

# JOHAN THOM

Complete catalogue of artworks

## Appendix A

**2008 - 2012**

Artworks produced as part of PhD, Slade School of Fine Arts, University College London

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ARTIST STATEMENT Statement prepared for 'Real Presence 2010: Expanded concept of art practice and art education', held in Belgrade and organised by Biljana Tomic and Dobrila Denegri (nKA-Ica, Belgrade).

I am truly disappointed and saddened to not to be there with you all. This is due to circumstances beyond my control. In this regard I have sent along a small component of the talk and the performance that I was due to give as part of the program.

The artist Gary Stevens has kindly agreed to distribute some gold Euro chocolate coins amongst the audience and to read this statement. Whilst you listen I ask that each of you take one and pass them along. You may do with these coins whatever you desire but with the exception of any diabetics in the audience, it is my sincere hope that you will eat them at some point.

Given the turn of events, the gold euro chocolate coin now seems an apt - if somewhat obvious - reference inasmuch as it brings together a number of 'threads'. These threads are as much conceptual, as material, artistic, practical and political in nature: I am not with you for I have had problems obtaining a visa. This due to the fact that Belgrade is not part of the EU - for which as luck would have it I currently do have a temporary Schengen visa. Moreover, I am currently living in London on a temporary student visa. It's all somewhat Kafkaesque and my situation is far from unique or extraordinary.

Moreover, I am a South African and gold does have a particular history there, in the messy politics and history of the 'new world' too. The promise and subsequent discovery of gold at the Rand in 1852 in no small way contributed to my being what and who I am today - a white African with the eponymous first name of 'Johannes'. (Statistically speaking it is estimated that more than 40% of all the gold mined in the world thus far came from the main gold reef in Johannesburg - ergo the nickname 'the city of Gold').

It may be said that the gold coin implies some

dominant form of 'currency' - one that shapes who we are, how we move around in the world (or not) and most specifically how this 'frames' the role of the artist therein.

In order to keep it short, I am just going to say one more thing: I have sent along these gold chocolate Euros because I think there is an important way in which artists communicate through materials - transforming ourselves and the world around us in the process. This way of communicating cannot simply be framed by discourse and language - a statement by which I mean to imply that such material exchanges will always modify, exceed and question the representational structures that we have so carefully cultivated in order to make sense of the world and our place in it.

In short, apart from what this gold chocolate coin looks like, it has a number of material properties that somehow resonate with the core of our very being as humans: its smell, taste, texture and so on all contribute to some kind of mutual affinity between us and it. This simple material affirmation of the world draws our attention not only to what we are, but rather, to what we could become.

And unlike the visa that participates in the more one-sided process of 'writing us', this story always has more than two sides or possible outcomes - a simple fact borne out by the sheer diversity and vastness of the natural world that surrounds us.

Johan Thom, London 2010



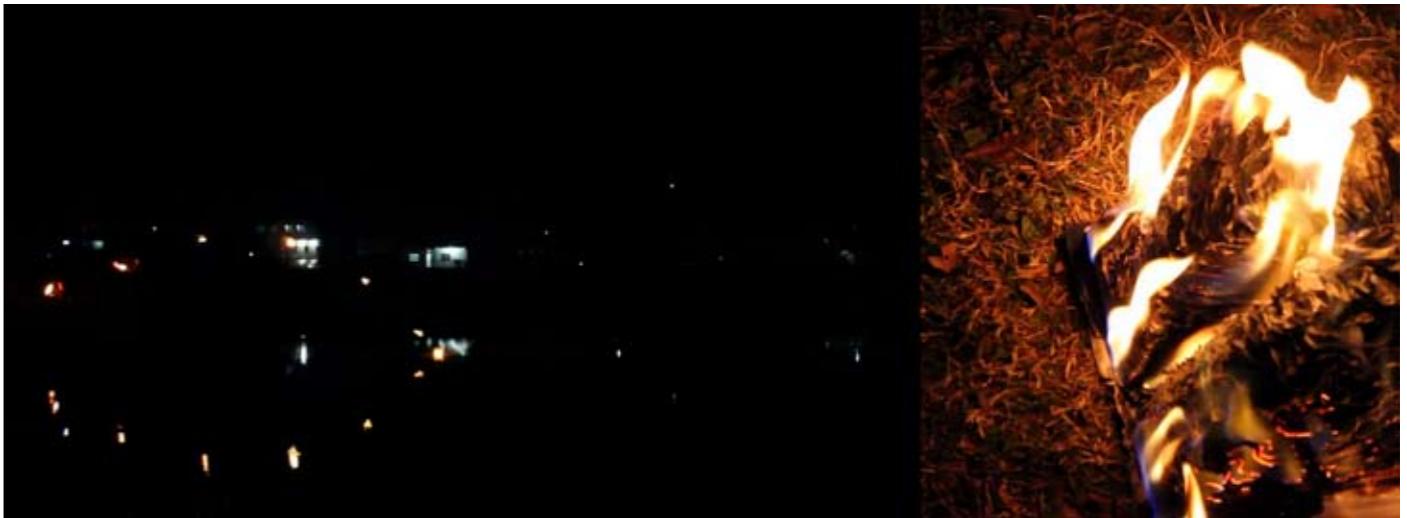
**FOUNTAIN** Current UK minimum wage (£5.93) compiled from various international currencies and placed by the grave of Karl Marx in London: 104 Rupees, 4 Euros, 4 South African Rands, 1.71 British Pounds. It is possible to determine the exact date of the work using knowledge of the exchange rate in conjunction with that of the minimum wage.



**LICKED COLONY** At first glance, the landscape appears rather plain without any clear sign of intervention. However, on closer inspection a wet line can be seen, a residue of physically licking the curved shape of the ant colony.



**BIBLIOCLAST** In this work I cast adrift an Afrikaans/ Dutch dictionary in the waters of Rotterdam harbour (the small red shape floating in the water).



**TEMPORARY MONUMENT FOR NALANDA UNIVERSITY** In this work I cast a burning Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary into a man made lake in Patna, India. The trajectory of the book can clearly be seen on the left of the image. In the reflection of the light upon the surface of the water this creates something resembling the shape of an eye. On the right is an image of the burning dictionary captured moments before I threw it into the water.



**CONTAINER** For this work I created an invisible public sculpture. I wanted to draw attention to the momentary, performative nature of the experience of art.

In order to do this I decided to create a large-scale, process-based sculptural intervention in the park, one that could organically disappear without leaving any trace of its presence at the site. I decided to work with a number of labourers to dig a hole that forms the shape of a container or 'bowl' in the earth. This shape was smoothed out and covered with cow dung. Finally another layer of turmeric (or 'haldi' as it is locally known) was added. The hole was left open for two days after which point it was filled with soil and neatly covered with the original grass layer. At this point the work became invisible again.

A number of conceptual threads are woven into the work:

India and South Africa are historically connected by way of the so-called Spice Route plotted during the

15th-17th century by European traders. The Cape of Good Hope was established as a resupply camp for the traders of the Dutch East India Company (who regularly traveled to south-east Asia in search of spices).

Haldi (or turmeric) is known in many parts of India as a particularly auspicious spice that is associated with marriage – thus signalling a co-joining of two different parties into a single union.

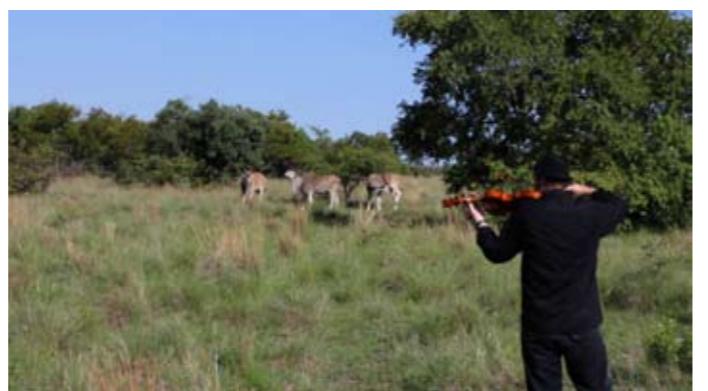
India is in fact home to one of the first great universities in the world, namely Nalanda University (fifth or sixth century CE to 1197 CE) – a fact I often pondered whilst staying in the province of Bihar (where Nalanda was also located). Today very few people know of this historical center of learning and one might say it has all but disappeared from view.



Detail, **CONTAINER** 2011, Production still of performative sculptural intervention. Turmeric, cow dung, soil, grass and labour, hole size 5m x 1.2m. Bodh Gaya, India



Above and facing page, Detail, CONTAINER 2011, Turmeric, cow dung, soil, grass and labour, hole size 5m x 1.2m. Production still of performative sculptural intervention, Bodh Gaya, India



**RECITAL** The work was filmed in late December 2010 on a private game reserve in the Northern province in South Africa. It was largely unplanned and arose from my chance discovery of an old violin at a family member's home a few days prior to the trip.

During the course of a number of days we travelled through the Highveld bush filming up to 30 individual sequences with various animals including Giraffe, Eland, Blue Wildebeest, Red Hartebeest, Kudu, Impala and Zebra, amongst others. The sequence from which the first image was taken best conveys the general tenor of the various encounters with these animals (approximately 40-50% of which yielded the same kind of result).

The work could be considered a loose response to Bruce Nauman's 'Violin Tuned D.E.A.D.' of 1968. In the original – filmed in his studio – Nauman stands with his back to the camera repetitively playing the notes DEAD. Initially I felt it could be interesting to redo the piece within the context of the contested South African landscape – including but not limited to, the ongoing struggle for land as well as that of its ever-shrinking pool of natural resources. These natural resources would include here, not only the vast but dwindling supply of gold and other minerals, but also the diversity of fauna and flora for which South Africa is so well-known internationally. Of course stereotypes abound with the notion of a 'wild Africa' perhaps encapsulating something about the supposed beauty and savagery of African landscape and of the people that inhabit it.

However, I continuously struggled with the tuning of the violin – a problem exacerbated by the poor condition of the instrument and the absence of any 'proper' musical referent. Even when I managed to get the instrument tuned it would not last for long. To cut a long story short, I soon felt the exercise a bit futile. In this way the work became something completely different, perhaps something more affirmative.

Once I let go of the clear conceptual and formal structure I had initially envisioned, the piece became animated by the possibility of interaction through the combined, minimalist use of sound and gesture. One could perhaps say that the actual material problems that I encountered during the production of the work led me to a reconsideration of – or in keeping with the musical terminology, a flattening out of – the very basic, foundational structures that underpinned its otherwise conceptual origins.

For me the end result cannot be thought a loss but rather suggests other beginnings and different possibilities. Finally, I feel the work is less about playing for an audience, or repeating a gesture, as much as finding value in the moment of interaction with others, including animals. In this regard, the video functions more as the somewhat soiled evidence of a process than a contained, final artwork.



LID/ SELF-PORTRAIT At the beginning of my period of study in London I decided to wear a hat and only the color black, every day for three years. I wanted to establish a definite, though unobtrusive marker through which this period could be 'framed'. In hindsight it is interesting to see how such a small change in my appearance would modify my artistic practice and general experience of life. This decision had some definite, immediate consequences as I could, for example, not enter into churches and was even turned away from nightclubs without having to remove the hat. The hat would become a prominent feature of many of the artworks produced during the time.

In this way the self-portrait on Wagner's grave is something of a double 'lid' upon a container: that of the gravestone as well as that of the hat upon my head. Both signal clear divisions between the various material states of being in time. I stopped wearing the hat and the colour black every day of the performance in Bodh Gaya, India, entitled 'Thank You' (14 February 2011). On the next page is an interview regarding the work I gave as part of an online exhibition entitled 'Opening Borders/Opening Objects', curated by MA/MFA/PHD students of, and hosted by, the University of Western Ontario, Canada, 1 May - 30 August 2010.

Q: Where did you get the object from?

(Please include the city and the venue)

JT: I purchased it at approximately 14h00 on Friday 29 September 2009 at a hat stall in Camden Lock Market, London, UK.

Q: Was the souvenir a gift, a purchased object, or a found object?

JT: Purchased, found object. (Even if you find an object one often still has to pay for it).

Q: If you purchased the object, how much did it cost?

JT: 35 Pounds sterling.

Q: What made you select/keep the object?

JT: When I moved to London from Johannesburg I felt that I wanted to change my appearance by wearing only black for the duration of my stay. Prior to this I had done a number of performance artworks wearing white workers uniforms. In some way I consider the change in my appearance indicative of a new phase in my work and life. Moreover I wanted to more fully integrate the performative aspects of my work into my everyday life without making it too obvious. I felt the hat fulfilled a multiplicity of roles here:

One, it suggested something about the notion of empire (the gentleman, the English bowler hat); Two, it effectively covered my head, stopping the natural flow of energy both in and out - thus it could function as something of a lid on an otherwise open 'container';

Three, it is functional in that it allows the body to retain much of its heat in the cold weather of the UK (especially since I regularly shave my head).

Moreover, on account of my wearing the hat I was refused entry (or requested to remove it if I wished to stay) at two sites during this period:

22 January 2011, 11h34 - Cologne Cathedral, Cologne, Germany. After entering the space a priest asked me to remove the hat. I politely declined and left.

25 September 2010, 22h14 – The My Hotel Bar at My Hotel, Brighton, UK. The bar has a 'no-hat' policy and would not allow me entry despite the fact that I was lodging at their premises.

The hat has also featured as an integral component in a number of artworks produced during this time. These include 'blood rites/ eat your words' (2010) and 'Prospecter' (2010), amongst others.

Lastly, I will stop wearing the hat at the end of my period of studies in the UK (I am currently completing a PhD at the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL on a Commonwealth Scholarship).

Q: Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your souvenir?

JT: On the inside of the hat the following inscription can be found: "100% Wool. Handmade. Made for England".



**TETHER'S ROW** This work was presented as a performance on 8 May 2009 at University College London. It was then shown on 14 October 2009 at the UCT Irma Stern Museum in Cape Town (South Africa) as part of a project entitled 'Visitor: 1-Day residencies', organized by artist Liza Grobler.

