



500 WORDS

- RECENT ARCHIVE
- 07.2010
- 06.2010
- 05.2010
- 04.2010
- 03.2010
- 02.2010
- 01.2010
- 12.2009
- 11.2009
- 10.2009
- 09.2009
- 08.2009
- 07.2009
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- 05.2009
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- 02.2009
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- 12.2008
- 11.2008
- 10.2008
- 09.2008
- 08.2008
- 07.2008
- 06.2008
- 05.2008

Sturtevant

02.26.10



Left: Sturtevant, *House of Horrors* (detail), 2010, mixed media, dimensions variable. Installation view. Right: View of "Sturtevant," 2010. Clockwise: *Finite Infinite*, 2010; *Duchamp Ciné*, 1989; *Gonzalez-Torres Untitled (America)*, 2004. Photos: Pierre Antoine.

The renowned Paris-based American artist Sturtevant has been defying—and fulfilling—expectations for over forty years; the best known of her works push the limits of the copy and the counterfeit through repetition. "The Razzle Dazzle of Thinking," her exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville in Paris, is on view until April 25.

THERE ARE TWO SECTIONS TO THIS SHOW. One is called "Wild to Wild" and contains works from the 1970s to the present, including *Duchamp 1200 Coal Bags* [1972], *Gonzalez-Torres Untitled (America)* [2004], *Vertical Monad* [2008], and *Finite Infinite* [2010]. *Finite Infinite* is projected on a 141-foot curved wall. The other part of the show, which is also a new work, is the *House of Horrors*. It is in complete opposition to "Wild to Wild."

The house is a classical carnival design, a ghost train. It was fabricated by JES Studio in France. The entrance has gray stones with skeletons and other scary things. When you enter it's all dark, and you hear screaming, banging, and flying bats. You'll be scared, and that's fun.

The carts in the work come from an original house of horror. They are very beautiful, incredible. JES Studio made the automated pieces like the Frankenstein who rises up from his gurney to the sound of great organ music, a dead head that moans and groans, a skeleton that jumps out almost into your cart, and, of course, the wonderful Divine with her doggy in the window. The studio knew other studios that then did the makeup, clothes, sound, lights, and engineering.

When you go into the museum, you turn and there are very beautiful steps that lead up to the famous Dufy Room, which I concealed with another new work, *Elastic Tango*, a nine-monitor video. It's intrusive, big, and visual. The monitors are shaped in an inverted pyramid and the videos are devised as a three-act play in a very formal sense: presentation of problem, escalation of conflict, and then resolution without narrative. The resolution is, obviously, simulacrum.

The dynamic force is the razzle-dazzle of thinking.

That's what I did, and that's what it does.

Voilà!

— As told to Lauren O'Neill-Butler

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- "Kurt"
- Gordon Matta-Clark
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Daniel McDonald

02.22.10



Left: Daniel McDonald, *The Crossing: Passengers Must Pay Toll in Order to Disembark (Michael Jackson, Charon, and Uncle Sam) (work in progress)*, 2010, mixed media, dimensions variable. Right: Daniel McDonald, *The Monkey's Paw*, 2005, brass, glass, sable, plastic, satin, monkey paw, 1959 book by Edward Gorey, dimensions variable.

The New York-based artist Daniel McDonald is a former director of the legendary American Fine Arts gallery in New York and a founding member of the collective Art Club 2000. McDonald is participating in the 2010 Whitney Biennial, which opens on February 25, and will also have a solo exhibition at [Broadway 1602](#) until April 10. He discusses both below.

WHEN YOU'RE ASKED to be in a Whitney Biennial, a whole series of thoughts go through your head. One is: "What are the expectations surrounding the Whitney?" Sometimes artists make the mistake of producing pieces that are too overblown, glitzy, or gratuitously political. There are lots of traps you can fall into. I decided to look at those impulses myself and go with them.

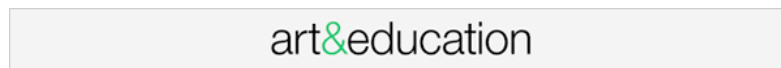
My work is titled *The Crossing: Passengers Must Pay Toll In Order to Disembark (Michael Jackson, Charon, and Uncle Sam)*. It's a kind of memorial tableau that takes place on a model Egyptian boat. It includes an action figure of Michael Jackson in the zombie costume from *Thriller*. The miniature Michael is coming onto the boat, holding a jumbo three-inch penny that he's handing to Charon, the mythical ferryman who transports souls to the afterlife. Uncle Sam is passed out in the back of the boat, clinging to a champagne bottle, and totally drained of life, while Michael approaches with a single tear in his eye. He looks like he needs rest or maybe he is anxious to pay and get to the other side, as Uncle Sam grins maniacally, doomed to limbo until he can pay the toll.

