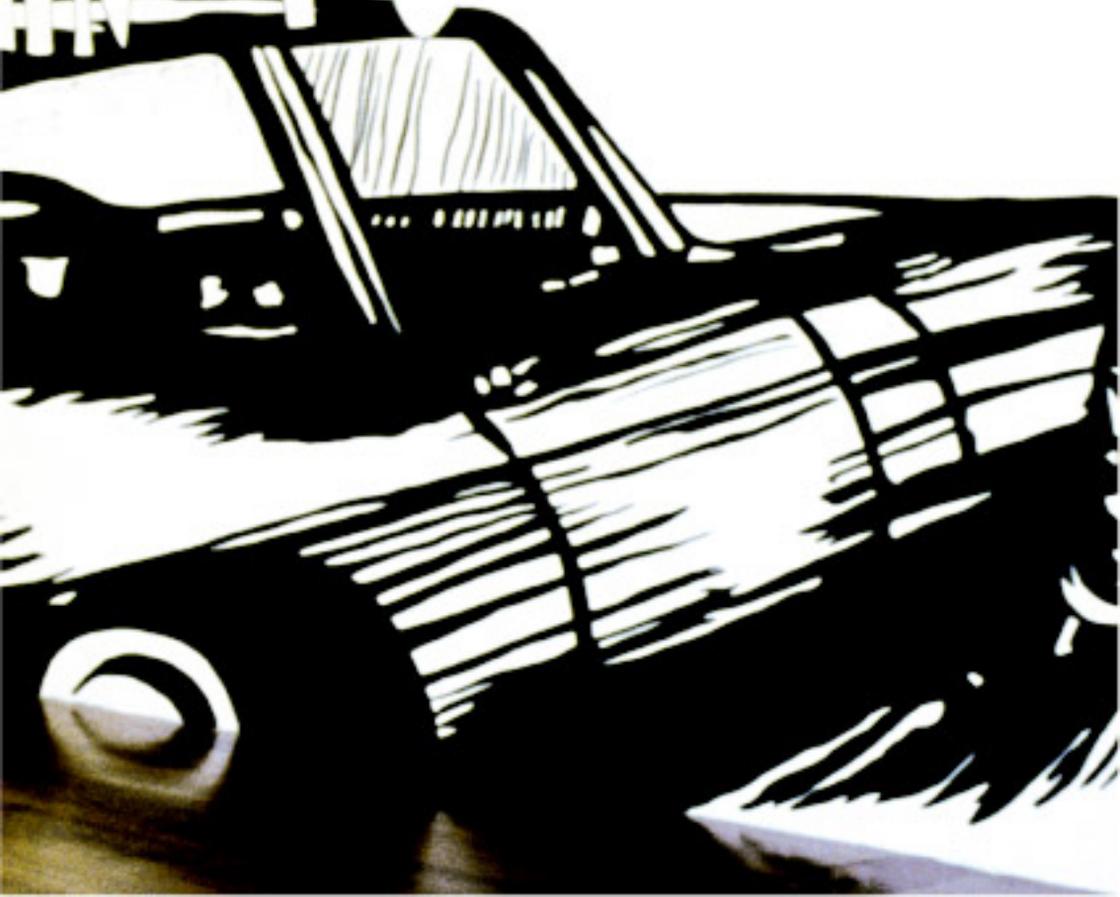


THE PHYSICS ROOM  
A FORTY-NINTH YEAR ANNIVERSARY  
ANNUAL 2004

PUSH

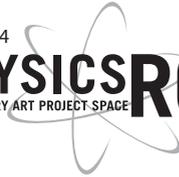
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MY HEAR



Annual 2004

**THE PHYSICS ROOM**

A CONTEMPORARY ART PROJECT SPACE



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# Exhibition Programme

28 January – 21 February

*Falling Free*

**Mark Boswell, George Chang, Ray Ekwisahn,**

**Jae Hoon Lee, Dave King, Seung Yul Oh, Rohan Wealleans**

Curated by **Jae Hoon Lee**

3 March – 27 March

*Projekt#*

Curated by **Brendan Lee**

Sampler: **Robin Neate**

7 April – 1 May

*Dear Victoria*

**Victoria Bell & Victoria Edwards**

Sampler: *Much Like a Traveller*

**Karin van Roosmalen**

7 May – 29 May

*Tomorrow Never Knows*

**Stella Brennan**

Sampler: *The Flower People*

**Joanna Langford**

9 June – 3 July

*Humiliation IQ*

**Michael Morley**

Sampler: *An Automatic Welcome*

**Iain Cheesman**

8 July – 31 July

*Perseverance*

**Sonia Bruce, Lee Campbell, Alexander Costello**

Curated by **Lee Campbell**

7 August – 27 August

*rear window*

**Emily Harris, Gala Kirke, Richard Lewer**

With slide screenings from the collection of **Russell Coveney**

2 September – 25 September

*Cuz*

**Natalie Robertson**

Sampler: *Dr Don: or how I learned to stop worrying and love Helen*

**Scott Flanagan**

6 October – 30 October

*Interior World*

**Seraphine Pick & Oli Perkins**

Curated by **Kirsten Rennie Weston**

Sampler: *Invisible Cities*

**Alex Monteith**

3 November – 18 December

*National Drawing Award*

# Falling Free

Mark Boswell, George Chang, Dave King, Jae Hoon Lee, Seung Yul Oh, Rohan Wealleans. Curated by Jae Hoon Lee

Identity becomes a slippery concept in the hands of Jae Hoon Lee. With overlapping reference points drifting between the Eastern perspectives of Taoism and Buddhism and the Western philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Lee's views on existence are defined by fluctuation. He compares Deleuze and Guattari's definition of a rhizome as an interconnecting "and...and...and" with the constantly growing chain of interlinked identities defined by the Buddhist belief in re-incarnation. Similarly, modern physics' description of matter being defined by its environment and surrounding particles, rather than its own properties, echoes Taoist descriptions of water being definable only in terms of the vessel that contains it.<sup>1</sup>

Lee's digitally combined images of skin, foreign locations and foliage collapse and play with the signifiers of any singular time, place or entity. In his work he constructs conversations around duality and displacement, merging the documentation of experience into a continuum of consciousness.

Although ostensibly taking the role of curator for this exhibition, *Falling Free* can also be viewed as a continuation of Lee's artistic project. An experiment in multiplicity and improvised group dynamics, the contributors are positioned together by the artist/ curator to provide a collective 'harmony in the space'.<sup>2</sup> Each artist's work has its meaning and reality expanded by the wider context offered by dialogue with other works, as if amplified by the Deleuzian "and...and...and" or the harmonic alliance of successive reincarnations.<sup>3</sup>

Working independently, each artist produced new work for the exhibition. Although this suggests a contingent curatorial strategy that should produce a diverse, perhaps even disparate selection, pre-existing relationships resulted in a relatively integrated result, described by Lee as 'rampant masculinity'. Lee says he chose artists with a quick-draw approach to their practice, who worked playfully and spontaneously and had established working relationships with other artists in the group.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is probably not entirely coincidental that all are male, Auckland-based, and recent graduates of Elam School of Fine Arts. Of course, the curator's interests and sensibilities also inevitably underpin the decision-making process and the final gallery arrangement.

This approach invites comparison with that of experimental composers John Cage and Cornelius Cardew, who assembled musicians to execute indeterminate instructional scores.<sup>5</sup> Brian Eno has described how this type of composition encourages variety, and this emphasis on deviation allows the output to fluidly adjust to its environment, much like evolutionary adaptation.<sup>6</sup> John Zorn's game-pieces took these "open compositions" even further, almost entirely eroding the distinction between composer and performer. Following pre-determined rules of engagement, he could participate as part of a community, resulting in a fluid, non-hierarchical dialogue between musicians.<sup>7</sup>

Although the works in *Falling Free* may share a boyish quality, each participant retains a distinct role in the group, unaffected by the curator/composer's intentions or any resemblance to their peers. There is a disciplinary diversity that allows for complex harmonics within this collective proclamation; Seung Yul Oh's bleating kinetic sculptures revisit childhood toys; Dave King recruits a heavy metal drummer for the opening and leaves a pile of oversized cigarette butts; George Chang projects thunderous video footage of aircraft; Mark Boswell decorates car bonnets with religious iconography; Rohan Wealleans creates Freudian associations with layered paint; and Lee contributes videos of digitally-manipulated skin. Although accommodated under a single roof, this riotous clamour of male preoccupations has as much consistency as successive circus acts. So much so, an unknown juggler unexpectedly joined the proceedings on the opening night.

Like Zorn, Cardew and Cage, Lee likes to loosen his grip on the rudder, acknowledging rather than resisting the influence of his environment. External influences are allowed to alter and add to the code, working as part of an organic whole guided by chance events. Rather than restricting his practice through loss of control, the simultaneous perspectives of group subjectivity provide a sure route to evolving a diversified view.

## Andrew Clifford

<sup>1</sup>Jae Hoon Lee, Doctoral proposal, Auckland University, 2005

<sup>2</sup>In conversation with the author, June 2, 2005

<sup>3</sup>Jae Hoon Lee, Doctoral proposal, Auckland University, 2005

<sup>4</sup>In conversation with the author, June 2, 2005

<sup>5</sup>All artists in *Falling Free* had contact at Elam with New Zealand composer Philip Dadson.

