitivities of a diverse range of public locations. These include police stations, emergency wards, religious institutions, shopping malls and occasionally, on invitation, private homes.

From 2002-2005 she was an Arts Humanities & Research Board Research Fellow at the University of Ulster. The concept of her research was to explore positive ways for artists to intervene with the history of buildings and place stigmatised by traumatic events.

Ruth Jones and Ursula Burke, *And the One Doesn't Stir Without the Other*, Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast, December 2005; Valerie Connor, 'Feminism, Democratic Politics and Citizenship' in *Third Text*, Vol. 19, Issue 5, Kala Press, 2005; Suzanna Chan, 'Sandra Johnston' in *Circa Art Magazine*, Issue 111, Spring 2005, pp. 68-69; Rosa Martinez and Maria De Corral, *51st International Exhibition of Visual Arts 2005: Venice Biennale*, Rizzoli, New York, August 2005; Dr Jill Bennett, *Emphatic Vision: Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art*, Stanford University Press, USA, 2005.

# MICHAEL LEUNIG

Michael Leunig is an artist, cartoonist, poet and commentator whose work has appeared in newspapers and books since 1965. His drawings, paintings and prints have been widely exhibited and are held in various public collections. He was born in Melbourne in 1945.

# SUSAN NORRIE

Born Sydney, 1953.

*We are at a critical and significant moment in the history of the world and as an artist one feels an enormous responsibility to document the truths of our experiences, not just simply erase history and support a collective amnesia. As Camus once said 'I am not a philosopher, I am an artist'.*

Susan Norrie's forthcoming exhibitions include: in June 2006 at the Boudin Lebon Gallery in Paris and at the G Fine Art Gallery in Washington DC, and *Elsewhere* at the Busan Biennale, South Korea, in September 2006. In 2007 she will represent Australia at the Venice Biennale.

Norrie is the recipient of an APA Scholarship for PhD studies, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004-2006, and was recently selected for the Sally and Don Lucas Artist Residency Program, Montalvo, USA.

Susan Norrie is represented by Mori Gallery, Sydney.

Barbara Creed, 'Susan Norrie', *On Reason and Emotion*, Biennale of Sydney exhibition catalogue, p. 158, 2004; Juliana Engberg, 'As the world turns' in *Art and Australia*, Vol. 41 No. 4, Winter 2004, p. 560; Helen Grace, 'underground passages' and Rachel Kent, 'Painter of Darkness and Light' in *Susan Norrie exhibition catalogue*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2003; Wayne Tunnicliffe, *Susan Norrie, Undertow*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2003; Julie Ewington, 'Susan Norrie: Inquisition' in *Fieldwork*, The Ian Potter Centre: National Gallery of Victoria, 2002; Juliana Engberg, 'Undertow', *Melbourne International Arts Festival Visual Arts Program*, 2002; Juliana Engberg, 'Engulf', *Thermostat*, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, 2001.

# SALAM PAX

Salam Pax is a pseudonymous blogger from Iraq whose site *Where is Raed?* received notable media attention during and after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In his blog, Salam discusses the war, his homosexuality, his friends, disappearances of people under the government of Saddam Hussein and his work as a translator for journalist, Peter Maass. He gave accounts of bombings and other attacks from his suburb of Baghdad until internet access and the electrical grid were interrupted. Salam remained offline for weeks, writing entries on paper to type later.

In May 2003, after speculation that the blogger was secretly a US, Israeli, or Iraqi government agent spreading disinformation about the war, *The Guardian* tracked the man down and printed a story indicating that he did indeed live in Iraq, with the given name Salam, and was a 29-year-old architect.

Salam Pax, 'The Baghdad Blogger goes to Washington' in *The Guardian*, October 22, 2004; Salam Pax, *Shut up you fat whiner!* (justzipit.blogspot.com), Google, started August 2004; Raed Jarrar, *Raed in the Middle* (raedinthemiddle.blogspot.com), Google, started March 2004; Salam Pax, *Salam Pax: The Baghdad Blog*, Guardian Books, London, 2003; Peter Maass, 'Salam Pax Is Real', *Slate* website ([www.slate.com](http://www.slate.com)), June 2, 2003, Rory McCarthy, 'Salam's story' in *The Guardian*, May 30, 2003.