In a way, the piece responds to the Biennial and the expectations that the show will speak to what happened in the past year or be some kind of crystal ball for the future. Michael, the Egyptian boat, and the Whitney can all represent immortality. Michael is an emblematic hero, who works as a kind of stand-in for American entertainment culture. It relates to Charon because for some people the Biennial seems to function as a kind of passageway for artists.

I'm also having a show in the project room of Broadway 1602 called "Questionable Beliefs." It will be a continuously evolving sculptural situation, hopefully with performance events and screenings. The normal entrance from the main gallery to the project space will be blocked off by stacked art crates, and visitors will have to enter the show through a pocket door in the gallery's back office. When you push open the door, you enter the show and it's like you're an art object coming out of a crate. The show will be changing the whole time, as if the devil curated an altar or stage in a forgotten storeroom with totems and art objects from the recent economic-bubble period and Hollywood films. It's a room of haunted objects, with toys, lights, and sounds. It could be imagined as an institutional critique show, but made by an acolyte of Jack Smith on acid.

— As told to John Arthur Peetz

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Jennifer Kroot

02.11.10

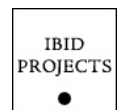
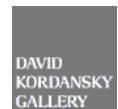


Left: Jennifer Kroot, *It Came from Kuchar*, 2009, still from a color video, 86 minutes (George Kuchar). Right: George Kuchar, *The Devil's Cleavage*, 1975, still from a black-and-white film in 16 mm, 122 minutes.

In the 1990s, Jennifer Kroot was a student of the underground film legend George Kuchar at the San Francisco Art Institute and later performed in several of his films. Kroot's documentary on the influential Kuchar brothers, *It Came from Kuchar*, will play at the [Walker Art Center](#) on February 11 and at [Anthology Films Archives](#) April 9–15.

I LIKE SUPERTHEATRICAL THINGS, which is one of the reasons I enjoy films by the Kuchars. There's an ambiguous overlap in their works where theatricality becomes camp. People often dismiss camp as a melodramatic aesthetic and associate it with gay culture. But I think camp is more inclusive. It can be political and meaningful.

Mike always proudly admits his films are campy, but some of them are strangely campy and serious. He often uses a mythological style we associate with science fiction. His movies are video portraits of "glamorous men," so he usually has a muse—an actor or model or someone he has met—whom he puts in theatrical



scenes. They're not narrative, but more experimental. That's the "genre" he works with.

George makes movies with his classes that are unapologetically campy and that star his students and the septuagenarian diva Linda Martinez doing insane things with really low-budget, theatrical sets. George might feature a man in drag, but there's usually something deep behind it. That actor is expressing human fears or inadequacies, and it's something that you can sense is coming from an authentic place but is expressed in a theatrical manner. George also makes video diaries, which basically depict him going to different events or outings with friends. There's something very warm and funny but edgy about them.

The Kuchars have also inspired different types of camp. John Waters and Guy Maddin are good examples of campy filmmakers affected by the Kuchars. The funny thing about George and Mike is that people just assume that they will love any given "campy" new movie, but several times I've asked them whether they liked a new film and they will say, "Oh, no. It's too campy." This happens again and again. For example, there was a new movie recently that had a drag queen as the star, and for some reason when I asked them to see the movie with me they were like, "That's just camp with a drag queen."

Although sometimes the word *camp* is used in a derogatory manner, I think it's interesting that George and Mike use it to explore deep issues. Things that trouble the Kuchars are offered under the veil of camp, and viewers can watch it without it being such a heavy thing. When I think about their films, I think about the humanity that comes through despite the work's extreme silliness. There is honesty, but Mike and George are different in the way they express it. And even though someone may see their films and think, "This is just campy," if you sit with it for a minute you realize it *is* campy but also so much more.

— As told to John Arthur Peetz

CONNECT PERMALINK TALKBACK (0 COMMENTS)

art&education

Florian Hecker

02.09.10



Florian Hecker, *2 x 3 Kanal*, 2009, three-channel electroacoustic sound, loudspeaker system, 19 minutes 10 seconds, dimensions variable. Installation view, BAWAG Contemporary, Vienna.

Florian Hecker is an artist who has recently performed with Aphex Twin and collaborated with Cerith Wyn Evans. Hecker's latest exhibition, commissioned by two nonprofit spaces—Birmingham's Ikon Gallery and the Chisenhale Gallery in London—opens at the latter on February 12.

