



post-performance

Timothy Kendall Edser, Simone Hine, Jess Hynd,
Katherine Taube & Jemima Wyman
Curated by Chris Handran & Rachael Haynes

post-performance

post-performance presents documentation from the performative practices of five Brisbane artists, who have been working consistently over a number of years. This "history" of performance art becomes tangible through memory sensations (as audience) and relived again as documentation. It is a flickering history, and for the absent audience, the performance becomes imagined, extrapolated from the documentation of its temporality. This exhibition explores the trajectory of this documentary process, stopping at various points, turning and starting again - questioning the translation of the performance from one of its moments, to another.

ACTION FIGURES

The practice of Jemima Wyman encompasses painting, video, sound, installation and, of course, performance. Wyman's practice is focussed at the meeting point of these diverse activities; it is a site of frenzied production, endlessly looping back on itself. Paintings and installations become implicated in the performances, which are documented and edited into further works. For *post-performance* Wyman presents a rarity: raw footage of a performance, that is, in this sense, still a performance; it has not yet been absorbed back into the practice. Throughout her practice, Wyman immerses herself in vibrant colour and hyper activities that feature elements of the absurd - in the process the artist herself seems immersed in sensation, rendered ridiculous; a figure of fun. Like some sort of psychotic super hero, her identity is masked, her body transformed - in this case, to an amorphous figure, a pair of conjoined bodies. Throughout this performance, Wyman and her body double appear on the verge of attacking their audience. This aggression is ambiguous and unsettling; the kicks, punches and martial arts moves that are (one hopes) playful are nonetheless real. As in many of Wyman's performances, the work seems almost an aberration in the space; the theatricised gestures and girations appear out of context here - they break through from the space of performance into real space, ungraciously entering the space of the viewer.

STRIKING A POSE

In Jess Hynd's *Protection*, we also find a doubling of the body. While in Hynd's earlier performances the motif of multiple figures assuming the same appearance seemed largely symbolic (a signifying doubling), here there is more ambiguity. The artist and her double are imperfectly matched; of different heights and body shapes, their clothing, make-up and motions mirror each other (however imperfectly), rendering them as doubles. Their bodies covered in layers of stockings and underwear, the figures move around the space, assuming poses, as if frozen by (or for) the camera; they become akin to a series of stills enacted in real time. The two bodies seem remote from each other and the audience around them, though linked by their appearance and their progress through the space. Their actions are dispassionate and (at various times) mirror, mimic and complement each other. Unlike Wyman's performance, there is no interaction with the audience - instead, the performers seem oblivious to the presence of the audience, as if operating in a different space. Their interaction with the space and the elements within it is mechanical, as if these motions were pre-determined. Hynd's text video, text and installation works function as props for the performance, but only to be examined, moved, re-arranged in a detached way. The stilled/posed nature of this performance makes it seem made to document, and the presentation of slide documentation here highly appropriate.

MEDIATIONS

While for Hynd doubles appear as symbolic figures or props, for Simone Hine the

double provides a means of replicating or 'cloning' her own body. Hine's practice spans the theatre as well as the gallery space, and it is usually in these theatre performances that we find the artist's body 'doubled'. In her 'gallery performances', however, there persists what could be described as a telematic doubling. That is; the artist's body is transmitted or transposed via video; her body is wired for sound and becomes a figure that constantly twitches, quivers and shifts in an attempt to generate sound from the microphones throughout her costume. Usually, the artist herself performs within another space, often a box or booth constructed for the event. The viewer is presented with a range of fragments; both of the artist's body (in this case the feet), and video footage showing the artist performing inside the box. This presentation fragments the body and blurs the lines between actual performance, live feeds and prerecorded video and sound. For *transpose*, Hine performed within a long, narrow box, which she paced as if it were a catwalk, her feet the only visible part of her body. In such gallery-based performances, the artist's body is only ever glimpsed, behind glass, like a museum object on display. Literally occupying its own space, it is Hine's presence within the box that seems almost vestigial; it is through the technological or augmented body that we experience the performance.

