

ART PAPERS

STRIKING IDEAS + MOVING IMAGES + SMART TEXTS

MARCH/APRIL 2012 US \$7 CAN \$9 UK £6 EU €8



INTIMACY
BETWEEN WORDS
+ DEEDS: JILL MAGID

LOVE
+ SELF-PERFORMANCE:
INNER COURSE

SOVEREIGNTY
TRIPLE CANDIE'S
EDITO-CURATING

INFRASTRUCTURE
BETA TANK'S
TAXING ART PROJECT





SLIPSTREAMS STAMFORD, CT

into flat images, as when a boy wearing a Spock T-shirt points a gun, and staring at the camera, is transformed into a photograph on the screen.

The black lead framing the stained glass images splinters their narratives and recalls the fragmentation of our contemporary image culture. Much like the detail or the clip dominates our visual culture, only the stained glass images are visible—neither their source nor the power(s) behind their messages are present. The four protagonists appear bathed in stained light as if the action were taking place in a space suffused with its authority. Dramatic correspondences between compulsive and numbed psyches include the recitation and repetition of halting dialogue. At times, it describes the inane: “What are you thinking about?” “A giant bug that can be used as a place holder.” Elsewhere, it is graphically violent: “And while he was doing it, cutting his own friend’s throat” A man and a woman “exchange gifts”—a glass orb and a parakeet working determinedly to escape its tiny cage—and “become sisters.” The characters wash their hands and each others’ feet, ask for blessings, follow and imitate each other, consider acts of passion, and repeat the angst-ridden, empty cry, “Oh God, forgive me.”

Wardill’s work is enhanced by knowledge of theory and historical context, but *Sick Serena* can be read simply through careful attention to its analogies. Wardill is neither a rationalist nor a proponent of irrationalism, but a meticulous skeptic. In *Sick Serena*’s final scene, the male protagonist, in his silver track suit, falls onto an angelic figure painted on the floor, beating and writhing on this image until he is spent, a moving image on a still image, struggling for access to the permanently impenetrable.

—Dinah Ryan

Tehching Hsieh’s convulsing body greets the viewer upon entering *Slipstreams: Contemporary Artistic Practice and the Shaping of Time* [Franklin Street Works; December 1, 2011—January 21, 2012]. For an entire year, Hsieh punched a time card in his studio each hour, on the hour, recording the act by documenting himself as he stared blankly at the camera for the video *One Year Performance 1980–1981 (Time Clock Piece)*, 1980–1981. His pained face is stricken with the mundane endurance of this anti-celebratory noting of time’s passing; an entire year reduced to six minutes and eight seconds.

Beneath Hsieh’s sobering greeting is a thoughtful group show about time—at once a taught mechanism, a tool of control, and something that easily escapes us. The works visualize and perform time. Here, personalized metaphors and modes of recording force a consideration of what time, or one’s existence through, in, and over time, might actually look like.

In Anna Lundh’s ongoing pseudo-scientific experiment and installation *The Year is a Python that swallowed an Elephant*, begun in 2009, a therapeutic voice-over narrates an imaginative tale that uses simple everyday things—sometimes themselves measures of time such as hours and months—as reference-markers that allow us to playfully imagine time as something else, such as animals and colors, for example. This internalization and regurgitation of time through new systems of categorization is again present in Stephen Sollins’ *Static* series, 2002–2006. The nine delicate paper works create repetitive grid-like rhythms of permanent-marker and correction-fluid rectangles that blank out names of movies and shows from television guides. The hand-yielded sentiment of the pen is at odds with the guide’s original content—glossy high-production Hollywood. The effect is a form of self-censorship. Like Paul Sharits, Sollins approaches film-related media through a kind of abstract charting. But while many of Sharits’ drawings are intended to be scores from which to create films, the neutrality of Sollins’ tessellated rectangles suggests something secret and infuriatingly incomprehensible—

the mind map for some other unknowable fiction.

This collection of stories, fictions, and myths from popular culture forms the backbone of these works, which are reconfigured to delineate new structures of time as a means to understand or distract us from our own subjective notion of time.

Pierre Bismuth is somewhere between these two states in *Following the Right Hand of Lauren Bacall* in “*The Big Sleep*,” 2009, and *Following the Right Hand of Ingrid Bergman* in “*Intermezzo: a Love Story*,” 2009, in which his marker pen lovingly traces the hand movements of the two iconic movie stars on Plexiglas over the screen shots of the films. Andy Warhol’s film *Empire*, 1964, in which he treats the building like his celebrity screen shot subjects, creates a single, still stare of New York’s architectural icon. Artists Adam Baran and Bradford Nordeen carve out a pocket of the contemporary moment to revisit this culturally stoic film, to self-reflexively document the very act of performing their quippy script-like conversation between two friends, via Twitter, and ultimately a small publication produced by Franklin Street Works. References to an era of movie-making gone by comes full circle in Conrad Ventur’s moving *Ramona (Candy for Werner)*, 2011, in which a clip of a singing Candy Darling is appropriated and projected at three angles, through crystals, to create a mesmerizing effect steeped with an eerie beauty.

Direct references to the movie industry and the great icons of its past deliberately nod to their continued reverence. This sentiment is positioned as a counterpoint to today’s less sophisticated and more agitated celebrity life—as well as our own, more private lives. While risking romanticizing the past, the exhibition goes beyond old/good, new/bad paradigms to instead reassert the logic employed by its artists, weaving a narrative of artistic lineage that makes light of or challenges the changing lens of culture, entertainment, and mass media by using source materials that themselves play with time as a subject. The result is a feeling of being away from time.

—Laura Barlow

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Anna Lundh, *The Year is a Python that swallowed an Elephant*, 2009–2011, experiment/installation/performative presentation/video with voice over, 14:13 minutes [courtesy of the artist and Franklin Street Works, Stamford, CT]; Conrad Ventur, *Ramona (Candy for Werner)*, 2011, two-channel video installation, 2011, recordings out-of-sync, rotating crystal pendant prisms, disco ball motors, 3:11 minutes [courtesy of the artist and Franklin Street Works, Stamford, CT]