

Portraiture in
a digital age

FACE TO FACE

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Face to Face has an exhibition catalogue, which includes an essay by the curator Kathy Cleland where she discusses the works in the exhibition and the broader ideas and concepts with which they engage. You will also find an essay by Anthony Bond in which he provides an historical context for portraiture in a digital age.

The *Face to Face* catalogue can be viewed here and downloaded as a print friendly version.

WEBSITE

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Welcome to *Face to Face*, an Asialink and d/Lux/MediaArts touring exhibition where you are invited to explore the work of fourteen Australian artists who provide a unique and engaging perspective on how digital technologies are reshaping our understanding and experience of contemporary identity.

Covering a variety of media from digital photography to video and interactive installation, you are encouraged to investigate these questions and form your own opinions.

A range of online resources to aid you in this process are available at dlux.org.au/face2face/asialink. Here you will find a specially developed education kit and comprehensive artist information, as well as insightful essays by curator Kathy Cleland and head curator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Anthony Bond who links key portraiture themes in a surprising trajectory of ideas from Rembrandt through to reflections on the self in the virtual world of Second Life.

It is an intriguing and timely exhibition for which we thank and acknowledge the artists, curator, writers and our project supporters for providing us all with an opportunity to encounter emerging forms of portraiture in this new digital age.

d/Lux/MediaArts

CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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KATHY CLELAND

The new face of portraiture in a digital age

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The human face is endlessly fascinating and it is not surprising that portraiture is one of the oldest and most popular genres in the visual arts. The story of Narcissus, who falls in love with his own image reflected in a pool, is the archetypal myth symbolising the human love affair with our own image. Like Narcissus looking at his own image in a pool of water, the portrait acts as a mirror held up to the human face. In today's media saturated environment the archetypal mirror image is only one of many technologically mediated images of the human face that are now available to us. In addition to painted portraits and drawings, over the last 150 years new imaging and media technologies such as photography, video and digital media have initiated many new ways of representing the human face as a visual image. These different media forms mirror the human face in different ways and affect in very profound ways how we see and understand ourselves. They also play an important role in creating our sense of self and self-image.

A painted portrait does not just reflect, it also creatively transforms the image of the subject. Although it could be argued that the more faithful and naturalistic the 'likeness', the more successful the painting is in evoking the human subject it depicts, the painted portrait has an extraordinary amount of flexibility as a representational form throughout history, ranging from the extreme realism of Hans Holbein to the expressive distorted portraits of Oskar Kokoschka, the fractured Cubist images of Pablo Picasso, the magic realism of Frida Kahlo, and the emotive portraits of Francis Bacon.

New media imaging technologies such as photography, film and video opened up the genre of portraiture to a much wider public, making it possible for everyone – and not just the rich and famous – to gain access to durable images of themselves and their loved ones. Like the painted portrait, the photographic image also holds up a mirror to the human face and captures a durable and lasting image of its subject. However, with this new media mirror the reflected portrait image contains an actual physical imprint of the human subject making it a far more literal mirror than its painted predecessor. The photograph combines the permanence of the painted portrait with the 'objective' imprint of reality that the mirror image provides. Early photographic images in the mid- to late-19th

century were frequently compared with the mirror image and were described as a "permanent mirror" or a "mirror with a memory"¹. New imaging technologies have had a significant impact on the genre of portraiture. The advent of photography from the mid-nineteenth century onwards added a new sense of immediacy and realism, making it possible to capture and preserve a literal 'trace image' of the human subject. The 'reality effect' of photography also meant it was quickly adopted by scientists, bureaucrats and criminologists to analyse, document and categorise human individuals and populations. In addition the moving images of film and, more recently, video enable us to see the human face and form in motion adding a new temporal dimension to the portrait image.

In the 21st century new digital media technologies have continued to change the way we think about portraiture, identity and faces. New digital imaging technologies have given artists new and more powerful tools to transform and manipulate images of the human face. New digital media and communication technologies have also opened up new arenas for audience engagement and interaction. Today portraits proliferate not just in galleries and photo albums but also on mobile phones, computers and the web. Popular image sharing sites such as YouTube and Flickr are becoming the 21st century's new public galleries where previously private images are now distributed on a global scale. In her influential 1986 article "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," American art critic Rosalind Krauss suggested that narcissism was a defining feature of early video art and video installations.² This narcissistic mirroring and exhibitionistic display of video is intensified even further in the digitally-networked global arena of the internet with its powerful capacity for display, voyeurism and surveillance.

Some of the artworks in *Face to Face* explore and critique the narcissistic longing for celebrity and the perfect face and body that is so much a part of our contemporary culture. Beauty, fame and celebrity have become an increasingly important facet of popular culture in our contemporary media-saturated culture where valorised identities are endlessly circulated for us to fantasise over and emulate. The impossibility of living up to these perfect media images and identities is poignantly and humorously captured in Rachel Scott's digital video *Hot Not*

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where the artist videos her reflection in a glass window as she dances and mimes to the soundtrack of the Pussycat Doll's hit song "Don't Cha." As Scott dances we see the uncomfortable 'gap' between fantasy and reality growing as her performance, initially confident, slowly becomes less and less convincing as she starts to measure her own reflected image against the MTV perfection of the Pussycat Dolls' singer-dancers. As she mouths the chorus refrain "Don't cha wish your girlfriend was hot like me", we see her dissatisfaction mounting as she peers at her face and critically examines the flesh of her belly, hips and thighs before giving up the 'fantasy' of the performance altogether.

A performative element is also apparent in Angelica Mesiti's video *Heroes*, but here digital special effects have been used to digitally copy and double the image of a young woman so that she performs for us alongside her reflected digital image. The young woman and her digital double are seen against a black background illuminated by jewelled beams of stage lighting and the video portrait is accompanied by the lush sounds of David Bowie's 1970s hit *Heroes*. As the young woman and her twinned image are caught in the glare of stage lighting, a virtual camera moves around her and her mirror image showing the audience multiple views and perspectives of her silent and pensive performance. The glamorous lighting and evocative music hint at a yearning for public acknowledgement and the celebrity associated with gaining one's fifteen minutes of fame – "... we can be heroes just for one day".

The desire to create an idealised media-friendly identity that improves on the reality of the physical self has been greatly facilitated by the seamless transformations made possible by digital imaging technologies where images can be tweaked and edited at will. In computer-mediated online spaces such as chat rooms, games and virtual worlds we are also seeing the emergence of a new form of digital identity – the avatar – a cartoon-like pictorial representation. The online avatar's appearance can be freely constructed to create an idealised or fantasy identity that is not limited by the specificities of the offline physical body. As Neal Stephenson, author of the cyberpunk novel *Snow Crash*, puts it:

"Your avatar can look any way you want it to up to the limitations of your

equipment. If you're ugly, you can make your avatar beautiful. If you've just gotten out of bed, your avatar can still be wearing beautiful clothes and professionally applied makeup. You can look like a gorilla or a dragon or a giant talking penis ..."³

The narcissistic lure of these digital avatars can be very seductive. In popular online virtual worlds like *Second Life*⁴ you can be whoever you want to be, or at least look like them. Modifying the visual appearance of your digital avatar is much easier and cheaper than plastic surgery and if you don't like your new look you can easily change it. These new digital screen images offer access to identities that are not limited by the specificities of the individual's physical offline self. Individuals can also maintain multiple identities or a 'wardrobe' of different identities that they can use in different games, virtual worlds and other online contexts.

Emil Goh's *MyCy* explores the world of fantasy avatar identities in South Korea's hugely popular online community Cyworld where members create and customise their own cartoon-like avatars and online environments. Goh's series of portraits highlights the commonalities and discrepancies between online and offline identities showing us the twinned images of individuals' real world selves in their actual bedrooms alongside their CyWorld avatar selves.

However, even when the digital portrait image is more recognisably human and realistic that these clearly fictitious avatar identities we can still not be entirely sure that it is what it seems. Unlike the conventional analogue photograph where 'seeing is believing', with the digital image we can no longer necessarily believe what we see. Digital media technologies can create images that are indistinguishable from conventional analogue photographs, film and video, thus calling into question the reality status of the image. We can no longer be sure that 'seeing is believing'. The digital image combines the transformational interpretive possibilities of the representational forms of drawing and painting with the visual 'reality effect' that we have become accustomed to with the indexical images of photographs, film and video. Digital images present images that look real without necessarily having any direct referent in the physical world. In the words of French theorist Jean Baudrillard, they are simulacra, "... models of a real without origin

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or reality: a hyperreal".⁵ Whether the digital image is created out of nothing – *ex nihilo* – or is the result of digital manipulation, its status as a direct copy of reality can no longer be assumed.

In the digital age, the computer-mediated screen is fast becoming our most important new media mirror reflecting a variety of different new and transformed images of the self. Unlike the traditional mirror and its photographic, cinematic and video analogues, with their straightforward reflection of what is in front of them, the reflections provided by the computer can be 'refracted' or altered to create a myriad of radically transformative effects. Artist and theorist David Rokeby describes interactive computer systems as 'transforming mirrors'. As Rokeby describes it:

"... an interactive technology is a medium through which we communicate with ourselves – a mirror. The medium not only reflects back, but also refracts what it is given; what is returned is ourselves, transformed and processed. To the degree that the technology reflects ourselves back recognizably, it provides us with a self-image, a sense of self. To the degree that the technology transforms our image in the act of reflection, it provides us with a sense of the relations between this self and the experienced world."⁶

While many of the images we see reflected on computer screens remediate or simulate realistic images of the self such as photographic or video images, as we have seen, with the digital image this direct link of image and referent may no longer apply. In the digital age, images of the self can be manipulated, transformed and mutated just as easily as any other digital image.

