

NEW07

DAMIANO BERTOLI
CHRISTIAN CAPURRO
NICK DEVLIN
CLAIRE HEALY
AND SEAN CORDEIRO
BRENDAN LEE
ANASTASIA KLOSE

NEW07

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FOREWORD

Now in its fifth year, the NEW series has become a key element within ACCA's programming and one of the most celebrated events in the visual arts calendar. We look forward to it, and we have a sense that our audience also awaits the arrival of the NEW works with a good deal of anticipation.

NEW offers opportunities to some of our best and brightest artists to create something extraordinary in their own process. The projects are developed with ACCA for exhibition in our unique galleries. Artists are encouraged to work with space in mind. Every year we see the evolving experimentation that comes of this opportunity. The results are always surprising and engaging.

This year's NEW is no exception. And we feel a new wave of energy in the works of Anastasia Klose, Christian Capurro, Brendan Lee, Nick Devlin, Damiano Bertoli and Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro. Whilst NEW is not a theme show, it is always interesting to observe the shifts and connections between works. This year we seem to be witnessing a return to the low-tech aesthetic of found objects and a reinterpretation of materialism.

Many people contribute to the success of NEW and as well as congratulating the artists, and Commissioning Curator, Juliana Engberg, we would like to thank the hardworking ACCA team ably led by Coordinating Curator Anna MacDonald.

This year ACCA celebrates an important new partnership with the Sidney Myer Fund which has generously committed financial assistance for NEW over the next three years. It is this kind of sustained support which gives ACCA the capacity to achieve the best for artists and for audiences. In fact it was the Myer Foundation which kick started NEW five years ago as a fledgling project of the newly launched ACCA, and we thank the Myer family for their ongoing vision and commitment.

Since then NEW has become a firmly established annual event, but I think you will agree it has lost none of its originality and freshness.

Kay Campbell Executive Director

JULIANA ENGBERG

NEW07

One of the first impressions you might gain from looking at the projects in NEW07 is that these artists are in the process of retreating from the slick, highly produced, and overtly finished kinds of work that fall within the seamless surfaces and structures of post-minimalism. And you would be right. There is something much more formless, scatological and un-cool about these several art works.

Some of them are messy. Others use recycled items rather than invest in all new schmick goods. Another is a form of altered residue and keeps company with the aesthetics of Arte Povera. Even the most 'finished' looking project within the set of six, Damiano Bertoli's suite of works, draws its mojo from a bastard mix of low culture meeting the grandiloquence of museum deportment in a kind of spatial/philosophical collage stand-off.

For me each of these projects represents an opening up of art practice, and an engagement with potential failure and uncertainty and lawlessness. For instance, not everyone will agree that a visual exegesis on the action drawing made by drag racers is a legitimate subject for art. And yet to me Brendan Lee's exuberant embrace of Westle car culture, Intermixed with a version of vernacular cinematic 'Westerns', such as Wake In Fright and Chopper, cojoined by irony and awe, seems like a very funny take on the macho art culture of action painting and expressionism. Lee's 'proving ground' is as much about a dandy surviving the culture of the badiands of the western suburbs, as it is about the artistic tussle between the blokey, abstract expressionist milieu of Pollock, de Kooning, Gorky et al, and the upstart pop culture artists such as Lichenstein, Warhol and Ruscha, or the let-it-all-hang-outers of the 'happening' crowd.

Speaking of happenings, or drag races, Lee's stacks of 300, and more, car tyres, establish a dialogue with Alan Kaprow's 1961 post-painting 'happening', Yard, in which a backyard full of rubber auto tyres were heaped randomly for viewers to climb in and around. Lee references Kaprow's free-for-all activity, now outlawed by virtue of Lee's relocation of such materials to a 'gaillery' setting. In doing this, Lee makes the social segue to recent conversations about creating a legitimate zone for drag racing. A longish bow maybe, but not if you know your art, and I would suggest each of the artists in NEW07 are in deliberate dialogue with art practices that precede their time in the ring.

Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro's past times is a case in point. Up until now their practice has been about stacking and bundling the discarded, abandoned or bequested objects of people's lives in sculptural gestures reminiscent of numerous Sydney Biennale projects where bundling and stacking have become requisite tropes to represent many diaspora. Of course bundling and stacks were earlier seen as a part of the Arte Povera gesture: Pistoletto's Venus of the Rags for instance. Other artists such as Richard Wentworth and Erwin Wurm have also invested in stacking, but mostly to prove issues of volume and mass, and to shrink existence: to exclaim the smallness of one's own place within cosmic largeness.

By contrast, past times wants to illustrate the expansion of existence. Healy and Cordeiro have taken a small caravan; a humble place of dwelling for a Berlin woman which provided her entire domestic world for more than 40 years, and enlarged it to a vast monument of experience. In dissecting the little caravan, and breaking it down into some 800 pieces of catalogued debris, and then distributing the pieces like a winged wooden butterfly, along with scattered other bits, we are given a sense of a kind of catharsis; of a life evolving and freeing to another state of being.

The afterlife, and transformed life, of an image is something Christian Capurro is interested to investigate with his works on paper, Compress (the pit of doublivores). Images marked upon sheets of paper as a result of having printer's ink transferred by the pressure caused by other image pages being erased, have been corrected by Capurro's intervention of white-out. The corrected images are ghostly baroque traceries in which the human form can be discerned but not comprehended.

The contemplation of these compressed inky bodies offer erotic and libidinous conjecture. Some people might go swiftly to an interpretation which is lewd and pomographic, but that is only their own speculation. Eroticism is the more likely outcome of these images since Capurro courts the audience's own drives by the ever successful seductive device of concealment, which prevents the images from descending into debasement. Capurro's erasing and correcting is a form of 'destrudo', which Freud would have defined as the energy of a destructive impulse. In Capurro's frustrating after-images, destrudo is brought together with the drive of the libido in a fight for the survival of Eros within the viewer's psyche.

Capurro's humble paper works recall the strategies of the informe used by artists like Lucio Fontana, Cy Twombly, and artists aligned with a kind of Hellenistic aesthetic whose works are in service of arousal and restraint.

There is less libido, but more ego, more front-of-brain activity in Damiano Bertoli's esoteric cosmology of signs and semiotics. Bertoli clusters art events to create a kind of weird science of self, from the wonderfully titled Does my brain look big in this?, a bizarre self-portrait in the hyperrealist style and pose of Chuck Close's famous Big Self-Portrait, to the warped, wall-leaning mirror piece Clear Light.

Round things and plateaus are important to Bertoli. Balls and bald heads share space with gridded-up platforms and spiritual plinths. The linear and the circular jostle for position in his overarching proposition of the 'Continuous Moment' which has become a kind of manifesto for his pursuit of the things that make up the continuously momentous events of a life in art practice. The year of Bertoli's birth, 1969, provides particular momentum and stasis for this investigation.

If I imagine a cinematic opening sequence as a way of describing Bertoli's project it would go something like this: Blackness and silence, followed by a BIG BANG explosion. The camera then zooms out to show the immensity of cosmic scatter. Colourful gas swirls and solid fragments whiz past the point of vision. The camera then settles on one small white speck, and zooms in to reveal the moon. In turn the moon rotates to expose planet earth, to which our cinematic gaze is now directed. We zoom fly to earth, and like a Google™ satellite map, jog in, incrementally, to inside the dark, quiet space of a maternal womb which explodes in the biological equivalent of a BIG BANG accompanied by the screams of a baby, whose round baid head rotates to see the moon; to which we visually ascend. From the moon we pan out to the scattered cosmos – this time filled with fragments of mediated images – which, in its expanding infinity ultimately arrives at a dark silent space, where we wait for the next BIG BANG.

It's true. I might be channelling The World According to Garp here, or elements of Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey. I have a vague sense I could be messing with Woody Allen's Everything you always wanted to know about Sex (but were afraid to ask); and possibly Planet of the Apes. No doubt each of these owes some debt to osmosis as well. And this is Bertoli's point, probably, that the artistic ego must acknowledge the osmosis effect in the ever evolving moment of creation within cyclical evolution.