<sup>6</sup>Brian Eno, 'Generating and Organising Variety in the Arts' *Studio International*, Nov-Dec. 1976,

<sup>7</sup>John Zorn, 'John Zorn' in Ann McCutchen (ed) *The Muse That Sings: Composers Speak About the Creative Process*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999

# Projekt#

Curated by Brendan Lee

Dick Higgins, Fluxus artist and writer, wrote in 1966 that 'much of the best work being produced today seems to fall between media'. No real coincidence, then, that while having origins in the filmic and radiophonic technological developments of the early twentieth century, video art's emergence from the nascent technologies of television also happened around this time. Now 40 years old, video is, arguably, the predominant postmodern meta-medium in its capacity to mix and dissolve the boundaries between media, to combine with and expand media, and to provide commentary on contemporary media-saturated social realities. An invaluable insight into recent Australian video art, *Projekt#*, curated by Brendan Lee, is a travelling video archive documenting the work of artists using video in art contexts, much of which was originally destined for showing in the gallery space. *Projekt#* serves a dual function; to gather and document the localised history of video in Australia, and to serve as distribution system for new artists working within the genre.

Video art's roots in the domestic space of television afford it an intimacy unknown to film, and personal video recorders have collapsed the distinction, preserved in film, between lived reality and the space of the media. Reality television is the most explicit statement of this. Artists in the *Projekt#* series draw upon such ideas in a variety of ways, including exploring the potential of home video and the internet to document hidden aspects of domestic realities. Kathy Bossinakis' *cry*, for example, shows a markedly abject, adolescent-sociopathic list of (obviously fake) tortures enacted by a central female character on a cat, like Carolee Schneemann without the utopianism, as seen through the warped lens of the Chapman brothers. Elsewhere, in Matthew Griffin's *All eyes on Amin* a dead girl on a pristine white ground spews blood from her mouth to a soundtrack of speed metal. More stark and simple gestures are foregrounded in Lyndal Jones' *crying man 1*, which in its depiction of a man crying against a bluescreen background is a succinct statement of video's potential to zoom in both neutrally and incisively on the human subject. Jones' piece was also shown as it was installed in a gallery setting, an attempt to portray the way in which the audio echoes in the space, and the way in which sound is, necessarily, an important component of video work.

The loop as a structural device is seen most succinctly in Emil Goh's *1 minute at 9*, and Daniel von Sturmer and Meri Bazevski's *Driveway Sequence*, both of which use editing techniques to restructure linear concepts of time into lulling repetitive mantras. Leslie Eastman's two works, *Eraserhead* and *Several Provisional Contingencies not necessarily precluding the eventuality of Reconciliatory Union* utilise similar concepts toward a reinvigoration of the medium of drawing, with each sketchy gesture enacted by the artist resisting the pull toward finality and definitiveness through the potential of video editing to rewind and erase events. The influence of popular culture - especially, perhaps, the music video - is everywhere, whether this be literally, in Philip Brophy's clip for Honeysmack, which, referencing the cross-dressing Freddie Mercury, traces a musician's search for his audience around the Melbourne suburbs, or in work such as the Kingpins' *Versus*, which uses archival footage from the Leigh Bowery estate to re-enact Aerosmith and Run DMC's *walk this way*, in a collaboration that time-leaps to the Eighties.

Britney Spears appears not once but twice, in Kate Murphy's *Britney Love*, a faux-documentary biopic that explores the sexualising of prepubescent girl pop culture, and Sue Dodd's *Fears for Spears*, a performance-based piece that draws heavily both on music video and karaoke. Dodd sets her analysis of celebrity culture and media surveillance to a squelchy electro acid soundtrack, bringing to mind the *Grunt Machine* video catalogue, seen at the Physics Room in 1999, in which New Zealand artists explored connections between video art and the music video.

## Sally Ann McIntyre

# Dear Victoria

Victoria Bell and Victoria Edwards

Twentieth-century art practices that aspired to unpick the conceptual functions of the museum, strategically exploring the institution's stated role in providing definitive historical and cultural overviews, have been evident since at least 1941, when Duchamp exhibited the first version of his *Boîte en Valise*. Walking into the installation *Dear Victoria*, the ongoing fascination with the *Wunderkammer* seems pertinent, with various gestures toward combining the starkness of the contemporary gallery space with the display methods of the nineteenth century, and with the more private space of the domestic environment.

*Dear Victoria* presented us with a selection of imprecise objects which suggested the fragmented elements of a landscape, clustered into cryptic relationships, some carefully arranged inside a cabinet with fluted, sculpted, decorative edges, recalling a nineteenth-century frame. The failure of Cartesian rationalism looms large with a moth-eaten stag's head, grafted in DIY fashion onto an incongruous, anti-figurative torso of rough wooden planks that provides the show's centrepiece ('Dear Victoria, no less), and its clearest statement of the cloud-wandering, the disembodied head's re-integration with the body, with contingency, and with the temporal and spatial limitations of physical materials. By realigning the stag's glassy eyes with the eyes of *Dear Victoria*'s viewers, the reifying process of looking is re-activated as a relational and ethical space, a loop that attempts to salvage the stag's status as once-living animal. The wooden stag-mannequin is in turn surrounded by a sparse forest of antler-like designer foliage, neither wood nor tree, but instead crafted from camouflage printed fabric.

From the outset, *Dear Victoria* is posed as a space which denies language, including the personal pronoun, its classificatory and denotative power, beginning with the title's ambiguous opening address. *Dear Victoria* goes on to collect the aging props of the Romantic landscape, into which it inserts the viewer, with an invitation to wander around "behind the scenes". What the viewer finds there is that the view has little behind it but an infinitely regressing series of sketches. Drawing's integral relationship to both Romanticism and the

scientific view of nature (figurative sketching was, in the pre-photographic era, the most reliable way to describe and identify) is here overlaid with its links to the recent history of sculpture, installation and process-based art. Traditionally considered the precursor to other mediums, drawing here is, in all the unselfconsciousness of its methodologies, harnessed as conceptual baseline.

The relationship of drawing to authenticity (in the sense of the "artists hand" being author of the signature gestural mark) is also explored within a context where no gesture can be singular; instead the authorial voice is a near-audible debate, with each manifestation into an object or an image being, largely, a consensus of two. The mark has not been automated and mechanised in a conceptualist way, but left casual and rough, hence the little trees in the cabinet, the restlessness of objects to stay in their designated shape, becoming instead gestures that recur within and across media, ideas passed visibly between the two artists. The intricate layers of self-reference and mimicry become cyclic, with everything becoming a working model for everything else. For instance, the noose hung in the space is a "drawing" of an image from one of the blurred video stills. It also draws on the active participating body of the spectator to complete its loop, whether that viewer interprets it as a child's play item or something more sinister.

Much has been made of the essential spectatorlessness of the "installation shot" of Modernism. In the accompanying publicity shots the artists inhabit the space, Victoria Edwards astride the stag, Victoria Bell moving through the "forest", her body a blur in motion (recalling also the blurred stills on the wall). *Dear Victoria* is about positioning, and it draws on the practices of both its artists in order to catalyse a new position that wouldn't have been possible for either of them in isolation, which declares the failure of singular and "authentic" versions of artistic endeavour, in favour of the idea of creation as fertile collective influence.

Sally Ann McIntyre

# Tomorrow Never Knows

Stella Brennan

*'The house was still throbbing, but a moment later it locked and became rigid. I leaned against the demented wall and let spray pour across my face from the sprinkler jets. Around me, its wings torn and disarrayed, the house reared up like a tortured flower.'*<sup>1</sup>

Stella Brennan's installation *Tomorrow Never Knows* (named for a sweetly psychedelic 1966 song by the Beatles) draws for its inspiration on a sci-fi short story by darkly subversive British writer J. G. Ballard. The story, 'The Thousand Dreams of Stella Vista', is about psychotropic architecture – houses that alter their entire environments in response to their owners' moods and emotions, only for it to all go horribly, horribly wrong. It is exactly this kind of failed utopia that seems to form a dominant thread in Brennan's oeuvre.

Brennan's work incorporates projected computer visualisations of a computerised voice reading the short story, polystyrene slab walls, story quotes scratched into paint on blacked-out windows and a "potted" photo-history of the geodesic dome – that visual-short-hand signifier of all things futuristic. As always, utopian vision eats itself – freedom is an illusion. The viewer is plunged into an intimate, tightly manipulated virtual environment. Vertigo is always a risk. Brennan explains:

*Sound visualisation is an evolution of the bubbling, glowing lava lamp ... The software takes the sound wave – in this case, the story-telling voice – and applies real-time transformations, converting sound into a streaming field of stoner imagery. The effect is like moving, morphing, psychedelic wallpaper.*

Perhaps it can be thought of as a knowing evocation of some of the more Romantic themes of Modernism carried over into the digital age – the Burkean Sublime mixed with the heroic transcendence hoped for by the Abstract Expressionists. All the New Jerusalems we try to build on earth fail or are flawed: the Romantic, the Modernist, the Psychedelic. All utopias are doomed by their solipsistic lotus-eating and navel-gazing. The giant geodesic domes designed by Buckminster Fuller to cover our cities and protect us on other planets ended up housing the satellite spying stations of the Cold War. One such geodesic dome, built for the 1967 World Expo in Montreal,

is depicted in Brennan's installation going up in flames. In many ways the tone is deeply pessimistic, or perhaps just a melancholy meditation on the ruins of the future not to be. There is a line in Tony Kushner's AIDS opus *Angels In America* that runs: 'The man who wrote *The Star Spangled Banner* knew what he was doing. He set the word *free* to a note so high no one could reach it.'