The digital mirror reveals the radically transformative nature of digital technologies and their ability to seamlessly blend recognisable visual elements of the viewer with computer-generated mutations and distortions. Dynamic graphical effects controlled by computer algorithms can be applied to the viewer's image in real-time to create strange new digital reflections.

The plasticity of the digital image with its ability to be endlessly manipulated and transformed is particularly suited to the exploration of contemporary postmodern notions of identity as fluid, fragmented and multiple. In David Rosetzky's digital

video *Without You* faces transform and swap identities using a digital overlay-collaging technique where sections of each face are digitally peeled away to reveal new faces beneath them. Identities are momentarily frozen before breaking down in sections and being progressively replaced by a new facial identity.

Adam Nash and Mami Yamanaka's interactive digital installation *In3Face* also reveals a series of transitions between different faces, in this case between those of a mother, father and son. Audience members can interact with and manipulate this mutable digital portrait by moving the cursor over the face so that chunky blocks of pixels randomly change and are replaced by those from one of the three faces. As the pixel blocks change, the face becomes more and more of a composite, the features mixing and merging as fragments of the three faces form new identity hybrids.

The merging of ideas of genetic inheritance and digital reproduction is also explored in Anna Munster and Michele Barker's *The Love Machine* which was inspired by the artists' experience with digital photographic booths in Asia in the late 1990s. In these booths couples could create 'baby' images that combined the images of both 'parents' along with digital modifications chosen from a variety of different gender, racial and facial feature presets which allow the 'parents' to create images of their chosen 'designer children'. The composite photos shown in *The Love Machine* highlight the playful yet disturbing possibilities of what could happen if genetic identity and biological reproduction could be manipulated and transformed as easily as we can now transform and reproduce digital images.

The ease with which the digital image can be transformed via computer algorithms can also be seen in the digital morph. The magical shape-shifting of the digital morph allows images to seamlessly transform from face to face and morphing visually represents a process of change and becoming rather than fixed and stable identity. The everyday transformation of faces that occurs as a result of processes such as aging, cosmetic changes (makeup and hairstyle) and the more radical changes that have become possible through plastic surgery enter a new realm with the digital morph which shows impossible transformations between gender, race, age and even species. Digital composites show the averaging or

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merging of different images in one still image. Just as with the morph, difference is eerily elided and erased as an average 'universal' or composite image emerges. The uncanniness of the morph and the composite image derives from the tension between our knowledge that the transformation we are witnessing is 'impossible' even as we are visually and imaginatively convinced by its compellingly real appearance.

In Denis Beaubois' video work *Constant* we see a photo-realistic video image of a human face which slowly and fluidly morphs into different faces, changing age and race as it does so. The morph is so slow that the facial changes are barely perceptible from moment to moment but reveal profound changes over longer time periods. A number of source faces were used in the construction of *Constant* but it is impossible to tell which of the faces that emerge through the digital morph correspond to the 'real' faces and which are the 'virtual' in-betweens. The morph produces an endless series of 'in-between' identities as the morph transitions between the key reference images. While the key reference images may have direct referents in the real world, these in-between identities are pure digital fictions. Self and other, different races and ages all liquefy, as different faces slowly emerge from and subside into the image flux of the morph:

"As our physical double, the morph interrogates the dominant philosophies and fantasies that fix our embodied human being and constitute our identities as discrete and thus reminds us of our true instability: our physical flux, our lack of self-coincidence, our subatomic as well as subcutaneous existence that is always in motion and ever changing."⁷

In these digital images we can also see resonances with some of the very earliest experiments in photography such as the early photographic composites of Francis Galton and Arthur Batut where they blended the faces of different photographic portraits to create ghostly composite images. Other digital imaging techniques follow in the trajectory of Eadweard Muybridge's and Étienne-Jules Marey's proto-cinematic time and motion studies in the late-nineteenth century which showed multiple frozen frames of human and animal movement.

In *time and motion study*, John Tonkin incorporates images of audience members by using a camera to capture a series of still image frames that are then projected as a dynamic visual timeline creating animated audience self-portraits. These animated self portraits are stored by the work so that gallery visitors can scroll back in time through their own images as well as those of earlier visitors. Tonkin's work has resonances not only with the proto-cinematic work of Muybridge and Marey but also with Marcel Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase," 1912, the dynamic painted images of the Futurists such as Balla's "Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash," 1912, and early music videos such as Amii Stewart's "Knock on Wood" and the Jackson 5's "Don't Stop 'til you get Enough".

Daniel Crook's series of digital portraits uses a technique of temporal and spatial 'slicing' and manipulation to reveal different spatio-temporal views of his portrait subjects in a still digital image. Reminiscent of both Cubist painting and photomontage, with their fractured and multi-perspectival aesthetic, Crook's work digitally slices and samples his subjects to reveal multiple spatial and temporal perspectives within a single image frame. We see different temporal moments spatially represented as slices juxtaposed together.

Digital editing, animation and artificial intelligence have also created the possibility for new forms of animated talking portraits. Unlike conventional portrait images that just sit on the wall, these portraits can 'talk back' to the audience. Anna Davis and Jason Gee's *Biohead Actualized* uses a digitally-generated persona to engage the audience in an unprovoked conversation. Using a mashup of digitally animated images of ventriloquist dolls along with 'found' snippets of self-help dialogue, the artists literally put words into the mouths of their digitised creations, manipulating and animating their facial expressions to create humorous and uncanny animated personas. As audience members approach, these uncanny talking heads reveal their personal problems and insist on giving gallery visitors an unending diatribe of unsolicited advice.

While the conversational remarks of the ventriloquist dolls in *Biohead Actualized* are one-sided (the dolls cannot hear or respond to audience comments), Stelarc's *Prosthetic Head* takes the idea of an animated conversational portrait a step further

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to create a genuine two-sided interaction with the audience. The *Prosthetic Head* is a giant projection of a three-dimensional digitally rendered and animated self portrait of the artist. Using embodied conversational agent (ECA) software based on Richard Wallace's alicebot software⁸ the head can communicate in real-time, drawing intelligently on its extensive database of responses to personalise its interactions with audience members. Stelarc's *Prosthetic Head* operates as a digital alter ego or prosthetic identity and is programmed with the artist's own autobiographical information including a range of his life experiences and philosophical ideas. In the gallery installation, the head is projected in a darkened space with a keyboard positioned on a plinth so that members of the audience can type their questions. The head's voice is generated by a text-to-speech synthesiser, its inhuman inflections giving the giant head's responses a somewhat alien and unsettling quality which is intensified by the uncanniness of many of its animated facial expressions.

As can be seen in the different artworks in the *Face to Face* exhibition, digital technologies have revolutionised the genre of portraiture enabling new forms of representation, distribution and interaction. From digital prints to single channel digital video and interactive installations the artists in *Face to Face* show us new ways of seeing and thinking about portraiture and the human face. These artworks hold up a mirror to contemporary culture and society showing us a portrait of ourselves in the 21st century. In these portraits we see our contemporary narcissistic obsession with celebrity, youth and beauty, the astounding fluidity of digital image manipulation and transformation, our fascination with the power of science and digital technologies to analyse and transform the human image, and an emerging predilection for the creation of digital alter egos and fantasy identities.

When we look into today's new digital mirrors, the selves we see are frequently shaped and enhanced by digital technologies. These new digital portrait images constitute far more profoundly illusory and malleable identities than the images reflected by of our previous media mirrors. As Frank Biocca comments:

"In the twentieth century we have made a successful transition from the sooty iron surfaces of the industrial revolution to the liquid smooth surfaces of computer graphics. On our computer monitors we may be just beginning to see

a reflective surface that looks increasingly like a mirror. In the virtual world that exists on the other side of the mirror's surface we can just barely make out the form of a body that looks like us, like another self. Like Narcissus looking into the pond, we are captured by the experience of this reflection of our bodies. But that reflected body looks increasingly like a cyborg."⁹

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Being before and beyond the frame

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In many ways possessing a portrait of someone has been considered a position of power, we are able to gaze at their image with no risk of being caught staring. By the same token we will never receive a flicker of recognition in return, nor have any possibility of contact. In fact the longer we gaze the more the image reveals itself to be just that, colour on a surface or electromagnetic discharges on a screen. Many artists have been acutely aware of this and sought to shift the register of their image from voyeurism to empathy. There are a number of ways of doing this, in the western painting tradition from Velasquez through Courbet to Freud and even Richter. The artist makes a kind of painterly equivalent of the sensation of the subject in which the medium and process by which the subject is conveyed is emphasised. In order to experience this sensation the viewer is required to reconstitute the medium as image internally. In this way a transformation of material to image occurs in the body of the viewer enhancing the emotional impact of the image. Alternatively the artist might construct the image in such a way as to make us acutely aware of our own position before the image and of the nature of our looking. Both these strategies produce a kind of interactivity which may translate into a feeling of identification with the subject. These strategies occur throughout *Face to Face* albeit in new technologies.

