

Ryan Gander: READ ONLY

Education Kit



Artist Biography



Photograph courtesy Lisson Gallery.

Ryan Gander was born in Chester, England, in 1966. He completed a Bachelor of Interactive Arts at Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, in 1999 and then completed a Post-Graduate Research degree at the Jan van Eyck Akademie, Maastricht in the Netherlands.

Ryan Gander has exhibited widely internationally, including most recently at The National Trust, London, UK; Manchester City Art Gallery, Manchester, UK; Taro Nasu Gallery, Tokyo, Japan; and the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France. Gander also completed a research residency at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam.

Ryan Gander lives and works between London and Suffolk.

Gander is represented by Lisson Gallery: <http://www.lissongallery.com>

READ ONLY Curatorial Rationale

Ryan Gander: READ ONLY is the first solo exhibition of the artist's work in Australia and has been curated with an Australian audience in mind. Taking the form of a focused survey, the exhibition displays 20 works created over the last 10 years.

Although Gander's practice is prolific this exhibition emphasises the central role of narrative in his work. Known for his quirky, engaging and multi-faceted works, Gander is a storyteller and his artworks are inspired by his everyday and the world around him. As Juliana Engberg, Co-Curator writes:

“For *READ ONLY*, Gander has assembled a number of works that place great emphasis on narratives subject to interrogation, interpretation and extrapolation. Elisions, ellipses and elusiveness are all part of the vocabulary employed here. In his epic Ampersand, the viewer is asked, quite literally, to sit and read the parade of objects and their accompanying stories as they appear, one to one. This intimate setting places the object and viewer in a fixed position, and yet the stories send the imagination travelling. Elsewhere in the exhibition you will find escape hatches, false turns, fugitive stories and circular journeys as Gander keeps you in a narrative loop. Sometimes his work appears direct and simple, but beware the fleeting glance... there is more here than meets the eye. Read on.”

READ ONLY also provides a unique insight into Gander's practice and creative process. Often starting with an idea or question, he creates narratives around these art objects and installations. The exhibition allows you as the viewer to make your own connections and invent your own tales around his artworks. No one story is the same.

Gander sees his role as an artist is not to create works that 'pander to a spectator' but rather, push and provoke new and different ideas, allowing viewers to explore and make up their own minds. He is a morally conscious artist, interested in creating art that will contribute to art history and deep discussions around the notions of art making.

Artist Practice

Making

For Gander, making is likened to thinking. “Who thinks in a disciplined way?” he asks, “why would a really good practitioner use the same material for everything they do even though things are meant to mean different things?” He reasons that thinking and language roams and moves around, and therefore so should making and its mediums. (Jonathan P. Watts, *Archi-What?* 22.04.2014: <https://www.grafik.net/category/feature/archi-what>)

Creativity

Children and their view on the world and art fascinate Gander. And in fact, Gander’s own childhood and upbringing has had a profound influence on his practice. Some advice that his father told him early on and that has stayed with him throughout his career was, ‘Never let the truth get in the way of a good story.’ As a teenager growing up in suburban Chester, Gander made art in his parent’s garage, which his dad had cleared out for him and his friends.

In an interview with Adrian Searle for the Guardian, Gander talks about “creativity being embedded in living”, and the artist as a kind of filter, who highlights certain elements of life and focuses in. Artworks are seen as starting points for stories, stationary and singular. However stories can change depending on who’s telling them:

“Living is a creative act and the way that you put things on your mantelpiece or the clothes that we wear or any number of decisions we make of how to brush a room. We all do it differently. The creativity is embedded in living. These things aren’t the creativity. They are the fallout from that process of living.”

Imagineering

Imagineering is a word that is used frequently by Ryan Gander in relation to his practice and combines the terms ‘imagination’ and ‘engineering’ to speak about lateral and creative thinking. ‘Imagineers’, like Gander, are not inhibited by disciplinarity (materials or modes of production), rather they are pioneers and explorers in design and artistic thinking and production.

In 2013 Gander created a work clearly exploring this idea of Imagineering. Called *Imagineering* the film is screening throughout the *READ ONLY* exhibition period on the large public screen at Federation Square. Imagineering is a digital video work that appears as an advertising campaign for the promotion of more creative and imaginative thinking: to re-acquire a sense of childhood wonder, in order to create a better future. It was produced using all the hallmarks of advertising campaigns, with glossy images and a friendly call to arms. It looks so real, that people may in fact think it is a campaign made by the British government Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.

History of art

The knowledge and history of art is vital to Gander’s practice: “To me it is essential to be well versed in visual language and part of that is knowing the history of art otherwise you’re just using three letter words.” (Ryan Gander, BBC The Culture Show: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcJgHyVaEKY>)

He is also inspired by and draws on design history, including designers Bruno Munari, Gerrit Rietveld, Charles and Ray Eames and Le Corbusier, each of whom he has, made work in response to. Some of these works appear within *Ampersand* for example, the Eames armchair and Ottoman and Rietveld’s *Crate Chair* pieces.

Materials & Techniques

“The point of being an artist is that you can do something different everyday”

– Ryan Gander, BBC BBC The Culture Show
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcJgHyVaEkY>

Gander works in every possible media. His thinking is not material specific and his ideas are not limited to or constrained by medium. He uses what he sees as the most applicable medium to suit the core idea of the artwork. For example: a balloon that appears weightless and floating, but it is actually fiberglass.

