

Maeve Connolly

Writing After the Exhibition: Tactically Yours



Frances Hegarty & Andrew Stones *Tactically Yours*, 2007. Installation view. © Courtesy the artists.

IN an analysis of North American narrative cinema during the 1970s and 80s, focusing on the recurrence of political conspiracy themes, Fredric Jameson emphasises the critical potential of the 'indirect'. He argues that *Videodrome* (Cronenberg, 1983) is particularly effective as a representation of post-modern urban life precisely because it does not aim to capture the documentary truth of Toronto but instead highlights the generic qualities of the city, through settings that are placeless and timeless. Elaborating on this concept of indirection, Jameson wonders whether direct experience is actually possible⁽¹⁾. He suggests that if we confront experience "with a will towards assimilating it at once, without mediation, we lose it". In earlier contributions to this column I have suggested that writing a review often serves to erase memories of the exhibition, perhaps implying that 'real' experience has been lost in the process. But Jameson's concept of indirection contests the very possibility of any immediate encounter and, by insisting upon the role of mediation, draws attention to the collective dimension of all experience.

Returning to the domain of contemporary art practice, the work of Frances Hegarty and Andrew Stones – specifically the exhibition 'Tactically Yours' at the Butler Gallery in 2007 – employed mediation and repetition to comment on the experience of collaboration and to explore the relationship between political action and art practice. Twenty-four CCTV monitors displayed black and white video imagery of a left-handed woman and a right-handed man hurling rocks in a forest clearing. Filmed from above, the figures are engaged in a form of self-surveillance, repeating the action as though in competition with each other and themselves. Significantly, the documentation of this repetitive action is itself repeated, played out in various arrangements of monitors across three rooms, so that the visitor may be tempted to return to an earlier work and revisit their own experience. In the fourth room, a colour video projection showed a woman's left-hand and a man's right-hand drawing rapidly with charcoal on the same sheet of paper, filling the frame before the image is erased by the appearance of another blank sheet. This final video ultimately withholds the closure it promises because, as noted in the press release, 'if the end of the work is to be 'drawing' or 'art', what, then, of the other connotations of the action in the forest, the undercurrent of violence, the allusions to insurrection, protest and resistance?'⁽²⁾

For Brian Hand, 'Tactically Yours' should be read partly as a response to the specific location of the Butler Gallery in the Kilkenny Castle, so that the action of stone-throwing references a wider history of rebellion and insurrection, and the exploration of collaboration becomes historically loaded⁽³⁾. He notes that, in the final room, the viewer is invited into the work, both as 'graphologist' (to interpret the drawings) and referee (to judge the winner) and crucially, as 'co-conspirator' in a collaborative project. This suggests that the invocation of art in this final video does not constitute a dead-end, but rather offers another route into this exploration of collaboration, in which the specific location of the Butler is perhaps no more important than the generic qualities of the gallery setting. Here I am referring to the ways in which 'Tactically Yours' draws its strategies of production and display from a repertoire (even arsenal) shared by many artists working with video and performance.

It does not seem accidental that Hegarty and Stones use CCTV imagery to explore repeated gestures and actions, and employ a sculptural approach to the arrangement of monitors. This allows for the experience of 'Tactically Yours' to be productively mediated, consciously or otherwise, by the memories of other works.

Notes

1. Fredric Jameson, *Totality as Conspiracy, The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System*, Bloomington, Indiana and London: Indiana University Press and BFI, 1992, 83, note 10.
2. Press release, 'Tactically Yours', Butler Gallery, June 23 – July 29, 2007.
3. Brian Hand, 'Tactically Yours', CIRCA 121, 2007, 110 – 111.

MUTABILITY



Deirdre Hayden *Remember Coming Here*

The Stone Gallery, Dublin presented 'Mutability', an exhibition of new painting by Deirdre Hayden, Kathy Tynan, Hugh Delap, Sheila Rennick and Anthony Kelly (6 Aug – 17 Sept). The works were described as addressing "current movements within painting practice and simulate an engaging conversation both individually and collectively".

www.stonegallery.ie

MORE THAN ONE WAY OUT



Maud Cotter *So and So*

The Rubicon Gallery, Dublin recently presented Maud Cotter's exhibition (2 Sept – 3 Oct) 'More Than One Way Out'. The works in the show were described as "a mode we might call the domestic surreal. In her sculptures, ordinary furniture and crockery become wondrous, and slightly disconcerting".

www.rubicongallery.ie

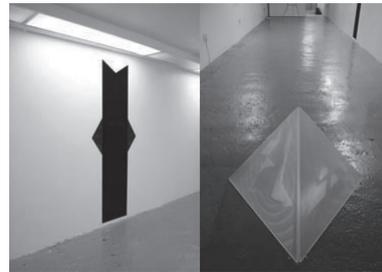
PASTORAL CITY

From 10 Sept – 3 Oct Talbot Gallery, Dublin exhibited 'Pastoral City' by John O'Reilly. O'Reilly's works in oils and aerosols depicted contemporary objects and landscapes influenced by graffiti art to bring an urban experience to canvas". Themes explored in the show included the relentless dominance of nature over the built environment, in such forms as rain, light and mould ... the effects of time and change on the city.