The invitation to contribute to this exhibition catalogue *Face to Face* came as a welcome excuse to revisit a particular interest of mine. In 2005/6 I curated an exhibition *Self portraits: Renaissance to contemporary*. The self portrait is a very particular kind of portrait that can reveal a lot about the fictions involved in the process of representation including the set up in the studio. I found that many of the ideas expressed in these portraits were surprisingly consistent over the 500 years covered by the exhibition. Many of them explored the complex nature of the mirror by playing tricks within the construction of the image to manipulate the position of the viewer before the canvas. As early as the 16th century the possibility of interactivity was at work in 'portraits of the artist seen in the mirror'.¹ Looking through the artists in this exhibition I can see fascinating parallels between early modern portraits and current strategies albeit in very different media. In 2005 I wrote:

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“...noticing the fiction of the displacement of the mirror by the framed painting engenders self-consciousness about the identification which occurs between the viewer and the painter. By physically and visually ‘occupying the place’ of the artist, viewers can imagine themselves to exceed the boundary between self and other, between personal, interiorised, embodied experience and the knowledge of others (and ourselves) gained through our apprehension of the way they (and we) look from the outside. The eyes that ‘meet’ in the mirror/canvas seem to brush the different subjectivities of artist and spectator against one another.”²

My initial idea was simply to show the empathy engendered by some self portraits. The idea arose as a result of existential confusion between canvas and mirror while I was looking at a late Rembrandt. I found myself standing for rather longer than usual in front of Rembrandt’s mature self portrait in Kenwood House in London. I experienced an unusual degree of identification with Rembrandt’s likeness. It was very much like looking in the mirror and seeing yourself reflected except of course I look nothing like Rembrandt. It may have been that I fell for that maligned idea of the internal world that we are supposed to be able to read in the exemplary portrait.

So what was I seeing in the Rembrandt? It was not easy to withdraw from what was a very empathetic and immersive experience to try and describe what was going on objectively. I called it a mature portrait; it is in fact an image of an ageing man just as the mirror I seemed to be facing would reveal me to be. So maybe to a younger person I do look a bit like Rembrandt or at least we share some objective features such as wrinkles, slightly red eyes, double chin and so on. But none of that comes close to explaining the intensity of self recognition I was experiencing. Maybe it was the expression around the mouth and eyes that seemed so intimately to resonate with my own interior world. This was an empathy that had little to do with the externally mirrored body and everything to do with the feeling that what I was seeing was a reflection of interiority. I am perfectly prepared to concede that this could have been a personal projection or hallucination; I am just describing the surprisingly disconcerting experience as I felt it at the time.

Rembrandt was responsible for setting me up for this transference, in some way

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the work was a template for self reflection and not just the likeness of a stranger. The image shows a man who could be a touch immodest; he worked hard, made a lot of pretty good art and was on the whole respected when he was not in the divorce or debtors courts. We know this from history but it is also clear from the painting I was looking at which is demonstrably a master work. The artist has drawn two ellipses in the background that seem to be a demonstration of his draughtsmanship rather like the hand drawn circle Giotto is said to have sent his patron as proof of his talent. Although the surroundings are only sketched in we sense that it is a solid home and although he is dressed for the studio he none the less appears as a person of substance in his fur coat and academic styled cap. Looking into the real mirror he had set up in the studio he must have seen all this. In his life time he painted and drew a great many self portraits and tronnies (portraits using your own face to establish character for your repertoire) so he had plenty of opportunity to reflect on some of these effects.

There was something in the expression that worked against this vision of the master's stature. While he shows no doubt about his status as an artist there is something like resignation about the mouth, a suppressed smile about the eyes, it is a thoughtful even slightly wistful face. He seemed to be thinking "how did I get into all this, what am I really doing here" it is a timeless even monumental image and yet within it there is a tiny flicker of self doubt fleetingly captured and conveyed across 400 years. I fear this has not been an objective description after all but maybe that is one of the best things about looking at art, we all bring our own experiences to our reading of the image. When we look into an image it is always in a sense a mirror in which we discover things about ourselves. In this exhibition Rachel Scott's painful enactment of self discovery captures a similar confrontation. It may be a feminist statement about self image but it is an all too human realisation that can make a viewer of any gender empathise with the embarrassment of self recognition.

Although self portraits can be particularly empathetic, all portraits have the potential to play with our awareness of looking at others and in particular to doubling and fragmenting the self. Angelica Mesiti for example makes double

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portraits of a very particular type of young woman which we may read as twins or simply the same woman at different moments. There is a performative element to this structure which has parallels in early modern portraits. Digital images such as those in *Face to Face* are hugely manipulable; with the right software and enough imagination anything can be twisted, doubled, morphed or subtly altered to become uncanny. It seems on the surface of things to mark a radical shift in artistic expression but I do not think that this is fundamentally different from the many kinds of manipulation employed throughout the history of portraiture. Several artists in this exhibition use software to morph several identities, for example Adam Nash pixellating mother, father and son into a composite identity which is interactive and can be morphed and re-morphed by the viewer. David Rosetzky has done a manual collaged superimposition of identities then animated them digitally while Anna Munster and Michele Barker use a programme developed by Japanese markets to morph parents to provide customers with an image of what a child of their union might look like.

Artists have always played with spatial/temporal coordinates and viewing positions making the viewer an active participant in the resolution of the image. Manipulating appearances has always been at the centre of this process. In self portraits the mirror comes into play and even when the glass is flat and seemingly returning a perfect likeness the image is flipped causing some people considerable confusion. After writing an article in Art and Australia where I asserted that the self portrait gives us back an image of another that is in the same orientation as our own mirror image, I found myself in a long and fascinating philosophical exchange with Donald Brook. I had suggested that the mirror was aligned with reality while a person met face to face was back to front. By this I meant that when we look in the mirror our right hand lines up with the reflected right hand, if we reach out to touch the mirror the fingers of our mirror image touch our own. When we face another we always have to reach across diagonally to find their right hand which aligns with our left. Incidentally the mirroring of the hands is what allows for their comfortable embrace face to face as it were.

We never see another as we see ourselves in the mirror except in the self portrait

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and potentially this is one way in which we identify with the image more intensely. Donald was of course right, when we face someone they only seem reversed because they are rotated through 180 degrees, naturally right then faces left. The mirror image is the one that lies because we see ourselves as if facing, i.e. rotated 180 degrees, and yet the alignment is direct. This is very handy when you comb your hair each day and we tend to become attuned to thinking of the mirror image as normal. Artists have had a lot of fun playing with mirrors; Artemisia Gentileschi was believed to have used several of them to allow her to paint herself from three quarters rear view. Charlie Toorop on the other hand stared directly into the mirror and painted exactly what she saw. The canvas then becomes perfectly contiguous with the mirror. The effect of that is actually hilarious since Toorop has painted an image of herself reaching out with a brush pointed directly at us as we gaze into the image of her in the mirror. Of course this figure reveals the lie of the painted mirror. The artist always has to look away from the mirror in order to be able to paint so at best she is painting her memory of what she saw moments before. If she literally painted what she saw she would in fact have smeared paint on the mirror obscuring her own image.

Richard Hamilton played with this in a complex series of self images entitled *Four Self-Portraits – 05.3.81*, this is a typically complex but playful work. It deconstructs the mystique of painting and originality in exchange for a very Duchampian visual conundrum. Hamilton has photographed himself from four slightly different angles in each of the four panels, suggesting the multiple viewpoints of Cubism. He then re-photographed these images through sheets of glass onto which he painted gestural marks. The visual effect of this is very similar to *Mystère*, Cluzot's film about Picasso made in 1956, in which Picasso is filmed painting onto a sheet of glass from behind the glass. Hans Namuth also adopted this technique for his film of Jackson Pollock at work. Thus Hamilton uses a formulation for his own self portrait to suggest a link with two of the heroes of Modernist art.

The history of art is rich in examples of this sort including the experiments of Peter Campus with reflection and double exposure in the 1970s or Joan Jonas' play with mirrors and video about the same time. Michelangelo Pistoletto in the

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1960s also made us realize that a mirror in an art work renews the piece as each new viewer stands before it. Ian Burn also noted this and exaggerated the effect when he photographed his own mirror pieces by allowing himself, with camera, to be captured in the frame thus simultaneously unmasking the process of the mechanical eye. This entails a temporal disjunction and a fragmentation of the self. Marcel Duchamp arranged a photographic meeting of multiple images of himself sitting around a table as early as 1917. One of the most startling video doublings and disintegrations was enacted by Campus in *Three Transitions* 1973. He videoed himself cutting through a canvas from the back in the manner of Lucio Fontana but instead of a monochrome surface an image of his back was projected onto the front of the canvas. The resulting image was of his hand and then his whole body pushing through an expanding slash in his own back as if turning himself inside out.

William Kentridge has played with this kind of fragmentation of self in many of his works and most dramatically in a rare performance he made for the Biennale of Sydney in June 2008. In this performance he talked about Gogol's short story *The Nose* in which the hero of the story wakes to find his nose is missing. It is a bizarre story for the early 19th century. This middle ranking public servant sets out to try and recover his nose, eventually he sees it in the distance dressed in the uniform of a senior officer. In spite of the terror imposed by the hierarchy in the Tsar's public service he approaches his nose to have him return to his rightful place. The nose refuses to recognize him and claims absolute autonomy not to mention seniority. The performance moves through other literary and philosophical references ending up with the terror of life under Stalin. It is not just physical mirrors that disrupt the self, society can have similar disorienting and alienating effects as it reflects us back to ourselves in unrecognizable ways. Kentridge's own life under the Apartheid regime in South Africa must have been just such an alienating experience.