Gander is interested in the world and always looks closely at the world around him, constantly filtering and grabbing artwork ideas. He takes photos of objects and items he encounters in his everyday. These photos are printed and filed in his studio into idea categories such as ‘Picture search, dens with ghosts, trees with meaning, lamps, hybrid tools...’ The photos and categories are the beginnings of ideas and artworks. Gander also pins topics and categories typed on A4 white paper up on his studio wall. An insight into his studio and this process appears in his artwork *The cold was three-dimensional as the studio (Ikebana Doodles)*. This artwork presents a series of posters reproduced at a 1:1 scale. It is a scene from the artist’s studio in which a still life has been constructed from research material on the subject of ‘The Still Life’ and a list of ideas for artworks appears in the background.

When discussing his practice with the White Review he revealed the following insights about his artistic process and starting with an idea:

THE WHITE REVIEW — Could you expand upon your statement, ‘you know so little about the medium that the only thing that can happen is unexpected’?

RYAN GANDER — Well, as before, fluency breeds disinterest for me, so I am constantly looking for new forms, mediums and devices.

THE WHITE REVIEW — You have often stated that, in your work, forms can be less important than ideas. So, in the pyramid of things, ideas come before forms. Do you agree with David Lamelas when he states that ‘the form is not an end but a way to get somewhere’?

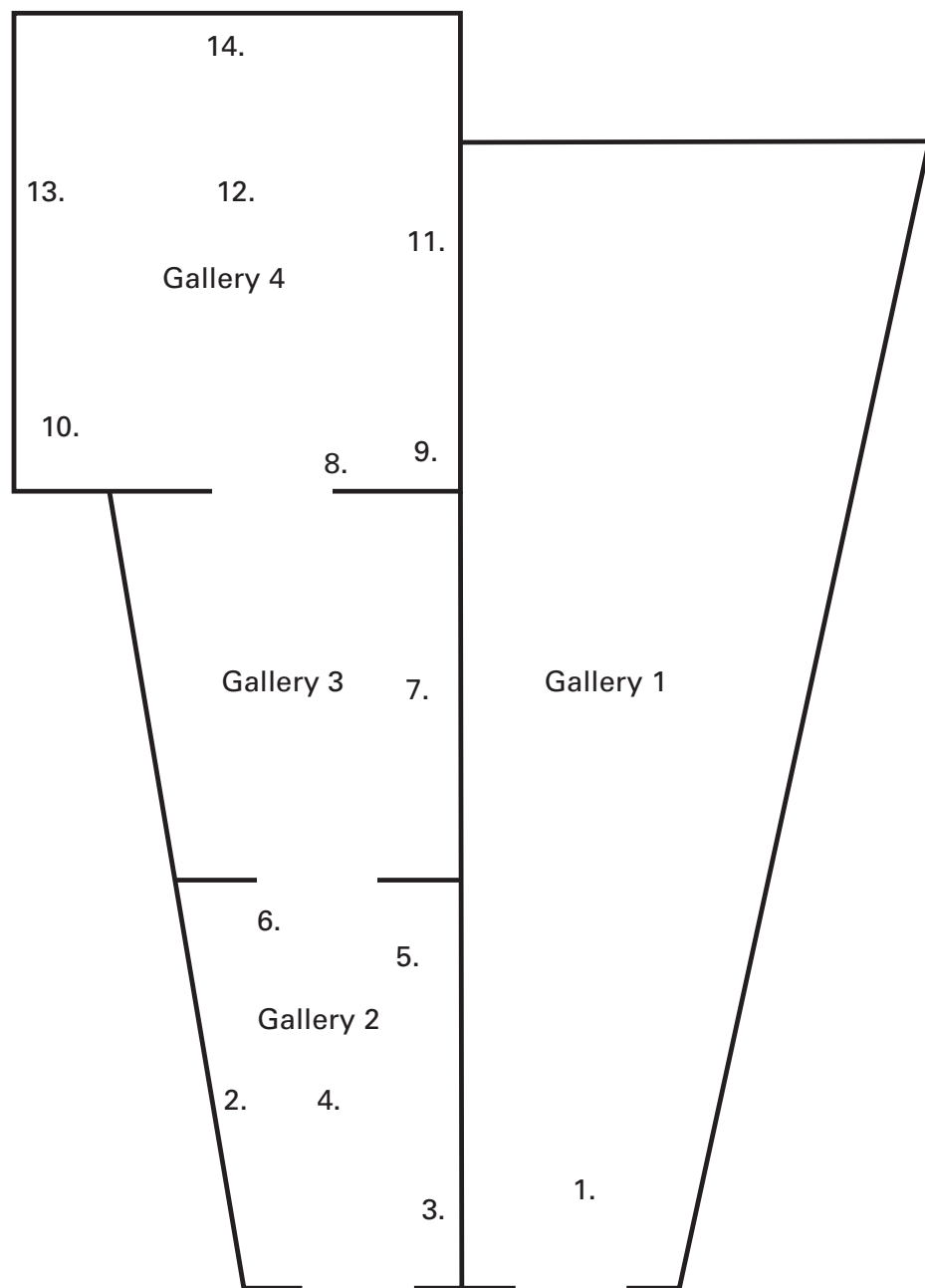
RYAN GANDER — Yes I do. But I also believe it can be an end if the concept requires it to be one, or that it doesn’t even necessarily have to exist if the concept requires it to. The sentence ‘the form is not an end but a way to get somewhere’ sounds like the cliché ‘never let the truth get in the way of a good story’. Clichés exist because they are easily understandable and can only be interpreted in a singular understanding. They become clichés by reaching popularity through consensus. I find them incredibly unhealthy for the imagination and they are the foundations of most of the terrible art that was produced in Britain in the early 1990s.