Anastasia Klose's indebtedness to the existentialism of Sartre is made explicit in her cheaply produced wall poster in which we see the artist with her head buried in the French philosophical book. Other posters aggrandise her 'stray' cat Ulber; show blown-up stills from her video works; display her bedroom, her studio (a small corner in her mother's Paris studio/bed-sit), and her mother's studio (a table in the same space). There is a lot of adolescence here: a load of symbiosis, probably osmosis, and a hint of catharsis.

Watching Klose's videos, Film for my Nanna, How to be Mel, The Outsider, The Meaning of Life, and more, the viewer might be tricked into thinking they are encountering the utterly banal. But this is a deceit. The appearance of Klose's videos, their very basic technical accomplishment, and the focus on common things – the artist and

her immediate relationships and surroundings, her self-scrutiny, discontents, feelings of alienation, fear of failure, cat, lists – belie the sophistication of their true examination, which is the universal search for life's meaning, but with a heavy dose of self-awareness. Klose is all too aware of Sartre's concepts of negation, bad faith, and the 'look' to fall victim to her own existentialism.

Film for my Nanna may appear to be about being alone and without a marriage prospect, but it is actually a film about Being-for-others, about the self as defined by others, but in a twist? rescued from this fate. Je suis une artiste, aussie!, may appear to be about advertising one's artistic existence, but in fact it is about the lack of 'look' of the others, a lack of acknowledgement, and therefore 'nothingness'. Although, of course, we the viewers 'look' and therefore the self is restored.

Klose re-establishes, and updates the aesthetic daggy-ness of early feminist works. Her works are deliberately naff and home-spun. Her self-performances cast her in the central role of experience in similar fashion to Martha Rossler, Lynn Herschmann (aka Roberta Breitmore), Adrian Piper and others, Klose's subject matter is being – a woman, an artist, and a survivor, and naturally, as have her predecessors, she encounters this with humour. Los Angeles performance artist, Cheri Gaulke makes the point when she says: 'Performance is not a difficult concept to us [women]. We're on stage every moment of our lives. Acting like women. Performance we found an art form that was young, without the traditions governed by men. The shoe fit, and so, like Cinderella, we ran with it'.

The construction of identity is not only about the roles we play but the phenomenological encounter we make with other and the self. Artists like Bruce Nauman have been concerned with using the body and its fleeting encounter with the self as a way of articulating this investigation. Nick Devlin continues this playful encounter in his TV totems made with old wooden box television sets, which have been manipulated to become electronic mirrors.

This low-tech surveillance of the viewer produces a charming interactive display in which the body is distributed into bits and pieces; the actualisation of Lacan's concept of the corps morcelé. But this is no deep, dark philosophical hole of negation, but a jaunty, friendly kind of encounter with the syncopated self. Devlin's works take on a kind of musicality, or physical poetry and connect in very approachable ways with an audience seeking confirmation in art.

Yes, I would say the works in NEW07 are about the expanding life; the enlarging cosmos, the fragmentary and the fleeting. So all bodes well. The body is out of the box of minimalism and back in the street.

ANASTASIA KLOSE

born Melbourne, 1978.

Anastasia Klose is an installation and video artist who makes work based on experiences from her own life. In her films, Klose employs a mix of humour and pathos to express her own failings and heartbreaks. She views her work as a celebration of life's banalities and tragedies.

Klose's recent solo exhibition Anastasia Klose... The Best Of was held at Spacement Gallery, Melbourne, in February 2006.

In 1998, Klose completed a BA at the University of Melbourne, with a double major in Philosophy and English, and in 2005 she completed a BFA (Honours) with a major in Drawing at the Victorian College of the Arts.

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ANNA MACDONALD

THE TROUBLE AND THE PAIN

A woman stumbles, groping the wall in a series of desperate, and ultimately failed attempts to remain standing. Over and over again she falls heavily upon the concrete floor. Each loss of balance requires of her a greater effort in righting herself. Getting to her feet again, she anticipates her next fall. Others are watching, and so she laughs at herself as she struggles around the room.

Many people glide by her, either absorbed in the efficiency of their own bodies or craning their heads as they go past, like curious drivers coming upon the scene of an accident. Others offer arms of support. They laugh with the falling woman as they seek to steady her. But in offering their assistance, these more confident participants make themselves vulnerable. Like a drowner, the falling woman threatens to drag down her rescuers. Before long she is on her own again, groping the wall again, waiting to fall again.

Rollerskating at ACCA is one of eight video works created by Anastasia Klose for NEW07. Unlike the other seven videos, which are monitor-based works, this piece is monumental by comparison with Klose's usually more intimate standards. Projected onto the end wall of the gallery, accompanied by Ralph Vaughn Williams's The Lark Ascending, and without her trademark humorous text-interventions, this slow-motion film depicting people roller skating around ACCA's large, empty commission hall invites us to draw our own conclusions about the way we relate to others.

In the tragi-comic slapstick of the falling woman, Klose reveals humour's social dimension. For Freud, the success of a joke depends upon both the joke-teller and her audience; on her ability to communicate the joke to another person. Laughing, the audience completes the joke-work, affirming the joke-teller's judgement. For her part, in her serial performances of personal humiliation, embarrassment and other forms of suffering, Klose-the-joke-teller releases her audience from their own inhibitions. We experience her gumption as well as embarrassment; but from a safe distance and removed from any possibility of audience participation. Our laughter is Klose's reward – and her measure of success.

Much of Klose's work pivots on a fundamental paradox. Again and again she explores in her films the difficulty of connecting with others in any meaningful way. At the same time, however, the success of her work largely depends upon our recognition of the suffering (at times trivial, at others more serious) that shapes her life. Watching Film for Romantic Artists, How to be Mel, Another Day in Paradise and The Meaning of Life we recognise elements of our own lives. Like Klose, we might: stress about whether or not we will succeed at work; dwell too long upon failed relationships and alienate those around us as a result; spend every Friday night in front of the telly; bicker with those close to us and then feel guilty; use our time unprofitably, retreating to bed alone and fully clothed in the middle of the day, or stare out the window, watching Indian mynahs occupy the world with an unquestioning self-assurance we ourselves lack.

Klose uses humour to explore ideas such as compassion and sympathy, but not as a means to accuse those who laugh with heartlessness or malice. Instead, it is in our laughter that we recognise our fears and inhibitions and discover our compassion. Playing with words and music, Klose jokes about her own suffering and we laugh with her, not at her. In Film for My Nanna, Klose walks down St Kilda Road and Swanston. Street in Melbourne, wearing a wedding dress, a veil and a cardboard sign: 'Nanna, I'm still alone'. American pop balladeer, Don McLean, provides the soundtrack with his song Castles in the Air; his music sighing the sigh of a guitar-strumming, floppy-haired, understanding young man. He empathises with Klose. So too do the passing Punks and the Emos gathered under the clocks at Flinders Street Station who offer embraces. and encouragement as McLean seeks to be saved 'from all the trouble and the pain'. Watching the scene unfold, we laugh at the overt offers of commiseration showered upon Klose as she walks through the city streets amongst the snap-happy tourists who wonder at this lonesome bride.

In Je suis une artiste aussie, Klose trawls through the streets of Paris to the tragic strains of Edith Piaf proclaiming 'Non, Je ne regrette rien'. In black marker on recycled cardboard, Klose optimistically declares herself: 'Bonjour Paris! Je suis une artiste aussi'. As Piaf's voice reaches crescendo pitch, so too does Klose's furious disenchantment when faced with the disregard and occasional condescension of Parisians on the right bank and, worse still, the left. Witness to her becoming more and more disheartened, our laughter offers the sympathy she failed so utterly to elicit from the Parisians she had hoped to connect with.