It seems all artworks eventually aspire to be sculpture. The invention of photography triggered the Post-Impressionists to use colour and gestural brushwork to make paintings objects. A century later in response to digital art, photography is blowing itself up and borrowing light-boxes from the arena of marketing to objectify itself. Maybe Brennan's installation is an early step in a similar trend in the digital in reaction to some as yet unimagined transition.

Andrew Paul Wood

<sup>1</sup>J. G. Ballard, 'The Thousand Dreams of Stella Vista', *Vermilion Sands*, Berkeley, 1971

# Humiliation IQ

Michael Morley

These coldly austere oil paintings look down at you with the kind of disdain those 20-something pretend-adolescents have when they're confident their knowledge of the canon of sub-pop isn't matched by yours. Or it's as if one of those great old bastards from the National Portrait Gallery looking sternly out at you from a golden frame suddenly morphed into a circular sheet of black vinyl. And you're supposed to feel some affinity with it. But you don't. This sense of mysterious authority is further developed through the paintings being named after famous albums of alternative pop and punk music. The names supposedly differentiate these works systematically and lead one to look for clues of Morley's perceptions of the music. But this is no fan adulation of a pantheon of rock heroes. There's no clue in the paintings linking to their title, or as to how or why Morley appreciates that particular album. It's a specification lost in the silence. The paintings are suggestive of music but resoundingly silent – the squeaky floorboards of The Physics Room sang loudest in my ears as I wandered this collection of vast turntables. And it's this absence that works most strongly in these paintings.

As a sound artist Morley's raw and loosely-structured music is filed under the genres of experimental, free form or noise music. The post-pop, post-punk avant-garde. Are these then post-painting paintings? The rough brushstrokes share the handmade quality that a played instrument does today in a world where precise digital sound is often preferred, just as the turntable and oil painting are both now outmoded processes of reproduction. The paintings' size makes them monumental, which with their emptiness and lack of detail builds a sense of gentle nostalgia, lost afternoons alone with music. While the many turntables give a nod towards modernist repetition, lining up like so many screen-printed Campbell's Soup tins, these are all recognisably distinct models. The heavy oil brushstrokes point to the labour and handcraft in the task and date the turntables: old ways of painting showing old ways of listening.

Somewhat sidelined are the brushy portraits of skyscrapers. Waving like Monet's water-lilies they're reduced as much as the record players are enlarged, suggesting that it's soundscapes that are monumental in Michael Morley's mind.

*Alastair Crawford*

# Perseverance

Sonia Bruce, Lee Campbell, Alexander Costello. Curated by Lee Campbell

Despite what the media suggests, there is art in London that has nothing to do with Saatchi, the YBAs (who in their turn were replaced by the New Neurotic Realists – all invented by Saatchi), Emin, Hirst, the Chapman brothers, the Tate Modern's Turner Prize, etc. This environment, which critic Julian Stallabrass has aptly named 'high art lite', has forced a generation of younger artists into less glib, less media-friendly modes of practice, subverting the already pretentiously subverted and kick the Sharons up the arse before they use up all the oxygen in the room. The title seems to sum the kulturkampf up: Perseverance.

Consisting of installations by young London artists Lee Campbell, Alexander "I am London" Costello and Sonia Bruce, and curated by Campbell, the show explores the banalities of the everyday as a pivot to transform space.

Campbell used supermarket sticker labels (supplied courtesy of local supermarkets) to cover walls, floor and second-hand thrift shop junk in a mosaic that visualised and made real the environmental and psychological effects of mass free-market capitalist consumerism, but also referenced other artistic traditions such as the landscape (always a popular British theme) and the legacy of Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades. It was a Chartres of bargains and sales. Obscured in this way, the objects beneath the stickers became un-identifiable commodities stripped of their uniqueness and resurfaced in the same way critic Clement Greenberg naughtily repainted a number of David Smith sculptures uniform brown, on the grounds that Smith wasn't a noted colourist.

Sonia Bruce is an abstract installation and digital print artist working with themes of identity and aspiration, social pressures and boundaries. Hers is a minimalist aesthetic crossed with assemblage, applied in gallery, outdoor, site-specific and on-line situations. Bruce's beautiful installation *Balance/Instance* reflected her own obsessive intensity and fascination with the individual's control of their own space and immediate

environment. At first it appeared to be a post-minimalist installation of hundreds of suspended tubes not unlike the kind of Op art Calderesque mobiles that appeared in Britain in the 1960s. On closer inspection the rods prove to be tightly rolled tubes of drawer lining paper printed with a kitschy rose print. It was very sweet and dramatic at the same time.

Alex Costello is interested in what he calls "slippage" – 'the misappropriation and inconsistencies in language and actions'. His work ranges over many materials and sources. His installation covered the walls with imagery derived from Sicilian comic books and, combining it with his own graffiti exclamations, explored linguistic ambiguity and the often bluntly tautological, if not downright idiotic, brusque contingencies of everyday interactions. The result was a volatile buzz reminiscent of the wall works of Paul McCarthy. It looked like political art, and in a sense it was, but more about the politics of language and communication of the minor everyday narrative than about any overreaching social agenda. In other ways it almost seemed a parody of the culture of the street and the urban youth-cultural fixation on the need to keep it authentic – as if anything was truly authentic anymore. Walter Benjamin's "aura" is well and truly extinguished.

While *Perseverance* was about art's ability to push the boundaries of wit and irony within the context of our consumer culture, it also recognised the need to retain a sense of personal involvement and immediacy in a world growing increasingly depersonalised and fragmented.

*Andrew Paul Wood*

# rear window

Emily Harris, Gala Kirke, Richard Lewer, with slide screenings from the collection of Russell Coveney

Photographer Russell Coveney has built an ever-growing archive that documents a decade of South Island live music sub-culture. By exhibiting a selection of slides drawn from this image bank of hundreds of live performances, a portrait of time and place was created. This pure documentary work screened alongside *rear window*, featuring work by Emily Harris, Gala Kirke and Richard Lewer, who each explore the process and power of image-making as document of reality and signifier of identity.

Our acceptance of the camera as an infallible tool and our reliance on visual information has given us a false comfort in the captured image and positioned it above other sources as a means of documentation, making it vital in the development and projection of identity. The famous subjects in Gala Kirke's series 'Celebrity Worship Syndrome' (acrylic on canvas portraits of female screen stars) are intimately aware of the power of image. Madonna exemplifies the ability to build an identity and an enterprise based largely on the careful control of her own image as it is projected into the public domain. Yet it is the very celebrities for whom success relies so greatly on perception who are most likely to lose power over their own image to the global media and paparazzi. The public's desire for knowledge of the intimacies of famous people seems to supersede any need for "truth" in their public presentation. This cultural obsession depends on our acceptance of a projected fantasy presented as reality (with a little persuasion from plastic surgery, air-brushed photographs, lip-synched concerts, false biographies). Kirke's portraits highlight this bizarre gap between the perceived or public identity and the hidden or private reality of the individual lives and characters portrayed.

Over the course of a year Emily Harris collected digital video footage of a group of adolescent boys, using methods of cinema verité and Dogme 95, in a manner which removed artistic and directorial control from the process of documentation. The completely unscripted teenage subjects of *Boys on Film* were afforded editorial input and right of approval, giving them group ownership of their projected image and therefore the ability to control, to an extent, the audience's perception of

them. *Boys on Film*, mundane yet quietly entertaining, provided a close-up on the development of individual and group identity in the formative moment of early adolescence.

Richard Lewer also explored identity from an unusual perspective, through a vast collection of drawings. Like Harris, Lewer often uses methods and materials that distance him from the content of his works. In preparing 'Goodnight' his approach to drawing was semi-automatic. Like an archivist, Lewer collected stories and characters from overheard emergency services call-outs made in Wanganui. While Harris aimed to reproduce events in real time with no subjective intervention, Lewer's work was unashamedly filtered, with overheard, half-imagined inhabitants of a comic book world exploded in large scale on the gallery walls. Yet the results of these two divergent approaches can both be described as forming, as Dylan Rainforth describes it, a 'kind of vignette or composite profile of not only a disconnected series of random events but something that alludes to the character' of their respective subjects.<sup>1</sup> Whether mimicking, interpreting or closely recording, each artist in *rear window* has attempted to point to another version of truth and identity, reminding us of the imperfection of images and perception.