# SIMON PERRY

Born London, 1962. For more than a decade, Simon Perry has designed and produced large-scale urban artworks. The works are site-specific and engage with various emergent themes within the urban context. These include the idea of the city as an evolving surface or skin, the contested nature of space, the role of the artist as social commentator and the dialogue between art, humour, politics and popular culture.

Recent projects and exhibitions include: in 2006, *Leverage* at the RMIT School of Art Gallery, Melbourne; *The Idea of the Animal*, Storey Hall Gallery, Melbourne; *City of Hobson's Bay*, Newport Lakes Sculpture Commission; and in 2005, *Melbourne Prize for Urban Art; The kookaburras, the towbar and the distributor lead incident*, RACV Club Building, Melbourne.

Perry studied at Chelsea School of Art and the Royal Academy Schools in London. He is the recipient of a number of awards and scholarships including: British School at Rome Scholarship in Sculpture; Landseer Scholarship Award; Edward Stott Trust Travel Scholarship; and Royal Academy Gold Medal for Sculpture. He recently established the International Virtual Studio Project, an experimental collaboration between RMIT School of Art, Melbourne and Chelsea School of Art, London.

Leon Van Schaik, *Design City Melbourne*, Wiley, UK, 2006, pp. 81-82; Chris McAuliffe, *RACV Collection Catalogue*, 2005, pp. 38-39; Sian Pryor, Juliana Engberg & Chris McAuliffe, 'Political Art' on *The Deep End*, Radio National, ABC, 2005; Angela Melkisetian, 'Commissions' in *Sculpture*, No. 9 Vol. 23, USA, November 2004, pp. 28-29; Andrew MacKenzie, 'Public Liability?' in *Architectural Review*, Edition 83, Australia, 2003, pp. 42-47.

# PETER TYNDALL

Peter Tyndall was born at the Mercy Hospital, Melbourne, in 1951. In 1972, with Christopher Hartney, he co-founded the Fosterville Institute of Applied & Progressive Cultural Experience. The foundation of Tyndall's art practice was set in 1974 with the realisation of his prime ideogram - a defining outline with lines of support: 'It is the dependent frame of self, and of our every other projection. At its simplest it is 'something because...''

Envisioning this ideogram as human gallery architecture, in 1981 Tyndall opened HAND SPACE: 'HAND SPACE exhibits/exhibitions are available at all times to the energies of analysis and criticism'.

Peter Tyndall, "...we are...described as being...", FIAPCE, 1981

## LIST OF WORKS

### Lida Abdul

*The White House* 2005  
16mm film transferred to video  
5 minutes

*House 1* 2003  
16mm film transferred to video  
2 minutes 13 seconds

*House 2* 2003  
16mm film transferred to video  
1 minute 53 seconds

*House 4* 2003  
16mm film transferred to video  
1 minute 15 seconds

*Tree* 2005  
16mm film transferred to video  
3 minutes 40 seconds

Courtesy the artist

### Kamal Aljafari

*Visit Iraq* 2003  
video  
25 minutes 45 seconds

Courtesy the artist

Kamal Aljafari would like to thank Kathrin Rhomberg, Maria Hlavajova, Anja Dorn, Anthony Moore and Juan Carlos Orozco.

### Marianne Baillieu

*The Faith* 1981-2006  
mixed media  
dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist

Marianne Baillieu thanks Philip Jackson for helping to create the audio mix of sacred song tracks; Imants Tilers for his long-time encouragement, and

his contribution to this exhibition catalogue; other fellow artists too numerous to mention for their friendship and sympathy after she switched from being a commercial gallery director to a career as a painter; her children for being ever-shining lights and inspirations; and her husband Ian for continued loving support and for help with whatever requires use of a PC.