WATCHING THE WATCHERS

In the work of Katherine Taube, this deferral/distancing of the artist's body by the video image is taken in another direction. In an early performance, the viewer entered a darkened room to be confronted by a simple red line, scanning up and down the artist's body. The presence of the artist in the darkened, claustrophobic space, produced a double-bind for the viewer; a split response to the artist's presence and to her body as work. More recently, Taube's performances have moved into even more confined spaces, with the artist's presence deferred through the use of video surveillance. That is, the artist performs within the enclosed space of specially constructed white boxes, with the performance experienced via the video screen, or by attempting to view the artist through segments of diffuse perspex. In the recent *soft pilot watch*, this closed circuit of surveillance cameras and television monitors extended to the audience. The video documentation polarises the difference between the social space of the gallery and the interiority of Taube's performance. Each occupying their own territory, the performance appears almost irrelevant to the audience - and vice-versa. While people viewed both live feeds and pre-recorded footage (including documentation from previous performances) on a number of monitors around the space, the audience paid little attention to either Taube's presence within the box or to the surveillance cameras that were recording them. While appearing heavily edited, the video documentation also makes use of the readymade editing of the security system, switching between the various views of the spaces, the performance itself and the pre-recorded footage that formed part of the installation. The re-enactment (via video) of this performance within The Farm Space constitutes a further doubling of the space - one in which the audience can, potentially, see themselves perform.

CLAUSTRO-PHILIA

In the ongoing *Tension* series of performances by Timothy Kendall Edser, it is the physicality of the artist's body that confronts the viewer. Edser places himself in situations that test the limitations of his body and the audience's response. His role is something of a passive one, and consists of Edser enduring these situations for the duration of the performance and submitting to the gaze of the audience. The confronting nature of these performances throws the viewer into question and tests their endurance. In *Tension 6*, we find the artist's body occupying the confined space of a box - this box also served as a seat from which to view live footage of Edser inside the box. In this case, the viewer only sees the artist's body via the video; his presence is wholly

mediated through this sort of 'live documentation'. As in Taube's *soft pilot watch*, the audience appeared almost oblivious to the artist's presence, focussing their attention instead on the video footage. The video serves to distance the audience from the artist's ordeal, despite the close proximity.

POST-PERFORMANCE ANXIETIES

In the work of these five artists, the body as subject is thrown into question, it doubles, fragments and splits; a subject cut off from itself. This doubling is replayed in the process of documentation – the performance itself doubles and splits, flickering between its first and subsequent moments. By replaying these performances through their documentation, we are able to re-view them, this time from the perspective of the viewing apparatus, the "disembodied" eye of the camera. Ironically (despite the emphasis placed on the audience) performances are often re-staged for the purposes of documentation – the audience is 'edited out'. The documentary camera (whether video or still) becomes the ever present silent observer of the performance, at times the only observer – it becomes both audience and mediator of the performative moment. At other times it captures the performance of the audience, which in turn becomes re-looped into the performance and its documentation. We have a strange sensation of watching ourselves (as another audience) watching the performance. This exhibition has sought to explore the gap between performance and its document, between the moment and its translation – to open up these gaps and 're-insert' the audience and to view these individual performances in the context of one another.

Chris Handran & Rachael Haynes
November, 2003

This catalogue was produced to coincide with *post-performance* held at The Farm for one night only on 7th November 2003. *post-performance* features Timothy Kendall Edser, Simone Hine, Jess Hynd, Katherine Taube & Jemima Wyman, and is curated by Chris Handran & Rachael Haynes. The Farm would like to thank Chris & Rachael, Tim, Simone, Jess, Katherine & Jemima, Clare Chippendale, Craig at Rinzen, QUT and *Eyeline*, the Dendy Cinemas, Brett's Hardware, Kirlou Signs and the Australia Council Visual Arts and Craft Board.

Chris & Rachael would like to thank the artists and Rod Palmer.

The Farm has been assisted by the Commonwealth Government's Young and Emerging Artists Initiative through the Australia Council, its arts and funding advisory board.

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