THE WHITE REVIEW — In my opinion, it is better that artists formulate the ideas that they wish to express before finding the forms in which they ultimately develop these ideas. As Thomas Demand said, ‘the medium itself carries a boring context’. So, the form is not really a project in itself and, in the end, ‘the substance checks the activity of the mind’ (Jean-Luc Moulène). Why don’t we look at the world through the art rather than restricting our view to the forms depicted?

RYAN GANDER — I entirely agree with you! And actually, I’ve never heard it phrased so adequately and economically.

(Source: The White Review, Ryan Gander interview: <http://www.thewhiterreview.org/art/interview-with-ryan-gander/>)

Ryan Gander: READ ONLY Floorplan



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1.
<i>Ampersand</i> , 2012 | 7.
<i>Man on a bridge - (A study of David Lange)</i> , 2008 |
| 2.
<i>Pushed into a corner by the logic of my own making - Vajazzles</i> , 2013 | 8.
<i>And what if no one believes this truth?</i> , 2014 |
| <i>Pushed into a corner by the logic of my own making - Personalised number plates</i> , 2013 | 9.
<i>Porthole to Culturefield Revisited</i> , 2010 |
| <i>Pushed into a corner by the logic of my own making - Rebecca's Blanket</i> , 2013 | 10.
<i>Things that mean things and things that look like they mean things</i> , 2008 |
| <i>Pushed into a corner by the logic of my own making - Jobs' Keyboard</i> , 2013 | 11.
<i>3 x The cold was as three-dimensional as the studio</i> , 2015 |
| 3.
<i>Bad Language (The Iconography and abstraction of escapism explored)</i> , 2015 | 12.
<i>I is...(viii)</i> , 2014 |
| 4.
<i>Career seeking missile</i> , 2011 | 13.
<i>It's a Hang! (The things you make they mock you, the things you make they mimic you)</i> , 2012 |
| 5.
<i>The First Studio Visit</i> , 2009 | 14.
<i>The things you make they mock you, the things you make they mimic you (It's a Hang!)</i> , 2012 |
| 6.
<i>Two hundred and sixty seven degrees below every kind of zero</i> , 2014 | |

Ampersand, 2012

Private collection of 66 objects, conveyor belt display device, viewing window, Eames lounge chair
Dimensions variable
Ishikawa Collection, Okayama

For *Ampersand* Gander has created an enclosed space in gallery one, ACCA's largest gallery area. A 1 x 1 m square hole or viewing window is cut into the white gallery wall and glazed with non-reflective glass. An Eames lounge chair sits facing the window and looking through you can see a collection of 66 objects, each passing by individually so that only one item is visible at a time, visible for approximately 5 seconds. The objects are placed on a large conveyor belt on a continuous cycle, constructed in the gallery space behind the white wall. The objects selected consist of classic design objects, other items of interesting construction and artworks that connect with Gander's everyday. Each item selected has an anecdotal back story written by Gander; many of the objects are associated with one another and some reappearing within the *READ ONLY* exhibition.

Ampersand is a "slideshow of everyday objects" and these objects act as "fragments of an embedded story" that present clues to the viewer. *Ampersand* "has no hierarchy, no beginning and no end." This "daisy chain of signifiers" gives us as the spectators the feeling that there is a code to be cracked. As object after object passes us, we search for clues and associations occurring in our own minds that might give significance to, and connect the endless stream of objects. (Palais de Tokyo, <http://palaisdetokyo.com/en/exhibition/bibliotheque-dartiste/ryan-gander>)

The objects on display vary from artworks in Ryan Gander's collection to everyday objects selected by the artist; they are disparate and range from a mushroom knife, to a plate of oysters, to a pair of pyjama pants with the *I LOVE NY* logo. They are objects that Ryan Gander has come across in his everyday. They are not 'art objects' in the Duchampian sense. (For example Duchamp's readymades – more information here: https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/dada/marcel-duchamp-and-the-readymade).



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Ampersand highlights aspects of Gander's making process and methodology. Gander's practice is alert to the everyday, and *Ampersand* is no exception. Most of the objects in *Ampersand* are somewhat familiar to us, they are not extraordinary, in fact many are pedestrian. The world is full of objects, of things to think about. As Juliana Engberg describes in her *READ ONLY* Catalogue text: "Before we even arrive at the finest human achievements... paintings and sculptures, ritual objects and religious books", there is a multitude of mass produced objects to contemplate. By spreading before us a selection of things, Gander questions modes of production and encourages us to make our own connections, to come up with our own stories – whether those stories are from experience and our own lives, or whether they are invented.

Gander's collection of objects eludes classification, and it is not immediately clear what the links are between them. It is almost as if these items are waiting, held in limbo before classification after creation. Accompanying this work is a publication also entitled *Ampersand*. This publication lists the objects and also includes a text on each, which reveals a story behind each object. The texts are casual and colloquial, but also quite poetic. To achieve this conversational feeling throughout his publication, Gander has used a dictaphone in the writing process, and has transcribed the texts from the recordings. Having an accompanying text affirms relationships between the objects, but also Gander's relationship to the objects, and asserts "their capacity to form a cohesive whole." By presenting texts alongside each actual object, Gander asks the viewer to consider different modes of representation, whilst considering the relationship between objects and the written or spoken word.