### Ursula Biemann

*Black Sea Files* 2005  
video installation  
File 0 - 9  
43 minutes

Courtesy the artist

Ursula Biemann would like to thank her close collaborators Angela Meltopoulos, Lisa Parks and Anselm Franke who inspired and supported her research for the *Black Sea Files*. She is grateful to sonic artist Peter Cusack for the soundtrack; to the Hosoya-Schäfer Architects for developing the oil circulation cartography, and to ACTAR for designing and publishing the *B-Zone* book. The project received a generous grant from the German Federal Culture Foundation and was based at the Institute for Theory of Art and Design, HGK Zurich.

### Louisa Bufardeci

*13 captured telephone conversations - all one minute long* 2006  
machine embroidery on canvas  
30 x 80 cm

Top row:  
2004/12/08 16:42-16:43 Dan St Clair with her

2004/03/17 12:42-12:43  
"Ndrangheta member with him  
1998/05/06 13:46-13:47 someone  
in the United States of America  
with you  
2006/03/04 21:03-21:04 Masato  
Takasaka with you

Middle row:  
2000/11/18 10:27-10:28 someone  
in Australia with them  
1973/02/26 04:27-04:28 someone  
in Portsmouth, UK, with us  
2006/01/16 20:33-20:34 Nicole  
Kidman with her  
1997/02/28 03:12-03:13 someone  
in the United States of America  
with someone in Australia  
1965/12/30 22:38-22:39 them  
with Martin Luther King Jr

Bottom row:  
2001/12/24 13:29-13:30 him with  
Louisa Bufardeci  
1994/01/21 08:21-08:22 Aldrich  
Ames with someone in Russia  
2001/09/10 17:21-17:22 someone  
in Afghanistan with someone in  
Saudi Arabia  
2004/12/05 23:43-23:44 Louisa  
Bufardeci with Dan St Clair

Courtesy the artist and Anna  
Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

Louisa Bufardeci gratefully  
acknowledges the assistance of  
Dan St Clair, Myra Rasmussen,  
Kimssooja, the staff at Anna  
Schwartz Gallery and at ACCA.

### Mutlu Çerkez, Marco Fusinato, Callum Morton

*Avalon* 2005  
35mm film transferred to DVD  
4 minutes, looped  
edition of 5

Courtesy the artists, Anna  
Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and

Roslyn Oxley 9 Gallery, Sydney

Mutlu Çerkez, Marco Fusinato,  
Callum Morton would like to  
acknowledge the following people:  
Christopher Sferazza: director/  
cinematographer  
Andrew Jerram: camera assistant  
Tim Parrington: editor (MRPP)  
Martin Greer: colourist  
Jason Wilson: online designer  
Kirsten Contizo: producer;  
advertising and design  
Rodney Lowe: sound design  
(Good Audio Sense)

They would also like to thank  
Julie Rutherford and The Guild  
of Commercial Filmmakers  
and Malcolm Richards at  
Cameraequip.

### Nathan Coley

*Jerusalem Syndrome* 2006  
two-screen video installation  
16mm film transferred to DVD

*Dr Kailan Interview*  
11 minutes 7 seconds

*Jerusalem Syndrome*  
20 minutes 2 seconds

Courtesy the artist and Haurch of  
Venison, London

### George Gittoes

*Soundtrack to War: Iraq* 2004  
video transferred to DVD  
95 minutes

Courtesy the artist and  
Co Producer Gabrielle Dalton

This work is supported by Fujitsu.

