DIRECT DEMOCRACY

26 APRIL – 6 JULY 2013

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Laylah Ali
Hany Armanious
Natalie Bookchin
A Centre for Everything
DAMP
Destiny Deacon
Alicia Frankovich
Will French
Gail Hastings
Alex Martinis Roe
Andrew McQualter
John Miller
Alex Monteith
Raquel Ormella

Mike Parr
Simon Perry
Carl Scrase
Milica Tomic
Kostis Velonis
Jemima Wyman

CURATOR: GERALDINE BARLOW
INTRODUCTION

Direct Democracy explores the changing nature of our engagement with the democratic tradition and looks to the emergence of new democratic models. The exhibition reflects contemporary social movements, unrest and the desire for change; modelling key social dynamics and possible futures. In Direct Democracy, destruction and resistance are connected with the need to collaborate and rebuild. Recent political shifts such as the Arab Spring, the global financial crisis and movements such as Occupy are considered in relation to earlier struggles for autonomy and self-definition, as well as the interplay of constructive and corrosive dynamics in leadership and governance. The exhibition examines the shifting forms of political agency, in both emerging and foundational democracies.

Direct Democracy continues MUMA’s ongoing series of thematic and discursive exhibitions, such as Networks (Cells & Silos) and Liquid Archive. Curated by MUMA’s Senior Curator Geraldine Barlow, Direct Democracy features the work of a number of international artists together with artists and artist collectives from Australia. An extensive exhibition catalogue will also be produced in combination with the presentation of Direct Democracy.
Curator Biography

Geraldine Kirrihi Barlow is Senior Curator and Collections Manager at MUMA, where she has worked since 2004. Geraldine is of Irish, English and Maori descent, of the Ngapuhi iwi. She worked for the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts, the Melbourne International Biennal and Heide Museum of Modern Art before moving to MUMA. Geraldine’s projects include focus exhibitions with Claire Lambe, Gabriella Mangano and Silvana Mangano, Brook Andrew and Arlene TextaQueen. Geraldine has developed the major thematic exhibitions Liquid Archive, exploring how contemporary artists work with the archive as well as seeking to understand how technological and cultural transformation impact upon knowledge and memory; Networks (Cells & Silos) surveying connections between artistic and naturally occurring representations of networks and the rapidly evolving field of network science; Too Much of Me: 7 Paths through the Absurd (with Detour), an absurdist study of the excesses of self-reflection; The Ecologies Project, curated together with Dr Kyla McFarlane and featuring the works of 40 artists from Australia and New Zealand; Before the Body – Matter, exploring perceptions of the body; and Ghosts of Self and State, an exhibition interested in drawing out our constructions of self and state, the citizen and the body politic. She has also contributed numerous written works to journals, exhibition catalogues and artists’ monographs.

Exhibition Dates

26 April – 6 July 2013
Opening function: Saturday 4 May 2013, 3-5pm

Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue.

Public Programs

A series of artists’ talks, forums and workshops will be held to coincide with Direct Democracy.
See MUMA’s website for details: www.monash.edu.au/muma

Media

For all media enquiries please contact Rosemary Forde rosemary.forde@monash.edu

Raquel Ormella, Poetic possibilities 2012
courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane
LAYLAH ALI

Born Buffalo, New York 1968, lives and works Williamstown, Massachusetts

Laylah Ali’s paintings are populated with cartoon-like figures in scenes saturated with tension. Ambiguous and confounding, Ali’s work is often animated by socio-political issues and current events, juxtaposing everyday objects such as sneakers, Band-aids and dodgeballs with themes of political resistance and betrayal.

For more information, see www.ellenmillergallery.com

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

NATALIE BOOKCHIN
Born USA 1962, lives and works Los Angeles

Natalie Bookchin works at the intersection of documentary, narrative, social issues and new media, creating video installations covering subjects ranging from globalisation, social isolation and mass connectivity, to labour, technology, and online DIY dance videos. Through editing and compiling extracts of video blogs Bookchin reimagines separate speakers as collectives taking form as a public body in physical space.

For more information, see bookchin.net

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS
Recent individual exhibitions include: Now he’s out in public and everyone can see, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, USA, 2012; Testament, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, USA, 2009.