In his discussion of Schadenfreude (the pleasure we take in the suffering of other people), John Portmann suggests that 'our own laughter may lead us to question the robustness of our compassion for others." Klose's use of humour presents such an opportunity for questioning. The Outsider is a tribute to her cat, Uber, a timid stray who had suffered at the hands of others. Poor Uber slowly came to feel at home living with Klose and her family. When he was hit by a car, however, he remained too afraid to let anyone come near enough to help. 'The world is so cruel', says Klose. But far from chastising us for laughing at the situation, she encourages our mirth, using humour both to alleviate suffering and to interrogate our responses to it. For all her playful and daggy bravura, Klose executes a comic turn with great sophistication. Thus, we lament the loss of Uber, who never returned home after being injured. But we are let off the hook. Accompanying Klose's video slide show, L'il Orphan Annie sings determinedly, The Sun'll Come Out Tomorrow. And so we smile ruefully, rather than cry, as humour and suffering are again revealed to us in unison.

In Klose's suffering, there is a sense of adolescent reverie. The penicillin pink of the walls in her exhibition space, and the poster-size photographs of her compulsively messy bedroom that paper them, create an atmosphere of collusive intimacy. Entering Klose's installation is like being invited into a teenager's bedroom and asked to share in the hopes and disappointments that animate both the person and the space. It's a rare opportunity to access areas that are otherwise off-limits. And who could refuse the chance?

Sigmund Freud, Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious (Standard Edition), Translated James Strachey, Vintage, London, 1960.

³ John Portmann, When Bad Things Happen to Other People, Routledge, New York, 2000, p.xvii









no





















How to be me!

1. Fall in love, then get
dumped

2. Cry and moan
endlessly about it

At



08:1

born Blackpool, England, 1966.

Nick Devlin's practice utilises a variety of techniques including portraiture, miniature dicramas, video and manipulated technology to create mirrors that explore the human condition. His recent work uses a mixture of old and new technologies often involving the viewer within the process.

Solo exhibitions include New Work, Sullivan and Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney, 2007 (forthcoming); Like Jelly on Your Shoulder (2005), Picture Portrait (2003) and Speaking Likenesses (2002), Seventh Gallery, Melbourne.

Selected group exhibitions include 2006 The Year in Art, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney, 2006; Sowing Seeds: the DRG Collection, Dubbo Regional Gallery, NSW, 2006; Life is Getting Longer, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2006; Flaming Youth, Orange Regional Gallery, NSW, 2006; The (Royal) Melbourne Show, Sullivan + Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney, 2006; Micro Masters/Action Heroes, Blindside, Melbourne, 2005; Artists' Artists, Axia Modern Art, Melbourne, 2005; Life is Very Long, Yarra Sculpture Gallery, Melbourne, 2004; Faces, Ord Minnett Fover Gallery, Melbourne, 2004.

In 1991, Devlin graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting) at Victoria College, Prahran, and in 1994 completed Postgraduate studies in Painting at the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne.

Nick Devlin is represented by Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney.

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09.

JULIANA ENGBERG

RANDOM CHANCE

Visual artists often understand aspects of John Cage's philosophy of 'chance' rather better than many music people who tend to worry about the sound of silence. 'Chance' in the way that Cage meant it, actually needs a certain structure to work: a parameter if you like. That's what converts 4 minutes and 33 seconds of not playing music on the piano into a sound composition entitled 4'33", as compared to an open-ended silence in which a time frame is not provided.

The structure of Cage's famous piece of 'silence' is created by the fact that the piano is there, the musician is there, the sheet music is there: the non playing of the piano is defined by all these things in concert with the sound of the world being allowed in to fill a gap for a precise period of time. What comes into the auditorium, aurally air-borne – street noises, sirens, coughs, rustling, mobile phones ringing, whispering..., whatever – is the stuff of chance composition. As Cage explained it, straightforwardly: "There is no such thing as silence. Something is always happening that makes a sound."

Cage-ian chance also includes random systems created out of controlled situations. Mazart Mix, 1991, is a good example, in which Cage 'composes' with audience participation. Using 5 cassette players with a playing list of 25 interchangeable Mozart tracks, Cage establishes the possibility, not infinite, but vast, of entirely new Mozart compositions – unified by Mozart's own notational signature. Having been one of Cage's collaborative composers, I can attest to the success of this selectively random event.

Visual artists interested in the fluxus of visual occurrence have embraced the concepts of chance and selective randomness, and enlisted the devices of optical capture to similar ends. Camera obscura apparatus, mirrors, CCTV, video cameras, periscopes and the like, have all been placed in service of optical gathering, and, like a Cage composition, been given boundaries to organise randomness into a specific encounter.

Bruce Nauman's series MAPPING THE STUDIO (Fat Chance, John Cage), 2001, for instance, is a great example of a visual artist understanding the drama, comedy, pathos, and potential failure of the Cage concept. I take Nauman's use of 'fat' here to mean big, as in a 'fat sound', and so he has made an epic video piece with chance playing out within the rigid parameters of the studio. The daily hour-long video is recorded over umpteen nights, and the characters are mouse, cat, moth, and whatever else enters the scope of the lens at any given time. For all the randomness within the piece, it remains tightly structured.

Like Cage, Nauman likes to mix it up. His works with mirror displacements offer another kind of 'chance' visual content. By using the technology of CCTV to create 'virtual mirrors', and by using real mirrors in complicated interplays, Nauman allows spectators

to see themselves in ways and places that are unexpected and disorienting. This displacing strategy creates a strange, frustrating sense of dislocation by denying physical access to what one expects to see.

Nam June Paik was also devoted to Cage and his concepts of chance, and saw links between these ideas and those of Fluxus. His TV worlds were structured to collide culture into an active site of visual noise, and create a kind of electronic cosmos of democratically organised visual mass with no one thing being more riveting than another.

I mention Cage, Nam June Paik and Nauman and their engagement with chance, structure and the technological, cosmological collage that occurs as a result of this Interplay, because these are the central elements in the recent works of Nick Devlin. Devlin uses the delineation of grungy old, wooden box TV sets as a framing structure within which the body of the spectator and the gallery surrounds become puzzled and fragmented to create a new visual energy. CCTV cameras capture portions of the spectator's body and disperse them within a monitor stack as a set of random and abstract body parts.

In Within You/Without You heads appear in two monitors simultaneously. Feet and legs are upside down, then sideways. Two faces of the same person appear; the body stretched between three monitors. Vertical hold slips and positions person against person in unexpected movement. Devlin creates a kind of live-feed monkey-puzzle out of the gallery visitors and their environment. This bodily flux offers a very active engagement between object and protagonist which plays off the circumstances of misrecognition, double-take, self obsession and chimera.

Devlin's break-down of the self-image provides a juiced-up version of identity formation. His TV stacks with arrayed bodies lure the viewer into a game of identification that must, by virtue of its own inherent dishevelment, derange the concepts of the mirror stage I'. The 'I' in Devlin's event becomes a corporeal commune: a sociological environment as much as anything, where the concept of the single self is positively undermined by the mutual need and interaction of others and other selves.

For all its positive social associations, no doubt this dismembering of the self can also cause a form of anxiety in the viewer, creating eine dunkel Gestalt: a sinister figure of fractured unity. Much as it is playful, funny even, to momentarily wear another's head, for instance, there will undoubtedly be a desire to restore the totality of the self and to reaffirm the gestalt of the 'l'.

In certain ways it has become commonplace to think about television, video, and digital feed as a kind of evil slippery slide down which humanity will fall – electronic media divorcing the self from self through mediation, with the electronic eye always monitoring one's movements. But Devlin's playful TV totems and hidden cameras enact an opposite kind of strategy; they tend to reorient the self to self. And differing somewhat from Nauman's play of the elusive, retreating 'I', Devlin's fiddling with the mirror image of the viewer fixes the gaze to the object and subject in a sympathetic and entertaining attempt at unification.

Devlin's work is, for want of a more lofty description, 'friendly' towards its subject, the 'l'/you, who looks at these TV stacks with pleasing and re-affirming totemic qualities.