The text is read in a standing position whilst slowly turning in a clockwise motion. Once a word has been read it is thrown some distance away from the body of the performer, creating a circle-type boundary when the reading is complete. The residue is left for display purposes.

Broadly speaking, the text functions as a form of 'incantation' defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as a form of 'magical singing', a spoken 'charm'/'chant' through which to raise a 'spirit'. [ORIGIN Anglo-Norman, *aphet*. from *espirit*, Old French *esperit*, (also mod.) *esprit* from Latin *spiritus* breathing etc. (in Christian use, incorporeal being), from *spirare* breathe. Cf. *sprite*.] The idea being to give breath to, or to animate something that is abstract (or even lifeless) in substance.

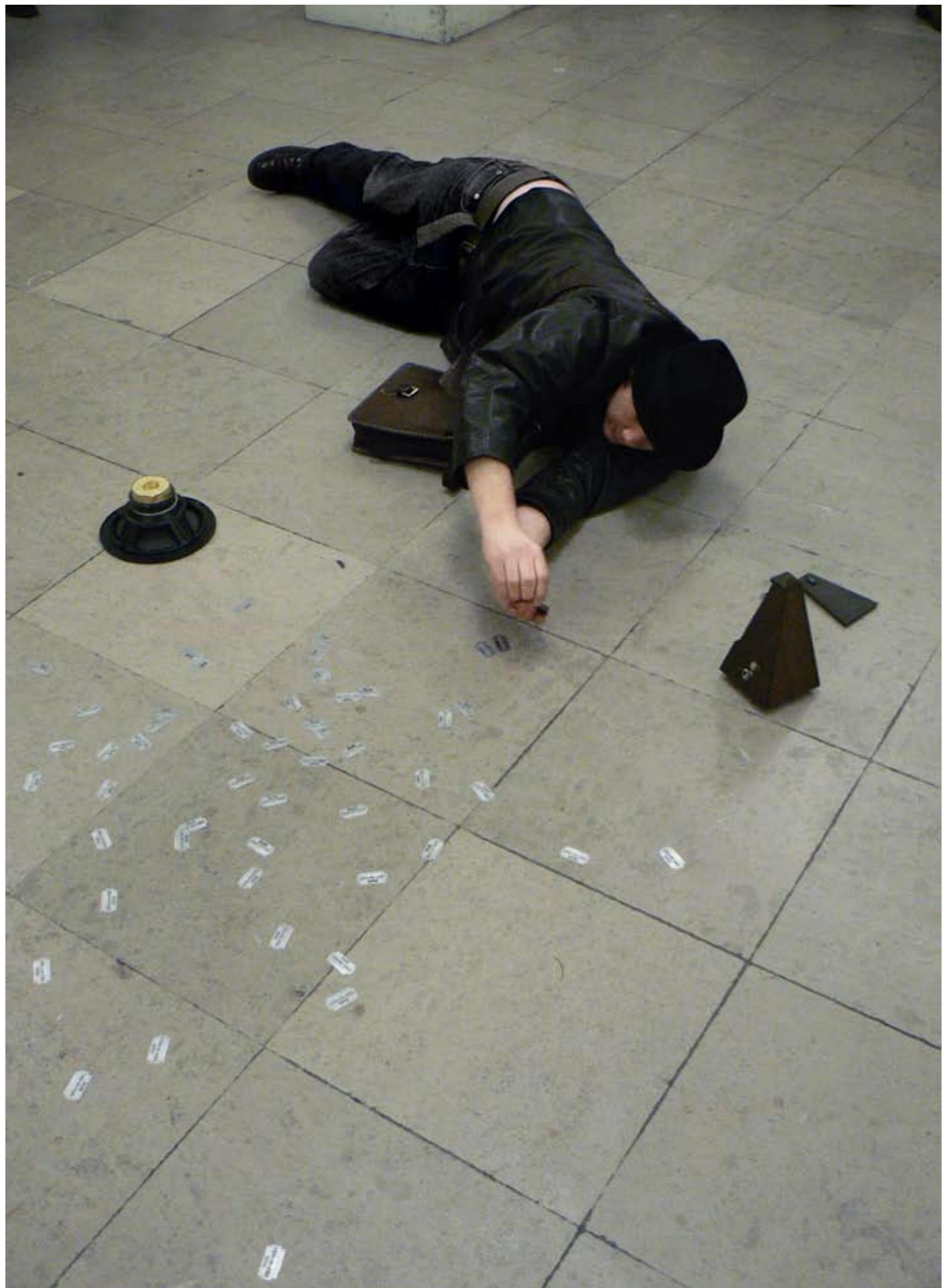
The text must therefore be spoken aloud, or 'intoned', in order to fulfil its purpose. Here the body, the written word and the object creates a series of machinic, corporeal connections – functioning like a production chain within which each element establishes a working relationship with one another, and together, calling something new into existence. Nonetheless there exists real tension between the act of reading and handling the sharp blades, and of 'intoning' the words. The blades may cut the skin, rupturing the body's surface and so dissolve the limit between inside and outside, written language and the body, what is seen and what may yet be called into existence.

Once the initial text has been recited the exact written sequence of the words is destroyed and are reconfigured anew with each successive reading: After the blades have been read (and thrown to the floor) they are collected again in a random order and recompiled as a single object, thus erasing the original text. In this way the artwork is continuously changing as it is re-performed in different contexts by different people.

The formal presentation of the work recalls the concept of 'cut-ups' (also known as fishbowling or decoupage) popularised by such authors as William S. Burroughs. In this regard, even though you may read the original text, it no longer holds any one-to-one correlation with the actual artwork.

Overall, the artwork is a meeting of sorts between various elements, including audience; artist; object; text; voice; the value of chance.

*in three anchor bay  
beneath an ever breaching wave  
not of water  
not of soil  
but where drowning meets with chafe and heat  
and open wounds still loathe to heal  
awash in bugles coil with salt  
yet pulsing far beyond our reach  
others float like nesting crows  
i knew you once or may yet still  
in turn of tide  
en masse  
set sail  
to bleached white sands long exposed to sun  
drenched  
cooled down by temperate flow  
this shore is neither yours nor mine  
to trample  
touch or disavow  
and castaway the chance to meet  
amidships afloat in tethers row*



rumble stumble  
I wonder  
how the slip occurred?  
this was solid ground  
but a moment ago  
one leg crossed over while the other stayed put  
through a line drawn invisible -  
afoot without plot  
now clumsily severed and running amok  
on terra firma gone soft  
uncharted and wet  
all pulpy disjointed a right bloody mess  
the tongue in my cheek  
cut loose from its place  
there lolling and rolling about on the floor  
obscenely devout  
it still curses and swears  
the loss of good lips  
to mouth a heartfelt adieu  
to an itchy phantom limb gone of a tripping  
sans owner

PHANTOM LIMB For this presentation I read a 100-word text exploring the relationship between my body, written language and the spoken word. Each word of the recited text is individually engraved upon a single razorblade and read whilst lying on the floor. The rhythm of the reading is determined through the use of a standard, Mazel wooden metronome running at 80bpm. Once all the words had been read, a speaker was used to collect the blades.



**DECOY** *A bird or animal, or an imitation of one, used to attract others. Also a person or thing employed to entice or deceive others into capture, danger, error, etc.; a swindler's confederate; a tempter; bait, an enticement (decoy-duck; decoy ship: used to decoy enemy vessels).*

For this work, I presented a performance-lecture that combined the body's physical action with the reading of text and the moving image. Each word was engraved on a single razorblade and read aloud from atop a ladder during the performance. My body physically cut into the projected image.

The sequence of projected images that accompanied the reading was drawn from found footage capturing the exact moment when a duck is shot over a lake. However, the sequence of images is reversed.

Once the reading was complete all the razorblades, or words, were collected with a speaker partially covered with gold leaf and placed upon the speakers' podium.

DECOY 2010, Performance, Text, razorblades, projected images, ladder; speaker. Performance held as part of 'Tables of thought' exhibition and seminar organized by the European Arts and Research Network and hosted by the Finish Academy of Arts 28-29 April 2010, Finland, Helsinki

it feels like forever  
this weightless moment  
that has me fobbing about  
as if I never even learned the basics  
much worse than sounding like a fool  
this spastic nowhere acrobatics  
ruffled feathers  
head over heels  
a common tumbler  
sun horizon sun veld  
oh look: it's the hills!  
sun sun  
solid ground approaching fast  
at least when they kicked me out of the nest  
I still made a show of resistance  
even if it were completely futile  
just one decent flap!  
before I go digging up daisies  
right next to that coocooing stiffneckbird  
that duped me so  
vlieg fokker vlieg!





**FLOCK/ MIRAGE** A mirage is defined as an optical illusion caused by atmospheric conditions, usually the refraction of light in heated air. The most well-known example is probably the false appearance of a distant sheet of water in a desert, or on a hot road.

I used 3,500 razorblades to create the illusion of a pond onto which a decoy duck could be placed. I first 'read' the wooden duck, twisting and turning the shape with my hands as my eyes followed the 100 word text letter-punched into its gilded body. The reading of the animal body reminds perhaps of a medical inspection such as performed by a veterinarian, but also as a form of extispicy as practiced in ancient Mesopotamian and Roman times (and may still be found in many parts of the world today). Extispicy is the act of inspecting anomalies in the entrails of animals in order to predict or divine future events.

One could well argue that extispicy was indeed one of the earliest forms of autopsy performed by knowledgeable individuals in order to help determine general ecological information about an area – information and expertise that would no doubt be valuable to nomadic peoples.

During Roman times haruspices (practitioners of extispicy) became known as 'auspices', a term ostensibly drawn from the Latin for 'avis' (bird) and 'spectare' or 'specere' (to see). However, in this performance a representation of an animal - the wooden decoy - is inspected and one's attention is drawn to the somewhat violent act of performing the reading by hand: the decoy's neck is twisted more than once in order to follow the text.

Once the action was complete I stepped barefoot onto the mirage (thus metaphorically walking on water) and placed the duck in the center of the illusion.



30 Above and facing page, FLOCK/ MIRAGE 2011, Performance. Gilded antique decoy duck, 3500 razorblades, text. Held as part of 'Polyplay 9: Animal'. Center for Creative Collaboration, London, England

listen

there it is again

even as i whisper i hear it still

trailing my voice in perverse replication

almost the same but not quite

as if somewhere somehow out there

in the bouncing back and the going through

the muck and the rain

and the fleshy pouting grit

of it's mispronounced migration

some words were irrevocably lost

whilst others were delayed

and found uninvited company strangely grafted

onto their limbs

before flocking to the edge of spring:

i didn't say that

or say it in that way

much less mean for it

to come out suspended

like some

primordial mating call



Production still and text for FLOCK/ MIRAGE 2011, Performance. Gilded antique decoy duck, 3500 razorblades, text.  
Held as part of 'Polyoly 9: Animal'. Center for Creative Collaboration, London, England



**THANKYOU** This performance was based upon the creation of an organic machine that connects a number of materials (milk, oil, mustard seed, glass, sculptures) with a number of physical bodies (the artist, the assistant, the participant). In this way, a series of intimate, repetitive actions and material tensions generated a circuit of energy. In turn, this circuit allowed for the transformation of the various discrete elements (materials, bodies, actions) into a singular organism.

In order to accomplish this, members of the public were invited to pour sump oil and milk (in that order) into my open, outstretched hands. Sewn through the skin of each hand was a small Buddha sculpture: on the right the emaciated, almost skeletal, black Buddha; on the left, the white 'post-enlightened' Buddha.

The performance assistant would then guide the volunteer to take their position in front of me, at which point I would open my eyes and focus my attention momentarily only on them. Finally, I would bow slightly and say "thank you". Soon this evolved into a situation where the participants would do the same. The assistant would then invite another member of the public to participate.

The performance was complete only once the milk and sump oil was finished.

Performance assistant: Douglas Ajitvar Kumar.