www.talbotgallery.com

RECENT EVENTS AT PALLAS

'Of Men and Mountains' at Pallas Contemporary Projects, Dublin (11 Sept – 10 Oct) was an exhibition of drawing, video, installation, and sculpture by Aoife Cassidy and Anita Delaney. The exhibition's documentation describes Cassidy's interest in "ecology, wildlife, and the cultural anthropology of society", and Delaney's pursuit of "systems of interpersonal communication particularly language, genre and semiotics". For culture night (25 Sept) the artists presented a special live event, comprising a collaborative attempt



Aoife Cassidy & Anita Delaney *Of Men and Mountains'*

to assemble a human pyramid in the exhibition space.

Previous exhibitions at PCP included shows by Cannon Fodder—a Dublin collective of artists Fiona Marron, Gerard Erraught, Nora Duggan, Serena Teehan and Caroline Doolin (3 – 5 Sept) and 'Play' (20 – 22 Aug) featuring artists from the gallery's internship programme; Emer Birmingham, Aoife Doolin, Niamh Dunphy, Fiona O'Keefe, Moya Revins, Emma Rowe, and Neil Ryan.

www.pallasprojects.org

BOXID, ROUND II



Work from 'BOXID, Round II'

The Black Church Print Studio, Temple Bar in coordination with Original Print Gallery presented 'BOXID, Round II', a fundraising exhibition featuring 297 works by more than 150 artists (23 – 27 Sept). Contributors were asked to create a piece, in any media, to be presented inside a CD case. The works were exhibited anonymously, with the artist's name revealed upon purchase—each being priced at €50. Featured artists included Yoko Akino, Liam Belton, Pauline Bewick, Carey Clarke, Felicity Clear, Maud Cotter, Clodagh Emoe, Mark Garry, James Hanley, Bernadette Madden, Lars Nyberg, Mick O'Dea, Jane O'Malley, Barbara Rae, Nigel Rolfe, Therry Rudin, Maria Simmons-Gooding, Susan Sex, Charlie Whisker and Peter Wray.

www.print.ie
www.originalprint.com

ON AT 126



Peter O'Kennedy – work from 'Skip bump roll scratch'

'Skip bump roll scratch' 126, Galway (23 Sept – 10 Oct) Peter O'Kennedy presented a new body of work. The exhibition contained video, photography and mechanical sculpture, and included a kinetic installation consisting of two mobilised record players playing the same record.

(30 Aug – 19 Sept) 126 initiated

'Mythologies' and 'How Do You Know'; two exchange exhibitions presented in coordination with Blankspace Gallery, Oakland, California, USA. 'How Do You Know' at Blankspace Gallery featured Vera Klute, Paul Murnaghan, Padraig Robinson, Christopher Banahan, Jackie Nickerson, Emma Houlihan, Adelle Hickey, Bernie Masterson, Emmet Kierans, Fiona Chambers, John Jones, Theresa Nanigian, Paul Hickey, Helena O'Connor, Tanya O'Keefe and James Hayes. 'Mythologies' at 126 hosted San Francisco Bay artists Gina Tuzzi, Samara Halperin, Brian Caraway, Lena Reynoso, Crystal Morey, Sam Lopes, and Renée Gertler.

www.blankspacegallery.com
www.126.ie

NO EMBARGO

The Arts and Disability Forum, Belfast presented 'No Embargo', an exhibition of new animated works by Joel Simon and Steve Noonan (27 Aug – 25 Sept). The press release described Simon's work as dealing with his experiences of "standing out as an amputee", and Noonan's exploring the life of a character that "brings the joys of reading, writing and counting to the nation."

www.adf.ie

ORANSSI APPELSIINI

'Oranssi Appelsiini', an exhibition by Finnish artist-in-residence Antti Leppänen, was presented at his studio in Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, Dublin (26 Sept). As the press release noted, the works in the show featured "an interconnected series of sculptures" that referred to "vernacular architecture and Modernist-inspired store display units".

www.templebargallery.com

PERSISTENCE OF VISION



Oonagh O'Brien – work from 'Experiments in the Persistence of Vision'. Riverbank Arts Centre, Kildare.

Oonagh O'Brien first solo exhibition 'Experiments in the Persistence of Vision' was recently presented at the Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge, Co. Kildare (1 – 30 Sept). The show featured photography, projection and digital video. The press release noted O'Brien's focus on the "moment when an image becomes a moving image ... working with strobe lighting, at night creating scenes reminiscent of early representational research".

www.riverbank.ie

PARADISAEIDAE

Monster Truck Gallery, Dublin presented Bennie Reilly's exhibition 'Paradisaeidae' (17 – 22 Sept). The works in the show were described as exploring "the potential for intrigue and mystery in the natural world by presenting to us the rarely seen and much mythologised Birds of Paradise."

www.benniereilly.com