**Rosemary Forde**

<sup>1</sup> Dylan Rainforth, 'Resident Evil – Richard Lewer in Wanganui, Auckland, Sydney and Beyond', *Art New Zealand* 113, Summer 2004-2005.

rear window. Mads, Gala Kirke . Photo: Rachel Brunton



**Falling Free.** *Swallow*, Rohan Wealleans. Photo: Rachel Brunton



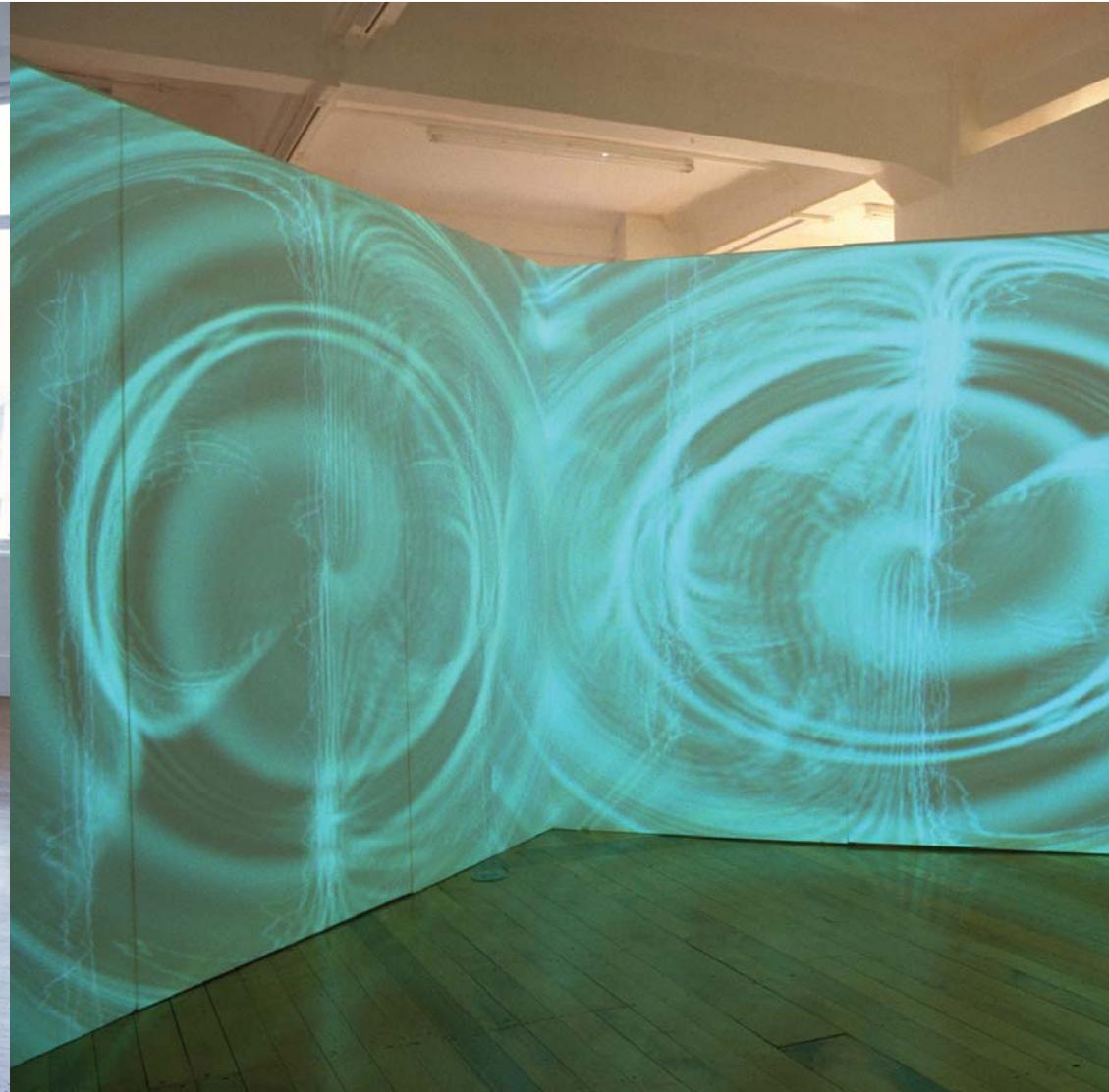
**Projekt.** *Double Blind*, Angelica Mesiti. Photo: Brendan Lee



**Dear Victoria.** Victoria Bell and Victoria Edwards . Photo: Rachel Brunton



**Tomorrow Never Knows.** Stella Brennan. Photo: Rachel Brunton



**Humiliation IQ.** Michael Morley. Photo: Zoe Roland



**Perseverance.** *All Present*, Sonia Bruce. Photo: Rachel Brunton





# Cuz

## Natalie Robertson

*Map, chart, drawing, diagram, atlas, globe...*

*Map - Representation of the earth's surface or part of it, similar representation of the sky, showing positions of stars or of the moon; diagram showing arrangement or components of things ...<sup>1</sup>*

*Mapi, māhere whenua, Pānui motuhake māhere, whakaahua, huahuatanga, Pukapuka māhere whenua, ao māhere...*

It seems all of Natalie Robertson's works are about mapping. She doesn't seem to be able to get away from it. In her work *Cuz* at The Physics Room during Christchurch's SCAPE – Art & Industry Art Biennial 04, Robertson extended her practice and shifted from the literal to the abstract, from the actual to the intangible, and presented a show highlighting familial and spatial relationships and the mapping of land, time, place and identity, both local and global.

Using time-based media – sound and moving image – Robertson, although not visibly present, created a semi-autobiographical experience, placing herself at the centre and mapping the space she occupied culturally and physically both within the show and inside her usual art practice.

*Cuz* marked a shift for Robertson, not only in the media she employed (using audio, including "hijacked" and sampled radio sound, and moving image in preference to her customary still photography), but also conceptually. In *Cuz* Robertson did not work with or refer to cartography, visual representations or markers of land measured, plotted and charted - European definitions of mapping, containing and demarcating land and often history. Instead she worked from margins to centre, from the outside in, and presented landscapes, time and space mapped from a cultural frame of reference through whakapapa, language, dance and song.

*The measure of mapping is not restricted to the mathematical; it may equally be spiritual, political or moral. By the same token, the mapping's record is not confined to the archival; it includes the remembered, the imagined, the contemplated.<sup>2</sup>*

Robertson's maps in *Cuz* were abstract and less perceptible than in previous work, such as her well known 'Prophet' works and her subsequent waka migration works. In *Cuz* Robertson

mapped the whakapapa relationship between Ngai Tahu and Ngati Porou by recording and sampling radio broadcasts by her two radio DJ cousins, brothers Aubrey and Ron Hughes, from Tahu FM and FM Radio Ngati Porou respectively. Within this framework Robertson also made evident her personal relationship to both the DJs and the two iwi. Weather reports "hijacked" from her cousins' radio shows (Ron features on a breakfast show and Aubrey on a late night drive show) expressed both the geographical mapping of two distinctive landscapes significant to the project and to Robertson, but also the atmospheric mapping of those two landscapes within opposing timeframes.

The large-scale video projections of *Player, Breaker, Dancer, Faker* featuring Nathan and Amina Creighton-Kelly – twin six year-olds of Mohawk, Ashinabe, French, South Asian and English descent – break-dancing, highlighted the mapping and claiming of space through movement and placed the twins, through their indigenous status and hip hop art form, in a global and contemporary juncture. Using material gathered in various locations including during her art residency at the Banff Centre, Canada, the video works in *Cuz* also charted the expanding domain, virtual and cultural, that Robertson is working in.

*Kati ra e hika* featured Kimiora Atkins, a rangatahi and whanaunga of Robertson's chanting a moeteatea related to the Port Awanui area of East Cape where the artist comes from. The work highlighted the customary Maori practice of mapping and recording connection to landscape through whakapapa and song. The companion piece to *Kati ra e hika*, a three-minute work called *Conversation with Reo*, recorded nine year-old Reo Hohaia speaking about the landscape and foreshore of Pungarehu in Taranaki on the west coast of the North Island. With these two final pieces Robertson reinforced the duality and oppositional themes played out throughout the exhibition – Kimiora female, Reo male – and charted the landscape that runs without question from where the artist positions herself, East to West.

## Megan Tamati-Quennell

<sup>1</sup> *The New Zealand Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, 1986

<sup>2</sup> Dennis Cosgrove, 'Human Geographer', in *Mappings*, London: Reaktion Books, 1999

# Interior World

Seraphine Pick and Oli Perkins. Curated by Kirsten Rennie Weston

Described by curator Kirsten Rennie Weston as 'an exposé of narratives that dangle like loose threads', *Interior World* played host to a variety of the figures and tropes of role-play and transgression as The Physics Room was populated with the silent but brooding traces of both Seraphine Pick's and Oli Perkins' figurative practices.

*Interior World* provided an assortment of Pick's sketchy and ambivalent forms installed in a bedroom/salon-style paste-up on the large back wall of the main gallery, with an array of new two and three-dimensional offerings by Perkins staking their claim to the rest of the terrain. Spanning a period of 10 years or more, I like the idea that Pick's accumulated drawings came spilling out of a box long hidden under a bed or sitting up in an attic somewhere, waiting patiently for its contents to re-emerge. As it turned out, both Pick and Perkins had a hand in the installation of Pick's sketches, which is in itself a practical illustration of the generosity and playfulness evident in the practices of both artists.