This is not necessarily the case with Devlin's other work Apartment in which stacked TVs become windows into the worlds of others. Filming into the rooms of the New York apartment block opposite his own, Devlin has seized moving images that enlist our voyeuristic complicity. Yet, while one might imagine that spying unseen upon the activity of others might be captivating and feed our elicit nature, it has to be said that the reciprocal/interactive encounter complicit in the construction of self remains far more compelling than these grainy, slightly murky glimpses of other people's lives.

Unlike Within You/Without You, the subjects of Apartment do not return the gaze back to the viewer. Unaware of their looked-upon status, the Apartment dwellers have no role to play in confirming the viewer's own self-reflection. Apartment differs then from cinematic versions of voyeurism, such as Hitchcock's Rear Window for example, in which the viewer is given a role of identification through the protagonist played by Jimmy Stewart. Unlike Stewart, there is no risk of Devlin's viewers being caught out, and so the danger of a returned gaze, and the confirmation or persecution of the self through others has been removed.

Devlin's Apartment in fact appears more like a stacked set of still lives, and its connection to painting is greatly enhanced by the muted tonality of the old TV monitors and the tight loop of action, which offers only nuanced movement. In certain ways the activity of Apartment is more aural than image based. The sounds of the city, the happy cries of a child, the clatter of plates and mummer of voices mix with the general hum of New York City in a cheerful Cage-ian composition of chance, looped around a moment.

Chance, selected randomness, the gaze and the gestalt: these are the essential elements of Devlin's project and they culminate to provide an updated version of identity construction and ways to engage with that knotty old number, existentialism.







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DAMIANO BERTOLI

born Melbourne, 1969.

Damiano Bertoli's practice uses the principles of collage to project an ambiguous sense of time, and an ambivalent attitude towards the ultimate functionality of art-making. Certain moments from art history and popular culture are reconstituted and re-aligned in a form of time travel; these works are speculations, and are the result of questioning how artists negotiate the past and future through their work. Bertoli's work uses utopian strategies, and their subsequent failure, as a kind of metaphorical structure that corresponds to the 'artist in the studio', and the so-called 'successes' and 'failures' of an artist's practice.

Bertoli has held solo exhibitions at Ocular Lab, Melbourne and MOP, Sydney, 2005; Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, 2003; and 1™ Floor Artists¹ and Writers¹ Space, Melbourne, 2002 and 1998. Recent group exhibitions include Relentiess Optimism, Carlton Hotel, Melbourne, 2007; Endgame: Late-Capitalist Realism, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2006; TrinltyNine - Ocular Lab ® Trinlty College, University of Melbourne, 2006; Adventures with Form in Space - The Fourth Bainaves Foundation Sculpture Project, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2006; Silenzi, Palazzo delle Prigioni, Venice, Italy, 2006; National Sculpture Prize and Exhibition, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2005; A Short-Ride in a Fast Machine: Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, 2005.

Bertoli is a member of Ocular Lab Inc., and a sessional lecturer at the Victorian College of the Arts and Monash University.

Damiano Bertoli is represented by Neon Parc, Melbourne

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TED COLLESS

MOMENTUM

Damiano Bertoli now calls most of his art – his assemblages and collages, paintings and drawings – a Continuous Moment. Each individual work is an instance of the momentum of this artist's output. But not just consecutively as in a story, with one moment after another accumulating (or degrading) around a climax... as in most artists' biographies. Instead, we should look at Bertoli's objects as all implicated in each other, Constant, faithful and simultaneous. They eventuate on a plateau rather than a gradient. That's to say, all of them will add up – if in an indefinite way – only to a single, self-same moment. No matter how long, how much or how little he works at it, his art amounts to this. A singular event.

That's a big claim, and one that radiates self-importance. But it's also a self-annihilating gesture since it insists that the artist's work and life are collapsed into a singular point. We can't exactly see what this point – the point of his art – is for Bertoli. But as with the physics of a black hole or singularity we can detect its presence from the accumulation of matter that is sucked into its radical curvature of space-time. And the gravitational pull into that point – Bertoli's point, his particular if ongoing moment – drags together a configuration of cultural debris in a gesture pointing to the year 1969.

Something happened then, something that Bertoli exclusively witnesses ...something otherwise unnoticed but which, like a prophecy, is encoded in the familiar inventory of the year's momentous cultural events. The US Apollo mission's landing on the moon incarnates such a sign, when it turns up in one of Bertoli's assemblages, for instance, through a three-dimensional lunar globe (a souvenir of the early Apollo exploratory missions) cradled on a metal tripod that stands over a mirrored surface. That mirror is a sex object, forming the top surface of a Minimalist plinth, fashioned after Sol Le Witt, and positioned at the level of a man's genitals. Glancing down at the mirrored underside of the globe you see up the moon's legs. Up its skirt. This plinth is the marriage bed. But of course, despite the offer there is nothing to see up the moon's legs and no way in. Only a dark, bald, smooth surface displacing the viewer's face. Like Duchamp's Bride Stripped Bare, the moon is a dysfunctional sex toy.

Charles Manson's notorious death cult incites another hallucinatory voyeuristic inversion for Bertoli. In 1969 the Manson "family" gate-crashed a Hollywood party and ritualistically butchered Roman Polanski's pregnant film star wife, Sharon Tate. Manson's "daughter-brides" shaved their heads during the trial, and in the press photos they look alarmingly like innocent Buddhist boy monks. But when Bertoli appropriates those images their skulls become moons. Like that virgin moon hovering above the mirror, their denuded heads reveal an upskirts vision of demonic chastity... a gorgon, an unimaginable love object. This object is only visible as a distorted reflection of Bertoli's desire to see himself in the event.

It's an object also appearing anamorphically in the slick curvature of the pinball, the instrument of magical artistry identified with the protagonist of The Who's rock opera, *Tommy*. The pinball wizard, 'a deaf, dumb and blind kid', has nothing but untutored instinct to guide his moves. 'Stupid as a painter,' says Bertoli, repeating Duchamp. Tommy is a natural genius in his art, but cannot perceive what he is doing, nor his achievement. In that sense his art is spectacularly sterile and narcissistic. He has no identity, nothing but his own unseen, liquefied reflection off the ball in play.

Nietzsche called the lover and the artist "moonstruck", or lunatic. They do not dare look at the real object of desire: the organism with its natural functions, pulsations and secretions. They live in thrall of the sign of such a body, captivated by the despotic signifier of beauty; the gorgon's reflection. Bertoli's identification of the moon with the Manson family also has a Nietzschean tone. The sublime desolation of Apollo, one might say, copulating with the intoxicated blood lust of Dionysos. The Manson "daughters" (daughters of the "son of Man") in mad love with their father and at his command, sacrifice an artist's unborn child. Tommy, as remote from the world as the astronaut whose blank helmeted face reflects the spherical earth spinning in a black cosmos, is the foetal state of the artist, a lunatic impregnation. And, like a speck in this complexion of cosmicutopian dreams and sacrificial satanic nightmares, in the middle of 1969, Damiano Bertoli is, himself, born.

What captivates this artist, then, is a series of obscure but incandescent details in an historical period, an iconography that fabricates an ominous sign of the artist's own birth. This is like an astrological event: an angelic star hovering above a barn, or a diabolical portent or emblem manifesting in a birthmark. With the methodical scrutiny of a cryptographer and the paranoid conviction of a conspiracy theorist, Bertoli identifies clues for an arcane message about his own artistic identity, in a scheme as magnificently daft and inflated as the da Vinci code. This narcissistic mystery appears in Bertoli's assemblages the way a crop circle does in a wheat field.