In this live performance Kentridge deployed projections of himself making drawings with which he interacted, bridging the world of screen and real time. This seemed to be a reconstruction of his own creative process in which autobiographical

ANTHONY BOND

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narratives not only double the self but question the limits and confines of the experiencing body. In his filmed sequences of drawings and erasures things multiply and disintegrate in front of our eyes only to be drawn together again by the artist. The structure of his imaging opened up a process that seems to allow us to sense something of the complexity of selfhood and being in the world. In a way by evoking this kind of disintegration from within Kentridge provides a homeopathic remedy for the externalized disintegration caused by totalitarian regimes.

It is fascinating to realize however that these strategies for destabilizing both the perceived singularity of the subject and the viewer are a product of neither modernism nor post modernism, this is a far older strategy in art. For example in 1646 Johannes Gump painted himself painting his own likeness.³ The artist is seen from the back, standing in the same plane as the spectator. The mirror is shown to his left and the painting he is working on hangs on the right. The Gump is also notable for the way it engages the viewer in a paradoxical hierarchy of representations of the real. Almost half the painting is occupied by the back view of the artist working in the studio; his black cloak forms a large triangular area in the lower centre of the composition, as if it were a void at the bottom margin of the painting. It also acts as an arrow to point up the composition to where the action takes place. By making his own body our point of entry to the composition Johannes Gump underlines the role of the spectator as second beholder, standing in the place of the artist, the first beholder.

There is a subtle progression in the three images of Gump presented here. The cloaked figure is the largest, yet it is virtually an unrelieved black space. To the left is Gump's reflection in the mirror, facing the artist we only see from the back. However, the artist does not face the mirror; he turns to look at the painting which hangs on the right, a little lower than the mirror. The mirror image thus represents a separate moment in time or his memory of what he saw before he turned back to the canvas. The painted portrait is just a little brighter and more present than the mirrored image, and, although it supposedly represents the same face captured at the same moment, instead of looking back at the artist it completes the cycle by looking over his creator's shoulder at the spectator.

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The figure of the artist at work, the one seemingly closest to the space and time to the viewer must have been painted from imagination unless he had a very complicated set of mirrors in the studio, which may partly explain why paradoxically it is the least defined of the three. The mirror, presumably a memory in the representation, is slightly shaded; the painted portrait that is the focus of the artist's gaze is the brightest of the three. Thus we have a clever representation of various states of consciousness: imagination, memory and immanent perception that reverses the natural order of events in which the active artist looks into a mirror and only then turns to the painting.

I would contend that turning representation around and revealing its conceits and marvels is a fundamental and continuing aspect of art regardless of medium and historical period. Art is after all an exploration of what we are and how we know what we are and occasionally what we might like to pretend we are. In *Face to Face* the empathetic connection between viewer and the self portrait I started describing in front of a Rembrandt returns in an exacerbated way with Stelarc's *Prosthetic Head*. The viewer can ask the portrait questions via a keyboard but the head speaks back its answers by drawing on an ever growing repertoire of information that grows in response to its dialogues. The first time I "spoke" with this presence I brought it to a halt by asking personal questions about Cyprus, the artist's country of origin. It almost seemed miffed at the line of questioning. The technology is very different from Rembrandt's but the illusion of contact with a displaced other identity is very similar.

While I have been seeking continuities across centuries it has to be acknowledged that the new technologies present very different viewing experiences. It is probably the exchange between artist and viewer and the strategies artists have always used to make us aware of our own responsibility in completing this exchange that remains the same. John Tonkin's Muybridge like images are similar to works using mirrors in that they return the image of our own body in motion. Like artists in the Baroque, most particularly Velasquez whose animated paint forces us to duck and weave before the image, the artist is asking us to perform before the work to animate the work in much the same way as I discussed above in regard to

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Pistoletto and Ian Burn. Daniel Crooks' slippages in space/time look nothing like Johannes Gump's manipulation of our presumed place before the canvas and yet there is the same desire to move our attention and challenge our assumptions about truth and representation. It is true of Gump and Crooks and I would contend this is the most basic responsibility of all art.

Notes:

1. The term 'self portrait' was not used until later when the enlightenment gave a higher status to the individual and emerging ideas of selfhood.
2. Anthony Bond and Joanna Woodall preface to the catalogue *Self Portrait: Renaissance to contemporary*, 2005-6, National Portrait Gallery London and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.
3. The description of Johannes Gump is based on my catalogue essay from the catalogue *Self Portrait: Renaissance to contemporary*, 2005-6 National Portrait Gallery London and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

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Portraiture in
a digital age

FACE
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MICHELE BARKER AND ANNA MUNSTER

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The Love Machine II, 2003

Digital prints on aluminium
3 images: 62.72cm x 74.1cm
2 images: 60cm x 135cm
1 image: 249.58cm x 15.1cm
(*The Love Machine* exhibited 1998, 2003)

MICHELE BARKER AND ANNA MUNSTER

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Artists' statement

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The Love Machine II looks at a new variety of exhibited object produced by the play of digital imaging – the morpheme. The morpheme represents the hybridity between technology and flesh, which computer imaging makes possible. It is also representative of a tension located within the logic of digital technology itself. This develops between the hierarchical, orderly processing and storing of data in the computer on the one hand, and the chaos and confusion of information which deletes itself, mutates and transforms, on the other.

The idea for *The Love Machine II* was developed from rethinking a kind of photographic booth first in use throughout Asia in the late 1990s. These booths use software to capture portraits of individual sitters and then output a 'baby' image combining the features of the original two images in conjunction with racial and gender presets. Thus the original context of this booth could be seen as literally digital 'reproduction'. Rather than one subject, it requires a couple, in fact the couple. Its Japanese manufacturers, while obviously cashing in on the novelty value, nevertheless list as an advantage its ability to let the couple 'see' what their progeny would be like for future matrimonial selection based on a suitable aesthetic.

Reworking the aesthetic, technological and cultural ramifications of this process, the artists produce an image installation of a series of portraits. The final work is presented in a 'booth-like' atmosphere with originally passport size photos scaled up to overwhelm and envelop the viewer. The installation incorporates five still images, which display detailed enlargements of images taken from the actual booths. The poor quality of the images becomes obvious when they are viewed on an enlarged scale, and the artists deliberately play with this 'poor quality' against the promise of perfection through choice that the original booth seems to offer. These images are magnifications, even explosions, of the social archetypes embedded in the process of this form of image taking: that is, 'the couple', 'the perfect child', and 'the genetic mutation'.

Biographies

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Michele Barker

Born 1969 Australia
Lives & works Sydney

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Michele Barker works in the field of new media arts, exhibiting nationally and internationally. Her work addresses issues of perception, subjectivity, genetics and neuroscience.

Works include the CD-ROM, *Præternatural*, selected for exhibition in 'Vidarte', the Mexican Biennale of Electronic Art, 2002 and 'Contact Zones' a touring exhibition of CD-ROM art in 2001. The work is now in held in the Rose Goldsen Archive of New Media Art, Cornell University.

Barker's present research involves multiple points of view for user-interaction using multi-channel projections and immersive environments. In 2004, she held an Artist-in Residency at *Eyebeam* New York. She developed a multi-channel work, *Struck*, which was awarded the acquisitive 'Harries' Digital Art Award in 2006. The work has been exhibited in Australia, the US and China. Barker's research has been presented at major international conferences including 'Future Bodies', Cologne, 'Vidarte' Mexico and 'New Constellations: Art and Science'. Barker is a lecturer at University of New South Wales, Australia.

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Anna Munster

Born 1963 Sydney
Lives & works Sydney

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Anna Munster is an artist, writer and educator. She collaborates with Michele Barker on new media and installation work and has exhibited at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and in Japan, USA and Europe. She has published the book *Materializing New Media* (2006) on new media and art. Munster is a senior lecturer in the School of Art History and Theory, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Australia.