Recent group exhibitions include: Experimenta Speak to Me, 5th International Biennial of Media Art, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2012; TV Night: Cookies (or: a Eulogy to Privacy), Loving Art. Making Art, Tel Aviv, Israel, 2012; The Whole World is Watching, Centre National d’Art Contemporain, Grenoble, France, 2012; Networks (Cells & Silos), Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2011.
A CENTRE FOR EVERYTHING
(GABRIELLE DE VIETRI & WILL FOSTER)
Established Melbourne, 2012

A Centre for Everything is a collaborative project run by Gabrielle de Vietri and Will Foster. Open to anyone who wishes to participate, the project takes form as a series of regular evening events that bring together a Venn diagram of disparate interests that manifest as workshops, discussions or activities, and always involve something to eat.

De Vietri’s own art practice involves people and language, often in video and performance. Recent projects look at self-presentation through non-verbal and verbal communication; and the ways in which language is used, interpreted and manipulated to create or distort meaning. De Vietri recently returned from the Australia Council’s Künstlerhaus Bethanien residency in Berlin.

British-born, Foster is an artist and independent curator with a background in environmental and socially engaged arts practice. His projects have taken form as temporary and mobile structures and the curation of multifunctional social spaces and events in both urban and rural environments. Major projects have taken place in Glasgow, Berlin, Istanbul, Fykse and Melbourne.

For more information, see
www.centreforeverything.com
www.gabrielledevietri.com
www.willfoster.co.uk
DAMP
(NARELLE DESMOND, SHARON GOODWIN, DEBRA KUND & JAMES LYNCH)

Established Melbourne, 1995

Originally formed as a drawing workshop at the Victorian College of the Arts, DAMP has maintained a fluid membership over the years with an alumnus numbering over seventy. DAMP’s performances, actions and installations explore the potential of working collaboratively. Frequently irreverent and occasionally anarchic, DAMP’s projects are always imbued with a sense of fun.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS
Recent individual exhibitions include: Some Like It Boxed, TCB Art Inc, Melbourne, 2010; Scene 1, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 2008. Recent group exhibitions include: Bristol Biennial 2012: Storytelling, Bristol, UK, 2012; or either silver lining, TCB Art Inc. Melbourne, 2012; Gertrude Studios 2010, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, 2010; 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2009; Wayfaring, La Trobe University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2009.
WILL FRENCH

Born Melbourne 1981, lives and works Sydney

Will French’s work carries a common thread of a wry humour and playfulness. Addressing the personal, popular and political, his work spans traditional, mechanical and conceptual manifestations. French examines his own position in relation to these concepts and showcases them in a manner that encourages the viewer to accept his terms. He often utilises accessible objects and amplifies their reading through a slight tweak or blatant upending.

For more information, see www.willfrench.com.au

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Recent individual exhibitions include: Feint Echo, Firstdraft Gallery, Sydney, 2012; Winner Take All, Grantpirrie, Sydney, 2010; Frank-o-philé / Velo-style, Monster Children Gallery, Sydney, 2009. Recent group exhibitions include: Like, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney, 2012; The Drawing Show, Breenspace, Sydney, 2012; Nothing Like Performance, Artspace, Sydney, 2011; 1.85 Million – Art Peripheries, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, 2011; Luxurious Time & Space, Tokyo Wonder Site Project, Tokyo, Japan, 2010.
KOSTIS VELONIS
Born Athens 1968, lives and works Athens

Kostis Velonis is a sculptor with a background in architecture. Velonis takes up the grand narratives and edifices of ideas – from the May 1968 protests, to Russian constructivism, or the cultural legacy of antiquity – and carries them into the sub-narratives of personal struggles, passion and solitude. By colliding references from the history of civilization with more fragile personal moments, he depicts life as an oscillation between sociability and loneliness, affectation and naivety, knowledge and natural instinct.

For more information, see kostisvelonis.blogspot.com

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS
JEMIMA WYMAN

Born Sydney 1977, lives and works in Brisbane and Los Angeles

Jemima Wyman works across installation, video, performance, photography and painting. Through these media Wyman examines visually based resistance strategies employed within protest culture and zones of conflict. Her works explore the formal and psychological potentiality of camouflage and masking in reference to collective identity.

For more information, see jemimawyman.wordpress.com milanigallery.com.au

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS