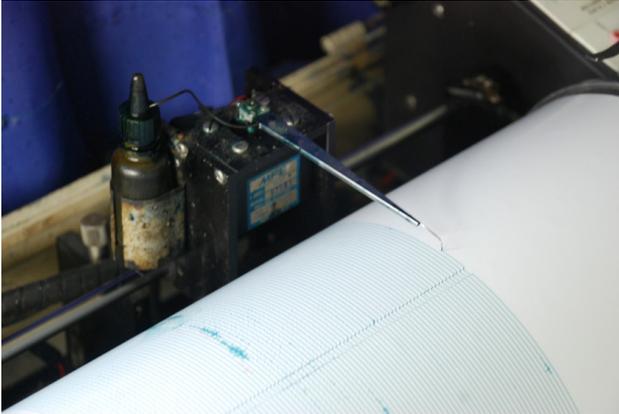


NEW WORLD RECORDS

Curated by Nick Mangan and Helen Johnson.



The more humans there are on the earth, the more complex and extreme are the ways we devise to measure, qualify and quantify ourselves, and our relationship to the places we inhabit. Sometimes we measure in order to understand, sometimes in order to prove, sometimes in order to triumph.

The 'record' is the grounding premise of this exhibition, and the differing ways in which each work engages with it present us with an idea of art as a means of apprehending change. The works in this exhibition range from the subjective to the disinterested, from the highly personal to the brutally universal.

We found that the simple motif of the circle manifested as a strong latent presence as the exhibition took form; beginning with Nick Mangan's filmically apocalyptic photograph of the sun

taken on Friday 13th, a week after Black Saturday. It quietly resonates with Charlie Sofo's clean-edged, brown circle, formal and enigmatic-seeming, actually a residuum of the artist's finger-grease and grime. The repetitive gesture is interesting to me as a defining aspect of recording or cataloguing, because it also forms the root of certain forms of anxiety, and certain approaches to attaining a meditative state. The spectrum of which these two conditions form opposite ends encompasses the breadth of practices in operation in this exhibition.

Next to Sofo's work, Stuart Ringholt's Picture magazine bearing lists of 'I had sex on these days' and 'I masturbated using this magazine on these days' is a candid record of one man's spermatozoic output for a four month period in 2002, the circle also quietly present in the magazine's cover layout. It manifests again in the sequins of Dan Bell's demurely extravagant Rope, in Piero Golia's vinyl master, and in the bleary pins of Hany Armanious' resin replica of a trashed pinboard, a solidified patina of cursory interactions.

Laresa Kosloff's silent, grainy black-and-white film of an elevator soaring vertiginously between the floors of the Melbourne stock exchange gives the impression of a world succumbing absolutely to the paradigm of rise and fall, whilst her contemplative film of the window of a prestige car dealership forms a lightly humorous meditation on 'how the other half live', the well-to-do browsers inside overlaid with reflections from the quotidian street scene outside.

Liza Rave's simple documentation of the now privatised, restricted and commercialised site of the Woodstock festival conflates the nostalgic, the cynical and the lost, the happy twittering of the birds over a low hum imbuing the idyllic-seeming landscape with a sense of wrongness. Within the field of this work's sight is Kate Smith's amusingly titled 23 fucked paintings of the farm, 2009 (27 great paintings of the farm, 2008), a stubby, phallic stack of abstracted landscapes that makes an irreverent but gravid contribution to the tradition of Australian plein air painting, and the role of the female artist in it.

Sriwhana Spong's mute, flickering film shivers through colour shifts, a residue of the artist's attempt to record an Indonesian artefact at the Met by hand-winding a role of super-8 film in order to circumvent the institution's no filming rule. Beside it, my own drawing Sometimes it's hard to see all the aspects of a given situation is an abstract rumination on complexity, though it in fact depicts a UV-lit cross-section of the inside of a meteorite, bringing attendant associations of impact, abstruseness and internalisation.

Piero Golia's record served in its original context as a tongue-in-cheek 'rally the troops', appropriating a battle speech of Aragorn's from The Lord of the Rings to produce a work for a fundraising exhibition which was to help save MOCA from bankruptcy and closure. Golia's work forms one end of a trio with Michael Stevenson's graph of the price of oil against the price of gold, and Mangan's collage that utilises two images from a single copy of The Australian which in this instance are a prestige car beneath the banner 'The Ultimate Australian' and an image of a refugee boat burning in the ocean off Christmas Island, which is placed to appear as a violent rupture in the car's bonnet.

This exhibition, then, can be read as a record of records, or a questioning of what constitutes a record, and in turn what service it can be put to.

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Halberd Head with Naga and Blades, Indonesia (Java), Eastern Javanese Period, Singasari Kingdom, ca. second half of the 13th century, Copper Alloy. Samuel Eilenberg Collection. Gift of Samuel Eilenberg 1996. 1996.468a,b

Super 8 transferred to dvd 2008

1'12 Silent Colour

Courtesy of the artist and Anna Miles Gallery.

This work is an attempt to capture onto film an Indonesian artifact at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Only still photography was allowed in the museum, so I created a simple pinhole camera using a cartridge of super 8 film. Without the mechanisms of the camera, a focal point is lost. Just as nothing can ever be precisely remembered or documented, the form of the artifact is not recorded, only the light from the space surrounding it. The film also captures in light, the rhythm of my hand winding on the film, playing on a belief held by some, that artifacts carry the vibrations of the hands that made them. The use of colour filters created by the cinematographer Storaro, help create a work that humorously references the Jupiter sequence from Space Odyssey 2001. A scene read by some as describing the transition from the material to the immaterial.

Sriwhana Spong

“We are stardust we are golden and we've got to get ourselves back to the garden.” 2008

16 mm colour film, analog sound, 7 minutes

The film revisits the 1969 Woodstock site now privately owned property by Alan Gerry a multi millionaire and pioneer of the privatized cable TV industry.

By capitalizing on the cultural significance of the event through privatization, Gerry has put an end to the constant pilgrimage and camping happening at the site since the festival was held thirty years ago. In the summer of 2008 a museum built on the edge of the festival site had just been made open to the public. As a dedication to the festival, the museum attempted to portray the countercultural movement of the 1960s. Equipped with interactive displays, a 360-degree rotunda where the „three days of love and peace“ could be experienced, a replica of a hippie bus and a gift shop.

Filming wasn't allowed in the museum nor outside the concert grounds. A few objects from the gift shop were filmed outside with permission. Using a 16mm film camera as well as an analog reel to reel tape recorder, the security and staff of the museum had intervened in the filming and continually forced us to stop recording. Thereby the observations are handheld and brief. The film repeats twice with a seamless transition.

Liza Rave 2009

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