<http://wundernet.cofa.unsw.edu.au/>

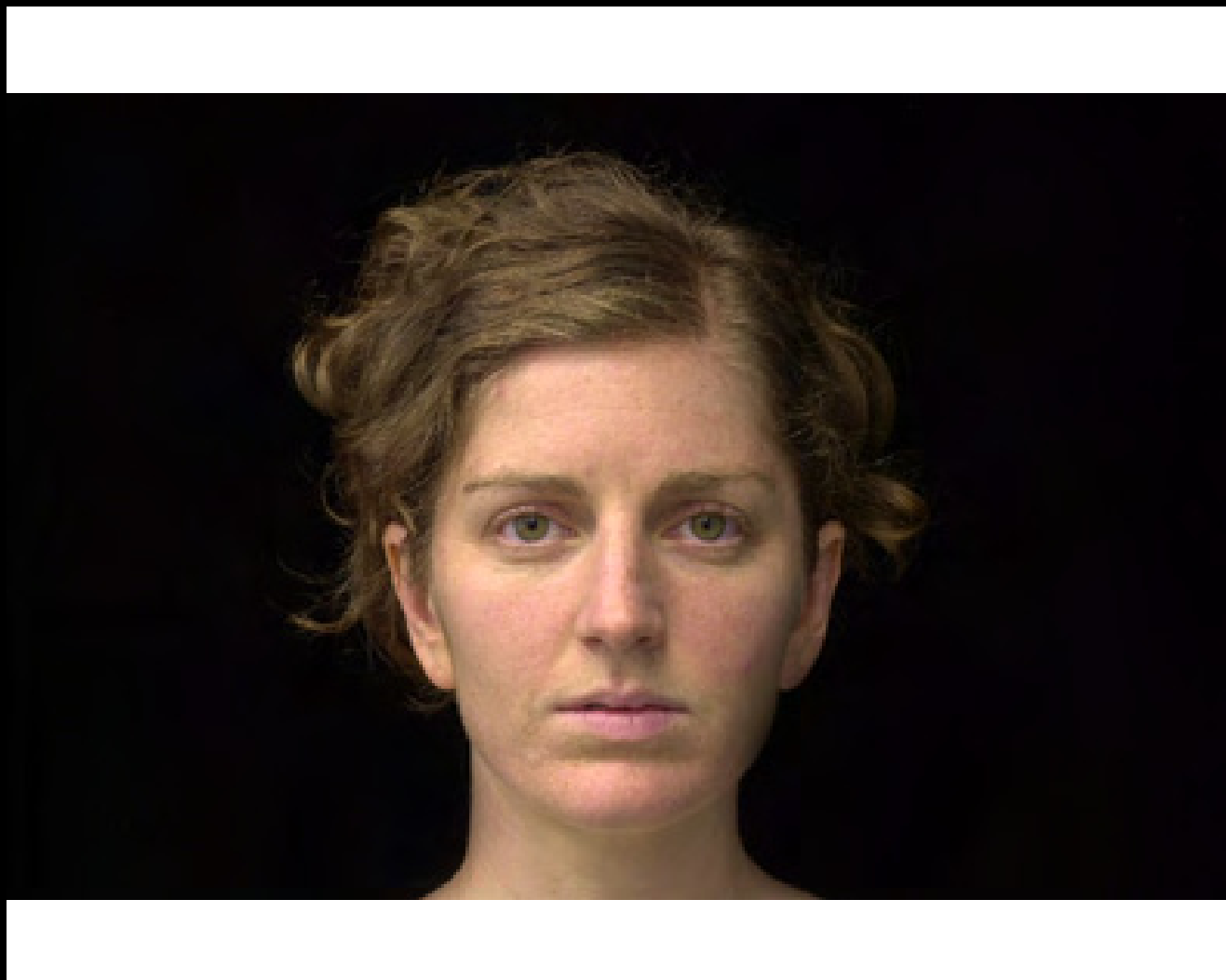
Portraiture in
a digital age

**FACE
TO
FACE**

DENIS BEAUBOIS

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Constant, 2004

Single channel digital video
Duration: 08:40

DENIS BEAUBOIS

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Artist's statement

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The subject in *Constant* engages us by staring at the camera, the gaze is fixed and un-blinking. As we watch, we witness the creation of 13,000 new faces yet this slips by us virtually unnoticed.

The work came from my interpretation of conversations held with Dr Richard Kemp and Helen Patterson from the Forensic Psychology Department at the University of New South Wales. The aim of the project was to study the problem of wrongful imprisonment, through inaccurate selection of suspects in a line up environment. Within such situations there is strong pressure on the witness to identify the SUSPECT – that is the person the police THINK is guilty – whilst they may not be so. Studies have shown that we tend to be better at recognising members of our own racial group and will often confuse members of other racial groups. This makes suspect recognition problematic in crimes where the witness /victim is of a different race to the perpetrator. This pressure for resolution can lead to cases of wrongful imprisonment, particularly in situations where the perpetrator is of a different racial background to that of the victim. The morphing process provides fluidity in the displaying of potential suspects.

There was a fascination in creating a work that was influenced by the spectre of guilt and recognition as a process leading to incrimination. It subtly plays with the conventions of portraiture and its reference to captivity.

Constant, through its subtle perpetual transformation, ultimately demands an analytical observation from the viewer.

In doing so it is the viewer who becomes the constant presence before a linear, singular crowd of 13,000 fleeting identities, hence it is the viewer who becomes momentarily and symbolically captured.

Credits

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The residency was funded by the New Media Arts board of the Australia Council for the Arts. Thank you to: Dr Richard Kemp, Helen Patterson and the Forensic Psychology Department at the University of New South Wales. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



Biography

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Born 1970 MOKA Mauritius
Lives & works Sydney

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Beaubois' works have been exhibited internationally, most notably winning the 1998 Bonn Videonale (Germany), and receiving the Judges special prize for the Mediunkunst preis 2001, ZKM (Germany). Recently his work has been exhibited at SCAPE 2006 Biennial of Art in Public Space, New Zealand, *Glass Kulture* Koldo Mitxelena in San Sebastian, Spain, Youkobo Art Space Tokyo, Rencontres internationale Paris Berlin, The Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei and Wood St Galleries, Pittsburgh USA.

He was a member of performance ensemble *Gravity Feed* and the *Post Arrivals* and has also performed with *Gekidan Kaitaisha* in the Drifting View X in Tokyo.

He is completing an MFA in Time based Arts at COFA, where he also lectures casually.

Portraiture in
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FACE TO FACE

DANIEL CROOKS

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***Portrait #1 (Self),
Portrait #2 (Chris),
Portrait #3 (Chris), 2007***
Digital prints 101 cm x 101 cm

Left: ***Portrait #2 (Chris), 2007***

DANIEL CROOKS

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Artist's statement

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With these portraits I'm attempting to make large detailed images of people in their own surroundings, images of people very much in and of their time that are both intriguing and beautiful. As with a lot of my work the portraits also seek to render the experience of time in a more tangible material form, blurring the line between still and moving images and looking to new post-camera models of spatiotemporal representation.

Biography

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Born 1973 Hastings, NZ
Lives & works Melbourne
Represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery
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Daniel Crooks was born in Hastings, New Zealand in 1973 and graduated from the Auckland Institute of Technology before moving to Australia to undertake postgraduate study at the Victorian College of the Arts. He currently lives in Melbourne with his family and divides his time between art-making and his work as motion graphics designer at ACMI (Australian Centre for the Moving Image). He has had solo exhibitions at Sherman Galleries Sydney, the Art Gallery of New South Wales Sydney, REMO in Osaka Japan, the International Festival of Digital Arts and Media in Sheffield, UK, the Centre for Contemporary Photography Melbourne, and the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Among the many group shows he has appeared in are the Anne Landa Award, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2007), World Without End, ACMI (2005), The Computational Sublime at the University of Southern California, CA (2005), Drift at Perth Centre for Contemporary Art (2004), and Primavera 2003 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2003). He has received the Australia Council London Studio Residency in 2005, a Guest Residency at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam in 2004, and numerous awards including the City of Stuttgart Prize for Animation and a Dendy Australian Short Film Award, both in 1996. His work has featured recently in magazines including *Art and Australia* and *Artlink* and he is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery.

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ANNA DAVIS AND JASON GEE

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Biohead Actualized, 2008

Single channel digital video loop
(Constructed from re-animated
digital photos of ventriloquist dolls
and 'found' vocal sounds),
Duration: 10:00

ANNA DAVIS AND JASON GEE

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Artists' statement

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In *Biohead Actualized* a digital ventriloquist doll regurgitates the language of contemporary self-help strategies, the actualisation movement (EST), psychotherapy and new age personality auditing. Engaging in an uneasy conversation with the audience, the doll answers very personal questions about its emotional state and continually gives unqualified advice. In the tradition of the ventriloquist show the Biohead offers a façade of humanness that transfers hidden agendas and speaks the unspeakable. Confused, wounded and neurotically manifested the biohead is a by-product and mouthpiece for a society infatuated with 'the cult of the self'.

Biographies

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Anna Davis

Born Sydney 1974

Jason Gee

Born Darwin 1965

Lives & works Sydney

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Anna Davis and Jason Gee are media artists who have been working together for the past six years. Their collaborative, audiovisual practice uses sampling, video scratch techniques, projection and cut-up to agitate the media environment. Collecting and manipulating fragments from film, television, computer games and the Internet, they scavenge the debris of popular culture to create absurdist mashups and video collages exploring disturbing patterns and humour underlying the everyday. Various works from the artists' *Biohead* series were exhibited recently in the group show *Mirror States* (2008) at the Campbelltown Arts Centre, as well as being screened at the Sydney Festival and The Museum of Contemporary Art's Summer at Night sessions. Their video works also screen regularly at The Big Day Out music festival and many of Sydney's underground electronic music events. The artists' both have solo practices and have exhibited at venues including: The Art Galley of NSW, Fremantle Arts Centre, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, The ICC – Inter Communication Centre Japan, The Ujazdowski Centre for Contemporary Art Poland, and numerous media art festivals worldwide including: Electrofringe, VideoBrasil, Viper, Videochroniques, Videoforms and The Split Festival of New Film.

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FACE
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EMIL
GOH

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emilgoh / Emil Goh, 2006
MD03 / Min Ji Cho, 2005
i_triangle / Kwang Hoon
Hyun, 2005

MyCy series
Digital prints 110 cm x 110 cm

Left: *MD03 / Min Ji Cho, 2005*

EMIL GOH

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Artist's statement

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"My entire childhood was spent moving all over Malaysia when my father was transferred for work. It was kinda fun growing up in so many different houses. As a result, I've been fascinated how people live ever since.

In 2000, I made my first work involving domestic spaces. Between comprised of a series of 360° video panoramas. The rotating miniDV camera was perched on window sills so you could see a 180° view of the inside of a room and the view outside. Since then there's been two others in the series, one in Hong Kong and the last one in Seoul. The first one, made in London, is a single channel projection work and the Seoul version is a diptych video projection, so the image is effectively doubled in width.

The MyCy series was started after discovering it was a major form of communication between most urban Koreans in their 20's. It's popularity is no surprise after one discovers how sophisticated it is yet so user friendly. Coupled with the fact that super high speed broadband is the norm here and there's a dollar-an-hour Internet café on just about every corner, updating your Minihompy (mini homepage) everyday is de rigueur.