When Bertoli carefully repaints a monumental self-portrait by Chuck Close with his own face supplanting Close's, this becomes—like the moon landing—a hallucinatory sexual scene. In effect, both Close's image and Bertoli himself are unveiled in 1969; the year the moon also is, in a sense, unveiled. Acquired by the Walker Art Centre in the USA straight from his studio

(and the first of his works purchased by any museum), Closes's painting was first exhibited in public in that year. Close gives birth to his iconic image and artistic career as Bertoli appears in the world. In fact, they share the same birthday! Is Closes's monotone moonscape face a miraculous sign for the coming of the infant Bertoli? Is Bertoli the belated, evil twin? "It's me in 'drag' as Chuck," says Bertoll gleefully. That's me, but not really. That's the double of someone I don't resemble, but who could live my life. That's also Tommy, who has no recognisable reflection and whose creator's name is nothing but a sign of misrecognition: The Who, Who? This is the guestion posed by the pseudo-portrait's companion piece: a flexible mirror jammed into a perspex frame that's just too small for it. It's another superimposed self-portrait, another sex object. This one recalling lan Burn's pioneering conceptual work of the 1967 Mirror Piece (a bathroom mirror on the wall): a self-portrait in which the viewer, in order to see the work, takes the artist's place. But it's the Burn piece in an altered state, lan Burn on an acid trip. The mirror buckles, becomes liquid and drags our reflection into its psychotropic lunacy.

All this makes sense, all the signs confirm each other, only within a continuous moment. And the continuous moment is a secret channel Bertoli discovers within the fantasies of the group of Florentine architects, active around 1969, called Superstudio. Their collages envision an endless mathematical grid (of power, traffic, information flow) over the earth's surface, upon which naked lovers and hippie families roam like nomads. They named this architectural displacement of the earth a "continuous monument". Excising the "nu" from the monument, Bertoli's moment screens the monument's nudity, just as his own face covers Chuck Close's. This unspoken nakedness, the "nu", is also glimpsed in the mirror or reversal of the "lunar". A hidden annulment. Bertoli's moment is a secret blot or blur, a nothing or "null" marking the spot of his entry into the world, there up under the bride's skirt.







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born Dampier, Western Australia, 1968.

Over the last ten years Christian Capurro has exhibited in contemporary art spaces, artist-run initiatives and university museums of art. His multi-disciplinary practice variously employs drawing, photo-graphy, and process- and concept-based procedures. The artist is taken (in) by the comings and goings of images, by the desires and frustrations they provoke, and the productive confusions that result when we take them to be more than they are. He would like to be done with them but is not quite able to let them go or to escape their pull.

Selected solo shows include Another Misspent Portrait of Etienne de Silhouette, multiple venues, Melbourne, 2004/5; Insufferable Nebulae and Other Couplings, (2004), and Gorgonia, (2003), Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne; White Breath, (2000) and Trying to Keep More Than One Thing in Your Head at Any One Time - Viva Timor Leste, Aug. 30 1999, (1999), West Space, Melbourne; After the Deluge, Corrections, Temple Studio, Melbourne, 1999.

Selected group shows include Venice Biennale 52nd International Art Exhibition, curated by Robert Storr, 2007 (forthcoming); Before the Body - Matter, curated by Geraldine Barlow, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2006/7; The body. The ruin, curated by Bridget Crone, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 2005/6; Cycle Tracks Will Abound in Utopia, curated by Juliana Engberg, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2004; Performance Anxiety, curated by Damiano Bertoli, Ocular Lab, Melbourne, 2004; Raw Hin; Christian Capurro, Choi Surra Youn and Soyoug Kang, curated by Cassie Karrillowicz, Gallery Kobo Chika, Tokyo, 1999.

Capurro has been the recipient of Rolex Mentor and Protegé Arts Initiative Nomination, 2005; Australia Council New Work Grant, 2004/5; City of Yarra Arts Development Grant, 2004; Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces Studio Residency, 2003 and was a Committee Member for West Space, 2002-2005.

In 2006, he completed a Master of Arts (Media Arts) at RMIT; in 1995 a BFA (Printmaking) at Victorian College of the Arts and in 1999 a Diploma of Photography (Fine Art) at the Australian College of Photography Art and Communication.

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ELIZABETH BROWN

BETWEEN RAPTURE AND REFUSAL

"Separation penetrates the disappearing person like a pigment and steeps him in gentle radiance" WALTER BENJAMIN

To be lost in another's skin as if that was the only salvation - the amnesic, ascetic, asymptotic charm of disappearance.

An invitation to fall - into a slice of time between f2.8 and f2 - into the space between an earlobe and the wallpaper- into the solemn geographies of Blue-Bloods in the skin trade - under the world of Images, into a pneumatic world without gravity, into an uncertain, undermined space - into the nap of the skin.

On, and in, the various spaces of the pages, a particular photographic sensibility is at work; one that is attuned to the idea of latency and to the pursuit of something deep in the fibres. Surgical caresses - removing small sheets of summer skin - part panacea, part pain. Disfiguring in order to figure. Frenetic rubbing annulling one thing causing a litary of bodies to condense on the flipside, unbidden, as if they were impurities in the paper - massaged into being by the pressure of enticement. A paradox has occurred in the making - the spawning of one skin by the erasure of another('s).

When he encountered them they were to turn toward the walls so that he wouldn't be disturbed by their presence. What remained were their imprints weeping through the plaster – plasma through a dressing.

Bodies thin, amorphous, aerial, torpid, libidinal - compressed into isobars of humid air. Velvet air. On filmsy sheets of paper, on dissipating grounds with few spatial markers, they and we are left to drift beyond horizons in various positions of vertigo and thrill, congress and friction.

The garden revolved as she fell. His weight dropping in slow motion behind her.

The desire for only perilous things. Like the errant, evasive images that both call to us and turn from us - the double-bind... the schizoid coming and going... nervous elasticity...swarming, restless, hovering, verging on looming. They arrive in flashes, reticent morse-code, migrainous symptoms of refusal.

Banana lounges, feijoa trees, white silk-canopied hills hoists, smokey-grey cats and I filled the garden they looked at through the screen-wire door, wondering why I never wanted my photograph taken. Never wanted a trace of what was already changing. Wearied of exposure. auras and scintillations dilatory pressures nausea swooning breathlessness dysphasia

Punning with rum from the tropics, erasing prohibitions, he had sucked in all his hot life, his vivid life, and was now silent - refusing to ever open his mouth again in case one lota of this sustenance should slip away.

In our "hunting for the right accidental notes" in the images, in our probings between surface and depth, perhaps it is we, also, who are stretched between rapture and refusal. The teleophobic squirming of bodies (and minds) put under pressure – frustrations of discernment - trying to make something out, trying to decide. Irritabilities; of creeping intrusions in the margins; of scatterings of the brain; of fissures in time and space – disintegrations.

Blinkers, tongue tie, lugging bit, noseroll, bandages, pacifiers wardrobe of an eight year old girl. Repelling the harness, it gets released to wreak havoc, to damage almost to the point of non-recognition. On and on it gallops, foam and sweat, flailing arms and legs. Until it drops exhausted and is gone.

There, where the physical plane falters, are the bodies bridging bodies bodies astride fusion of bodies.

In their reluctant opacity, in their mirage-like presence, they are partially protected from sight, protected from too much recognition. Secreted in just the right density, they propose their clandestine state.

In fallback positions

soundless pelicular spectral unhinged

Refusing to fully arrive, armoured in silence, these fragile images rupture the trajectory of our looking. Roles of seer and seen are in flux.

In the narrow spaces between, we sometimes meet to tell tales of you. Attendants at the birth, illegal guests at the opening, the time when we are closest. Ours are liminal lives forming holding patterns around you, observing the old formalities that attend every intimacy. We never intervene; onlookers only and secret storytellers. Constructing your invisible biography, we are the ghost writers. Lifting the "weight of being" (cavities of bliss!)

The movement, the lightest and quickest of touchdowns – bumps and turns – flying. To avoid the desecrations of their eyes, their corrosive glance, come in at twelve o'clock high and leave that way too – way above – way above

ungrounded euphoric forgetting the body small deaths "a slow farewell to externals"

days to mirror the mind of no insistence no agitation no proof no need of proof if such a thing existed in lesser light a sloughing of wasting brightness unbecoming

A dalliance with the images - one of those eleventh hour dreams on a concrete floor - a skin-search through the layers, a groping in the dark, a rendezvous left spectacularly unattended.