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Materials and techniques for *Ampersand*

There are a whole range of different materials and forms in *Ampersand*, some real objects taken directly from the everyday, other reproductions created by Gander and his studio team. The conveyor belt was created by a set building company, Kinetic Sets. They were in consultation about the making of the belt with ACCA and Gander studio staff. The system took one month to make after almost six months of consultation and planning. The installation of the work (including conveyor belt and artworks) took nearly two weeks. The plinths which each object sits on top were created using wood at the ACCA workshop months before the exhibition. Each plinth has specific support rails attached to it to move along the conveyor belt. The conveyor belt was first constructed during the installation and then the fake wall was built, using a timber stud frame and plasterboard covering and insulation. The viewing window was constructed as a separate part and then mounted into the wall which was then plastered and painted around. Once these sections were constructed the installation team and artist were then ready to begin placing the *Ampersand* objects onto the plinths.



Bad Language (The Iconography and abstraction of escapism explored), 2015

Acrylic paint on canvas, vinyl
246 x 294 x 4.9cm
Courtesy the artist and gb agency, Paris

Bad Language (The Iconography and abstraction of escapism explored), consists of an acrylic painting on canvas. The painting is abstract and graphic, created from various graphic decals found on caravans. The design continues beyond the edge of the canvas and onto the wall, as a vinyl transfer.

This work is a part of a series, which Gander has titled *Bad Language* as a reference to the generic nature of these designs. He believes these decals are an example of bad visual language, in that they don't have a specific meaning, or do they direct the viewer in any way. By abstracting and scrambling these designs, as well as pushing them outside the picture plane, Gander is attempting to take them apart and transform them. He is also merging pop culture with fine art, while questioning the medium of painting.

Materials and techniques for Bad Language

To make this work Gander selected a range of graphic decals from images of caravans online. He then separated the visual components of these designs using online software, such as Adobe Creative Suite, and arranged them into abstract compositions on the computer. These images were then recreated on the canvas through painting with acrylic paint and the decals were printed in vinyl and applied onto the surrounding walls.



The First Studio Visit, 2009

Digital video

Looped

Courtesy the artist and Lisson Gallery, London

The First Studio Visit is a video work that is displayed on an analogue TV monitor on the floor of the gallery. The video consists of a DVD menu system for a fictionalized feature film called 'Songs Erratum' about Laurent Isnard, a young art student from the National School of Fine Art at the Villa Arson in Nice, France. This work connects to another of Gander's works, *The things they make they mock you, the things you make they mimic you (It's a Hang!)*, 2012 in that the context is Villa Arson. The DVD menu is on a loop and is set to a soundtrack by Sleeping States, who were commissioned by Ryan Gander.

As the viewer watches the DVD menu it becomes apparent that they are watching the entirety of the work, and that the film doesn't actually exist. Like *The things they make they mock you, the things you make they mimic you (It's a Hang!)*, *The First Studio Visit* leaves the contents of the film to the viewers' imagination. We are given a glimpse of the mood of the film from the footage playing on the menu, but it is very minimal. What it does suggest is a journey of an art student, which connects with Gander's interest in art making systems. The black and white footage is nostalgic, however Gander uses nostalgia knowingly. There is also a touch of romanticism in this work, as in other works of his.



The things you make they mock you, the things you make they mimic you (It's a Hang!), 2012

Framed print-on-demand book
216 x 455 x 2.6cm (overall)
Courtesy the artist and gb agency, Paris



The things they make they mock you, the things you make they mimic you (It's a Hang!), takes the form of a 334 page Choose Your Own Adventure book. The book is centered on Villa Arson, which is a French art museum, elite art school and research institution for contemporary art, in Nice, France. The book focuses on the lives and practices of the students at Villa Arson, and many of the choices you face position the reader as a student. The book has been made entirely by Gander, however the narrative text has been deleted, leaving only the illustrations and the decisions at the end of the selection pages to guide the narrative.

Displayed on a large grid on the gallery walls are 168 of the 334 pages; on one wall hang the equal numbered pages; the odd pages are presented on the other wall. Some of the frames are not hung straight suggesting that they may have been disturbed, and one of the frames is missing all together (perhaps it has been taken?!).

This work is an example of how central storytelling and narrative is to Ryan Gander's work. Books and stories are at the forefront in his practice. He has made many books that are artworks in themselves including this one and *Ampersand* and his practice at large revolves around narratives.

As in many of Gander's works, absence plays a crucial role in *The things you make they mock you, the things you make they mimic you (It's a Hang!)*. It is clear that the absence in this work is the gaping hole where the text used to be, but what does this make way for?

With the narrative deleted, the viewer plays a vital and active role in the work. Our minds connect different parts of the fragmented story, and make associations whether they are intended or not. Much like Ryan Gander's epic work *Ampersand*, our minds are set in motion by a range of clues that are set before us. In the act of deleting the narrative, Gander is giving our imagination free reign to roam beyond the confines of the book page or the written word.

Pushed into the corner by the
logic of my own making –
Security Mirror

Pushed into the corner by the
logic of my own making –
Used Rimowa

Pushed into the corner by the
logic of my own making –
Personalised number plates

Pushed into the corner by the
logic of my own making –
The reverse of a Security Mirror

all works:

2013
C-type print mounted on Perspex, mirror
105.7 x 85.7 x 3.5 cm

Pushed into the corner by the logic of my own making, 2013 is a series of works by Ryan Gander. The works are mounted on the wall and each have a selection of photographs, book pages, and written texts by Gander sandwiched between the sheets of Perspex and mounted in frames.