What makes it so interesting is the miniroom, one of the main features of a Cyworld minihompy. It's a blank room a user can decorate so in essence it becomes their online 'living room' or any other type of space they desire. On the surface, it seems trivial, but it's a reflection of life in Seoul as a young person. Most live with their parents till they get married and the home in general is exclusively for the family, not a place for socializing. So the miniroom is the public manifestation of one's perfect "private" space.

Hence my fascination for domestic living situations has extended to their online versions and the pairing allows me to explore both landscapes."

Emil Goh, 2008

Biography

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Born Johor Bahru, Malaysia
Lived & worked Seoul & Sydney
Represented by VWFA Gallery, Kuala Lumpur

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Emil Goh (1966-2009) was an Australian artist of Malaysian Chinese descent who was based in Seoul. As he child, his family moved constantly and as a result, his childhood was spent in various parts of the Malaysian peninsular & Singapore before completing his education in Australia & England. He developed an interest in urban phenomenon and was fascinated with people's relationships with technology, design & inhabiting highly dense cities. His projects included simultaneous screenings of films & their international remakes (*Remake*, Busan Biennale, South Korea 2004), relationship bonding fashion (*Couplelook*, Sherman Gallery, Sydney 2004), urban guides (*Umbrella Taxi*, Charlottenborg Udstillingsbygning, Copenhagen 2005) & precycling (*Grocery Bag Today...* SSamzie Gallery, Seoul 2007).

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**FACE
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ANGELICA MESITI

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Heroes, 2002

Single channel digital video
Duration: 05:00

ANGELICA MESITI

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Artist's statement

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Heroes is a series of video portraits of five young women set to a slowed down interpretation of David Bowie's song *Heroes*.

Reminiscent of a kind of commercial photographic portraiture that brings to mind the debutant or the talent quest contestant, the five women present have similarities in their appearance that connects them to a certain type.

Each with long brown hair and dressed identically in a red t-shirt, the headshots of the individuals are presented as double exposures. The effect depicts the woman, with her complimentary double, in the same frame. The pair are frozen, staring at a point beyond the viewer, backlit with a beatific purple glow.

In this video the artist recorded the subject posing for five minutes without moving. The last minute of the pose was used in the edit, at which point the subject had relaxed from their initial nervousness and eased into what appears as a kind of reverie.

Biography

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Born Sydney 1976
Lives & works Sydney
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Angelica Mesiti is a video, performance and installation artist based in Sydney. Her works take everyday environments and attempts to discover their unseen potential through displaced activities like performance, dance, costume and music. She was a founding member of the Sydney artists run Gallery Imperial Slacks during which time she curated the two part video publication *Serial 7's*. She has held solo shows at Mori Gallery (2003) and Rubyare Gallery (2004) and her work has been shown in Australia and overseas including; *O.K Video Festival* (2005), National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta, *Game On* (2006) for the Next Wave festival, Gertrude St Contemporary Art Space, Melbourne and the touring show *PLAY: Portraiture and Performance in Recent Video Art from Australia and New Zealand*, (2006) shown at The Performance Space Sydney, Adam Art Gallery New Zealand and Perth Institute of Contemporary Art. She has been employed by the College of Fine Arts as a casual lecturer in the Time Based Art department since 2001.

Mesiti is also a member of the collaborative group The Kingpins, who have exhibited and performed in museums nationally and overseas including the Liverpool Biennial 2006 – UK, The Palais de Tokyo and Nuit Blanche-Paris 2006, Contemporary Art Centre – Vilnius, Lithuania and Zacheta National Gallery of Art – Warsaw 2006, *Transmodern Age Festival*, Maryland, Baltimore USA 2006, South Korea, 2004 *Taipei Biennale*, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Super Delux Tokyo 2004.

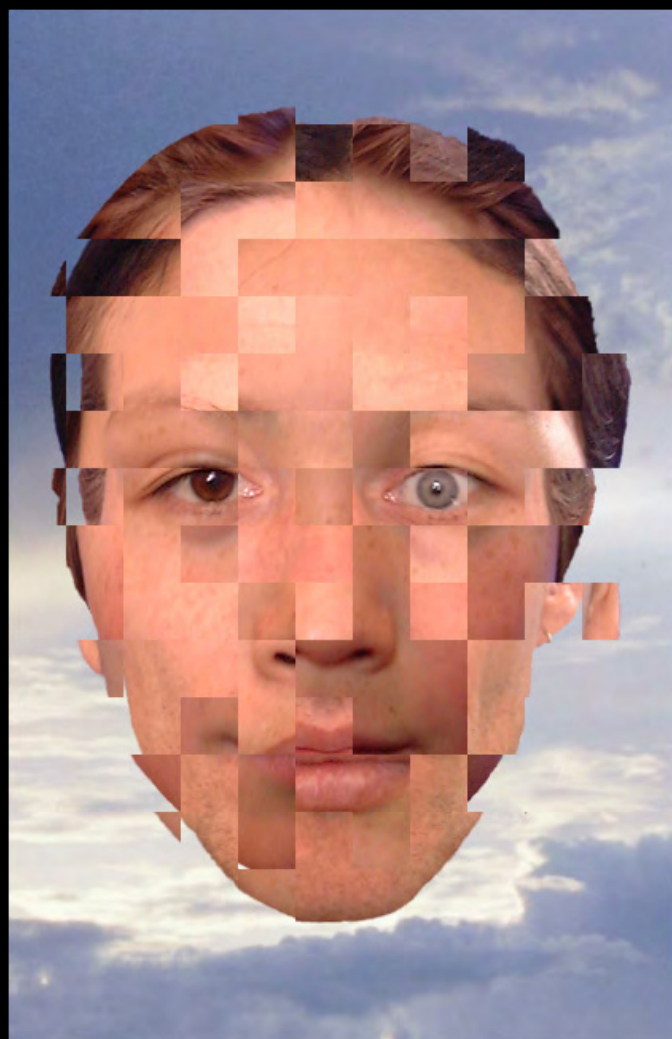
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ADAM NASH AND MAMI YAMANAKA

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***In3Face*, 2002**

Interactive installation

ADAM NASH AND MAMI YAMANAKA

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Artists' statement

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An exploration of The Human Face. A metaphor for identity. Three faces: mother father son. Identity is blurred, pixellated, inherited and swapped around, informed by both the subject and the viewer. It makes a chimeric sense, but is unpredictable: what one viewer sees another will never. The permutations are as numerous as the identities we present to others, always based on our physical reality, but constantly changing according to situation.

Biographies

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Mami Yamanaka

Born Japan
Lives & works Melbourne

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Mami Yamanaka is a visual artist who challenges and explores new media in her work. The main focus of her art practice is exploring the concept of her original idiosyncratic drawn motifs by creating patterns from the motif within an installation space to express her own experience of cultural relocation and consequent transcendence of her identity. Her use of various methods (e.g. Painting, Printing, Engraving, Sculpting, and Digital Video) give her work a unique contemporary element while her original motifs express the influence of her inherited traditional Japanese culture. Mami is also exploring the Internet as an artistic medium, mainly through the activity of the YamanakaNash unit

<http://yamanakanash.net/>

Adam Nash

Born Bristol England 1964
Lives & works Melbourne

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Adam Nash is widely recognized as one of the most innovative artists working in Multi-User Virtual Environments. He is a new media artist, composer, programmer, performer and writer. He works primarily in networked real-time 3D spaces, exploring them as audiovisual performance spaces. His work has been presented in galleries, festivals and online in Australia, Europe, Asia and The Americas, including peak festivals SIGGRAPH, ISEA, and the Venice Biennale. He was the recipient of the inaugural Australia Council Second Life Artist in Residency grant. He has been commissioned to present a mixed-reality participatory work at 01SJ Biennial of Global Art in San Jose 2008. He also works as composer and sound artist with Company In Space (AU) and Igloo (UK), exploring the integration of motion capture into realtime 3D audiovisual spaces.

He is currently undertaking a Master of Arts by Research at the Centre for Animation and Interactive Media at RMIT University, Melbourne, where he also is a Lecturer in Computer Games and Digital Art in the School of Creative Media at RMIT University.

He was composer, programmer and performer with The Men Who Knew Too Much from 1994-2002. He has performed with many musical groups and bands in Australia and Japan, including Japanese noise-chaos collective Proud Flesh, Melbourne electro-dub outfit Half Yellow, Brisbane's Choo Dikka Dikka and Melbourne Concrete Poetry group Arf Arf, among others. He has been a writer and reviewer for Digital Media World magazine, and editor of the Computers and Internet department at LookSmart. He was also a Project Officer at com.IT, a community charity he helped to establish that recycles computers and redistributes them for free to NFPs domestically and overseas.

<http://yamanakanash.net/>

Portraiture in
a digital age

**FACE
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FACE**

DAVID ROSETZKY

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Without You, 2003/2004

Single channel digital video

Duration: 10:40

DAVID ROSETZKY

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Artist's statement

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I made *Without You* at the end of 2003 beginning of 2004. It was a work commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria to be part of an exhibition in Japan. As we had to have subtitles made for another video work of mine in the show – which was very costly – I needed to come up with something that didn't rely on dialogue or voice-over, which much of my previous work had done. I wanted to consider in this new work how others inform and almost become part of our selves – whether through memory or interpersonal relationships.