## WRITERS

### Jenny Holzer

*Untitled (Selections from Lustmora)*  
1994  
cibachrome prints  
33 x 50.8 cm

*For the Centre*  
Light projection  
© 2006 Jenny Holzer

Courtesy the artist

### Sandra Johnston

*Conduct Best Calculated for  
Obtaining Victory* 2005  
video installation  
21 minutes 24 seconds

*Something You May Later Regret*  
On 2006  
video installation

Dptych 1  
Part 1 Finaghy Road North  
Part 2 12 Carnacally Road  
10 minutes 30 seconds

Dptych 2  
Part 1 Dr Marie Smyth  
Part 2 Rossville Flats, Derry  
10 minutes 47 seconds

Dptych 3  
Part 1 Mary Holland/Droppin Well  
Bar, Belfast  
Part 2 Milltown Cemetery, Belfast  
12 minutes 25 seconds

Courtesy the artist

This work is kindly supported by  
Fujitsu.

Sandra Johnston would like to  
thank the Arts, Humanities &  
Research Board at the University of  
Ulster and Hugh Mulholland.

### Susan Norrie

*Twilight* 2005-2006  
DVD  
9 minutes 33 seconds

Courtesy the artist and Mori Gallery,  
Sydney

*Twilight* is a collaborative work with  
David Mackenzie

Video: David Mackenzie  
Editing and Sound: David  
Mackenzie/Susan Norrie

Susan Norrie would like to  
acknowledge the Aboriginal Tent  
Embassy, Canberra: Isabel Coe,  
Ray Swan, Caroline Swan, Maisie  
and Brendan Cook; and the  
National Archives of Australia.

### Salam Pax

*Baghdad Blogger: Constitution*  
2005  
digital video  
52 minutes

Courtesy the artist, Journeyman  
Pictures and Guardian Films

### Simon Perry

*Public Address* 2005  
polyester resin, steel, rubber and  
sound

Courtesy the artist

Simon Perry would like to thank  
Nesle Kenny for his generosity  
and assistance in the design and  
fabrication of the work, and Paul  
Doornbusch for his work on the  
sound component.

### Michael Leunig

*Sacred Text* 2002  
13 x 16 cm

*Bows and Arrows* 2003  
13 x 19.5 cm

*Guerrillas* 2003  
13 x 15 cm

*Night Club* 2003  
13 x 18.5 cm

*Know-How* 2003  
13 x 17 cm

*Leash* 2004  
13 x 18 cm

*Live from Iraq* 2003  
13 x 19 cm

*Terrorism* 2002  
13 x 17.5 cm

*Falluja* 2004  
13 x 18 cm

*The Missile* 2002  
13 x 21.5 cm

Courtesy the artist

### Peter Tyndall

Detail  
*A Person Looks At A Work of Art/  
someone looks at something...*  
LOGOS/HA HA  
(A Praise to the Four Noble Truths)  
1998-2006  
*A Person Looks At a Work of Art/  
someone looks at something...*  
CULTURAL CONSUMPTION  
PRODUCTION

Courtesy the artist and Anna  
Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

**Imants Tillers** is an artist and writer  
living in Cooma, NSW.

**Michael Leunig** is a cartoonist and  
columnist for the Age newspaper in  
Melbourne.

**Russell Storer** is Curator at the  
Museum of Contemporary Art,  
Sydney.

**Anna MacDonald** is Curatorial  
Assistant at the Australian Centre for  
Contemporary Art.

**Juliana Engberg** is Artistic Director  
of the Australian Centre for Contem-  
porary Art.

**Peter Tyndall** is an artist.

**Valerie Connor** is a curator, board  
member of the Irish Museum of  
Modern Art, a tutor in creative  
practice and visual studies at the  
Dublin Institute of Technology's  
Photography and Digital Imaging  
Studio and the Visual Arts Specialist  
with the Arts Council of Ireland/An  
Chomhairle Ealaíon.

**Margaret Morgan** is an Australian-  
born contemporary artist based in  
Los Angeles.

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Our thanks to each of *The Unquiet World* artists and writers for creating provoking works that encourage reflection and debate. We thank each of you for your contributions.

Thank you to Milton Kaloudis at Fujitsu.

Thanks, too, to our wonderful installation team and our volunteers for their ongoing commitment to the presentation of our exhibition program.

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