THE SOUND PIECES in this show will entail distinct requirements for their installation. But what is constant is the dialogue between the micro, meso, and macro sonic levels. Housed in a renovated veneer factory from the 1930s, the Chisenhale Gallery plainly shows its industrial past. Five large T-bars cross the ceiling and divide the otherwise open space. This architectural structure appeared to me an intuitive fivefold division of the gallery, and superimposing a conventional exhibition design felt somehow out of place. It became clear that a temporal layout of the four works would be my approach, and this sequence, from one piece to another, mirrors the internal spatial logic of each piece.

The first up in the show, *Magnitude Estimation*, features spoken-word sections that had to be recorded in an anechoic chamber. John Cage often mentioned the anechoic chamber as an important influence on his interest in silence, which led to his composition *4' 33"*. Due to its highly absorbing acoustic properties, such a space offers a magic, intense experience of sonic dislocation. All the day-to-day environmental noises that we take for granted as the cues for our spatial orientation seem to disappear, and a whole other auditory world arises. (You can hear the sounds of your nervous system, blood circulation, and bodily fluids, for instance.) It was exactly this perceived otherness and its very effect on the performers' vocal inflection and accentuation that interested me.

Magnitude Estimation will be followed by *2 x 3 Channel*. This work consists of two separate three-channel pieces that rotate simultaneously around three speakers. One rotates clockwise, the other counterclockwise. Depending on the viewers' auditory focus, one part is heard in the foreground, the other in the background. In the second section of this work, the conflict of the directional auditory perception of both pieces is complicated and intensified anew. A seemingly constant ascending sonic structure alternates with a sequence of tones in the style of Diana Deutsch's *Tritone Paradox*. Here, an additional dimension can be heard besides the circular movements in the work. *Auditory Scene*, the final piece in this temporal order, presents a sequence of five short tones that may be arranged depending on the viewers' position in the gallery.

This multitude of perspectives and the perceptual organization the show creates—which change according to the very position of visitors and the direction of their attention—emphasize the impossibility of a unified description or consensus as to what has been heard, from where, at what time, and by whom. In each of the pieces, one can witness a certain decoupling of the perceived sound and its visible source.

— As told to Lauren O'Neill-Butler

CONNECT PERMALINK TALKBACK (0 COMMENTS)

art&education

Matt Keegan

02.04.10



Left: Matt Keegan and Su Barber at the *North Drive Press* release party at X Initiative. Right: View of *NDP 5*.

The annual art publication North Drive Press has produced interviews with a wide range of artists, as well as unique multiples—from records and posters to perfume and soap. On the occasion of its closing issue, artist and cofounder Matt Keegan discusses its origin and finale.

WHEN WE STARTED the project in 2003, I was in my second semester of Columbia's MFA program, and wanted to create a publication that reflected the collective and discursive space of school. *North Drive Press* tried to translate this intimacy within its first issue, which was designed like a nonthematic, mobile group exhibition.

Lizzy Lee and I founded *NDP* (its name came from the street that connected the parallel blocks we lived on as kids growing up on Long Island), and as the project's art director, she suggested a brown vinyl envelope as a cost-effective way to house the inaugural issue's contents. As with most art projects, all decisions were based on what we could afford (for assembly and future mailings). Also, we didn't want our publication to have a particular beginning, middle, or end; ideally the "kit," as we initially called it, could be reconfigured each time it was opened. The sleeve contained ten unbound, legal-size, photocopied interviews and a panel transcription, as well as two large, double-sided, full-color posters and five commissioned multiples, all made in an edition of five hundred.

From its inception, *NDP* was made for and by artists, and the priority has always been to make it affordable to this intended audience. This first issue retailed for twenty dollars, and subsequent issues have gradually increased to the current price of fifty dollars, while all interviews and texts are available as free downloadable PDFs from the website.

Thanks to a friend who shared his copy of *NDP 1*, we were offered funding to make a second installment. For *NDP 2*, I started working with a new art director, Susan Barber, who proposed using a box for the sequel. This would provide the project with a spine to allow for shelving—booksellers were dissuaded by number one's semi-rigid vinyl casing, and the box provided greater depth for our new focus on funding and publishing more multiples. The format of the publication found its template and beautifully articulated design under Su's direction.

In reviewing the first issue and preparing to make a second, I knew that I was most excited about the potential of the artist-on-artist interviews and multiples. There seemed to be a void in the distribution channels available to for emerging artists that *NDP* was committed to presenting—for them to be recorded in their own words and provided with funds to produce editioned artwork. *NDP*'s initial contributors (although we have featured a wide range of artists) fell below the radar of publications such as *Bomb* and *Parkett*.

From *NDP 2* on, we provided no editorial parameters, allowing the contributions to define each issue. After completing *NDP 3*, Su and I—and my editorial collaborator for *NDP 3* and 4, Sara Greenberger Rafferty—knew that the project would have to come to a close, as it began to take more time and money to produce. We didn't want the publication to ever feel burdensome, as all of our own art and design practices began to demand more time and attention.