Amongst Pick's collage writ-large, a small selection of paper bag masks hovered eerily, projecting from the wall. Even though the image has haunted her work for years, amongst the spidery lines and the connotative intrigues of Pick's early, layered-up figurative style, these sculptural elements stood out as a peculiarly inviting entrance point into the epic and edgy world cobbled together here and exposed for all to see.

The masks equally offered a way out from Pick's dense, pressed-flat world of veiled references and events that papered the gallery with its roll-call of eerie figures bordering on the nightmarish. It was within this realm of supposition and conjecture that Perkins' dioramas and battle scenes meshed most fruitfully with Pick's playful, voyeuristic intent, gestating an air of shifty looks and provocatively mischievous gestures within the show as a whole.

Perkins' sequence of 60 photographic stills in which Skeletoor does battle with Luke Skywalker's action-figure replica potentially invoked the resolute tone of those silent pacts and acts of infinite bravery that always exist within the field of play, accompanied as they are by the spoken commentaries and hyperbole of youthful mythologising.

In counterpoint to this energised sequence and the more static mug shot-like "portraits" of plastic characters, Perkins presented miniature sculptural scenes constructed from the found objects and play things that are glorified in his colour-saturated photographs. Here the objects find themselves perched, all gleaming white and dripping, on paint cans lined up upon a table with rickety saw-horse legs.

Bleached of the narrative perspective, colour and scale of the photographic prints, these sculptural works seemed silenced and diminished. Yet Perkins' deceptively simple technique of telling tales and trying different narratives on for size illustrated how mobile and tentative our understandings of "reality" should necessarily be. If anything, Perkins' whited-out dioramas surely sought to remind us of the vulnerability and variability of "value," perhaps indicated most clearly via the plastic squirrel with his not-so-silver but precious-as-gold Seagers spoon. Here Perkins also cleverly unearthed the absurdity of "truth" or any kind of overarching rhetoric, preferring to privilege the enabling and contested space in between particular subjectivities or understandings.

Just think of those moments of utter betrayal on the playground or that strange blend of tragicomedy that exists when you can't tell if your opponent or pal is laughing or crying. For it's in poignant moments like these that both Pick and Perkins give a slick, sly nod to the various scales of experience, along with the rope-burn and frayed tempers of our inner, and most often other, selves.

*Kate Montgomery*

# National Drawing Award

It all starts with drawing.

In the spirit of community and collaboration, Artspace and The Physics Room joined together in 2004 to present the inaugural *National Drawing Award*, an initiative aimed at supporting and promoting the range of artistic practice in this country. In a virtual flinging open of the gallery doors, the award had overwhelming popular appeal, evidenced by the 546 entries received. The open (and FREE) entry aimed to counter the hierarchy and expense typically associated with such events in favour of giving back to the artists out there. The total prize pool of over \$5000 cash went some way in achieving this. Every submission gained a place on the wall, attracting a range of artists, "amateur" and "professional" alike. The democratisation of the two gallery spaces brought to the fore a warm fuzzy feeling about the respective galleries' commitment to nurturing contemporary art across the field.

Selecting a winner was bound to be tough. The Award was judged in two parts, firstly by a panel comprising Tobias Berger, Artspace Director; Emma Bugden, City Gallery Wellington Curator; and Danae Mossman, The Physics Room Director. Battling it out over a trestle table at Artspace, the judges concluded the overall winner was Auckland artist Andrew McLeod. McLeod's drawing, *Art School Dream*, was described by Berger as:

*unique, yet skillfully drawn, referencing theory as well as personal experience. Funny and conceptual, quoting and satirising so fantastically a montage of theories – French drawing, Photographic, Sculptural, Intermedia and 'jokes for assholes' – standard art school fare. Not only does this drawing use the medium of drawing with skill and distinction, it also talks about the business of art making.*

As part of McLeod's prize package he received funds to produce an artist book (the result is *Largess*, a chunky publication that plumbs the depth of McLeod's practice), as well as a cash prize, a Telecom mobile phone and other goodies.

The challenge of selecting a single award winner from the range of entries spawned a new category – the Merit Award. Recipients of this award were Richard Lewer with his graphite sketch *Gymnastic Championship Wanganui*, Monique Jansen for her deconstruction of the drawing in *Untitled*, and Ruth Cleland's classical rendering of a banal street scene, *A Sunny Day in Mosgiel*.

The second part of the judging, the People's Choice Award, took place at the end of the exhibition and aimed to hand the reins over to the public. The winner was decided in Christchurch after a ceremonial affair that saw Tobias Berger, endowed with game-show style hype, working through the tie in votes with an animated physical voting session that involved members of the audience having to become a 'vote' and move to one side of the room. The winner was Jacquelyn Greenbank with her stitched rendition of the Queen Mother. Greenbank received a cash prize, a Telecom mobile phone, an artist page in *Staple* magazine, and other treats.

The exhibition of the entries was equally as democratic; the works were hung in alphabetical order, and shown in two parts at each gallery, first artists A-L then M-Z. A novel, and entirely un-curated approach to presentation, the exhibition as a whole was an engaging and insightful representation of drawing practice in all its guises. From digital prints and pencil sketches to collage and stitch-work, the show was a montage of ideas and approaches. An often underrated medium in contemporary art, drawing's status as the poor cousin was thrown out the door.

*Danae Mossman*

# Sampler

Robin Neate, Karin van Roosmalen, Joanna Langford, Iain Cheesman, Scott Flanagan, Alex Monteith

When an artist enters a space with their work to unpack and install, they begin and end a journey of adapting, arranging and inhabiting - temporarily with their materials in physical space but also hanging indefinitely in the viewer's thoughts. The artists in Sampler excelled in this, with the processes of escapism, exploration, travel and colonisation recurring across the series of six solo projects. Each drew heavily on histories (political, artistic or imagined) and succeeded in evoking memories and internal dialogue, some through kitsch and playful nostalgia and some via more cynical satire.

The ideas and attitudes pondered in Sampler seem reflective of a generalised experience of Aotearoa as a young country that keeps history in close proximity and whose geography gives it an appreciation of distance and a slightly removed view of global affairs. Some of the artists share a personal experience of immigration and most have taken the virtual travel worlds of film and literature as references or inspiration in their works. However each artist in the series inhabited the gallery space with visually and materially individual works. Some displayed elegant restraint and subtlety, others a gloriously playful approach.

Each exhibition was impressively crafted, engaging with audiences and contemporary experience without compromising the artists' own style. Christchurch artist Robin Neate's untitled grouping of paintings, sculpture and photography referenced his own progression as an artist which has seen a variety of media take primary focus at different points, with a recent return to painting. It traced popular elements of art history, referencing the styles and subjects of Giacometti, Pissarro and Michael Harrison. Yet Neate did not privilege these recognised artists above hobby painters or street photographers, who also had a presence in his work.

An idealised Paris formed the backdrop and atmosphere of this exhibition - the kind of rosy nostalgic impression that is most vivid viewed from a distance. Taking magazine pictures and reproductions as subject matter, Neate re-enacted the primary method in which early modernism was filtered through and adopted by New Zealand artists, at a time when far away Paris was the centre of the art world. A 1950s photo of a couple in

front of the Eiffel Tower was re-photographed as a starting point for the exhibition. This well-travelled and adapted image exemplified the connection points across place and time made possible through art.

Karin van Roosmalen's family emigrated from the Netherlands settling in Christchurch, and as an adult the artist has lived an itinerant life. Her artwork is equally well suited to travel and adapting to new surroundings. Van Roosmalen's work for *Sampler Much Like a Traveller*, was part of an ongoing project which saw the artist reuse materials in four different gallery spaces during 2004. Moulded sheets of art paper along with personal ephemera and objects were selected and rearranged by the artist in each space, allowing the work (and artist) to subtly settle into its destination.

While quietly assimilating into the gallery, van Roosmalen's work also changed and highlighted architectural oddities and histories, with a peep-hole cut into the adjoining storeroom and sheets of white paper creating a curve in a corner and softening previously flat surfaces. The many layers thus revealed and hidden in the exhibition made a tangible link to the past and other places, in a way that writer Charlotte Huddleston likened to archaeology.<sup>1</sup> The impermanent relationship between van Roosmalen's installation and its location was evocative of viewers' own associations of belonging, time, memory and building a sense of home when cast adrift.

Working in a similar manner of organic arrangement, Joanna Langford also constructed a work that allowed its audience to travel with memory and a sense of wonder. Installing *The Flower People* Langford worked as an explorer, colonising the gallery with her sprawling MDF cities inhabited by miniature populations. The adventures and journeys of children's books immediately sprang to mind, the artist's construction appearing as three-dimensional illustration.

Fuelled by recollections of childhood play and fairytales, *The Flower People* recreated a belief in the fanciful. Yet the playful escapism and kitsch construction belies a darker, more fragile edge. Each "colony" of the installation was bridged to the other by precariously winding roads and, built from the

same materials, differed only in form. Like van Roosmalen, Langford can dismantle and reconfigure her work, making its inhabitants' worldly existence a fleeting one. Meanwhile the ticking flower heads gently but incessantly reminded us of the passing of time and its impact on our memory contributing to nostalgic views of a golden youth.