Above and facing page, Production stills, **THANKYOU** 2011, Performance, Sump oil, milk, glass, mustard seeds. 14 February 2011. Bodh Gaya, India



Above and facing page, Detail, THANKYOU 2011, Performance. Sump oil, milk, glass, mustard seeds. 14 February 2011.  
Bodh Gaya, India



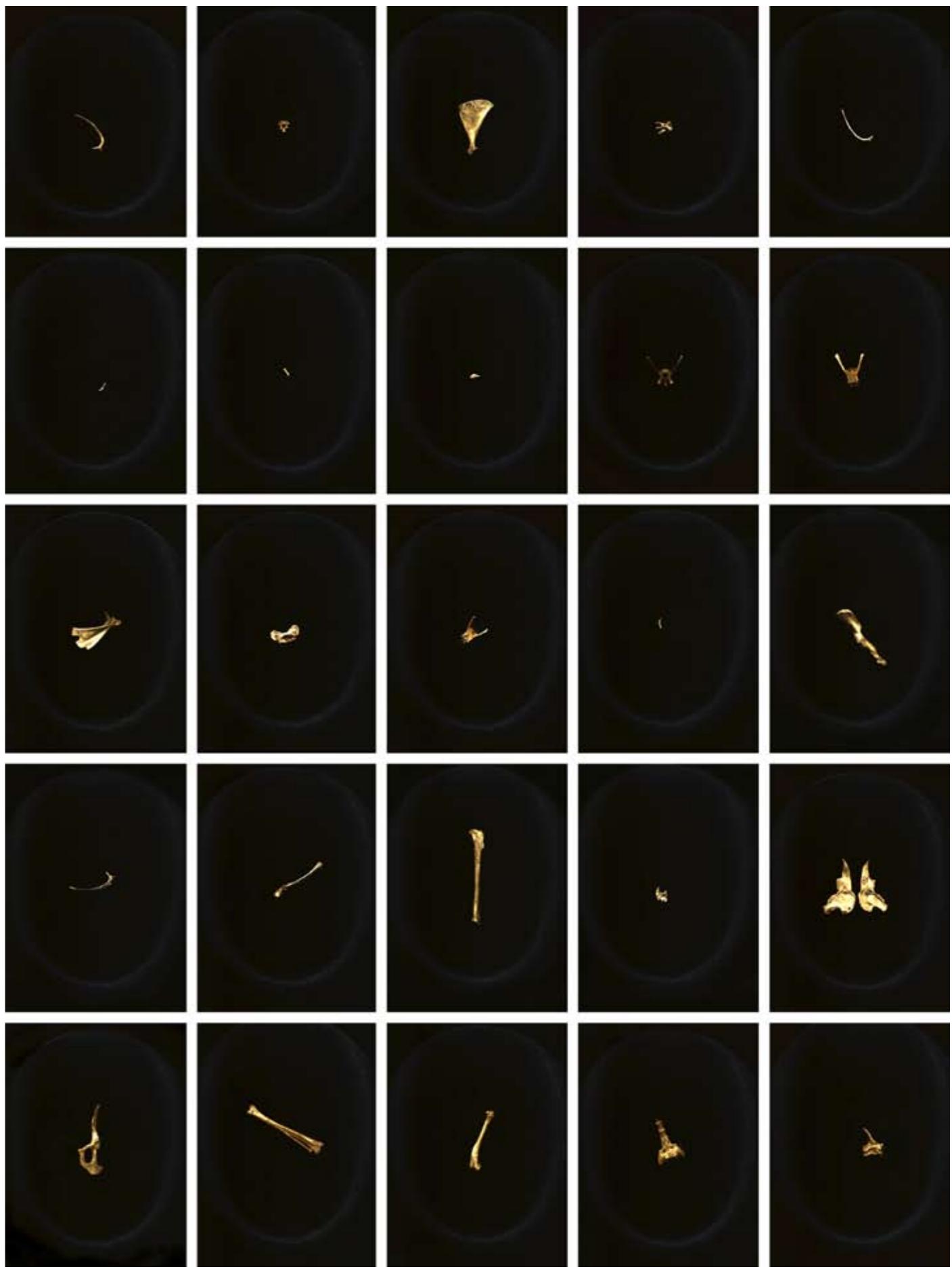
in blood red waves  
 heads and feet come a-rolling down the hill  
 Sisyphus has his hands full but he remains ever so committed  
 below prince valiant tallies the count and readies the bonfire  
 ra ta ta ta ta (some half-wit lights a string of fire crackers)  
 eleven hungry bellies growl in unison  
 and the chorus stamp their feet  
 braai bra braai!  
 (thula thula se fokken gat)  
 ukuziphatha kwabaphilayo kuthunaza amadlozi!

dull knives cut thin strips of meat from lean bones  
 eyes goes pop! as dirty fingers prod all the remaining cavities  
 digging digging (prospecting as in days gone by)  
 small hammers appear when persistence pays off and produces a lucky find  
 a solid gold filling (this must be eldorado)  
 enough of them and we can make ourselves a shiny calf boys  
 stood daai vuur boetie, stood hom warm!  
 ukuziphatha kwabaphilayo kuthunaza amadlozi!

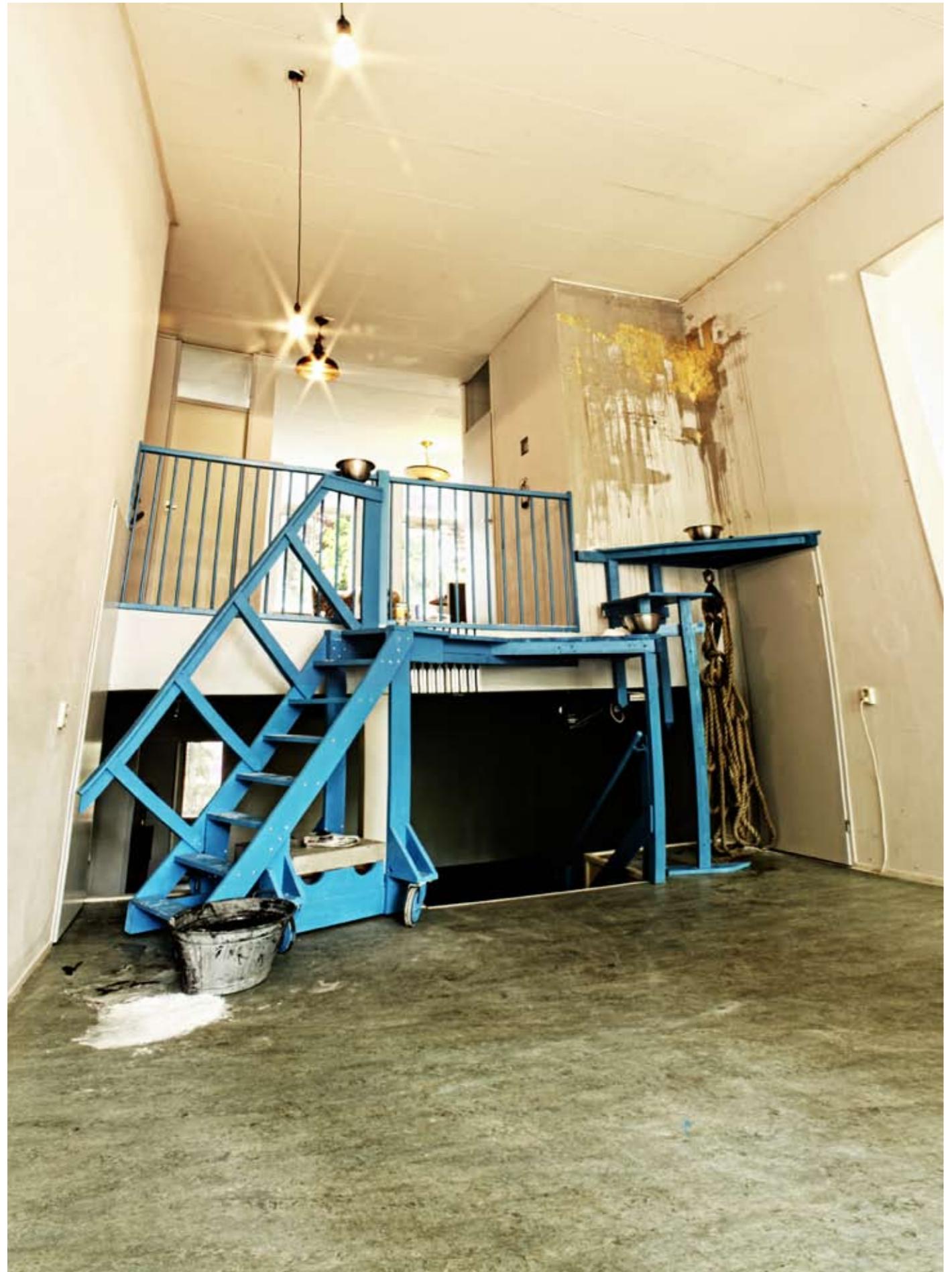
here and there a lost ass brays  
 nudging other stragglers and sniffing about like a dog  
 as if it might still find Sampson among the masses  
 a hand instinctively reaches behind its ears  
 but its the jawbone that itches  
 (what philistine cannot understand?)  
 hierdie donkie weet waar die groot water lê  
 en hy's hier vir sy date met destiny  
 ukuziphatha kwabaphilayo kuthunaza amadlozi!

**PROSPECTER** The reading of a 206-word text is accompanied by a slide projection showing 206 images of different gilded rabbit bones. Each stanza of the text was read according to a different rhythm.

In turn, the rhythm was determined by a wooden Mazel metronome, set at the following tempo: 60bpm, 120bpm, 180bpm. This increased the intensity at which the words were read and the images (manually) advanced.



40 Above and facing page, Production stills, PROSPECTER 2010, Held as part of 'Arts research: Publics and purposes' Conference, European Arts Research Network (EARN), 15-19 February 2010, Dublin, Ireland



**FIGUREHEAD** This performance explores the concept of a 'figurehead' through a combination of text, action and gesture. A figurehead is commonly defined as the head of an organization (such as the state, a corporation and so on) that functions largely as a symbolic figure of power. Nonetheless, the word actually derives from the practice of placing a carved or cast sculpture over the cutwater of a ship.

With the help of De Zwarte Ruiter, I constructed a space in the entrance to the gallery whereby its corner would suggest something like the prow of a ship. For the performance I would transform myself into a figurehead. In turn, the audience was transformed into passengers aboard the vessel for the duration of the performance. I also wrote three fictional texts in which the figurehead speaks of its experiences whilst at sea.

The figurehead enters into conversation with two other entities aboard the ship, (the captain and the person manning the crow's nest) whilst looking into the horizon and crossing the oceans.

For the performance itself I repeated a sequence of events three times: First I washed my hands with water and salt. I then climbed the stairs towards the prow, collecting honey and oil in each hand that I would siphon off into a metal container on the small platform. During this process I would recite excerpts from the texts that I had written on the wall covered in honey and gold leaf. The honey and oil would become mixed and flow through a hole in the platform onto the large rope construction hanging directly below. Eventually the oil and honey started spreading on the gallery floor.

Each sequence of actions took approximately 5 minutes to complete.



Above and facing page, Production stills, FIGUREHEAD 2010, Performance. Wooden construction, 23 ct gold leaf, honey and text, crow feathers, rope, stainless steel bowls with honey and extra virgin olive oil, flour, found objects, water. 4 June 2010, De Zwarte Ruiter Gallery, Rotterdam, The Netherlands



(i)

ek het geen vlees nog bloed  
tog vlek die koel bries wel my vel  
terg speels aan bolwange met wille  
spatsels sout en water  
skaaf-skaaf  
aan goud en murg en been so strak  
gevang in blik-des-voorts  
'n logge windryer wat smag  
bly soek  
na die smokkelfontein  
van literis liefdeswater  
wat so oor krans en berg  
vir ewig bly stroom

(ii)

skree kwaak-kwaak!  
of watookal n ou kraai sal kraak  
as skerpe glinster  
die horizon se sluier versplinter  
en nuwelandebinneval  
soos 'n vinger in n goue ring wat harte  
versamel deur trou te sweer  
aan ieder matroos  
wat bid vir n stukkie land van sy eie

(iii)

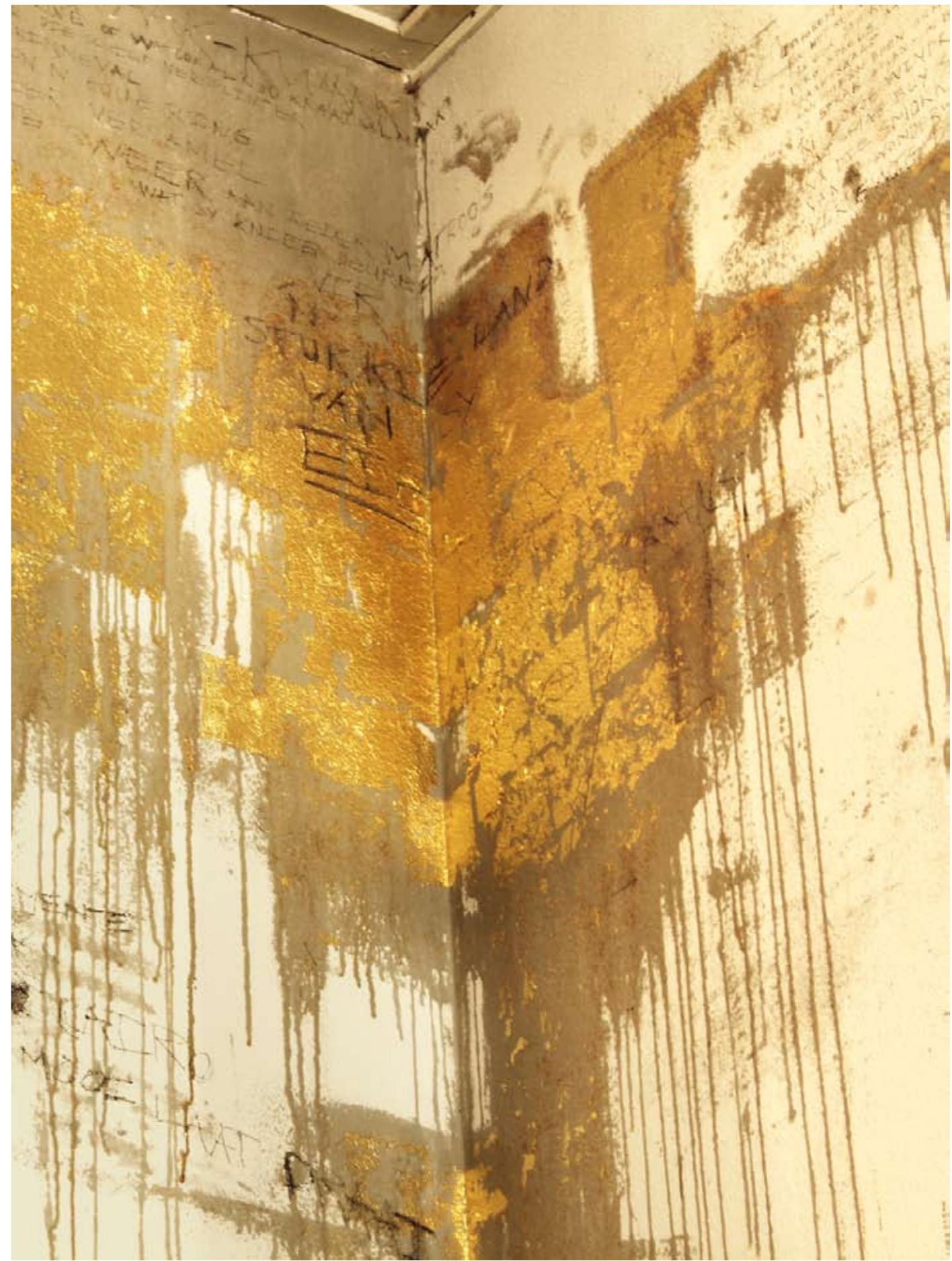
ek is die bas die mas die kop op die  
kalf  
wat heunings spruit  
oral uit sy gaatjies uit  
n blinde siener wat landmas kurf  
geduldig omseil en beset met  
blinke instrumente  
wat elke kiepie kraai  
van kaapstad tot kairo  
se kop laat draai  
skoon fokken morsaf

(iv: slot)

wanbeeld, drogbeeld, houtbeeld huurgod  
goudgod  
(met stywe seile duisend myle  
die horizon in)  
oop see

Production still, FIGUREHEAD 2010, Performance. Wooden construction, 23 ct gold leaf, honey and text, crow feathers, rope, stainless steel bowls with honey and extra virgin olive oil, flour, found objects, water. 4 June 2010, De Zwarte Ruiter Gallery, Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Photographic credit Hans Wilschut

Production still and text for FIGUREHEAD 2010, Performance, Wooden construction, 23 ct gold leaf, honey and text, crow feathers, rope, stainless steel bowls with honey and extra virgin olive oil, flour, found objects, water. 4 June 2010, De Zwarte Ruiter Gallery, Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Photographic credit Hans Wilschut



Above and facing page, Detail, FIGUREHEAD 2010, Performance. Wooden construction, 23 ct gold leaf, honey and text, crow feathers, rope, stainless steel bowls with honey and extra virgin olive oil, flour, found objects, water. 4 June 2010, De Zwarde Ruiter Gallery, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

VIDEO



Video stills, FLOW 2011, DVD, Edition of 5.Two-channel video installation



FLOW I decided to roughly cut a 'Shiva Linga' in two in order to make a somewhat humorous statement regarding the relationship between the masculine and the feminine.