I made still images from digital video footage which were then cut by hand with a scalpel. The collaged elements were then re-shot at two frames per second to form an old-school style animated morphing. *Without You* questions the boundaries where our selves begin and end – an idea that is communicated using a purely visual language.

Biography

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Born Melbourne 1970
Lives & works Melbourne
Represented by Sutton Gallery (Melbourne) and Kaliman Gallery (Sydney)

.....

David Rosetzky is a Melbourne based artist. He creates photo-based, video and sculptural installations that deal with issues of identity and subjectivity within a global capitalist culture. His work combines documentary and fictional styles of image making and is influenced by cinema and popular screen culture such as television and advertising.

Rosetzky was the inaugural winner of the Anne Landa Art Award for moving image and new media art, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2005 for his work *Untouchable* (2003).

He has been included in numerous group exhibitions both nationally and internationally including: *Raised by Wolves*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth (2007); *Crowds / Conversations / Confessions*, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada (2006); *2006 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: '21st Century Modern'*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; *2004 Australian Culture Now*, ACMI, Melbourne (2004); *Living Together is Easy*, Art Tower Mito, Mito, Japan (2004); *Face Up*, Hamburger Bahnhof Museum for the present, Berlin (2004); *New 03*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2003); *BitterSweet*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2002); *Screen Life*, Reina Sofia Museum, Madrid (2002); *Connections, Contemporary Artists from Australia*, House of Croatian Artists, Zagreb (2001); *hybrid <life> forms*, Netherlands Media Art Institute, Amsterdam (2001); *Rent*, Overgaden, Copenhagen and ACCA, Melbourne (2000). Solo Exhibitions include *Nothing Like This*, Kings ARI, Melbourne (2007), *Worlds Apart*, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne (2006); *Self Defence*, Contemporary Art Centre of S.A, (2005); *Living Together is Easy*, Hero apartments, Melbourne (2002); *Weekender*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney, (2002); *Custom Made*, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne (2000)

Rosetzky is a lecturer in the Photography Department at the Victorian College of the Arts and was the founding director of 1st Floor artists and writers space, Melbourne, 1994-2002. He is currently undertaking a Masters of Fine Art at Monash University in the department of Fine Arts, Caulfield. He is represented by Kaliman Gallery, Sydney and Sutton Gallery Melbourne.

<http://www.suttongallery.com.au/artists/artistprofile.php?id=11>

http://www.kalimangallery.com/web_pages/artists/rosetzky/BIO_rosetzky.htm

Portraiture in
a digital age

FACE TO FACE

RACHEL SCOTT

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Hot Not, 2006

Single channel digital video
Duration: 03:17

RACHEL SCOTT

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Artist's statement

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My performance videos are invested with ideas of human weakness and self-consciousness. These works are engaged in an amateur use of video technology to present an honest, unadorned account of the psychological struggles and battles of the artist. Using the personal as raw material, I explore the territory surrounding the construction of the surface, of conflicted desire as played out both for the camera and behind the scenes. I'm interested in questioning aesthetic values and hierarchies, combining controlled, pre-meditated decision-making with risk, improvisation and intuition, and walking a fine line between success and failure.

In *Hot Not* the artist, dressed in a gym outfit with bare face and unkempt hair, dances and poses in front of the window of her suburban house whilst mouthing selected lines from the recent Pussycat Dolls' pop song 'Don'tcha wish your girlfriend was hot like me'. Initially displaying all the confidence of an amateur aspirant, there comes a moment when the excruciatingly self-critical realisation hits her that she is not, in fact, 'hot' like a Pussycat Doll and far from believing that 'you' would wish your girlfriend was hot like 'me', she is full of self-disgust and disappointment at her far from music-video-ready body. The scene fades to black as she slumps closer to the window, her body engulfing the screen, allowing the reflection of the video camera to appear against it in the grubby windowpane.

The work operates as a critique of female representation and objectification in current popular culture, revealing a psychological battle with self-reflection.

Biography

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Born Singapore 1970
Lives & works Sydney
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Rachel Scott is a visual artist working across the mediums of video, performance, painting and installation. She graduated in 2005 with a Master of Visual Arts from the Sydney College of the Arts and in 2007 she was the recipient of the Fauvette Loureiro Travelling Artist Scholarship and was Highly Commended in the Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship exhibition at Artspace, Sydney. Selected solo exhibitions include MOP (2007), Peloton (2007), and James Dorahy Project Space (2006). Selected group exhibitions and screenings include: *between you and me*, Firstdraft Gallery (2007), *Videobrasil*, São Paulo, Brazil (2007), *Projector*, Fremantle Arts Centre, Western Australia (2007), Four Gallery Dublin (2007), The Norwegian Short Film Festival, Grimstad, Norway (2006), and the Parallel Program of the Biennale of Sydney, Phatspace (2004). In 2007 Her work was featured in the *Art Life* television series on the ABC, and in the *Australian Art Collector magazine's* 'Undiscovered' section.

Rachel has been actively involved in artist-run initiatives such as *runway* magazine and has worked as a casual lecturer in the Painting Department at the Sydney College of the Arts.

Portraiture in
a digital age

**FACE
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FACE**

STELARC

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Prosthetic Head, 2003
Interactive installation

STELARC

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Artist's statement

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The *Prosthetic Head* is an embodied conversational agent (ECA) that speaks to the person who interrogates it. It is projected 5 m in height in its own light-trapped space. The cuboid space becomes the "head-space" of the *Prosthetic Head*. A sensor system alerts it that someone is present. The *Prosthetic Head* turns, opens its eyes and initiates the conversation. The interface is a keyboard and the text box beneath the 5 m high projected head confirms the user's query. Exactly how you ask the question will determine the *Prosthetic Head's* response. So there's a translation between the keyed in text and the text-to-speech engine that coupled to the geometry and animation of the 3D model results in the real-time lip synching and spoken response. The effectiveness and seductiveness of the ECA is that it needs to be somewhat convincing in both it's comprehension and communication with the user. It is now possible to code both verbal and facial responses to the user's queries. The *Prosthetic Head*, with its facial behaviour and basic repertoire of expressed emotion performs with words. The *Prosthetic Head* then is a conversational system, that coupled to a human user is capable of some interesting, often appropriate and at times unpredictable exchanges. The *Prosthetic Head* can generate its own poetry and song-like sounds which are different each time it is asked. The system now is capable of head-tracking, so that the *Prosthetic Head* can locate you in the space and follow you around. Additional capabilities will be color detection and even face recognition which will result in more personal exchanges and remarks about the appearance of the user. And as its data base increases and its feedback from the real world increases the artist will no longer be able to take full responsibility for what his Head says.

Acknowledgements

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Original software

Karen Marcelo, Sam Trychin, Barrett Fox.

New version

Martin Luerssen, Trent Lewis with Associate Professor David Powers, Flinders University.

From Talking Heads to Thinking Head Heads:

(ARC/NH&MRC Thinking Systems). Leader: Professor Denis Burnham, MARCS Labs, University of Western Sydney.

Prosthetic Head was first exhibited at New Territories, Glasgow 2003

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Biography

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Born Limassol, Cyprus 1946
Lives & works Melbourne, Sydney, and London.
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Stelarc is a performance artist who has visually probed and acoustically amplified his body. He has made 3 films of the inside of his body. Between 1976-1988 he completed 25 body suspension performances with hooks into the skin. He has used medical instruments, prosthetics, robotics, Virtual Reality systems, the Internet and biotechnology to explore alternate, intimate and involuntary interfaces with the body. He has performed with a THIRD HAND, a VIRTUAL ARM, a STOMACH SCULPTURE and EXOSKELETON, a 6-legged walking robot. His FRACTAL FLESH, PING BODY and PARASITE performances explored involuntary, remote and Internet choreography of the body with electrical stimulation of the muscles. His PROSTHETIC HEAD is an embodied conversational agent that speaks to the person who interrogates it. He is presently surgically constructing an EXTRA EAR on his arm that will be Internet enabled, making it publicly accessible to people in other places.

In 1995 Stelarc received a three year Fellowship from The Visual Arts/ Craft Board, The Australia Council and in 2004 was awarded a two year New Media Arts Fellowship. In 1997 he was appointed Honorary Professor of Art and Robotics at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh. He was Artist-In-Residence for Hamburg City in 1998. In 2000 he was awarded an Honorary Degree of Laws by Monash University. He has completed Visiting Artist positions in Art and Technology, at the Faculty of Art and Design at Ohio State University in Columbus in 2002, 2003 & 2004. He has been Principal Research Fellow in the Performance Arts Digital Research Unit and a Visiting Professor at The Nottingham Trent University, UK. He has recently been appointed as Chair in Performance, School of Arts, Brunel University, Uxbridge, UK. He is also Senior Research Fellow and Visiting Artist at the MARCS Lab at the University of Western Sydney, Australia.