Elements of childhood play continued in Iain Cheesman's installation *An Automatic Welcome*. While Langford's exhibition recalled the adventure and territorialism of childhood, Cheesman took this further using toys (talking dogs, plastic guns) and domestic materials (carpet, garish fabrics) to satirise the language of war games. He also recalled childhood imaginings, but in Cheesman's case this was a recurring dream in which his bed edged towards a cliff, intimating a more nightmarish concern for the security and comfort of home.<sup>2</sup>

LED lights and video works added a low-fi science fiction element, referencing surveillance and airport security in the potentially sinister atmosphere of contemporary travel. The international world evoked by Cheesman was an unstable one. While the exhibition entertained (with sound excerpts from a John Wayne movie), the sinister mise-en-scene seduced with the same techniques of pomp and frill, repetition and flashing lights used in the propaganda of politics and war.

Cheesman (who was born in the UK but grew up in NZ), did not allow geographic remoteness to remove a sense of global responsibility from his exhibition, implying as other Sampler artists have, that whether or not the rest of the world is aware of us, we are conspicuously aware of it. Scott Flanagan presented Aotearoa as a kind of experiment in nationhood. A map of the country cast in bitumen and moulded to the shape of a bell-curve was the eloquent central point in his installation *Dr Don: or how I learned to stop worrying and love Helen*. While the title made reference to contemporary localised politics, Flanagan gave his exhibition a greater sense of history with his use of the roading material integral in the colonisation and industrialisation of a new land. His act of cartography recalled explorers of the seas; whether referencing Maui and his fish or Captain Cook, Flanagan's heavy black map was a land of discovery pulled and forced into a taut form.

Shaky foundations hinted at ancestry and cultural inheritance (with a skeletal human foot as a crutch) and the artist's own dissatisfied experience of education (with a broken school desk). Again, there was no security or permanence to the depiction of place or home for this Sampler artist. Satirising the methods and controls of propaganda, Flanagan's also delved into the manipulation of information with his use of the bell-curve form. The statistical mapping of information does not sit easily with the artist's view of human experience, and Flanagan's work emphasised its dangerous role in the rhetoric of history, politics and education.

The continually shifting and unregulated data bank of the web was the tool used in Alex Monteith's intermedia installation *Invisible Cities*. Programmed to conduct particular searches, Monteith's work supported itself via a live internet connection and random sequence of results that continued the feeling of impermanence running through much of the series. Elements of surveillance technology and control flagged in previous Sampler exhibitions also pervaded Monteith's work. One projection showed the results of Googling the objects and descriptors of the gallery itself, incorporating and assimilating the space into the installation.

The notion of virtual or internal travel was accentuated by Monteith's primary source material, the 1974 novel by Italo Calvino from which her work takes its name. Vocabulary from Calvino's invented conversations of Marco Polo and Kublai Khan, explorer and conqueror, became the inputs for another of Monteith's programmed search engines. Tracing stories through literature and time, *Invisible Cities* completed Sampler as it began - describing real and impossible places, leaving us with our recollections, a weightless temporality and the 'idea that every place is unreal'.<sup>3</sup>

## Rosemary Forde

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Huddleston, *Much Like a Traveller* Sampler catalogue essay, The Physics Room, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Paul Wood, *An Automatic Welcome* Sampler catalogue essay, The Physics Room, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Maria Walls, *Invisible Cities* Sampler catalogue essay, The Physics Room, 2004.

# The Kiosk

## Our more compact outdoor art site.

Situated on the verge of a major intersection, on the cusp of an outdoor mall, the Kiosk is a small yet active art site. Its positioning disrupts the flow of the mall, offering a non-fiscal exchange between art and pedestrians amidst a run of commercial enterprises. In 2004, its second year of operation under The Physics Room (conceived originally by the Oblique Trust in 2000), the Kiosk hosted a programme of 11 exhibitions that provided opportunities for local, national and international artists to work with the site.

The Kiosk kicked off the year with Jacquelyn Greenbank's *The Irish State Carriage Visits The Isle Of Greenbank*, in which the artist's crochet mastery celebrated the homespun wholesomeness of tea-cosy kitsch. The Queen's resplendent carriage complete with white horses trundled fruitlessly around the small island nation of Greenbank. In this miniature epic Greenbank gently critiqued the princess-dream whilst bringing to the fore her fascination with the Royal family. The scene also made a pert reference to the crime in public art that is the bronze sculpture of the Queen's corgis, unfortunately visible from The Physics Room window.

Jess Johnson's sci-fi critique, *The Future Is Not What It Used To Be*, unravelled the stereotypical comic book representations of the future. Thinking back to the modern imagining of the future, we are confounded by images of silver suits with shoulder pads, talking computers and monorails to the moon. Johnson's transformer robot, resting on a base of rocket ships and bodybuilders, arches back in defeat, highlighting a shift in consciousness from a utopian imagining of the future in the modern era towards a dystopian contemporary view.

*outTAKEout#* was a selection of outtakes curated by Brendan Lee, from the *Projekt#* archive, a quarterly video catalogue of artists working with video. In conjunction with the *Projekt#* exhibition at The Physics Room, the Kiosk's screening of the *outTAKEout#* video edits presented the 'unanchored' aspects of the works to the public, providing an insight into what didn't make the cut.

In conjunction with Karin van Roosmalen's installation for the Sampler series titled *Much Like A Traveller*, van Roosmalen's Kiosk installation comprised a small dressmaker's workbench that played with the space through shifting scales and dimensions. Referencing her family history (two generations of van Roosmalen clothing industry workers had businesses in the neighbourhood) van Roosmalen gave a nod to her ancestry by fashioning her structures with a fluidity and temporality that alluded to the practice of tailoring. Van Roosmalen's site specific modelling was a subtle investigation into site and memory.

Also in the Sampler series, Joanna Langford's construction out of pink Hundreds and Thousands biscuits sat quietly, gently lit, amongst the towering facades of Christchurch's old world buildings. Langford colonised the space, arranging and developing miniature environs inhabited by plastic people, investigating the construction of "communities" that represent the private and imaginary worlds of both the artist and the viewer. Her work shifts continually between the real and the make believe. There is something so familiar and reassuring about the fabled Hundreds and Thousand biscuits, that their appropriation as building material propels the viewer into a story book narrative. And like the gingerbread house, the candy-coated goodness of Langford's installation has darker underpinnings if we read on.

In an obliquely political act, Treason Sedito installed a can of grey paint stencilled with the text 'Cultural Cleansing Committee', from which the work takes its name. *Cultural Cleansing Committee* sought to activate a dialogue about the legitimacy of the unauthorised artwork that appears on the streets of Christchurch. Sedito's protest against the removal of graffiti in the area was born as the artist began documenting sites where graffiti had been removed and only patches of dull grey paint remained. The work comments on Christchurch's conservative underbelly that seems to repel street art as vandalism. Sedito utilised the Kiosk's very public setting to voice her concern about what she describes as 'cultural cleansing'.

Similarly focusing on the homogenisation of culture, Lee Campbell's *Chinese Burns* featured a small dragon covered in supermarket stickers surrounded by 'Oriental' stickers. The landscape of stickers formed an undulating terrain in which the dragon seemed unable to navigate. The dragon's luminescent eyes and a beguiling 'Oriental' tune examined the construction of universal signs and codes of mass commercialism in which cultures are commodified for a global market.

Andrew Eyman's *Streetyarns* was a 22-minute video showing a collection of 600 photos taken in the streets of Paris over a period of six months. In a tribute to Marcel Duchamp, Eyman walked out each day in search of discarded objects. The objects were then catalogued and documented as "street sculptures". These images of urban debris are accompanied by the ubiquitous sounds of gay Paris in Edith Piaf's songs of sad endings, lost love and abandoned souls.

In typically slick Wayne Youle style, *Exploitation St* comprised a row of identical houses constructed from a pack of playing cards that feature historical images of wahine. The row of houses and perfectly formed fake grass referenced the suburban mentality in which white middle-class ideals are constructed. *Exploitation St* critiqued the mass-produced consumer items that exploit the notion of the "exotic" Maori woman.

Lisa Clements explored the benign nature of "cuteness" in *The Artlist Dog*, where she questions useless consumer goods that appeal to buyers through their cuteness. Sharon Kinsella writes "Cuteness loaned personality and a subjective presence to otherwise meaningless and often literally useless consumer goods and in this way made them much more attractive to potential buyers".<sup>1</sup> This Japanese phenomena, often called "fancy good" refers to objects that have "cute" characteristics: soft, infantile, round, without orifices, insecure and helpless. *The Artlist Dog* - a drawing instrument in the shape of a dog that operates on batteries to produce mindless scribbles on blank sheets of paper - embodies these features.