The two separate sections of the sculpture (the 'linga' and the 'yoni') are hung from my body using fishing line. This creates a sculptural form through which the activity on the streets of the city of Gaya is re-framed. The sharp incision that the fishing line produces on the body recalls the act of cutting the stone Shiva Linga in two: the line around the male neck resembles that of decapitation whereas that on the arm creates an almost yoni-like shape. Finally, honey and milk is poured onto the head and arm respectively.

The work is displayed as a two-channel video on plasma screens lying flat on the floor. The force of gravity, so readily apparent in the flow of the liquids and the hanging forms, thus seem to draw the shapes and their symbolic meanings closer to one another. Moreover, the viewer is forced to walk around the screens in order to view the work, thus adding a decidedly sculptural element to the piece.



HOST II This video was filmed at the Anatomy Museum of the Royal Veterinary College, London. The viewer is witness to an intimate encounter between myself and the specimens contained in the glass display cases throughout the museum – mostly animal, some human.

Whilst turning my body in a clockwise motion I softly recite a 100-word text written specifically for the occasion: the text, engraved on ordinary razorblades (one word per blade), addresses the relationship between my body as a meaty living thing, and the stripped-down specimens on display. For me, this is a deeply violent encounter with the humanist systems of studying, classifying and displaying the fruits of its labour.

I kept thinking about the relationship between flesh, bone and form in the artworks of English painter, Francis Bacon (1909-1992). In Bacon's work one often finds a single colour plane, or 'form' from which a figure is born. But, placing myself here, in the midst of the many reflective structural planes, my body explodes, no longer emerging from a single plane or held together by the structure of the bones. For a moment, I emerge both from and within a sequence of events.

My body is fragmented into multiple reflections that take on a life of their own: Initially these reflections duly follow the central figure's movement. But, as the action progressively unfolds, the two reflections on the side go completely out of sync until, as if by magic, they all complete the performance at exactly the same time.

The 'words' produce sound as each blade is thrown against the various material surfaces that surround me.

Production assistant: Wayne Binitie  
Special thanks: The Royal Veterinary College (RVC);  
Mr Andrew Crook (Senior Technician, Department: Veterinary Basic Sciences, RVC)

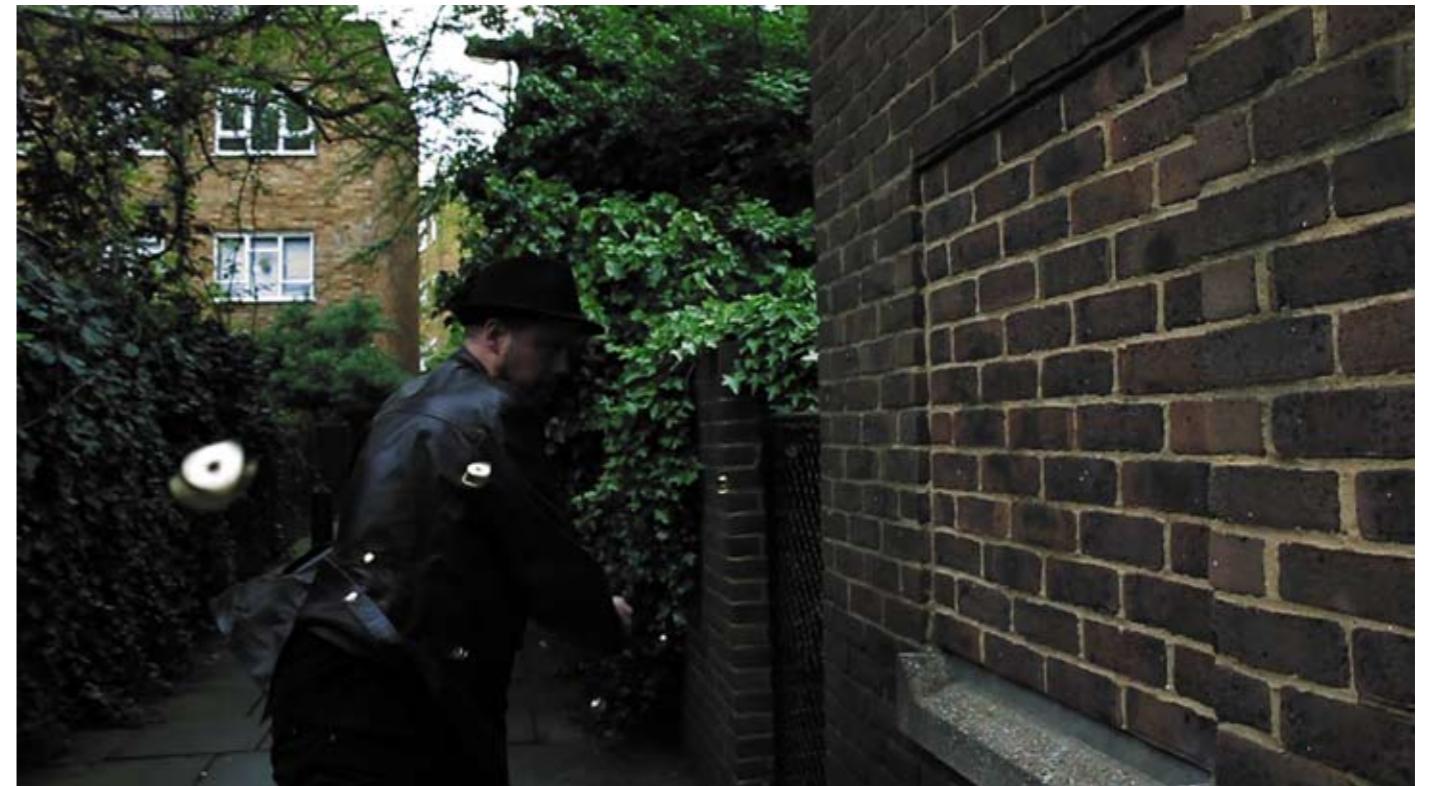


spinning wildly  
into the blind light of chronic insomnia  
where pupils dilate repeatedly  
and struggle to adjust  
to the tricky flickering  
of a half-open half-shut vibrato  
that give shapeless masses temporary form  
as they come in closer  
to the cut  
that separates and unites  
the outsider's lament  
from the stealthy humour of the ancient ghosts  
that trawl this nowhereland  
and snicker among themselves  
as they revel in the anomaly  
of our barenaked shame  
like feral cats with sharp claws and poison teeth  
that clean-preen and sink-right-in  
a body still dispersed in time&space  
without ever drawing a single drop of blood

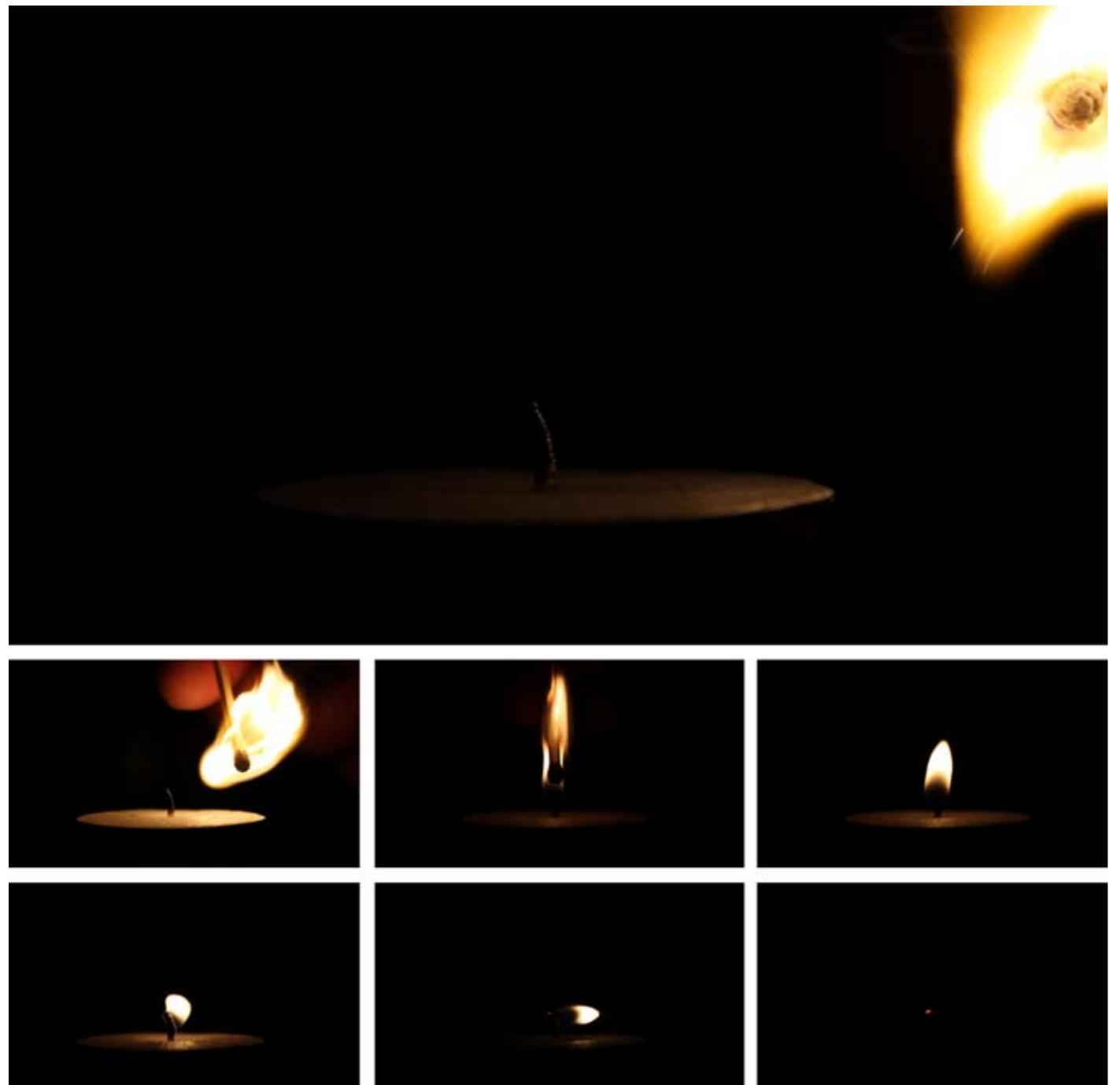


54 ANI-MALE, C-Type print on aluminum, 60cm x 43cm. Edition of 5. Photographic production still from HOST II 2010, Anatomy Museum, Royal Veterinary College London, England

Text and production still, HOST II 2010, Anatomy Museum, Royal Veterinary College London, England



**SHELLSHOCK** In this video, I throw a handful of duck-calling whistles against a bricked-up window. The sounds of the whistles hitting the wall, simulates the sound of broken glass. The whistles are made from 12 bore brass shotgun shell casings. The video was filmed at fifty frames per second, slowing the action down by half.



**CROSSING OVER** A short 100-word text is recited with my lips close to the flame of a candle. The flame dances around as I recite the words. Each time a word is said too loudly the flame dies and the candle must be re-lit again.