Multiplying uncontrolled in a mirrored Vegas ballroom - glossy -

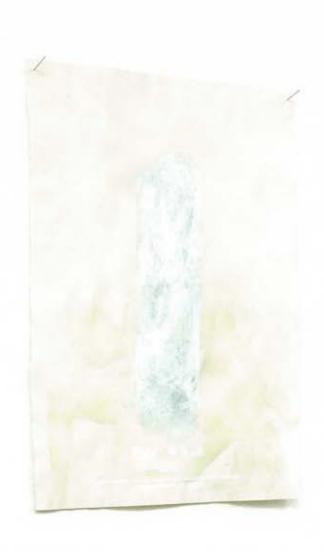
a luminous hesitation.

Undone by light

a distant intimacy









CLARE HEALY & SEAN CORDEIRO

Claire Healy born Melbourne, 1971. Sean Cordeiro born Sydney, 1974.

Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro are installation artists from Sydney currently residing in Berlin. Their collaboration began in 2002 with the artwork Location to Die For, a mock sale of property in Paddington, Sydney. Since then the pair have continued to focus upon issues of architecture, gentrification and space invasion. The couple continue to investigate these concepts — driven by their state of international peripatetic living. This strange situation is the result of consecutively securing the Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship, the Kunstlerhaus Bethanien Residency in Berlin, the Anne and Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship, and several other grants and residencies from the Australia Council for the Arts.

The couple are founding members of the Imperial Slacks collective. Their work has manifested itself in a diverse variety of sites, including Mark's Park, Bondi; an abandoned artists' warehouse in the south of Germany; and a disused toil station in Switzerland. They have also presented their work at the Art Autonomous Network, Yokohama; and Sparwasser, Berlin, The pair have travelled and worked extensively, including volunteering on national park programmes in Iceland, installing pachinko parlours in Yokohama, and making apple juice in Switzerland.

The year 2007 will be spent creating work for the exhibitions: That's Life, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Primary Producers, Performance Space, Sydney; and Die Studierenden von Tony Cragg Verabschieden Sich von Ihrem Professor, Universität der Künste, Berlin.

Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro are represented by Gallery Barry Keldoulis.

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JONATHAN TURNER

PACKAGE HOLIDAY

In those old Road Runner cartoons, the wily coyote sits astride rockets, motorbikes and all types of fast-moving projectiles in his desperate bid to catch his lunch. Time and again, as the coyote is catapulted along desert roadways, the camera focuses on him, while the landscape behind him passes by in a repetitive loop. Cactus, boulder, cloud, cactus, boulder, cloud. It is a reversal of the natural order of things. The animated, high-velocity figure is static, framed and unchanging. The surroundings move instead.

In past times, the travelling caravan-based project by Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro, a formerly dynamic object is transformed into an immobile installation, although its transport to the exhibition venue is itself an integral part of the concept. On the floor, we see neatly ordered elements from a carefully dismembered caravan. From our elevated vantage point, we scan over the spare parts as we attempt to decipher their purpose within the original structure of the caravan. As we move and change our viewpoint, the flat perspective shifts like the landscape in a cartoon. Here the artists' vision of travel is different. The mobile symbol of a leisurely vacation is recast as a cumbersome mathematical puzzle.

A caravan is a container of dreams, a safe enclosure, a roving gypsy's refuge. It represents shelter from the elements, a home away from home, a place of joy and secrets. However, in the hands of Healy & Cordeiro, this mobile Pandora's box is reduced to its deconstructed parts, devoid of mystery. Their suburban caravan is no romantic nomad, but the ultimate middle-class vacation vehicle, rendered useless. In an act of reverse logic, simultaneously overcoming the frustrations of freight (the installation is only a partially honest archive of the caravan's own manufacture, since some parts have been modified to suit international transport specifications), Healy & Cordeiro have dismantled and cut up an ordinary German caravan and shipped it back to Australia - like sliced lunch. Holiday transport itself has become the pre-packaged tourist. In its new form, it is virtually unrecognisable; like at the beginning of a televised cooking programme where all the necessary ingredients have been neatly chopped and prepared. If the menu has not yet been announced, you don't know whether the chef is making a savoury dish or a sugary cake.

According to the artists, this new project emerged from their previous work flatpack, 2006. The caravan was dismantled so that most of the pieces fit neatly into the rectangular 120 x 80cm dimensions of a standard Euro-pallet, for transportation from Berlin to Australia. In past times, these pieces are placed together as a flat assemblage, as though it is a jigsaw puzzle, on the floor at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art.

Although the whole installation may seem fragmented and scattered, there is a unifying dimension to the pieces. Even in its sprawl, razor-sharp edges and perfect right angles are evident, indicating that certain care has been taken in the initial disassembly. The careful packing and stacking at the first stage ensured that a maximum of material could fit into each box."

Due to the space constraints inside a caravan, everything has its own proper place. Life is neatly compartmentalised and streamlined. In Healy & Cordeiro's catalogue of materials, space considerations have been overturned. We are reminded of the scene after an aeroplane disaster, when the sections recovered from the crash site are spread out in an attempt to determine the cause of the accident. Catastrophe, dislocation and consequence.

In Healy & Cordeiro's patchwork version of contemporary archaeology, no attention is paid to the former function of the materials. The holiday home is no longer a piece of roadworthy real estate, but the staged scene of an invented disaster or a disastrous inventory. 'We are creating some kind of order out of disorder, tidving up the fragments in an attempt to mend what has been fractured,' say the artists. 'We have constructed a wooden viewing platform in the corner of the space. The platform is only a metre or so high. The lookout is similar to what you may come across whilst on a walking trail in the bush. There are also two photographs on the wall seen from the viewing platform. One of the photos is of the caravan before deconstruction, the other is of the crates in which the caravan was transported. In essence, past times is partially reconstructing a holiday experience (the caravan) within the parameters of a holiday experience (the viewing platform)."

Healy & Cordeiro currently reside in Berlin. They have recognised that just like the Trabant (a much-scorned East German family sedan), the bulky image of the post-war caravan can still conjure up strong emotions and responses. These include the dismay of a driver being stuck on a winding country road behind a car towing a caravan, the nostalgia of misty-eyed recollections of innocent summer holidays, or the clichéd cultural dismissal by snobs (in response to the caravan's disturbing ability to transport the chattering middle-classes, complete with Tupperware containers and fold-out chairs, into the midst of the previously pristine wilderness). Indeed, in Germany, the caravan park's ingrained sub-urbanity has even inspired a suitably drab drag name – Kara Van Park.

While Healy & Cordeiro are charting the territory in their own specific manner, they are not alone in their use of the mobile home as a metaphor to comment on modern dilemmas. In their first collaborative project in1996, Carsten Höller and Rosemarie Trockel created their Mosquito Bus from a Volkswagen Kombi van, in which a swarm of biting insects were locked inside rather than shut out. More recently, Austria's Hans Schabus sliced his car in half to build a trailer, which he then closely documented as it was hauled uselessly around Vienna. Unlike Andrea Zittel's Wagon Stations in California, (small capsules that resemble car-towed camping trailers) or the felt-lined, feelgood refuges created by The Netherlands's Atelier van Lieshout, Healy & Cordeiro's work is about deconstructing the myth of cosiness - dissembling the inaccurate memories of holiday fun. They discuss the ideas of forgetfulness, dementia and cerebral disconnection to the past.

Like their large-scale collaborative works, Healy & Cordeiro are steered by a highly social attitude. For example, when I recently met up with the artists in Rome, much time was spent talking about ideas such as the old order confronting the new disorder, the complexities of modern transport and the concept of the 'invader' being welcomed by the local inhabitant, all subjects particularly relevant to the installation here at ACCA. As ever, in their work, the essential discourse is the role of willing witness versus participant.