The finale to the year's programme, *The Birds* (by The Pleasure Hunters collective Leanne Williams, Susan Jowsey and Fiona Lascelles) was a quirky critique of the Victorian ideal of the Garden. The work highlighted the elitism evident in such indulgent pastimes, where to focus entirely on the beautiful and decorative without a concern for functionalism suggests the uselessness of the pursuit. According to The Pleasure Hunters, the fascination with collecting is based on a desire to capture the wonder of nature, and this is brought to the fore in the work through the incorporation of faux-fauna representing our underlying desperation to understand the relationship between humans and nature. The artists explore the transformative process of collecting, where nature becomes subsumed into the domestic. The work communicates a tension aligned with Alfred Hitchcock's 1963 thriller, with its mix of pleasure, pain, longing and power.

After another twelve months and ten diverse projects, The Kiosk has maintained an important presence in Christchurch. With its easy 24-hour access and public positioning, the site continues to be an integral part of The Physics Room programme.

### Danae Mossman

<sup>1</sup> Sharon Kinsella, 'Cuties in Japan' from Skov & Moeran (eds), *Women Media and Consumption in Japan*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1995.

# Public Programmes

In addition to the core programme of exhibitions and publications, The Physics Room fills an important niche in the presentation of a range of experimental performance, sound, internet, digital and video practices.

The year's public programme was launched with a concert performance by Cologne-based Thomas Lehn and ex-pat New Zealander David Watson. Both artists are actively involved in the international new music scene, and are renowned for their production of cutting-edge sound that traverses genre boundaries. Supported by the Goethe Institute, Lehn joined with Watson to create spontaneous interactions from a unique palette of sounds on his 1960s classic analogue synths.

26-02-04 was a series of one-night only performances that brought together acclaimed national and international sound artists: Joel Stern (Australia), Anthony Guerra (London), Rosy Parlane (New Zealand), Mattin (Spain), Daniel Beban (London) and Bruce Russell (New Zealand). The series presented a lively mix of electro-acoustic music, digital and physical computer sound, electric guitars and sundry electronic devices, and provided an opportunity for the audience to track new developments in experimental sound.

Once again, The Physics Room joined forces with the Goethe Institute to present *MuVi: Music Video Clips from Germany*. Hailing from the renowned Oberhausen Short Film Festival and screened at Christchurch Art Gallery's Auditorium, the programme offered an insight into the unique visual world of German music clips, pop culture and cinema, introduced by the Festival's director, Lars Henrik Gass.

Avatar Body Collision is a collaborative, globally active cyber-theatre group based in London, Helsinki, New Zealand and, of course, cyberspace. At an evening event Vicki Smith, the New Zealand member of the collective, gave an interactive demonstration of the group's work, which explores the relationship between the body and the machine. In particular, the group deal with what it means to be human in this ever-increasing world of "intelligent machines", through the use of cross-platform, free to download chat software.

In a night of experimental performance Auckland-based intermedia artist Philip Dadson, equipped with singing skulls and talking drums, radiophonic works, sound sculptures and experimental musical instruments, song-stones, compositions, graphic scores and sound stories, created an invigorating exploration of sound's potential.

The second instalment of the acoustic adventure *Trambience*, a co-production with ((ethermap and RDU, featured local sound artists/musicians Greg Malcolm and Chris O'Connor. Taking place aboard one of Christchurch's restored heritage trams, the event sought to explore the physical and acoustic space of the tram and the rhythmic spontaneity of its motion through the sounds from two celebrated experimental sound artists.

The Physics Room hosted a "jam session" with John White and Francesca Mountford, with special guest musicians Jody Lloyd and Aaron Beehre. White's twee guitar songs of repetition and side-stepping were the main agenda, while Mountford enrolled the assistance of gonging clocks, chiming music boxes and vocals made by swallowing Walkman earplugs.

Conceptualised by Warren Olds and Nicola Farquhar, the *Ahoy!* flag project utilised inner city flagpoles on commercial buildings as sites for the presentation of a selection of contemporary art flags. Taking the art out of the gallery and onto the streets, the Christchurch skyline played host to flags by designers and artists from New Zealand, Australia, France and the Netherlands, including Von Dekker, Genevieve Gauckler, Jon Campbell, Nathan Pohio, Fiona Amundsen, Warren Olds, Tessa Laird, Karin de Jong, Lisa Benson and Nicola Farquhar.

The final programme for 2004 was *German Video Art 2000 to 2002*, a screening of entries for the German Marl Video Art Award, which has been active in the video art scene for over 20 years, and has become an attentive observer of the development of the medium.

Visit [www.physicsroom.org.nz/specialplace](http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/specialplace) to download a CD replete with the year's sonic highlights – a gift from us to you. The webpage also features images and quicktime movies...

Public programmes. Thomas Lehn and David Watson. Photo: Rosemary Forde



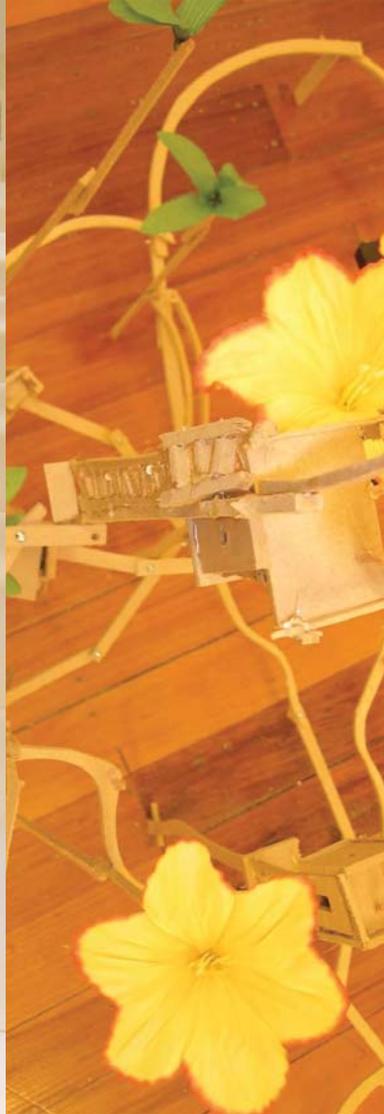
Interior World. Seraphine Pick. Photo: Simon Lawrence



The Kiosk. The Future Is Not What It Used To Be, Jess Johnson. Photo: Jess Johnson



**Sampler Series.** Robin Neate / Karin van Roosmalen / Joanna Langford / Iain Cheeseman / Scott Flanagan / Alex Monteith





# Director's Report

Danae Mossman

The Physics Room is a platform for the presentation of contemporary art and ideas that encompasses a range of integrated activities including exhibitions, publications and performances. Our aim is to create a supportive and responsive environment for arts practitioners to develop new work and new directions through a range of local, national and international projects.

The 2004 programme comprised a range of activities, including 14 exhibitions in the gallery, 11 Kiosk projects and a number of public programmes. Acknowledging the commitment we have to supporting artists, The Physics Room contributed over \$22,000 in artist fees throughout the year. This was made possible by Creative New Zealand's core financial support for The Physics Room, supplemented and sustained by sponsorship, grants and donations from foundations and businesses. We are immensely grateful to Creative New Zealand for their consistent support over the last eight years. Their contribution to the organisation has been significant, not only through funding and training opportunities, but also through advocacy and support.