The text was based on the idea of a soldier stuck on a battlefield without a gun, and how, in a moment of doubt he considers the possibility of killing the soldier walking right in front of him and to take his weapon for his own protection.

brother  
 hold the line  
 steady now  
 advance  
 keep those bullets close  
 when the man in front with the rifle falls  
 it's all yours  
 or take it from him now  
 it matters so very little  
 though he may not be on the other side  
 he sure as hell is your enemy  
 you still have your hands  
 and they should be good for something  
 never see you coming in the crossfire  
 suckerpunch  
 throttlebytheneck  
 its over  
 in the blink of an eye  
 the agony of the long wait  
 mercifully stopped dead in its tracks  
 consider it a kindness  
 this crossing over  
 eyes wide open

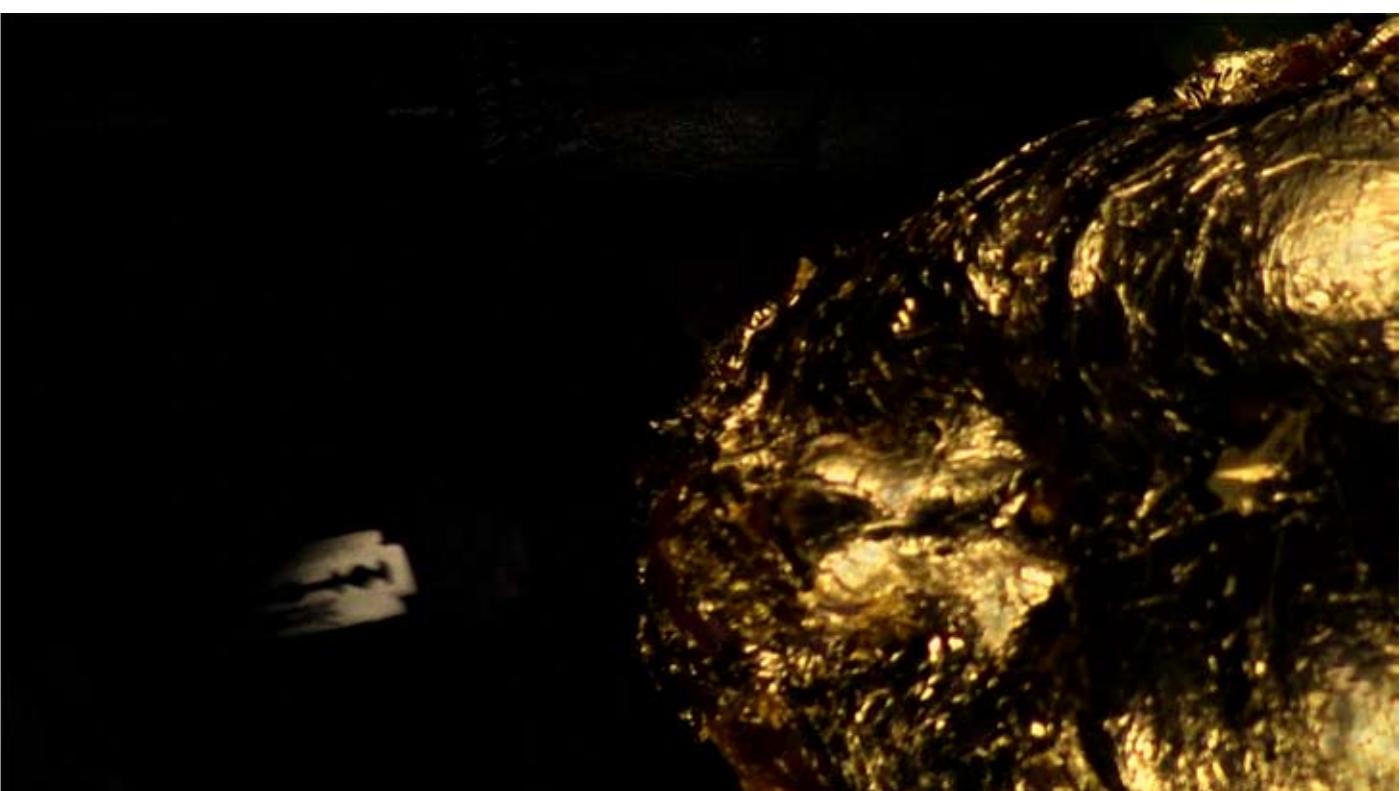


**BLOOD RITES** My face is covered in honey and 23ct gold leaf. I place 50 individually engraved razorblades in my mouth. Each blade is then moved from cheek to cheek and spat out into a black hat. The gesture reminds of communion and even of the concealing of blades in prisoners' mouths for nefarious intentions.

Each of the blades is engraved with a generic term for a family member including 'mother', 'father', 'son', 'cousin', grandmother and so on. However, the list of family names also include non-blood relatives such as 'partner', 'divorcee', 'ex-wife' etc.

The work has been slowed down to almost 40 percent of its original speed making for a meditative viewing experience quite at contrast to the violence of the repetitive gesture.

The soundtrack was made using samples of various ships and submarines traversing the oceans (perhaps referring to my own heritage, and the shipping trade routes through which South Africa was founded).





**ILLUMINATION** In this video, a pair of hands is submerged in milk in a steel bowl that has been covered with 23ct gold. Slowly, the milk drains from the vessel, revealing an object cradled in the hands before the bowl fills up with milk again. The process seamlessly repeats, revealing a series of objects that appear almost completely unconnected but for their inclusion in the work: a compass; a length of rope; engraved razor blades; a Kruger Rand; sewing needles and various sewing tools; a fish and a rabbit's skull, amongst others.

There is a slow transformation of color and light that occurs as the milk drains from the bowl revealing the gold surface: gradually the image becomes saturated and visibly brightens until parts of it suffer from almost complete color burnout. This effect was not accomplished in post-production editing but, rather, formed an integral part of the technical process the camera capturing the event.



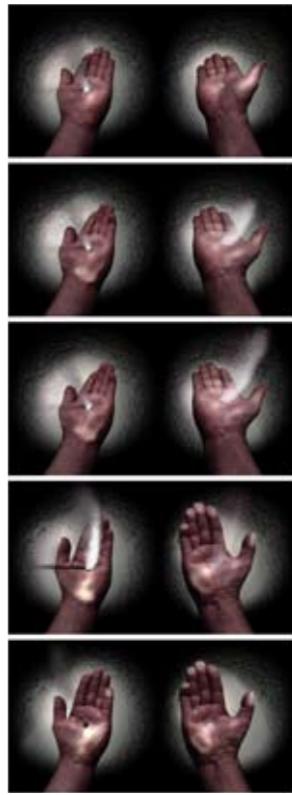


64 PANOPTICON 2009, Installation, 125cm x 200cm x 45cm. Video projection on salt, mounted unpolished half-round glass shelves



PANOPTICON On an obvious level the work refers to the sufferers of stigmata, the ecstasies who experience the divine in the flesh through the appearance of wounds/ marks on their hands, feet, side, or brow - the marks of the Passion of Christ with corresponding and intense psychological and physical suffering. However, a flowing stream of salt is substituted for blood, perhaps referring to the healing properties of salt as an antiseptic material but also playing with the idea of 'rubbing salt in one's wounds', thus compounding the agony of one who has already suffered injury. However, unlike the flow of blood from a wound, the salt is actually flowing upward towards the viewer - as if the holes in the hands have become small fountains through which the salt materializes.

For this work, I thought specifically about the notion of distance, of looking outward into space as a means of establishing a relationship with the world. Often, one imagines that the sensory act of looking is some kind of guarantee of objective knowledge (as opposed to say touching, smelling or hearing - sensory experiences that are somehow 'suspect' in their subjectivity, their intimacy).



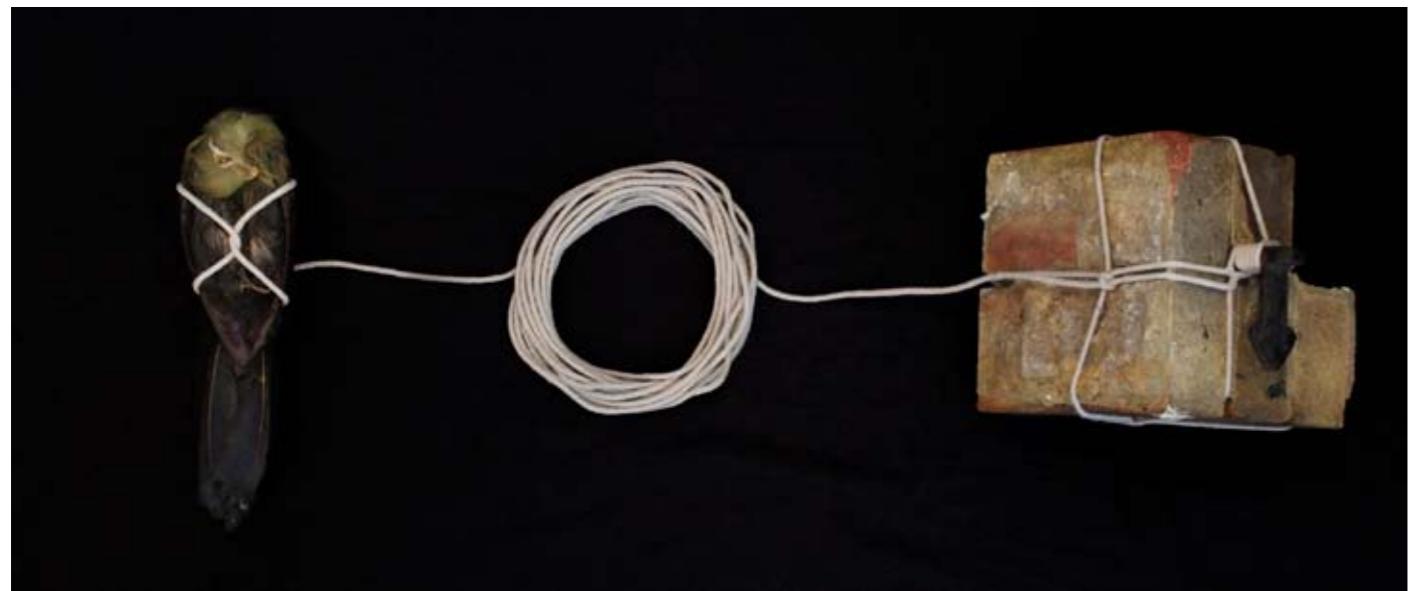
Left, Installation view; Right, Video stills, PANOPTICON 2009, Installation, 125cm x 200cm x 45 cm. Edition of 3. Video projection on salt, mounted unpolished half-round glass shelves

But here, this certainty is questioned and rendered ambivalent through the disappearing body: the gaping wound that makes of Saint Thomas a believer. That is to say, exactly because one believes in what you see with your eyes, you are drawn into a complex system of subjective beliefs that, as in the case with stigmata, may have a very real impact on the body - both yours and that of others.

The viewer is ultimately positioned as an integral part of the work itself, taking the place of St Thomas and the desire inherent in his request to become a believer. By looking at the wounds, St Thomas becomes a believer in a particular kind of reality, one constituted by the interrelated values of 'seeing' and 'believing'.

Of course, given the title of the piece (Panopticon - a reference to Jeremy Bentham's plan for a prison), relations of power are inherent in this exchange between St Thomas and Jesus, the viewer and the artwork. In Bentham's Panopticon, the reality of the prison is fundamentally underpinned by, and indeed constituted by the act of looking.





**FALLEN** During my time in London I became very familiar with two bridges, Waterloo-and Blackfriars bridge. In part this is due to the fact that my wife works close by and we often have lunch together. From there it is an easy walk across Blackfriars or Waterloo bridge to reach the Tate Museum of Modern Art, a place I visit as often as I can.

In crossing those bridges I often think about the Victorian trope of the 'fallen woman' and its relationship to art and morality: Both Waterloo and Blackfriars bridge were used by Victorian artists and writers (including the Pre-Raphaelite painters Dante Gabriel Rossetti and George Fredric Watts, amongst others) as the setting where so-called 'fallen' women would commit suicide by jumping into the River Thames. Having lost their sexual innocence by indulging in extra-marital affairs, such 'unchaste' women followed a doomed, though well established trajectory from angel to whore, becoming prostitutes and/or pregnant and finally committing suicide (thus, well and truly having fallen from the grace of God). Weighed down by their shame, guilt and despair they finally, though quite appropriately, disappeared into the murky depths of the river. Such women were in effect viewed by Victorian society as being emblematic of the corruption of human mores experienced by the urban city dweller and their depraved, coproreal lifestyle. Nonetheless, where it concerns the expression of their sexuality; the double standard applied to women and men during the Victorian era still pervades popular culture and society today.

I wanted to create something like a 'little' monument for the few women that actually jumped from those bridges and how, in that moment of flying; theirs is a resolute act of self-assertion, autonomy and defiance.

Of course the overall outcome is the same – the material properties of the human body (such as its physical its weight and form) cannot escape the force of gravity, nor of the shock of plunging into the icy cold.

But, in casting oneself into such a space – one defined materially (and not only morally) - there exists a real sense of freedom and escape too.