Su and I decided to end the project with *NDP 5* because the number five felt like a point of completion. After we made this decision, the production of this final installment took on a different energy. Assisted by a fantastic crew of interns, we were really excited about it from beginning to end, and our enthusiasm helped fuel an intimacy that had existed in earlier issues.

Many of our contributors have gone on to have success as artists, and *NDP*'s archive of five issues, more than 150 contributors, and more than fifty interviews has been accessed by students and teachers as points of reference at varying moments in our various contributors' careers. I'm glad *North Drive Press* is over, but Su and I have already talked about continuing to work on a future publication with a smaller number of contributors and lower production costs. This yet to be titled project will definitely be informed by *NDP*, and I look forward to that next permutation.

— As told to Lauren O'Neill-Butler

CONNECT PERMALINK TALKBACK (0 COMMENTS)

art&education

Harrell Fletcher

02.01.10



Views of "Selections from the Life and Work of Michael Bravo," CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, 2010. (Photos: Navid Baraty)

Since the mid-1990s, Harrell Fletcher has worked collaboratively and individually on socially engaged, participatory works. He is currently the director of Art and Social Practice at Portland State University in Oregon. Here he discusses "Selections from the Life and Work of Michael Bravo," an exhibition on view at the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco until April 24.

I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT CURATING this show for the past five years. Michael Bravo retired from the art department at Humboldt State University—where I studied with him as an undergraduate—in 2004, after thirty-one years of teaching. Coincidentally, that year I began to teach at Portland State University. He was married to my older sister when I was a child, which adds an unusual element to our relationship. I've always been inspired by his work, as it is very interdisciplinary and unorthodox. But I've also been interested in him as a person and feel that our trajectories have been similar in several important ways.

The show features some objects he made for me when I was a baby, such as a mobile that used to hang over my crib, a toolbox, and wooden ships. I've also included a selection of Michael's art from the past fifty years, as well as ephemera, like family photographs and documents from his life. I interviewed him for a publication that accompanies the show and wrote an exhibition text that describes our relationship and thoughts about his work. The exhibition presents my very particular view of Michael. It's a very idiosyncratic exhibition, and many people have told me they think it's the most personal show I've done.

I think this exhibition is related to several projects I've organized in the past that look at artists who operate on the margins of the art world or who are not involved in the art world at all. I've always been drawn to people and places that are peripheral to art-world centers. These are concerns that are central to my practice.

The exhibition is also similar in some ways to my traveling exhibition "The American War," which began in 2005. In that case, I rephotographed all of the images and texts from the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City and organized events and talks to accompany the show. I think the connection between that project and the current one at the Wattis is that in both cases I create a framework in which to view a set of objects that I didn't make myself. As a viewer you can look at the work directly or you can consider it from the larger perspective of my relationship to the materials and my motivations for organizing the show.

Michael's exhibition is part of the Wattis Institute's program "The Magnificent Seven," which is spread out over a three-year period. In addition to having a solo show, each participating artist will teach at CCA for a semester and will create a new work as part of a Capp Street Project Residency. (The other artists are Abraham Cruzvillegas, Ryan Gander, Renata Lucas, Kris Martin, Paulina Olowska, and Tino Sehgal.)

Right now I have another project that I'm working on with Wattis director Jens Hoffmann called "The People's Biennial." For that traveling exhibition, which is being organized by Independent Curators International, Jens and I will travel to five locations across the US—Portland, Oregon; Rapid City, South Dakota; Scottsdale, Arizona; Winston-Salem, North Carolina; and Haverford, Pennsylvania. We will choose local people's work in each of the cities to be a part of a group exhibition that travels to art centers in each of the cities that we selected work from. The art itself could be anything from a kid's science experiment to the work of an artist who for one reason or another hasn't participated in the art world. We'll also have roundtable discussions about art and curating in those cities where the exhibitions are held. The show was partially inspired by the artist Michael Patterson-Carver (not to be confused with Michael Bravo), whose career I helped launch. When I first met him he was selling his drawings on a sidewalk in Portland, Oregon, and now he has had shows in galleries and museums in New York, Paris, London, and Brussels. Not that I think there is anything wrong with showing your work on the street, but it is also nice to be able to break down the walls that normally prevent artists like Patterson-Carver from showing in mainstream art venues.

I want to level things out by drawing attention to work being made outside of standard art world circles. I'm not interested in hierarchies or creating distinctions between different kinds of people and the work they make based on where they live or whether or not they have a MFA. I think this kind of expanded view of what qualifies as "art" and who can be called an artist, ultimately makes for a more interesting art world and world in general.

"The People's Biennial" opens September 10 at the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Oregon.

— As told to Lauren O'Neill-Butler

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