Each framed work is slightly different, and uses colour, composition, and cropping techniques in different ways. For example in *Pushed into the corner by the logic of my own making – Used Rimowa*, the area of wall behind the work has been painted silver, which is a spot colour chosen from the image. This silver backdrop is visible through the Perspex. In between the two pieces of Perspex is an image of a used Rimowa Topas cabin multiwheel suitcase and an essay excerpt written by Ryan Gander on the suitcase. Incidentally both the suitcase and the essay appear in *Ampersand*, in the work and the text respectively.

Images of other objects from *Ampersand* and their accompanying essays appear in the other works from this series, including a set of personalised number plates reading 'Best Dad' and the wall mounted security mirror.

The fact that images of certain objects from *Ampersand* are repeated or mirrored in other works throughout the galleries reinforces this idea of association. This repetition allows the viewer to form connections and recognise traits and relationships within the exhibition that piece together a broader picture. It also reiterates the idea of narrative, weaving together and linking various works in the exhibition – similar to how a narrative might weave together events, contexts and characters.

Two hundred and sixty seven degrees below every kind of zero, 2014

Fibreglass
103 x 32.5 x 31cm (approx.)
Courtesy of the artist and TARO NASU, Tokyo



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Porthole to Culturefield Revisited, 2010

Wood, metal, ribbons, audio
100 x 50 x 40cm (approx.)
Private Collection, USA



Two hundred and sixty seven degrees below every kind of zero, consists of a black fibreglass balloon floating at the gallery ceiling. The title of this work refers to the boiling point of helium, which incidentally is the lowest of all the chemical elements. The ideas in this work stem from and point towards a collection of Ryan Gander's earlier works, titled **Culturefield**, which is a word that Gander has invented himself to describe an invented place, perfect for research, discussion and creation. The balloon is attached to the ceiling of the gallery, and appears as if it is pushing at the ceiling waiting for release or escape.

There is another of Gander's Culturefield works in *READ ONLY*, called *Porthole to Culturefield Revisited*. It consists of a steel porthole with three ladder rungs leading up to it. Caught in the sealed porthole are the tails of three coloured ribbons and through the porthole, if you listen carefully you can hear a Miles Davis song, 'Rouge' on repeat. The music takes the viewer away from the space they are in, and transports them to another world. The works offer a glimpse into, or suggest a trace of another dimension and in the end the viewer is left wondering and imagining what may lie beyond.

The works also conjure up memories of childhood and the possibilities of childhood imagination. The image of a flyaway balloon is an iconic image from many storybooks and children's films and this image is both evocative and emotive.

Materials and techniques of *Two hundred and sixty seven degrees below every kind of zero*

To make this artwork Gander created the concept and consulted with a specialist sculptor to manufacture the work using fibreglass. Creating a fibreglass sculpture is very labour intensive and time consuming. It also uses toxic and hazardous materials that are not safe to experiment with at school. More information about casting, using materials other than fibreglass (such as plaster or sand) can be found here: <http://www.artshow.com/resources/sculpture.html>

Man on a bridge (A study of David Lange), 2008

Digital video
16.27mins
Courtesy of the artist and gb agency, Paris

Man on a bridge is a digital video transferred from 16mm film that shows a number of slightly different takes of the same short sequence: a man walks over a bridge and seems to notice something over the railing to his left hand side. As he moves in for a closer inspection, the film cuts and is then followed by another take of the same shot. The layering of the same scenes over and over with only subtle changes conjures up thoughts about interpretations of narratives, a thought that reoccurs throughout the exhibition and Ryan Gander's practice; how we perceive and read a story.



I is...(viii), 2014

Marble resin
109 x 164 x 110cm (approx.)
Ishikawa Collection, Okayama

Children and their view on the world and art fascinate Gander. In *I is... (viii)* Ryan Gander pays homage to his 4 year old daughter's creativity and recreates a cubby house that she has made from household items with a bed sheet draped over them, in marble resin. A child's cubby is a temporary structure, often made by dragging chairs together in the lounge room or communal space. Once the viewer understands what it is, a child's den is immediately recognisable to most of us, and brings up memories from childhood. However "without knowledge of the original domestic narrative or setting that inspired such a shape for the cubby the audience is left free to invent their own ideas" and theories. Perhaps then in light of this, these marble shelters are homage's to imagination and invention themselves. (Juliana Enbgerg, *Ryan Gander: READ ONLY* Catalogue Introduction).

By casting his daughter's cubby in marble resin, Gander transforms something fleeting and momentary into something grandiose and monumental. It is poetic, subtle and even slightly comic. Often using questions or 'what ifs' as starting points for artworks, Gander asks, what would happen if I turned a cubby house into marble? This subtle material shift obscures and veils what we are looking at, forcing us to search harder, develop our own ideas, and see anew.

Materials and Techniques for I is...(viii)

In order to make *I is... (viii)* Ryan Gander made moulds of his daughter's cubby houses, and then poured marble resin into those moulds. Marble resin is often used to fill and reinforce slabs of marble and other types of stones. Stones often have natural defects, for example, fractures and superficial holes and pits, and resin is used to fill these defects. Marble and other polyester resins are also used in marble polishing, and have been used in this way for over 50 years.