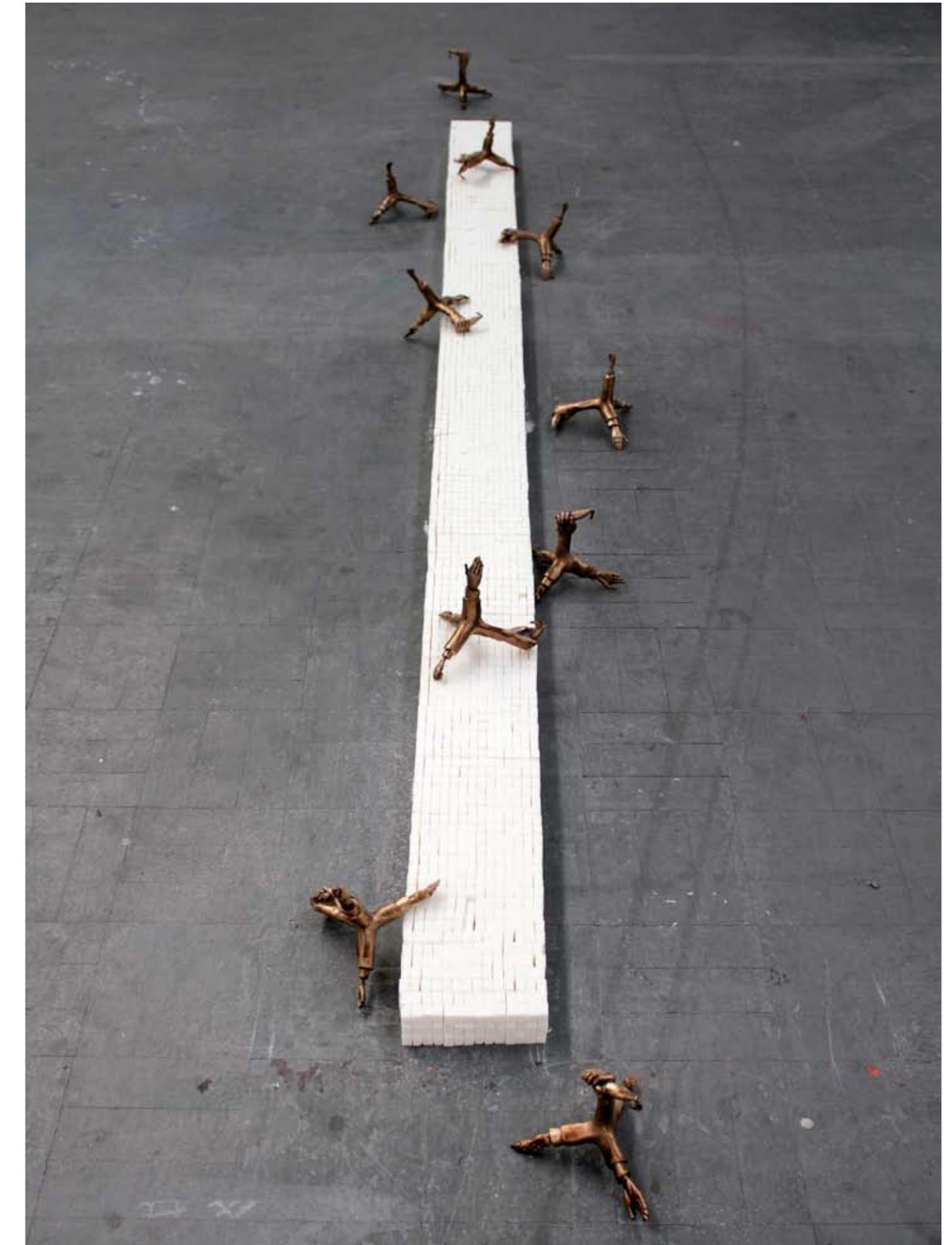
I believe, that notwithstanding his reservations about the inherent violence of the natural world, Darwin understood this too and so, despite the limitations of material world (the forces of gravity, of biology, the struggle for survival and so forth) the violence of their workings are, in my mind infinitely more merciful than those of human morality.

Such natural forces (as gravity) do not seek to change the meaning of a human body; for example, to rectify or punish it for its deviation from the moral norm. But rather, as Darwin himself noted, in nature death is swift and one's suffering is not disproportionately prolonged. Nature expects no confession and grants no forgiveness; what is at stake is not the soul, nor one's intentions or even your sins: in that moment of flight the body delivers itself to itself, it is a wilful act of mutual giving – the self to the body and the whole to the world (to which it invariably always belongs). The work is not about suicide at all, but about the freedom of living and the sometimes merciless, though ever-hopeful act of giving.

The work may be sold but in order to become an artwork, it must be returned to its full materiality: the artwork must be cast into the river from one of the bridges. That is my gift to whosoever purchases it.

Instructions:

- 1) Pick a day, any day, and
- 2) take the work to either Blackfriars or Waterloo bridge, take care to walk exactly to the middle of the bridge,
- 3) place the work parallel to the safety railing with the bird facing towards the river, and away from your body approximately 1 metre,
- 4) throw the brick-section into the water  
(ensure that the rope does not become tangled)



WORKHORSE 2011, Bronze sculpture installation, 2900cm x 250cm x 200cm. Collaboration with Guy Du Toit.  
Modified found objects (caltrops) and 10,584 sugar cubes



**WORKHORSE** In the artwork 'Workhorse' a number of cultural, political and aesthetic ideas are brought forward through a combination of material, form and concept.

Here, custom-made bronze caltrops are combined with a barrier constructed from approximately 50kg of tightly packed sugar cubes. A 'caltrop' is defined as an iron shape with four spikes placed so that one spike is always projecting upwards. Caltrops are thrown on the ground to impede advancing cavalry horses. (Originally the meaning of the word derives from a plant which tended to catch or entangle the feet). The bronze caltrops were designed and cast by South African sculptor Guy Du Toit (in collaboration with Iaan Bekker). Each of the four spikes have been modified into a human hand engaged in a variety of iconic gestures – one points a gun, another holds a credit card and so forth.

Sugar may be associated with the slave trade and the expansion of the 'empire'. But it is also a medium that requires us to consider the sensory experience of taste – as in adding a lump of sugar to a cup of tea, or the simple fact that horses love the taste of sugar, even though it is really bad for their health. Moreover, from a distance the sugar creates the illusion of a single solid barrier whereas closer inspection reveals that in fact it comprises an almost unfathomable number of inter-changing, almost modular components.

In all, the artwork forms a complex socio-political and historical boundary that bespeak the ongoing business of the ruthless, capitalist exploitation of the world (one that finds its roots in colonial modernist attitude towards natural resources, people and so forth). This idea is conjoined with that of a widespread instrumental view of art that today commonly defines it as being merely 'surplus to requirements'.

As with the field of pure science, such an instrumental view of art posits an insidious neo-liberal, capitalist form of functionality at the very core of artistic practice and research. Where art does not conform to this instrumental form of functionality, it is viewed as being merely entertainment or as luxury items produced for the upper-classes.

Though I will never subscribe to the doctrine of 'art for art's sake', I believe it is imperative that the practice of art remains as free as possible to investigate, embody and to challenge the very limits of society (including how the very concept of 'functionality' may be rethought and reformulated into other, as yet unthought, creative possibilities).

It is arguable that a horse, like the viewer may feel compelled to linger at, and closely investigate, this dangerous boundary become a lure. For me this is exactly what artworks should do.



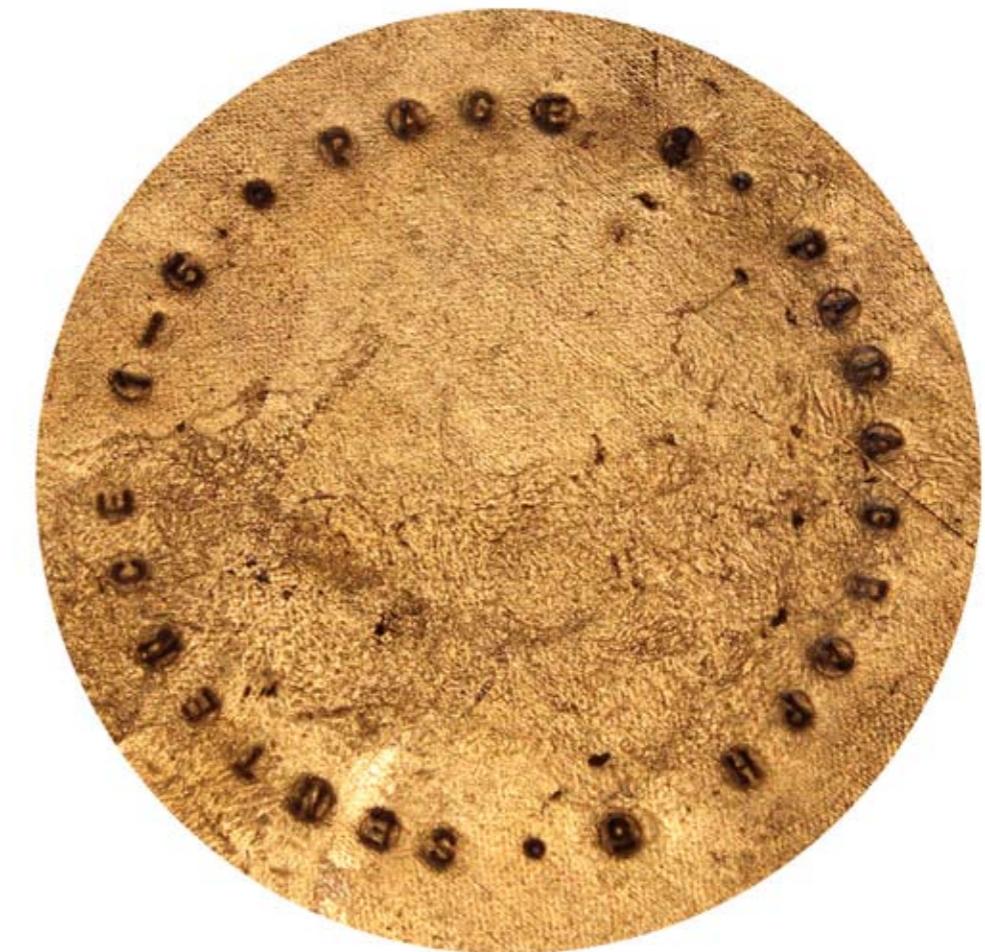
THE SUNBEAM The inscription embossed on the cover of the book instructs the viewer to turn to a specific page, paragraph and sentence contained in the text.

This selection of text has particular relevance to the title of the work itself. The inscription is therefore an invitation to handle the object and enter into real communication with it via the senses and the mind. I consider the work a conceptual piece although ironically it can only become an artwork once the viewer enters into direct physical contact with the object and the text.

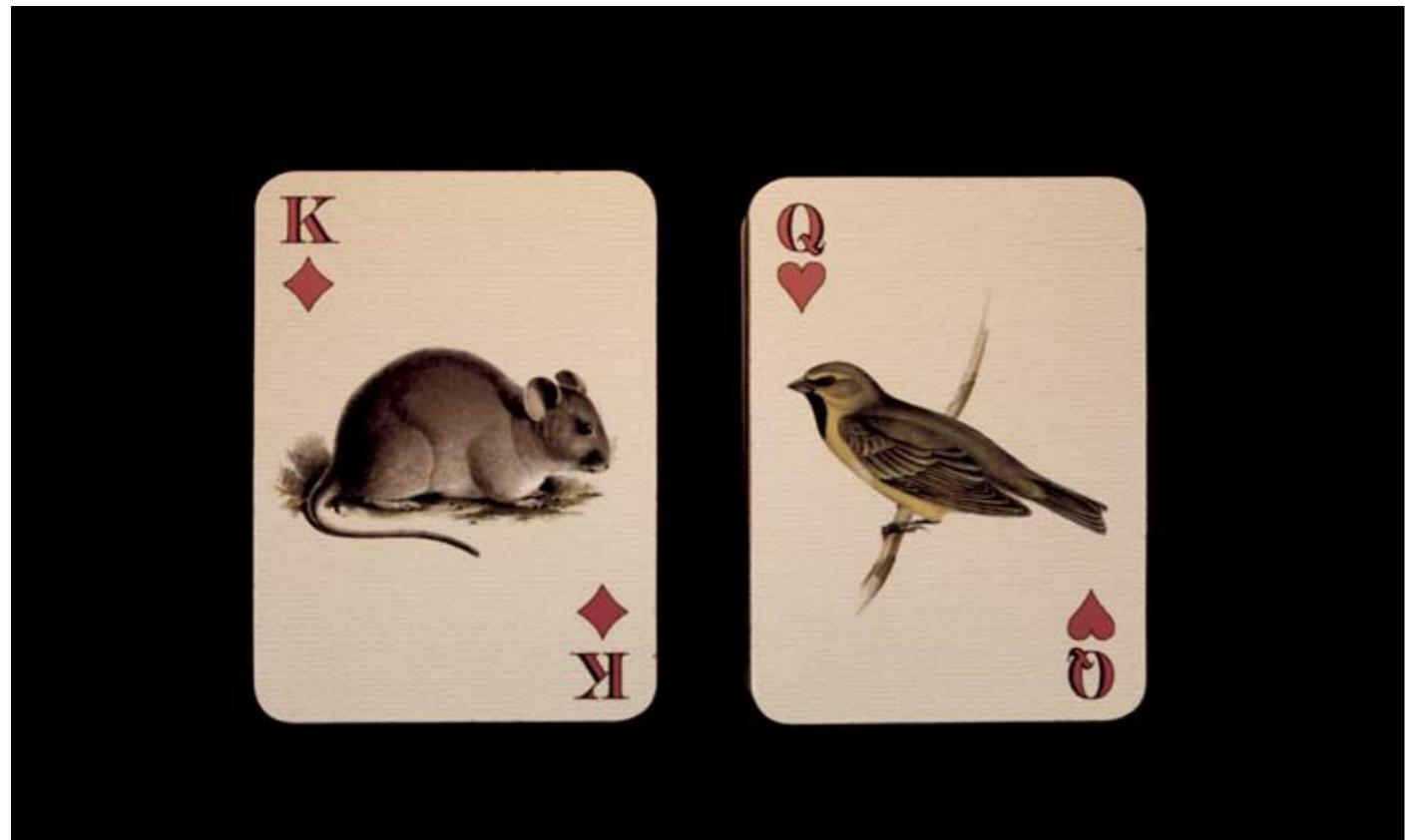
The title is taken from the passage to which the embossed instructions direct the viewer: in 1904 a ship named the 'Sunbeam' sailed from the port of New Bedford containing a small library of 100 books.

As the author of the text explains, this is noteworthy because the library contained too few books to satisfy the Sunbeam crew's appetite for reading materials during the 5 years of its voyage. The crew soon returned to the art of scrimshaw and rope-knotting in order to keep themselves busy. The irony is that it was in fact the introduction of literacy programmes aboard sea-vessels that led to the almost wholesale extinction of the traditional art of rope knotting.

The Ashley Book of Knots contains detailed written instructions and illustrations for 3,854 different rope knots and rope-knotting techniques. It remains a seminal text detailing the history of the sailors' craft of rope-knotting. Today the book helps to keep this dying art form alive albeit in a new, written form.