<http://www.stelarc.va.com.au>

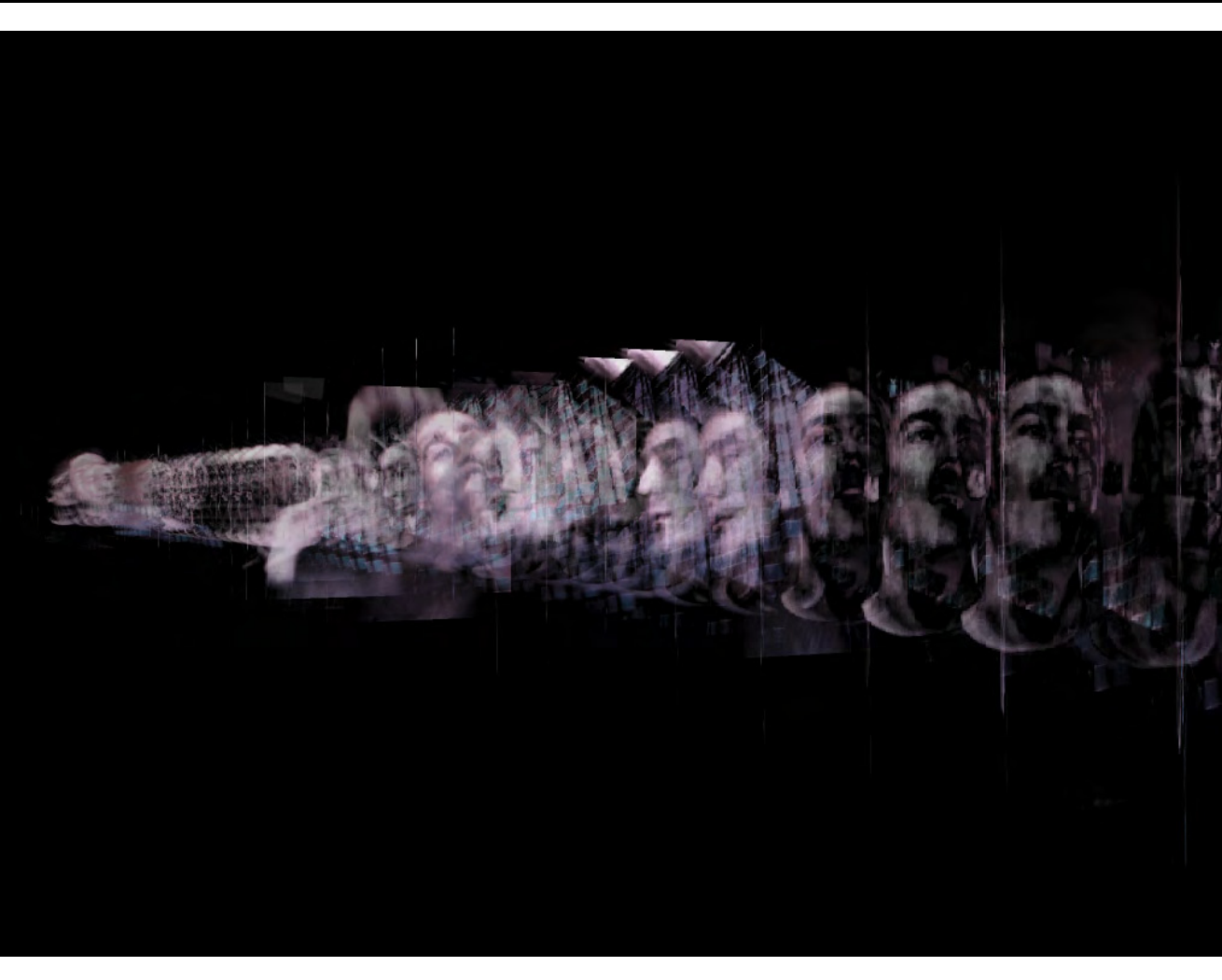
Portraiture in
a digital age

**FACE
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JOHN TONKIN

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time and motion study, 2006
Interactive installation

JOHN TONKIN

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Artist's statement

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In the late 1800's scientist/inventors such as Marey and Muybridge developed a number of pre-cinematic devices to analyse motion. These technologies allowed people to observe time and space in a way beyond normal human capabilities, creating a heightened sense of awareness of our passage through time. The images that were produced captured the public imagination and influenced artists such as Duchamp ("*Nude Descending a Staircase*", 1912) and Balla ("*Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash*", 1912).

Later technologies such as strobe photography and video effects processing have continued these explorations leading to the production of images such as ". 30 *Bullet Piercing an Apple*" (1964) by Harold Edgerton and music videos such as Amii Stewart's *Knock on Wood* and the Jackson 5's *Blame it on the Boogie*.

time and motion study uses contemporary technology to further investigate time and motion. The users' image in front of a camera is captured as a sequence of frames positioned along a timeline in three dimensional space. Only those parts of the image that are moving are rendered visible. The user is able to zoom in and out and to navigate forward and backwards through time.

Like many of my recent projects the work is formed through the accumulated actions of its users. The playful gestures of the audience build an archive of animated self portraits, like the pages of a flip book, a series of ghostly fragments echoing through time.

Biography

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Born 1963 Adelaide
Lives & works Sydney
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John Tonkin was born in Adelaide in 1963. He lives and works in Sydney. After studying biological sciences he began making experimental film and video in the early 1980's. He started working with computer animation in 1985. Tonkin makes his works using his own custom software developed in programming languages such as Java. In 1999-2000 he received a fellowship from the Australia Council's New Media Arts Board.

In 1995 Tonkin began making interactive art works that were designed to be exhibited both as installations and online. *meniscus* (1995-99) is a series of three works that explore ideas relating to subjectivity, scientific belief systems and the body. It consists of *Elective Physiognomies*, *Elastic Masculinities* and *Personal Eugenics*.

Tonkin's recent works involve building frameworks / tools / toys in which the artwork is formed through the accumulated interactions of its users. He is currently working on a number of projects that use real-time 3d animation, visualisation and data-mapping technologies. These include *Strange Weather*, a visualisation tool for making sense of life, and *time and motion study*.

Recent exhibitions have included *Media City Seoul – 2nd International Media Art Biennale*; Seoul Museum of Art 2002, Ozone; Pompidou Center Paris 2003, Digital *Sublime – New Masters of Universe*; Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei 2004, *Strange Weather*; Sherman Galleries 2005, Wood Street Galleries, Pittsburgh 2007 and collaborative projects at Artspace 2005, and ISEA 2006 (San Jose).

<http://www.johntn.org/>

CURATOR BIOGRAPHY

Kathy Cleland

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Kathy Cleland is a curator, writer and lecturer specialising in new media art and digital culture. She lectures in The Digital Cultures Program at The University of Sydney and is currently completing a PhD investigating avatars, digital portraiture, virtual characters and representations of the self in virtual environments.

Kathy writes for a number of arts and cultural publications and was guest editor of a special new media issue of Artlink magazine, "e-volution of new media" [Vol 21, No.3, 2001]. Her curatorial projects include ARTificial LIFE at Artspace, Auckland, NZ (1998), the Cyber Cultures exhibition series which toured to over 20 venues in Australia and New Zealand from 2000 – 2003, and the Australian component of the St@rt Up exhibition at Te Papa Museum in Wellington, NZ (2002-2003). As well as the *Face to Face* exhibition, in 2008 she co-curated the exhibition *Mirror States* which explores audience interactions with digital selves and digital others exhibited at Campbelltown Arts Centre in Sydney and the Moving Image Centre in Auckland, NZ.

<http://www.kathycleland.com>

LIST OF WORKS

.....
Michele Barker and Anna Munster

The Love Machine II, 2003

Digital prints on aluminium
3 images: 62.72cm x 74.1cm
2 images: 60cm x 135cm
1 image: 249.58cm x 15.1cm

Courtesy of the artists
.....

Denis Beaubois

Constant, 2004

Single channel digital video
Duration: 08:40
Digital video player, HD LCD monitor

Courtesy of the artist

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the
Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body
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Daniel Crooks

Portrait #1 (Self), Portrait #2 (Chris), Portrait #3 (Chris), 2007

Digital prints 101cm x 101cm

Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery Melbourne
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.....
Anna Davis and Jason Gee

Biohead Actualized, 2008

Single channel digital video loop
Duration: 10:00

Dimensions variable, DVD player, HD LCD Monitor,
multi channel sound (constructed from re-animated
digital photos of ventriloquist dolls and 'found' vocal sounds)

Courtesy of the artists
.....

Emil Goh

emilgoh / Emil Goh, 2006

MD03 / Min Ji Cho, 2005

i_triangle / Kwang Hoon Hyun, 2005

MyCy series

Digital prints 110 cm x 110 cm

Courtesy of the artist and VWFA Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
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Angelica Mesiti

Heroes, 2002

Single channel digital video

Duration: 05:00

HD LCD monitor or projection, multi channel sound

Courtesy of the artist
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.....
Adam Nash and Mami Yamanaka

In3Face, 2002

Interactive installation, dimensions variable
HD LCD monitor or projection, computer,
custom software, touch screen interface

Courtesy of the artists
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David Rosetzky

Without You, 2003/2004

Single channel digital video

Duration: 10:40

Digital video player, HD LCD monitor, multi channel sound

Courtesy of the artist, Sutton Gallery [Melbourne] and Kaliman Gallery [Sydney]
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Rachel Scott

Hot Not, 2006

Single channel digital video

Duration: 03:17

Digital video player, HD LCD monitor, multi channel sound

Courtesy of the artist
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Stelarc

Prosthetic Head, 2003

Interactive installation, dimensions variable
Computer, custom software, web cam, keyboard,
data projector, multi channel sound

Original software – Karen Marcelo, Sam Trychin, Barrett Fox.

New version – Martin Luerssen, Trent Lewis with Associate Professor David Powers, Flinders University.

From Talking Heads to Thinking Head Heads: (ARC/NH&MRC Thinking Systems). Leader: Professor Denis Burnham, MARCS Labs, University of Western Sydney.

Courtesy of the artist
.....

John Tonkin

time and motion study, 2006

Interactive video installation, dimensions variable
Custom software, computer, web cam

Courtesy of the artist
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