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And what if no one believes this truth?, 2014

Lever arch, laser prints on paper
29.7 x 21 x 10cm
Courtesy of the artist and Lisson Gallery, London

And what if no one believes this truth? Is a homemade calendar that is put together in a DIY manner. It is mounted on the gallery wall with a metal arch lever, and is printed in black and white on laser printed A4 paper. On each page there is a date and a month alongside notes, images and photographs from Ryan Gander's notebooks. These notes and images range from Gander's research and ideas for artworks to general 'to do' lists. For Gander's exhibition at ACCA the months of June, July and August will be printed and secured to the wall. With each day that passes, that page is ripped from the calendar and thrown out.

The calendar is produced in an edition of 365, and each edition is named after a year and a date. If the work is purchased, the file is delivered on a USB stick so that the owner can reprint the pages annually.

Like the majority of Ryan Gander's work, *And what if no one believes this truth?* questions what an art object is and how it functions. The crudely made calendar printed on photocopy paper begs to be picked up and leafed through, however the traditional gallery setting holds us back from reaching for it. The DIY nature of the calendar with Gander's scrawls and scribbles, sits at odds with the stark walls of the white cube. It looks small and modest against the vastness of ACCA's galleries. The work could also be seen as a homage to the making and thinking processes behind an artwork, to all that an artist's practice is day to day. Finally, the work also connects back to another object we see in *Ampersand* – try and guess what object?



Your Romanticism, 2014

Bronze
40 x 40 x 60cm (approx.)
Courtesy of the artist and gb agency, Paris

Ryan Gander is very interested in the systems and conditions of art making. Whether it is art school or art education settings, the studio, the gallery, or the art market, Gander makes work about it and is heavily involved with it. He even set up and arranges the funding of an art school called Fairfield International in Suffolk, England. Gander's practice is also very interested in the history of art, and the idea that good art should make new and exciting contributions to art history.

Your Romanticism consists of a pair of the artist's sneakers cast in bronze and displayed on the gallery floor. It is a small sculpture for Gander, but a significant one. Bronze is a material that is heavily embedded in art history, so much so that it has come to symbolise the immortality of an artwork: solid, serious and classic. When we think of bronze sculptures we think of classic bronze figures or abstract modernist forms. Sneakers and bronze are at odds with each other both materially and in what they represent. Bronze is monumental and it endures, it is permanent and almost indestructible. Sneakers are disposable, throw away and everyday. In western culture most people own a pair of sneakers. In no way could sneakers be said to be monumental.



Curriculum links & activities

VCE ART

Unit 1, Area of Study 2:

Artmaking and personal meaning

Explore the work *Ampersand* and analyse it and your response in relation to the personal and formal frameworks. Consider in your response what relationship does the artwork have to the artist's life and experiences? What visual evidence supports this reading? How is the artwork installed and how does it impact on your own personal viewing of the work?

View *I is... (viii)*. Discuss how you think the artwork is linked to people, places or experiences of personal significance to the artist. Does the experience of the viewer affect the interpretation of the artwork?

Inspired by Gander's artistic process, keep a visual journal for a two-week period. In the journal, collect written and visual information about your experiences, conversations and responsibilities over that time. At the end of the two weeks, reflect upon the information you have collected and create a visual response in an art form of your choice that unites the mundane, repetitive and exciting experiences, events and ideas encountered. Reflect upon your response using the Formal Framework and the Personal Framework.

Unit 2, Area of Study 1:

Art and culture

How does the cultural background of the viewer influence the interpretation of Gander's *READ ONLY* artworks? Would the interpretations change if the works were exhibited in a non-western country?

Unit 2, Area of Study 2:

Artmaking and cultural expression

Unit 3, Area of Study 2:

Investigation & Interpretation through artmaking

Inspired by Ryan Gander's practice, explore your own cultural and social world around you by creating a series of works that involve objects, observations, people or places in your everyday. Experiment with recording these observations through listing them as ideas and then, similar to Gander, experiment with different ways to refine and translate the idea into visual language using a range of different materials and techniques. Reflect on the ways in which you have used visual language to comment on the qualities of your cultural environment.

Unit 3, Area of Study 2:

Investigation and interpretation through art making

Explore *Ampersand* and use the Analytical Frameworks to analyse how Gander's choice of presentation, subject matter, materials and techniques challenge or reflect artistic and social traditions? How does the physical placement of the artwork affect its interpretation?

Gander is very inspired by art history and good, functional and visually appealing design. Gander believes to create effective design work, a good designer would aspire to the following qualities: "subtlety, intelligence, humour, cultural knowing, historical recognition, beauty and charisma" (*Ampersand* book, page 23). What do you think makes up good visual design and visual language?

Ampersand contains several reproductions of past 20th Century design works including Josef and Anni Albers' 'Tea Glass with Saucer and Stirrer' (1925) and components of Gerrit Rietveld's 'Crate Chair' (1934). Discuss how these works from the past, reproduced and exhibited amongst other diverse objects in *Ampersand* now take on new meanings in the context of their contemporary display, ideas and issues.

Ryan Gander's practice is so prolific and wide ranging that his 'style' is very 'un pin-downable'. Using a variety of artists from different times and cultures identify and discuss what artistic style is. Explore Gander's work in the exhibition *READ ONLY* and research the artist speaking about his practice in interviews:

* The BBC Culture Show, Ryan Gander – The Art of Everything: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcJgHyVaEkY> and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TS_Cvli1s_g

* The Guardian, 2012, 'Meet the artist: Ryan Gander – 'Living is a Creative Act': <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/video/2012/oct/15/ryan-gander-meet-artist-video>

Informed by this, discuss the following questions: how do you describe Gander's artistic style? What are key characteristics about Gander's practice? Is conceptual art an artistic style? What are the stylistic qualities of conceptual art?

