

Bona Mangangu

Guest: Tim Etchells

Host: Penny McCarthy

14.10.2009

Is a simple exchange of emails read in public a work of art? Is a display of what could remain in the private sphere much enough to draw some comfort from the fact it is a 'live art'? Fragments of friendship are displayed before an audience. It is rather disturbing to listen to private words. One could doubt the effectiveness or the need for such an exercise: a simple reading of e-mails. It is just not presented as what would normally be considered a piece of art. How to get through? I do not know where to locate truly this 'live performance'. It destabilises. Maybe part of the audience was not that sad when the live performance ended, although it was friendly. What is out there? I do recognise any textual material, read or listen, leads to reflect, to think, to react. I do also believe Borges' words, and some evocation of New York and the Mediterranean Sea came from this private conversation, to help us open the windows and breathe something different, a dreamed world breath.

Guest: Roderick Buchanan

Host: Andrew Sneddon

21.10.2009

Buchanan shared with us great moments of happiness, joy, and sadness. The performance by a band of local musicians, traditional, with their bagpipes, separated from another band by a wall of incomprehension, the wall of division, beliefs of another age, was very powerful: loyal supporters versus the Republicans in Ireland. The artist did not find any difficulty working with both groups. Is an artist, with an uncertain status, his faltering voice, able to build a human bridge between communities? Perhaps the artist, in all his brittleness but with his courage, his clearness, his honesty, through his works could do more than others, and if not more, then maybe as much. When the voice of those who are supposed to find solutions to the problems fails, it is time to listen to the fragile voice of an artist, to hear friendship, creativity, and courage.

Guest: Jane Harris

Host: Gary Simmonds

11.11.2009

From Jane Harris's trips in Japan and France – very inspirational – we discovered what would change her vision of art; the binary opposite, a sort of dualism. She talked about distance, light, and shadow, symmetry and balance, enclosure and exposure, wet and dry, outside and inside, inclusive spaces and exclusive spaces. All these notions are illustrated in her recent discovery, that of gardens.

From this binary opposite and discovery she began to build a strong, soft work of circles in vivid colours, playing with ideas of far and near, empty and fullness, silence and music. The work sometimes tends to fall into uncontrolled movement while the background music disrupts what dualism transforms into a sublime art of repetitive visual forms.

Guest: Amanda Beech

Host: Jaspar Joseph-Lester

25.11.2009

With her authoritative voice, persuasive Amanda stands adamant and speaks with such assurance and power we wonder if doubt ever rises in her speech and mind. During her presentation, she tried to re-think the structure upon which the neo-liberal society relies, questioning its own rhetoric and basis, how Hobbes's principles are applicable in our modern society, for example. Does it require a permanent, political, Marxist critique, like hers? Probably yes. Since Heidegger, we know 'to think is to act'. However, is Karl Marx's theory an alternative to the post-capitalist society? He is considered as one of the most powerful critics of capitalism.

Well. Beech uses a performative, radical language, video, and strong music. Is radicality an answer to a blind, stubborn and powerful administration? On the basis of the principles she stresses, insisting on *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* for all. It is a concept, an idealistic process, a purpose, a target. But why is what is conceivable, thinkable, and valuable in the Western world constantly denied elsewhere? To question is to begin to answer. Her voice turns soft and concludes in a poetic manner, while we see on the screen an image of ancient Delphes: *Is the project of a Delphic world achievable?*

Guest: Juan Cruz

Host: Sharon Kivland

02.12.2009

To translate is to betray. Juan Cruz chooses to take this phrase literally. *Don Quixote of Cervantes*, for example, translated from Spanish to English becomes a work of his own, translated live, as an experience, before an audience, sometimes in an empty room. He sits and performs. The text carried by his voice becomes another text, a new language transmutes the old one. It changes. He who speaks becomes the owner. He exposes himself and takes a risk. For Cruz, praxis is an experience of practice, even learning how to build a wall or to play violin. Pleasure is in between. When he translates any kind of book, he does betray, only on behalf of creation.

Guest: Kate Davis
Host: Julie Westerman
27.01.2010

On the fading screen, the narrator's body is only a red spot blending into the dawning day. Her white voice is masked by the noise of cars passing over the bridge. Between two runs, her figure is draped in a red cardigan. She walks. The voice of shadows is hit by clarity but no presence of the missed one on the bridge. She walks like Jensen's *Gradiva*. Without destination. She stops, appears and disappears. What does she expect? No promise can justify her coming and going. Expectation is the only justification, the ceaseless flow of coming and going without reason. Walking, with the words of love in the mouth.

What happens when you lost the one you love? What does remain? One's voice, one's words, a body of solitude? Is talking the only issue, as said Novalis? We cannot underestimate the power of words. Their magic of re-creating and restoring a lost world; struggling to build a new one upon the body of absence, the structure of *waitingness*. Davies is this voice of absence, *unforgetfulness*, and *nowhereness*. Walking, falling. Speaking is trying to get the balance. Talking, caressing the running present, kissing the memories of the past, brushing the same gestures of tenderness. The mix of all this is love. Nothing but love.

Guest: Taconis Stolk
Host: T. C. McCormack
03.02.2010

Taconis Stolk talks. Circles, red colour, geometric figures surround a map of New York. Plank time, database, numbers – Einstein. We are truly in a scientific world. The scientist's words cover the artist's imagination. He takes the risk of talking before an audience not familiar with science subjects. They break loose. Then come sounds on octaves, music theory, *tic tac* ... something unexpected passes through the audience. They appear more relieved rather than delighted after that. Music but in a different tone: plank time, plank length quantum, frequencies in molecules. It is not something they dreamed about when they came here. Stolk explained how we could reinvent a system in harmony with the universe itself. Is it a new theory? No, it is a plank time. The artist tends to spin out his speech so I end up without conviction and pleasure, only a few memorable words and images for such an investment of time. The audience did not need to bother chatting. I believe he could do so much better if he proceeded in a different way. A big challenge. Talk more about his practice, less about pure science. It would be a consistent performance, but science is his primary source. So ...