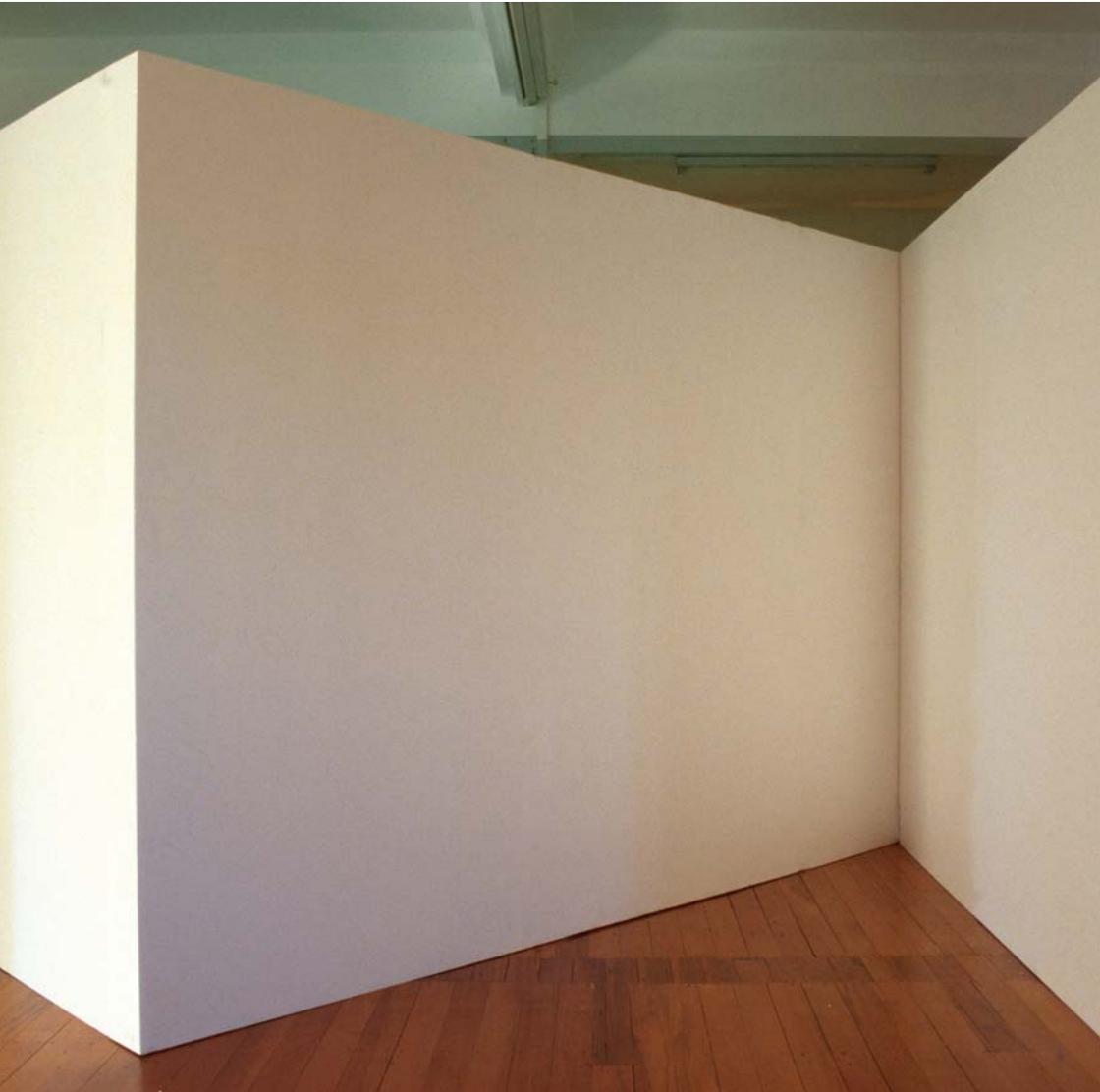
The Physics Room has continued to build strong working relationships with other organisations and businesses in the community, which assists us in the presentation of our programme. 2004 saw the continuation of our relationship with the Art & Industry Biennial with the presentation of Natalie Robertson's exhibition *Cuz*, and the establishment of the National Drawing Award in partnership with Artspace, Auckland. The *National Drawing Award* was a great opportunity for us to work with a like-minded institution with a similar dedication to supporting the development of contemporary art in this country. The project was assisted by a range of businesses, including Telecom NZ Ltd, Sweeny Vesty Ltd, Armacup Maritime Services Ltd, Mitchener Cammell Ltd and local designer Aaron Beehre, to all of whom we are very grateful.

2004 saw a number of staff changes. Director Rosemary Forde headed abroad in October after four years at The Physics Room. During her time here she enriched the organisation with her strong leadership skills and considered programming. Jess Johnson, Programme Coordinator, also moved away after two years with The Physics Room. Jess was replaced by Zoe Roland, who subsequently took maternity leave in November. The time and energy that each of these staff members contributed to The Physics Room has had a significant impact on the organisation. We wish them all the best for the future. I came in to the role of Director in November after Rosemary's departure, and Vanessa Coxhead took up the Programme Coordinator position in December.

The Physics Room Board has continued to develop its focus on the strategic direction of the organisation. Each Board member brings a wealth of skills and experience to the organisation, which in turn helps shape its direction. We are grateful for the dedication and commitment that the Board bring to The Physics Room. There were some changes to the Board in 2004 – Robyn Voyce resigned in March, and Hermione Bushong resigned in October – many thanks to Robyn and Hermione for their contributions during their time as Board members.

In addition to the Board, the Curatorial Committee make an important contribution to the overall programming. In 2004 the Committee consisted of Emma Bugden, Megan Tamati-Quennell, Sean Kerr and Chris Chapman - many thanks to the committee for their input.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all the artists, curators and writers who contributed to the programme in 2004. It is your vision and commitment that makes The Physics Room exciting.



# Many Thanks...

On behalf of The Physics Room, arts practitioners, and audiences, we would like to extend our grateful thanks to the following businesses and organisations that have made significant contributions to The Physics Room in 2004 through the provision of goods and services for our projects and events.

Armacup Maritime Services Ltd  
Artspace  
Art & Industry  
Christchurch City Council  
Mitchener Cammell Ltd  
Monteiths  
Sweeny Vesty Ltd  
Telecom NZ Ltd

Many thanks also to our funding partners...  
Creative New Zealand / Toi Aotearoa

Canterbury Development Corporation  
Canterbury Foundation  
Community Trust  
Creative Communities Christchurch  
Lion Foundation  
Metro Charitable Trust  
Work and Income New Zealand

# Financial Statement

The Physics Room accounts are prepared by Gavin Shepherd at Miller, Gale & Winter.

The Trust is audited by Hargreaves & Felton.

## Statement of Financial Performance for the year ended 31 December 2004

Revenue	177,456
Less expenditure	179,657
Net operating loss	(2201)

## Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2004

Total Capital	52,109
<i>Represented by</i>	
Cash & deposits	44,523
Accounts Receivable	1,751
Fixed Assets	14,981
<i>Less</i>	
Accounts Payable	4,359
GST Payable	3,287
Grants in Advance	1,500
Net Assests	52,109

# Strategic Plan

## Our Mission

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An internationally recognised arts platform dedicated to develop and challenge both the artist and audience for innovative contemporary art in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Our Strategic Objectives

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To assist art practitioners with resources and opportunities to achieve a higher level of professional and creative development.

To promote and encourage a greater acknowledgement, understanding and value of contemporary art among New Zealanders.

## Our Values

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### *Innovation*

Providing a platform & context for the development of new work & new directions.

### *Sustainability*

Contributing to a strong local and national arts infrastructure.

### *Accessibility*

Presenting art in a context that develops audiences & understanding .

## Artistic Programme

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### Aims:

To develop a critical artistic programme, with an emphasis on the development and presentation of new work

To support local contemporary art practice within a national and international context

To present innovative visual art and interdisciplinary art forms within an accessible cultural framework

## Business Programme

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### Aims:

To ensure the financial sustainability of The Physics Room Trust

To diversify sources of revenue, decreasing the contribution from CNZ to a sustainable level below 70%

To contribute positively to the local and national professional arts infrastructure

# Physics Room Members

The Physics Room would like to thank and acknowledge the support received from the following individuals and groups...

Jim Barr & Mary Barr

Jenny Gibbs

Chartwell Trust

Music & Audio Institute of NZ

FLIWAY

Resene

Monteiths

Matthew Ayton

Alison Bartley

Hannah Beehre

Victoria Bell

Rudolf Boelee

Michael Bolden

Mary-Jane Duffy

Michael Lett

Stella Brennan

Rachel Brunton

Emma Bugden

Hermione Bushong

Helen Calder

Iain Cheesman

Liz Coats

P D & J R Crothall

Victoria Edwards

Jane Egerton

Suzanne Ellison

Amy Fletcher

Jane Gallagher

Brooke Georgia

Tessa Giblin

Greg Hall

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Dorothy Helyer

Juanita Hepi

Sophie Jerram

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Kate Johnstone

Zita Joyce

Kirstin Hollis

Lynne Lambert

Anthony Lealand

Keiller MacDuff

John McCallum

Deborah McCormick

Tony Maskell

Gael Montgomerie

Louise Palmer

Phil Parkes

Don Peebles

Hamish Pettengell

Vivienne Plumb

P E Rhodes

Jamie Richardson

Zoe Roland

Bevan Rouse

Karin van Roosmalen

Naomi Smith

Leafa Janice Wilson

Hamish Win

Jane Zusters

# Physics Room Membership

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Joining The Physics Room Membership programme is a great way to keep in touch with what's happening in contemporary art and support your favourite gallery at the same time!

Rewards to Members include:

- FREE copies of ALL Physics Room publications — the Annual, exhibition catalogues, CDs and CD ROMs!
- Regular invitations to Physics Room events by post or email, as well as members-only email updates of events and opportunities in the arts
- Free or reduced admission for Physics Room events including performances, film and video screenings, and lectures

Organisations, institutions, businesses and generous individuals, are also invited to subscribe to our new Atomic Membership rate. This level of support will be rewarded with the same benefits as individual members, with the addition of the following:

- One free gallery hire for private functions or events during the year
- Listed as a sponsor in the Physics Room Annual and on our website

To become a member of The Physics Room, fill in the form on the reverse of this page and post it to:

**The Physics Room**  
**PO Box 22 351**  
**Christchurch, New Zealand**

or fax to **+64 3 379 6063**  
or email [physicsroom@physicsroom.org.nz](mailto:physicsroom@physicsroom.org.nz)

# Membership

I would like to become a member of The Physics Room

\$30 Standard annual membership fee       \$15 Students

\$50 Members outside NZ       \$100 Atomic Membership

Name: .....

Occupation: .....

Organisation (where applicable): .....

Postal Address: .....

.....

.....

Telephone (hm):( ) ..... (wk):( ) .....

Fax: ( ) .....

Email: .....

Website URL: .....

Method of Payment:     Cheque       Cash       Money Order

Cheques should be made payable to the Physics Room Trust. All amounts are in NZ dollars.

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