Unit 4, Area of Study 1:

Discussing and debating art

Write a response about how Gander's artistic practice challenges the traditional notions of artmaking and the role of the artist in contemporary society.

Gander wants his artworks to make a contribution to art history and the understanding of art. Do you think his artworks succeed in creating new inspiring narratives and considerations around art? Debate as a class.

VCE STUDIO ART

Unit 1, Area of Study 3

Interpretation of art ideas and use of materials and techniques

Compare and contrast Ryan Gander's everyday objects to Claus Oldenberg's sculptures of everyday items and objects and consider how they comment on their respective times and cultures.

View *Ampersand* and select 3 objects to research further. Read the text about the selected objects in the *Ampersand* book. Write a response to the work and focus on the three objects selected, discussing what the ideas and inspirations behind these objects are. Inspired by this create your own anecdotal narrative in the same style as Gander's writing around the chosen objects.

Gander's artworks are inspired by his everyday. Research other artists from a variety of different times and cultures who are also inspired by the everyday and popular culture.

Unit 2, Area of Study 1

Design Exploration

Ryan Gander has an interesting and inspiring artistic practice and the exhibition *READ ONLY* reveals much information about his artistic process. After viewing the exhibition and researching Gander sketch out your interpretation of his design process. What inspiration can you gain from his process into your own folio work?

Unit 2, Area of Study 2

Ideas and styles in artworks

Investigate *Ampersand* and identify what art elements and principles are visible in the work. Discuss as a class how you could describe the way the art elements and principles have been used to create aesthetic qualities and communicate ideas? Informed by this discussion write an analysis of the artwork, focussing on the use of art elements and principles to create aesthetic qualities and communicate ideas.

The gallery design and layout around the artworks in *READ ONLY* are fundamental considerations when discussing the art elements and principles and aesthetic qualities in Gander's artworks. For example: *Porthole to Culturefield Revisited*, *Imagining*, *The things you make they mock you*, *the things you make they mimic you (it's a Hang!)*. Select one artwork to analyse in more detail focussing on a discussion around the gallery design and installation of the work in the gallery setting and how this impacted your viewing and interpretation of the artwork.

Unit 3, Area of Study 3

Professional art practices and styles

Ryan Gander's practice is so prolific and wide ranging that his 'style' is very 'un-pin-downable'. Using a variety of artists from different times and cultures identify and discuss what artistic style is. Explore Gander's work in the exhibition *READ ONLY* and research the artist speaking about his practice in interviews:

* The BBC Culture Show, Ryan Gander – The Art of Everything: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcJgHyVaEkY> and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TS_Cvli1s_g

* The Guardian, 2012, 'Meet the artist: Ryan Gander – 'Living is a Creative Act': <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/video/2012/oct/15/ryan-gander-meet-artist-video>

Informed by this, discuss the following questions: how do you describe Gander's artistic style? What are key characteristics about Gander's practice? Is conceptual art an artistic style? What are the stylistic qualities of conceptual art?

Explore *Ampersand* and read excerpts of the *Ampersand* book, including the chapter on Ryan Air and Amazon Box. In these works the logos of particular companies (Ryan Air and Amazon) appear. Discuss the legal obligations that Gander would have to address to use this corporate visual language in his artwork.

Unit 4, Area of Study 3

Art Industry Contexts

Ampersand is a work that is very responsive to the ACCA site, particularly due to the scale of the artwork and the dimensions of the room. Use this artwork as a case study to consider how galleries and artists work together to realise and install artworks.

Review the *READ ONLY* exhibition, examining the role of the curator, the artist and the gallery in developing and realising the exhibition.

ACCA's exhibition marketing and promotion appears in a variety of places including advertising posters at public transport stops (eg. Flinders Street Station), community radio advertisements (3RRR), social media (Facebook, twitter and instagram), online cultural journals (Art Guide, Broadsheet and Time Out) and exhibition reviews (the Age, the Guardian etc). Search for some examples of *READ ONLY* exhibition advertising and promotion and collate all this material together into a scrapbook of evidence.

SECONDARY VISUAL ARTS / STUDIO ARTS

LEVELS 9 – 10

THINK: EXPLORING & RESPONDING

Gander's practice is quite different to traditional artists as he often outsources the production (making) of his artworks to skilled practitioners (eg. bronze sculptor, carpenter etc). Discuss how his practice challenges the traditional ideas of art making by comparing his work to those of past artists such as Picasso and Rembrandt.

Gander is often described as a conceptual artist, where the idea takes precedence over the material or aesthetic concerns of an artwork. Inspired by Gander's artwork and the *READ ONLY* exhibition research what conceptual art as an art style and discuss using examples, how conceptual artists communicate ideas and meaning.

MAKE: CREATING & MAKING

Explore Gander's practice and the *READ ONLY* exhibition. Research the artwork *Out of sight (all on my own)*, 2011. This work reconfigures Edgar Degas' famous *Ballerina, The Little Fourteen Year Old Dancer* (1879-80). In his work Gander removes her from her plinth, gives her a partner and places her kneeling on the gallery floor. Inspired by this research other famous artworks and develop ways through researching, sketching, planning and creating you could appropriate and reconfigure them into new artworks (either two or three dimensional).