Guest: Lindsay Seers
Host: Chloë Brown
10.02.2010

Lindsay Seers struggles to tell something when she chooses the past as a diagram. When she was young her ability to exert her memory was so unusual that she could not see a difference between her inner world and the 'real' world. As a result of this she lacked the ability to speak. She remained silent. The inner world was her realm of true dreams. At the age of seven she saw a photograph of herself, for the first time. She was then able to speak but lost her astounding memory. The loss of memory led Seers to start chasing images and capturing them. It is a kind of compensation. She uses her body as a story-teller, while she theorises her practice; the photograph is in the body, in the conscious, *physical subject-object point of view*; being a camera or a projector, looking back at her story-teller in a *performative, narrative way*, thinking of metaphysics of trees, images of anthropomorphic film photographically deformed. She tries to blur the boundaries between the viewer and the practitioner. *Who speaks, who photographs, it doesn't matter if I destroy history, distort objects, dolls, if you get lost, an image has nothing to do with the truth.* All in her a practice is theatricality, everything is set up as a scenario of her language and memory, her life.

Guest: André Stitt
Host: Hester Reeve
17.02.2010

Words fail utterly to describe André Stitt's work. A single sentence, full of sound and fury, comes out his sensitive performance: 'I saw you in the street when I was born'. In a full hour of reading, he faces his traumatic past with courage and describes, with both violence and softness sometimes in his voice, a world of family violence, alcohol, drugs, political conflicts in his native Ireland, a world of absolute solitude, and sadness. As an artist, his life is a long process of how to escape disorienting trauma. Now the phantoms of the past have disappeared little by little and it is the time of contemplation, of silence. A time of recovery and human celebration. If art is considered as a work of attention to details, then Stitt's dramatic details are dreadful, full of emotion. Powerful.

Guest: James Pyman
Host: Lesley Sanderson
24.02.2010

James Pyman's style is more like illustration of a text than a pure writing. It is simply an illusion of text, one might say. The pencil drawings, part of his art research drawn from comics, pop culture, cartoons, seem emotionless, without expression. His technique, so simple, is conditioned by a sticky memory for things, for objects. The primary sources are quite biographical, his childhood, the seventies, a huge influence. Sometimes the narrative cartoons the references are separated from their context. In his work Pyman produces coherency, a distinct

and personal style. While he struggles to please, to grab a young audience who discover the music of the seventies and the old-fashioned cartoons and comics, his own biography, as a main source, helps him find a strength with which to embrace his art.

Guest: Neville Gabie

Host: David Cotterrell

03.03.2010

Neville Gabie's work is friendship in movement, a sharing of something positive in human relationships, what we have lost. It was a moment of exhilarated viewing, as we absorbed what he brought to our attention. In his practice, he pushes the boundaries of the possible. When Gabie questions how he could give credence to his work behind images, we are quite doubtful before his inability to do it. He goes through a situation, teases out without response, and still plays for an engagement full of delight and pleasure. The process of investigating the world around him brings a sort of excitement. If the words hospitality and friendship still have a sense we should be grateful to Gabie for going so far in his experiences in order to help us see without judgement. The migrants and people of Bristol share food, sing a song, tears burst from some eyes, even from our own. We can still believe in our old and frail humanity, full of resource and surprise.

Guest: Hollington & Kyprianou

Host: Rose Butler

10.03.2010

The collaborative work produced by Hollington and Kypriano is such an exercise of humour, seriousness, and freedom, one could not stay indifferent before this mix of interrogative yet thoughtless creativity. Thoughtless and funny? They deliberately choose to stage their creation or to exhibit this way: images, display of useless objects, artefacts and war tools, etc ... When they stage an auction or when they talk about the climate change, how could this be serious enough to be trusted? The narrative is so disrupted, full of absurdity, it turns into a childish game. Such a game played by young artists whose irony, even though presented in such a funny way, is deep, critical of our consuming yet depressive society. Absurdity and irony are their powerful weapons against a post-capitalist society running to its own loss. They would certainly laugh at this serious sentence.

Guest: Sound Threshold

Host: Jaspar Joseph-Lester

17.03.2010

Daniela Cascella and Lucia Farinata explore the relation between sound, as a media, and site, landscape. Through shared background, music, literature, and experience in writing and curating visual and sound art, they produce what they call Sound Threshold. In this specific project presented during, the *Transmission*

lecture, Farinata and Cascella chose Farinata's native land of Trentino, near the Lake Garda, to investigate the *extended metaphor of boundary, frontier, border, and difference*. All began by long walk up to the top of the alpine environment where they invite people to explore this territory through an unusual way. The music played *in situ* by a band *reshapes* the mental landscape. People share their emotions, re-investing the place, and absorb sound and image. The climbing experience became an exchange of memories, personal accounts, and fragments of the past became the sound of stories on this archaeological location. The interdisciplinary collaborative project between artists, archaeologists, writers, the public, and the past, so present in this site, creates new memories. It questions how curating projects could be articulated beyond conventional contexts. The re-assembling of these different elements led people to question what they call the *relationship between art and science and its physical, social and cultural environment*. Sound Threshold tries to answer the important question of how one might transcend conventional system of representation, shatter two-dimensional ways of thinking, and combine modes of looking with those who look through.