Many of us navigate daily through tourist-saturated spaces. The archaeological 'excavation' and display of a European caravan in an institution in Melbourne, complete with a specially constructed viewing platform, is a meditation on the purpose of tourism today. What are people trying to construct in their heads by going abroad or living in motion. Are we literally looking at the cogs of tourism? In the end, if you keep to the rules, everything is transportable. Hence Healy & Cordeiro's caravan installation is not merely the flattened husk of a portable home. After scrutiny, the sum of its parts is more than just some of its parts.









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born Maryborough, Central Victoria, 1974.

Brendan Lee's art looks at the associations that are made between notions of place, film and history. Through constructed and discovered film locations, Lee presents open-ended questions about identity through filmic narrative and tropes, Lee's video installations aestheticise cinematic genres and portray the underbelly of Australian culture represented via film.

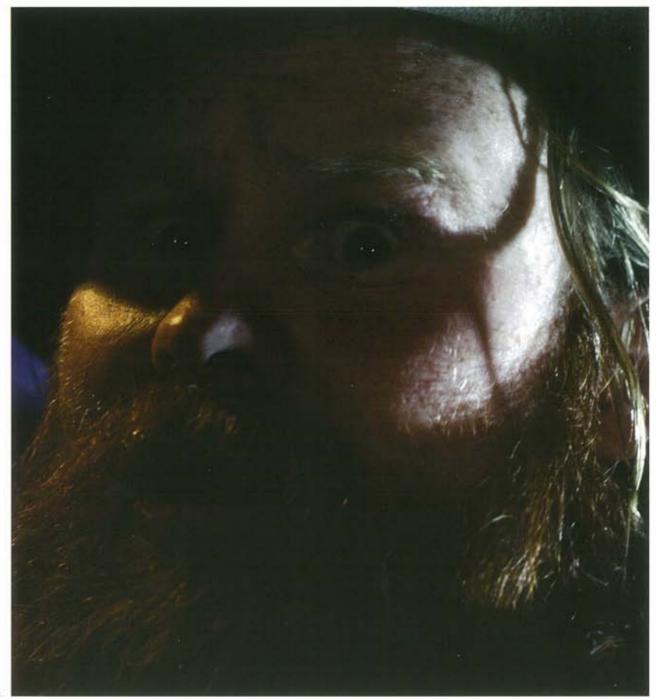
Recent exhibitions include Two Birds With One Stone, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2006; The Beautiful Badlands, Crossley & Scott, Melbourne, 2006; Shootin' From the Hip, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, 2005; Takin' a Shot, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2005; Video Spall curated by Blair French, Performance Space, Sydney, 2004; ... Matter of Time, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, 2003; Death is a Matter of Time, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, 2003; and Cut to the Chase, First Floor, Melbourne 2001. His works have been included in an extensive range of international exhibitions and festivals including in Berlin, Amsterdam, London and Athens. In 2007, he will hold a major solo exhibition at the Bendigo Art Gallery.

Lee has also curated a number of exhibitions including WIDEOLA at the Australian Centre for Photography; Art + Film at the Centre for Contemporary Photography with Natasha Buliock; outTakeout (30 contemporary Australian video artists) and PROJEKT# at the Physics Room in New Zealand. He was the guest editor of Photofile no. 74 and has written for unMagazine in Melbourne and Hijacked in Perth. Lee recently completed an Australia Council residency in Los Angeles.

Brendan Lee is represented by Crossley & Scott, Melbourne.

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TONY BIRCH

HIGH NOON IN BRENDAN LEE'S PROVING GROUND

Enthusiasts of the original Mad Max film regularly visit locations on the fringes of Melbourne's western suburbs and beyond where many of the car chase scenes were filmed. Brendan Lee is one such enthusiast. He is also an artist and filmmaker with a bit of cheek and plenty of old-fashioned front. Lee has a deep affection for cars with grunt, including his own rebuilt VK Commodore.

Brendan Lee's *Proving Ground* continues a tradition that predates the *Mad Max* film by several decades. The history of the Melbourne west's association with fast cars and the occasional menace that accompanies them (both real and imagined) has been a dominant force in shaping its geographic and social landscapes. For instance, the car parks of its suburban malls are as vital to its social function as any of the shops found within its labyrinthine bowels.

Throughout the post-war era both dedicated car racing enthusiasts and rebel-without-a-cause teenagers seeking the adrenalin rush of speed, of the mechanical variety, would spend their weekends hanging around the many speedways dotted across the west, including those in the then far flung mystery suburbs of Brooklyn and Laverton.

This attraction to cars, and the resultant 'racing in the streets' and across the vast back roads of the western plains continued into the golden age of street car culture in Australia – the 1980s – which are remembered as a time when the track car and its street variant became close to inseparable in design and performance. During the 1980s western suburban streets would occasionally be taken over by hotted Holden Commodores and Ford Falcon 500s facing off against each other as gunslingers in a petrol head's version of a John Ford western; and with as much tension as that which surrounded the Bathurst 1000 car race that annually decided if it would be a Holden or Ford that would claim the title of King of the Mountain.

Proving Ground, as with many of Lee's previous works is a celebration of both his obsessions and his dedication to his craft. His art is a work-in-progress. It was once stated that the great American poet, Walt Whitman, wrote just the one poem — and did so many thousands of times as he revisited landscapes both tactile and metaphysical in search of meaning and the reiteration of an idea. While I suspect that Brendan Lee would prefer to be labelled many things other than a poet, he does adopt a similarly creative approach to his work, which many poets, including Whitman, use.

Lee's creative interests are based on an unassailable attraction. He fixates on particular interests before creating works that convey the loyalty and affection he holds for his subject matter, which may be an object, a sound, or the chorus of a raucous

rock song. Most particularly, he focuses on the social and cultural landscapes that too many of us either disparage, marginalise or exploitatively reconstruct as marketplace fetish. Lee has no such interest. While his approach may appear at times playful and suitably loutish, an astute commentary on contemporary society is ever present. As a result his work feels honest.

Lee is unashamedly influenced by the work of those that preceded him, such as the films of actor and director John Cassavetes, the recent feature film Chopper (2000 - directed by Andrew Domink), and Kenneth Cook's disturbing 1961 novel Wake In Fright. But Lee's own work is never derivative.

One of Lee's gifts as a filmmaker is that he is able to frame aspects of cultural phenomena that appear seemingly familiar to us (even if only from the safe and comfortable distance of the flat screen theatres or in our suburban homes) and challenge both our prejudices and enjoyment. He interrogates aspects of both sub and popular culture through his filmmaking while neither disparaging nor romanticising the landscapes that we are invited to enter with him.

It is obvious that Lee loves his cars and the formative landscapes of his youth. These places remain vital to a new generation of suburban youth and young men. While the screech of tyres and the wall of smoke left by burning oil and melting rubber in the (repeated) opening of *Proving Ground* might result in disapproval or even a sense of discomfort (for instance, ponder these two words – carbon emission) I was fascinated that these burnouts appear meaningless (or even futile) while at the same time being overburdened with meaning and necessary expression.

The segmented narrative that takes place in the saloon bar of *Proving Ground* appears deceptively comical while visiting a volatile terrain similar to that which hovers in the outback shadows of *Wake In Fright* before the novel explodes into levels of masculine violence that pervade these kinds of Australian landscapes. The drinkers in this bar are more disturbing because they appear to be all too *real*. They scream out at each other, with mild obscenities, and at newcomers when offering yet another beer, while being themselves drowned beneath thumping repetitive music.

Although we can never be sure what might happen in places such as Lee's saloon bar, or in the front bar of any number of the many thousands of pubs across Australia, we do know that anything could happen, and feel more disturbed (or excited perhaps?) as a result of our uncertainty.

And this ever-present menace of Australia – you just never know – is the triumph of *Proving Ground*. You just never know.