Think about how transforming an object into a completely different material could change it. How would it change that object conceptually? Make an artwork by taking something already existing, and make it in another material. Think about how you are going to make it in your chosen material, will you cast it? Will you sculpt it? Will you assemble it? Discuss in a written response why have you chosen this/these material/s?

Gander is often described as a conceptual artist, where the idea takes precedence over the material or aesthetic concerns of an artwork. Inspired by research into conceptual art and Gander's *READ ONLY* exhibition create your own conceptual artwork stemming from the theme: 'My World'.

LEVELS 7 – 8

THINK: EXPLORING & RESPONDING

After viewing the *READ ONLY* exhibition think about the inspirations behind Gander's artwork. Using 2 artwork examples of your choice write an analysis about the works focussing on the inspirations and ideas that are communicated in them. What are your own interpretations of these works? Do you like them? Why?

Describe how the artist has used art elements and principles in his *It's a Hang* drawings. How would you describe his drawing style?

MAKE: CREATING & MAKING

Collect 3 different objects from your own everyday life. The objects should be varied and conjure up different associations of yourself and your world. Inspired by *Amper-sand* and *Your Romanticism* create a sculpture of these items using air-dry clay.

Inspired by *It's a Hang* create a short visual narrative using drawing, film or photography.

Inspired by *Imagineering* work in groups of 4 or more to develop your own "Imagination campaign." Brainstorm ideas, gather inspiration, complete a storyboard and then shoot your campaign. Edit the footage in iMovie or Quicktime pro using all the attributes of a glossy advertising campaign (lighting, sound, image, logo, voice overs).

PRIMARY ARTS

LEVELS 4 – 6

Inspired by Ryan Gander's work *Ampersand* think about a special object that you use everyday (a pencil, a spoon etc). Draw it from 3 different angles using 3 different types of drawing materials. Create a small sculpture of this everyday object using FEMO or clay. Write a short description of this object, why you use it everyday and why it is special to you. Exhibit the class' objects all together in a room or school cabinet, with their corresponding stories near by.

Inspired by Ryan Gander's work *It's a Hang* (choose your own adventure) read a selection of short stories and create new and different endings to those stories. Draw these out using a storyboard template. Present these endings and discuss ideas about them in class. Break into groups of 6 or 8 and each group should select one ending to act out and record on camera. Film this story, edit the footage using simple editing software and present the final film in class.

After exploring *Ryan Gander: READ ONLY* write an exhibition review about your visit and interpretations about the artworks. What artworks did you like and why? How were the artworks presented? What questions, thoughts and ideas were triggered from your exhibition visit?

LEVELS FOUNDATION – 3

Many of Ryan Gander's artworks including marble cubby and xxx are inspired by play and imagination. In groups of 3 or 4 list some of the games you play at home or at school. Select one game to show and tell and then present this game to the class.

Explore *I is... (viii)* What do you think lays beneath the marble sheets? Imagine you could open up the cubby and enter inside. What would you see? Where would you go? Imagine what it would look like inside. Draw this imaginary world on paper and experiment with texta, coloured pencil and collage to colour it in.

Select an object from home that is very special to you. Create a short story using text and image about that object using the sentence stems "It was a hot summer's day and I was going for a walk when I saw..." Or "I was getting ready for school, about to eat my breakfast. When I opened the fridge I saw..." or "I was in the park and the dog ran up to me with in it's mouth. It spat it out and...."

acca education

Further Reading

Representing gallery: Lisson Gallery

<http://www.lissongallery.com/artists/ryan-gander>

ACCA Exhibition

<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/ryan-gander-at-acca-a-playful-exploration-of-truth-and-fabrication-20150509-ggwwx6.html>

Interviews

The White Review, 2012

<http://www.thewhitereview.org/art/interview-with-ryan-gander/>

The Guardian, 2012, 'Meet the artist: Ryan Gander – 'Living is a Creative Act'

<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/video/2012/oct/15/ryan-gander-meet-artist-video>

The BBC Culture Show, Ryan Gander – The Art of Everything

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcJgHyVaEkY> and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TS_Cvli1s_g

Ordrupgaard Museum, 2014 interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FABfjktPP0U>

Design & Ryan Gander:

<https://www.grafik.net/category/feature/archi-what>

Past exhibition reviews

'Use your Imagineering: Ryan Gander's art world of pranks and puzzles', The Guardian

<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/jul/07/ryan-gander-make-every-show-like-its-your-last-manchester-review>

'make every show like it's your last', Ryan Gander at Manchester Gallery, 2014

<http://www.designboom.com/art/make-every-show-like-its-your-last-by-ryan-gander-at-manchester-art-gallery-08-22-2014/>

Fairfield International School

Apollo Magazine, September 2014, 'Ryan Gander's plans for an art school in Suffolk'

<http://www.apollo-magazine.com/ryan-ganders-plans-art-school-suffolk/>

Visiting ACCA

ACCA's FREE education programs are available for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary groups between 10am - 4pm from Monday to Friday.

Maximum 25 students per group for THINK and MAKE programs.

Bookings are required for both guided and self-guided School and Tertiary groups.

10am - 5pm Tuesday – Friday
12pm – 5pm Weekends & Public Holidays
(except Good Friday & Christmas Day)
Monday by appointment

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TERMS OF USE

This Education Resource has been produced by the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art to provide information and classroom support material for school visits to the exhibition *Ryan Gander: READ ONLY*. The reproduction and communication of this Resource is permitted for educational purposes only.

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