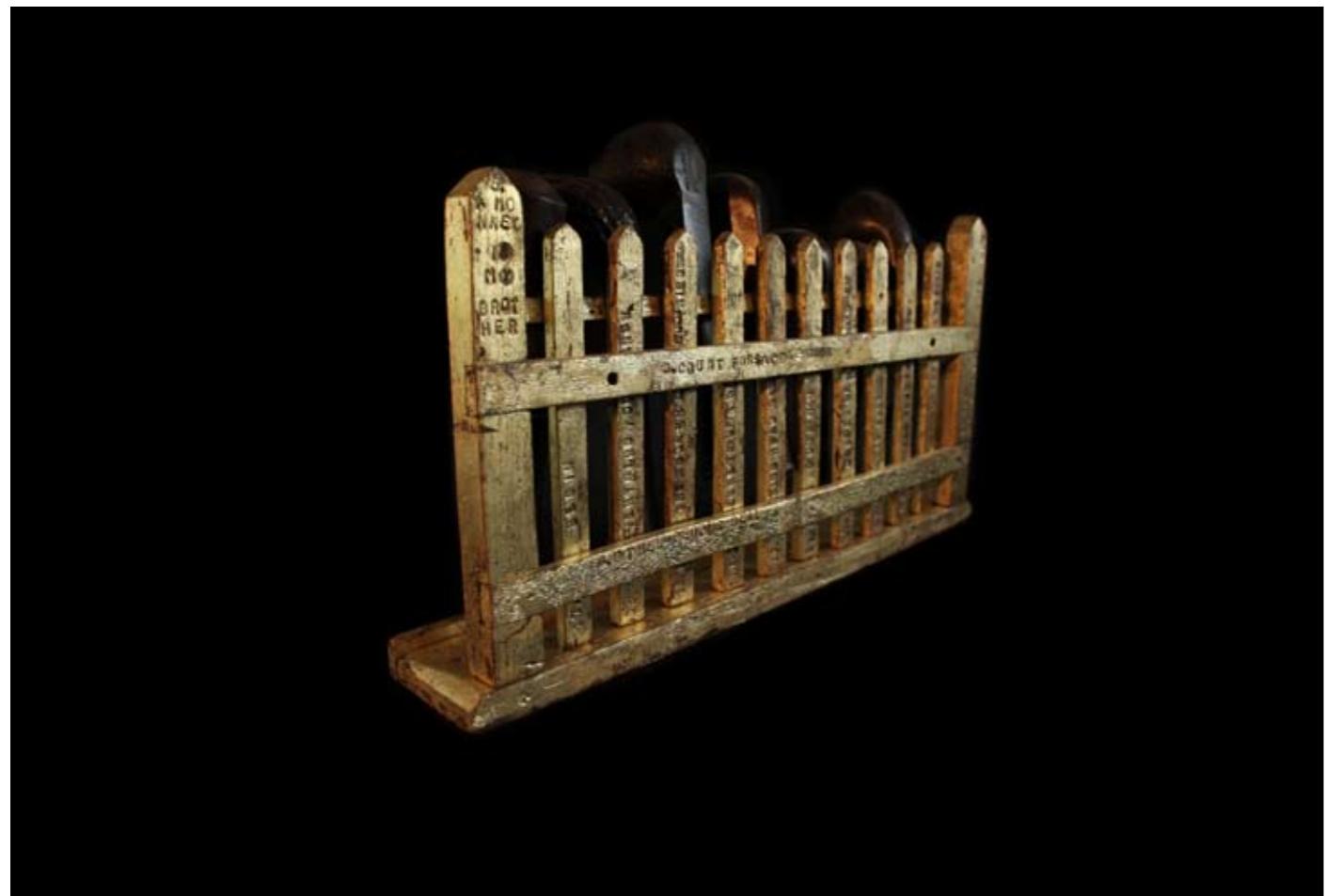
Above and facing page, THE SUNBEAM 2009, Modified found object, 21.5cm x 28.5cm x 5.5cm. 'The Ashley Book of Knots' by Clifford W. Ashley 1993, covered with 23 ct gold leaf and embossed with text inscription



Top and bottom, KINGS & QUEENS I 2010, Modified found object, approximately 15cm x 8cm x 3cm. Limited Edition Casino quality twin-deck playing cards, 23ct gold leaf. Cards published in 2009 in commemoration of Darwin's Bicentenary and 150 years of The Origin of Species



KINGS & QUEENS II 2011, Modified found object, 18cm x 12cm x 9cm. Camel bone chess set, steel knuckle duster with the word 'love', mahogany chess box, 23 ct gold leaf. The chess pieces do not fit into the container in any other formation



Above and facing page, RACK OF PIPES/THROWING BONES 2010, Modified found object, dimensions variable. Used smoking pipes and pipe rack, 23ct gold leaf and embossed with text inscriptions



Above, Installation, and facing page, Detail, TUMBLER (for Darwin) 2012, Modified found object, 15cm x 50cm. David Bryce & Son commemorative miniature bible and lectern made to mark the centenary of the publication of the Authorized Version of the English Bible, 1911. Pigeon skeleton, 23 ct Gold leaf, builders foam and museum glass display domes



RABBIT & HAT Mary Tofts (c. 1701-1763) is an infamous figure from British history whose actions gave rise to the figure of speech (and magic trick): 'pulling a rabbit from a hat'. In the mid-18th century Tofts convinced the British establishment that she had the ability to give birth to rabbits. She was eventually found to be a fraud but her actions destroyed many a surgeon's reputation. Interestingly, on average a rabbit has the same amount of bones in its body as that of a human being.



Above and facing page, RABBIT & HAT (for Mary Tofts, c. 1700-1763) 2010, Modified found object, 25cm x 32cm x 23cm  
206 Rabbit bones, 23ct gold leaf, vintage collapsible silk top hat. Original storage box, German made, 1930



Above and facing page, VESSEL: PERFECT LOVERS 2009, Wooden vessel, 110cm x 25 x 8.5cm. Polished Meranti Wood, hollow stainless steel orbs, razorblades, text. Collection of the artist

**VESSEL** On the morning of Monday 29th June 2009, my wife, Mika Thom and I each wrote a list of 50 words detailing how we felt about being apart - in daily life and, in terms of our larger mortal journey together.

The words were then engraved onto stainless steel razorblades and, after being read aloud, placed inside two stainless steel orbs. The orbs were immediately welded shut, sealing them in perpetuity whilst erasing the notion of individual ownership that accompany the authoring of the lists: it is no longer possible to determine whose words are contained in each vessel.

As with Schrödinger's paradoxical cat sealed inside a box, it is possible that the words now oscillate between both orbs, existing as it were in a state of indeterminacy - collapsing the individual words and thoughts into a new 'entangled' co-existence. Paradoxically, this state is simultaneously ethereal and concrete; static and in flux.



The artwork is perfectly balanced and, if touched, each orb moves freely atop the 'tracks' created by the two wooden side sections, with the entire vessel rocking gently from side to side. Thus, the words make a soft noise, 'speaking' or 'whispering' (in an entirely new audiological / linguistic form) when the orbs crash into one another as they periodically separate and meet again.



SONGBIRDS/ DECOY 2010-2012, Installation, dimensions variable. Site-specific wall installation of eleven modified vintage decoy ducks



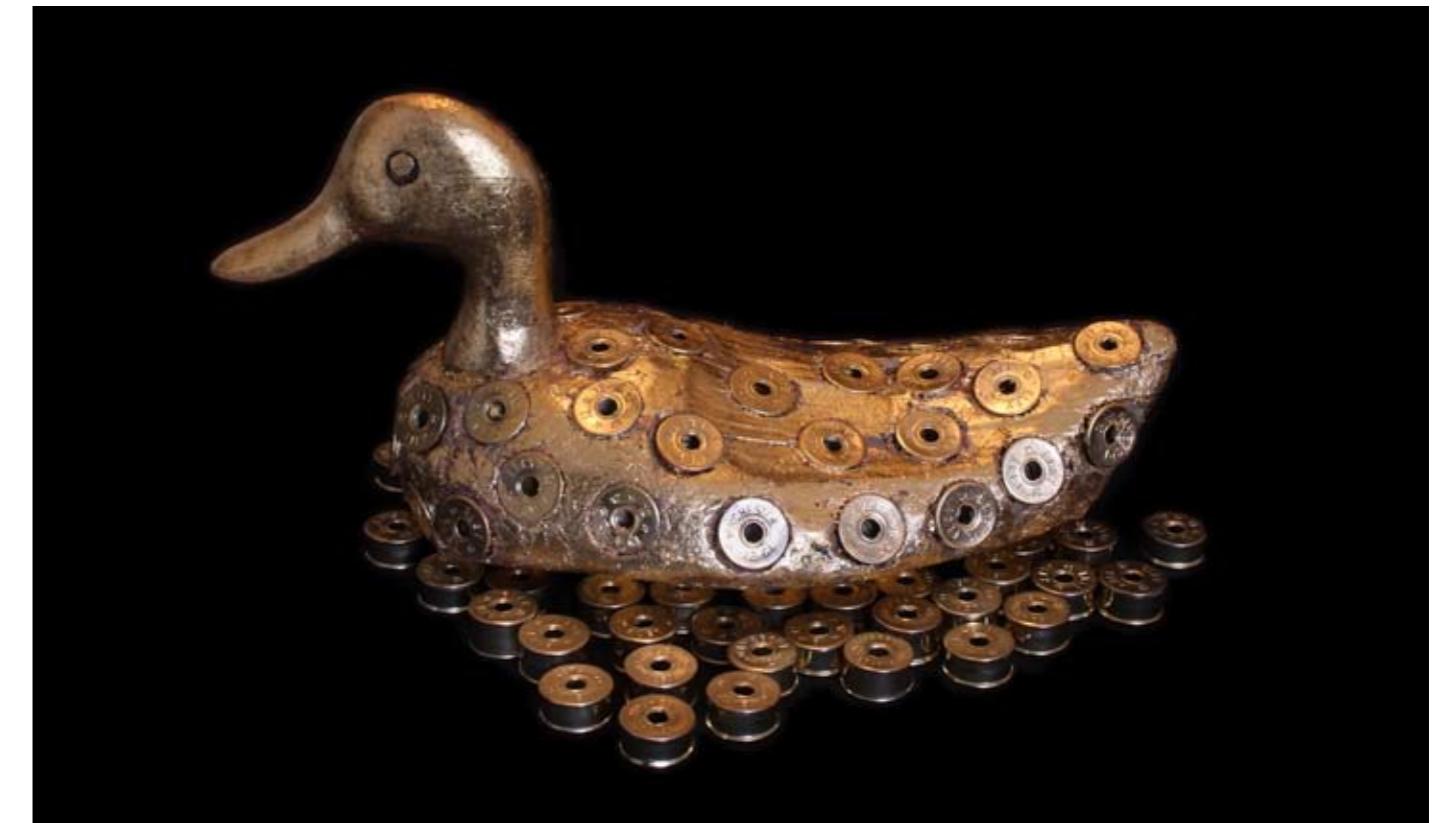
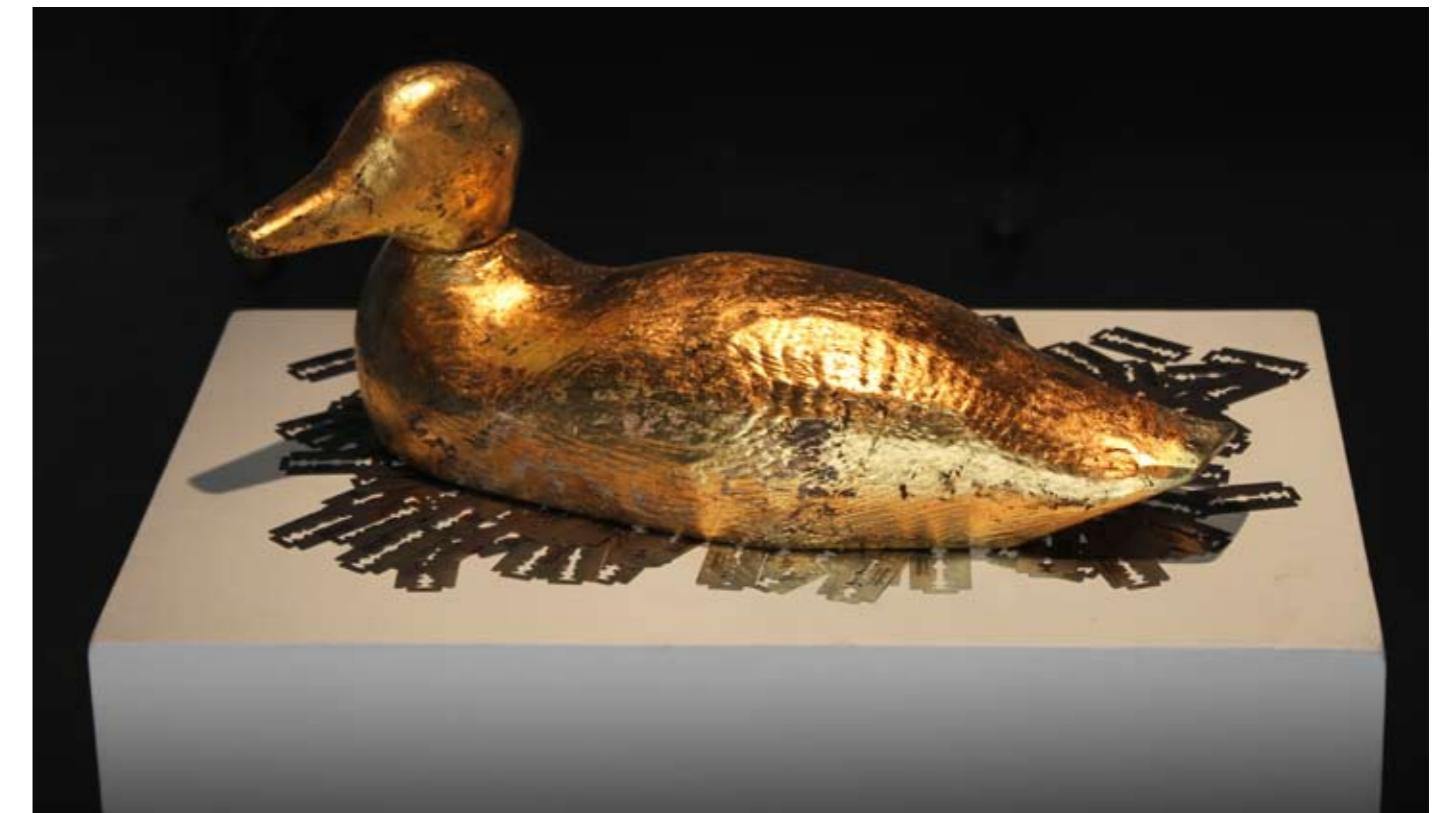
SONGBIRDS/ DECOY 2010-2012, Modified found object, dimensions variable. Site-specific wall installation of eleven modified vintage decoy ducks. Antique hardwood decoy duck, cut into various sections and partially covered in 23 ct gold leaf