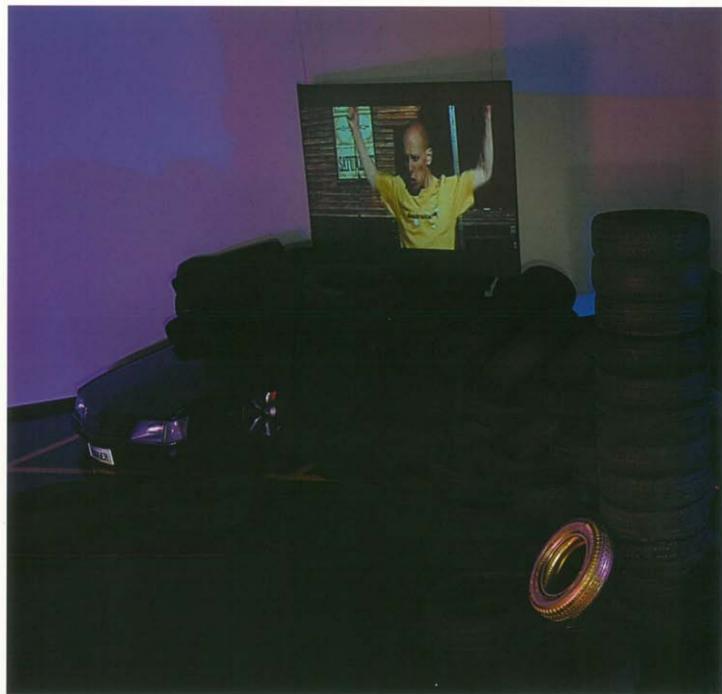






32:







DAMIANO BERTOLI

Mind Island 2007 Pływood, acrylic, PVA, flora, electrical components 240 x 120 x 30 cm

Analysing the Transaction 2007 Glass, found objects 120 x 60 x 80 cm

Psychotherapy and Growth 2007 C-type photographs 31 x 31 cm each

Dark they were and Golden Eyed 2007 Formply, scrylic, C-type photograph 115 x 180 cm

Populating the Field 2006 Veneered plinth, crystal 128 x 40 x 40 cm

Clear Light 2007 Acrylic, polycarbonate 200 x 100 x 20cm

Does My Brain Look Big in This? 2006/7 Oil on canvas 200 x 157 cm

All works courtesy the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne

Thank you to Robert DeMeis, Fiona Abicare, Tristian Koenig, Geoff Newton, Josh Milani and Ted Colless.

CHRISTIAN CAPURRO

Compress (the pit of doublivores) 2006/7
Works on paper drawn under the pressure of erasing other images, then corrected, Megazine pages, ink, correction fluid and pins.
Approximately 31 x 22 cm each

Courtesy the artist

Thank you Libby Brown, especially for your text and its companionship with these images.

NICK DEVLIN

Within you, without you 2007 Television monitors, CCTV cameras Dimensions variable

Apartment 2007 DVDs for monitors dimensions variable

All works courtesy the artist and Sullvan+Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney

Nick Devlin would like to thank Juliana Engberg and ACCA for the opportunity and assistance in the realisation of these works, Anna MacDonald for her help and professionalism, the ACCA team, and Samantha Vewdrey for everything.

ANASTASIA KLOSE

Rollerskating at ACCA 2006 DVD for projection, looped 6 minutes 11 seconds Music: The Lark Ascending, Ralph Vaughan-Williams (Naxos) Filmed by Elizabeth Presa and Graham Smith

Film for my Nanna 2006 DVD for monitor, looped 5 minutes 32 seconds Music: Castles in the Air, Don McLean (EMI) Filmed by Elzabeth Presa

The Meaning of Life 2006 DVD for monitor, looped 3 minutes 36 seconds Music: Gonna Fly Now (Theme from Rocky) by Bill Conti, performed by Carol Connors, Ayn Robbins (Capitol)

Film for Romantic Artists 2006 DVD for monitor, looped 4 minutes 1 second Music: Vincent, Don McLesn (EMI)

Another Day in Paradise... 2007 DVD for monitor, looped 2 minutes 34 seconds Music: 'Moscow', Ghengis Khan (JVC Victor)

The Cutsider 2007
DVD for monitor, looped
4 minutes 32 seconds
Music: different versions of
Tomorrow written by Charles
Strouse and Martin Charmin,
performed by Alicia Morton (Sony),

Andrea McArdle (Columbia) and Alleen Quinn (Columbia)

Je suis une artiste aussief 2007 DVD for monitor, looped 4 minutes 50 seconds Music: Non, je ne regrette rien, Edith Piaf (EMI) Filmed by Bizabeth Presa

How to be me! 2007 DVD for monitor, looped 3 minutes 42 seconds Music: Alone Again (Naturally), Gilbert O'Sulfivan (Phino/Wea)

Posters 2006-2007 Digital photographs 118 x 84 cm each

All works courtesy the artist

Thanks to Elizabeth Presa and Graham Smith for the filming, and Simon Klose, Stuart Bailey and Gabrielle de Vietri for help and advice. Thanks to my family and friends for watching my work, and encouraging me.

CLAIRE HEALY & SEAN CORDEIRO

past times 2007 Caravan, C-type prints, wood Dimensions variable

Courtesy the artists and Gallery Barry Keldoulis

BRENDAN LEE

Proving Ground 2007 Dual channel projection, tyres, car parts, wood, lights, vinyl Dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist and Crossley & Scott, Melbourne

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CATALOGUE IMAGES

- Anastasia Klose, Poster, photograph: Elizabeth Presa
 Anastasia Klose, Rollerskating at ACCA, video still
 Anastasia Klose, Film for my Nanna, video still
- 04. Anastasia Klose, Film for Romantic Artists, video still
- 05. Anastasia Klose, Another Day in Paradise..., video still
- 06. Anastasia Klose, The Outsider, video still
- 07. Anastasia Klose, How to be me!, video still
- 08. Anastasia Klose, installation view, photograph; John Brash
- 09. Nick Devlin, Within you, without you (detail), photograph: John Brash
- 10. Nick Devlin, Apartment, photograph; John Brash
- Nick Devin, Apartment (detail), photograph: John Brash
- 12. Nick Devlin, Within you, without you, photograph: John Brash
- 13. Nick Devlin, installation view, photograph: John Brash
- 14. Damiano Bertoli, installation view, photograph: John Brash
- 15. Damiano Bertoli, Dark they were and Golden Eyed, photograph: Christian Capurro
- 16. Damiano Bertoli, Psychotherapy and Growth (detail), photograph: Christian Capurro
- Damiano Bertoli, Clésir Light, photograph: Christian Capurro
- Damiano Bertoli, installation view, photograph: John Brash
 Damiano Bertoli, Populating the Field (detail), photograph: Christian C
- Damiano Bertoli, Populating the Field (datail), photograph: Christian Capurro
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- 21. Christian Capurro, installation view, photograph: Christian Capurro
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- 23. Christian Capurro, Compress (the pit of doublivores), photograph: Christian Capurro
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- 27. Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro, process
- 28. Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro, past times, photograph: John Brash
- 29. Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro, past times, photograph: John Brash
- 30. Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro, past times, photograph: John Brash
- 31. Brendan Lee, Proving Ground, production still
- 32. Brendan Lee, Proving Ground, production still
- 33. Brendan Lee, Proving Ground, production still
- 34. Brendan Lee, Proving Ground, installation view, photograph: John Brash

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ACCA

Each year ACCA happily anticipates the arrival of newly devised projects for inclusion in its NEW series of exhibitions. What we receive and what is delivered to ACCA's audiences through this commissioning process never fails to surprise and challenge. And so we say thank you to each of the NEW artists for their work which has already generated much discussion, debate, and not a little laughter.

We are very grateful to The Sidney Myer Fund for its support of NEW07 and contribution to ACCA's effort to promote contemporary Australian art to ever increasing audiences.

Our thanks also to Kmart Tyre & Auto Service who have offered special in kind assistance to Brendan Lee's project.

And as ever, thank you to our installation team for their support and hard work, and to all our volunteers and invigilators who offer such fanastic visitor services.

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