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SONGBIRDS/ DECOY 2010-2012, Modified found object, dimensions variable. Antique hardwood decoy duck covered in 23 ct gold leaf. 100 razorblades engraved with text and set into the body of the decoy. Object used in Performance, DECOY, Performance held as part of 'Tables of thought' exhibition and seminar organized by the European Arts and Research Network and hosted by the Finish Academy of Arts 28-29 April 2010, Finland, Helsinki

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TOP: Detail, SONGBIRDS/ DECOY 2010-2012, Installation, dimensions variable. Site-specific wall installation of eleven modified vintage decoy ducks. Found object. Antique hardwood decoy duck, hand cut round shisha mirrors, covered in 23 ct gold leaf.  
BOTTOM: Detail, Installation, dimensions variable. Site-specific wall installation of eleven modified vintage decoy ducks. Antique hardwood decoy duck, 23 ct gold leaf, 100 word poem letter-punched into the body. Object used in Performance, FLOCK/ MIRAGE, Held as part of 'Polyply 9:Animal'. Center for Creative Collaboration, London, England

TOP: Detail, SONGBIRDS/ DECOY 2010-2012, Installation, dimensions variable. Site-specific wall installation of eleven modified vintage decoy ducks. Found object. Antique hardwood decoy duck covered in 23 ct gold leaf; 3500 razorblades. Razorblades used in Performance FLOCK/ MIRAGE, Held as part of 'Polyply 9:Animal', 14 April 2011, Center for Creative Collaboration, London, England  
BOTTOM: Detail, SONGBIRDS/ DECOY 2010-2012, Installation, dimensions variable. Site-specific wall installation of eleven modified vintage decoy ducks. Found object. Antique hardwood/cork decoy duck covered in 23 ct gold leaf. Approximately 60 duck calling whistles made from Winchester rifle 12 bore brass bullet cartridges. Whistles used in Video, SHELLSHOCK 2010, Kentish Town, London, England



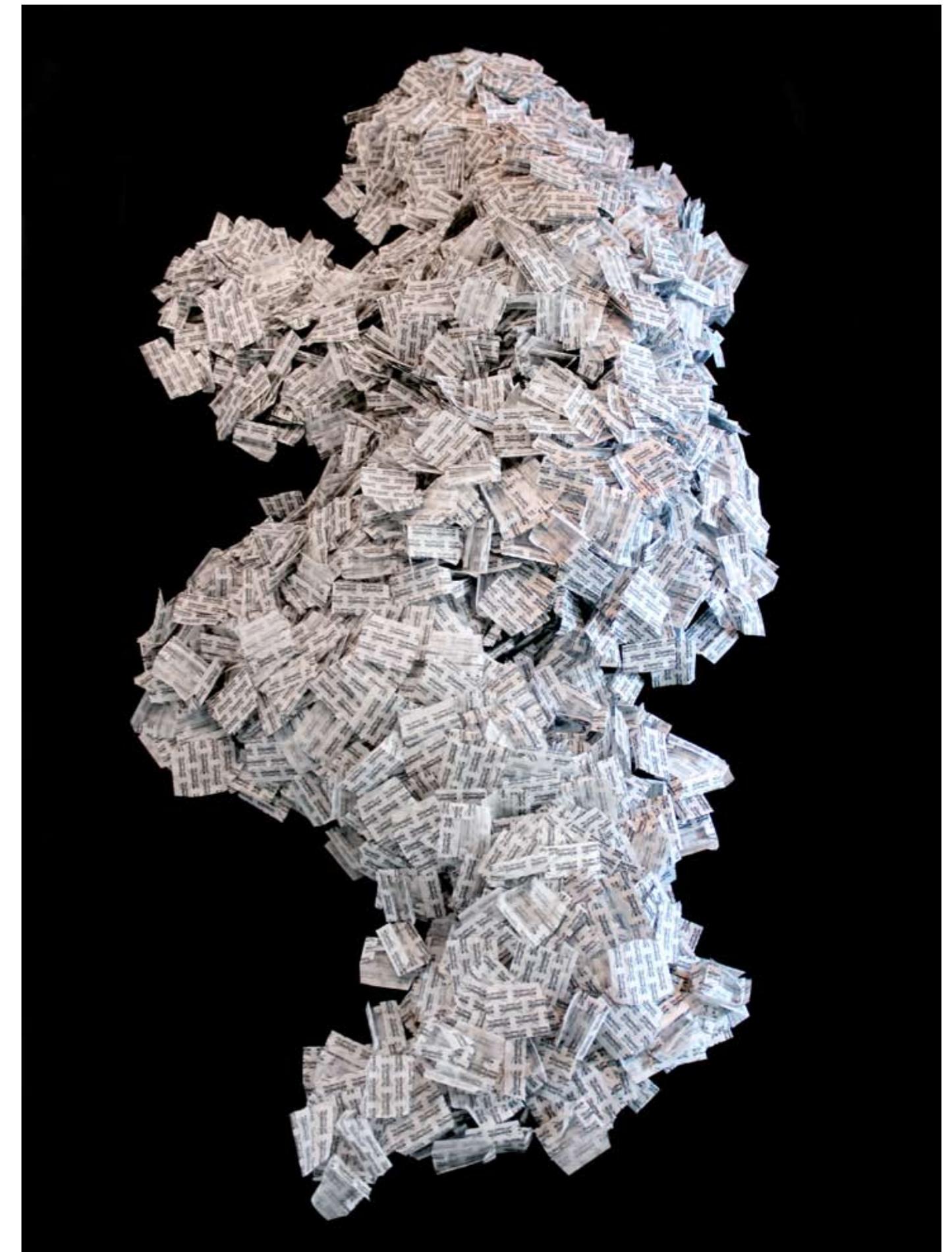
Detail, SONGBIRDS/ DECOY 2010-2012, Installation, dimensions variable. Site-specific wall installation of eleven modified vintage decoy ducks. Found object. Antique hardwood decoy duck, 23 ct gold leaf, steel guitar and bass guitar strings collected over the course of playing for three years



Detail, SONGBIRDS/ DECOY 2010-2012, Installation, dimensions variable. Site-specific wall installation of eleven modified vintage decoy ducks. Found object. Antique hardwood decoy duck, rabbit bones, polyurethane foam, 23 ct gold leaf



Detail, SONGBIRDS/ DECOY 2010-2012, Installation, dimensions variable. Site-specific wall installation of eleven modified vintage decoy ducks. Found object. Antique hardwood decoy duck broken into pieces, 23ct gold leaf, used instrument strings (guitar) 15watt speaker. Speaker used in Performances: i) PHANTOM LIMB, Held at UCL 22 March 2010 and ii) DECOY, Held as part of 'Tables of thought' exhibition and seminar organised by the European Arts and Research Network and hosted by the Finish Academy of Arts 28-29 April 2010, Finland, Helsinki and iii) HOST II, Held at the Anatomy Museum, Royal Veterinary College London, England



SLEEPING/ SELF-PORTRAIT 2012, Installation, dimensions variable. 4,500 empty razor blade wrappers collected over the course of three years

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS/ PROJECTS/ PRESS/ AUTHORED

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

'Becoming, Binding and Disappearing', Iwalewa Haus (The Africa Research Center of the University of Bayreuth), Germany, 2010

'Bind/Ontbody', Kwazulu Natal Association of Art, Durban, South Africa, 2008

'The Theory of Flight', Bag Factory Gallery (Fordsburg Artists' Studios) Johannesburg, 2008

'Minotaur Series 12', a collaboration with Christophe Fellay (Composer & experimental percussionist, Switzerland) at the Forum d'Art Contemporaine, 2004 & Johannesburg Art Gallery, 2006 (Catalogue)

'The Diary of New York', Graskop Gallery, Mpumalanga, South Africa, 2006 (Catalogue)

'bind/ontbind', Outlet, Pretoria, South Africa, 2004

'The Exorcism series', National Cultural History Museum, Pretoria, South Africa, 2003

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS/ PROJECTS

'Mine', a selection of films by South African artists (including William Kentridge, Minette Vari, Berni Searle, Johan Thom, Robin Rhode, Greg Smith, Simon Gush, Bridget Baker and others) curated by Abrie Fourie Traveling group show: Iwalewa Haus, Bayreuth, Germany, 2011; DUCTAC, Dubai, Feb 2012; University of Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg 2012

'Opening Borders/Opening Objects', an online group exhibition curated by MA/MFA/PHD students and hosted by the University of Western Ontario (Online from 1 May -30 August 2010: [http://uwo.ca/visarts/research/grad2011/Online%20Exhibition\\_html/opening%20borders%20opening%20objects.html](http://uwo.ca/visarts/research/grad2011/Online%20Exhibition_html/opening%20borders%20opening%20objects.html))

'Off the shelf: performance, film, video, poetry music', an evening of live events staged by the Slade School of Fine Art and presented by the Slade Word/Image Forum, University College London, 2010

'Dystopia', traveling group exhibition of South African art curated by Elfriede Dreyer and Jacob Leboko (May 23 – June 30, 2009: Unisa Art Gallery; Pretoria; October 8 – November 15, 2009: Museum Africa, Johannesburg; June 10 – August 8, 2010: Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Mangaung; 17 October–21 November, 2010: Jan Colle Galerij, Ghent)

'Britto New Media Festival', group exhibition at National Gallery, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2009

'The Double Body: being in space', group exhibition curated by Anthea Buys and held at the FADA Gallery, University of Johannesburg, South Africa, 2009

'The heart of the African city', group exhibition organized by MAP ZAR as part of African Perspectives 2009 and held at The University of Pretoria, 2009 (Catalogue)

'Dada South?', Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa (curated by Kathryn Smith and Roger Van Wyk), 2009

'Rites of fealty/ Rites of passage', Bag Factory Art Gallery, Johannesburg, group exhibition of new performance art (co-curated with Bronwyn Lace), limited edition portfolio prints, 2008

'Between meaning and matter', group exhibition at the Bell Roberts Art Gallery, Woodstock Cape Town, 2008

'.za: Giovane arte dal Sudafrica', group exhibition of new South African Art curated by Lorenzo Fusi, Kendall Geers Minette Vari, Sue Williamson, Berni Searle and Marlene Dumas, Pallazzo delle Papesse, Sienna, Italy, 2008 (cat)

'Spier Contemporary Art Award', Spier Estate (Stellenbosch) & Johannesburg Art Gallery, 2007 (cat)

'South African Art on Paper', Group show at Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney Australia, 2007

'A Legacy of Men', Group Exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in support of the 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women and Children (Nov 2007 – Jan 2008)

'Bliss', a three person exhibition with Marc Cloet (Belgium) & Jacki McKinnis (South Africa) held at Fried Contemporary Art, Pretoria, 2007

'The First Architecture, Landscape and Art Biennale of the Canary Islands', curated by Antonio Zaya, 2006 (cat)

'Hotspots: Johannesburg and Mexico', held as part of the Rotterdam Film Festival, curated by Aryan Kaganof and Catherine Hennegan, 2006

'Waste at Work', traveling group exhibition curated by Jeanetta Blignaut and held at Hollard Headquarters, Johannesburg (Sept 2006) and at the Spier Estate in Cape Town (Nov 2006) (cat)

'The 10th International Computer Arts Festival', Maribor, Slovenia, 2004 (cat)

The Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, as part of the group show 'Recycling the Future: vivieravenezia2, curated by Angela Vettese and organized by the IAUV Academy of Fine Art, Venice, Italy, 2003 (cat)

'Negotiate', a series of exhibitions at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) in celebration of the Decade of Democracy in South Africa, curated by Simon Gush, Hanli Becker and Hannes Olivier, 2004

'The Klein Karoo National Arts Festival', Oudtshoorn, South Africa, 2004 (cat)

'Aardklop, Potchefstroom National Arts Festival', South Africa, 2002, 2003, 2004 & 2005 (cat)

'The Brett Kebble Art Awards', South Africa, 2003, 2004 (cat)

'X- an Exhibition in Celebration of Ten Years of Democracy' in South Africa, curated by Kelly O'Reilly at the Stephen Lawrence Gallery, Greenwich, London, 2004 (cat)

PPC Young sculptor's competition held annually at the Association of Arts in Pretoria. 1995, 1996, 1998 & 2001 (Merit Prize, New media)

'Sasol New Signatures National Art Competition' held annually at the Pretoria Art Museum, 1996, 1998, and 2001 (Judges Award)

'Kempton Park Tembisa Metropolitan Art Competition' held annually by the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan in Kempton Park, 1995, 1999, 2000, 2002 and 2004

'ABSA Atelier National Fine Arts Award', 1999, 2004 (Catalogue)

'Young Vision 2004', group exhibition of young artists curated by Kay Hassan and held at the Alliance Francaise, Johannesburg, 2004

#### SELECTED AUTHORED PUBLICATIONS

Thom, J. 2007. Digging up old horses. In: *Onemillionandfortythousandyears (and sixtythreedays)* edited by Kathryn Smith, 2007: 214-218. SMAC Gallery: Stellenbosch, South Africa

Thom, J. 2007. Jeering at a one-eyed man: Kendell Geers at the Stephen Friedman Gallery. *Art South Africa* Vol 5.4, Summer 2007: Bell Roberts Publishing: Cape Town. *Available Online*: <http://www.artsouthafrica.com/?article=178>

Thom, J. 2007. Life Intimidating Art. *The Diplomat*, Sept/Oct 2007: James M. Pach, Australia. *Available Online*: <http://www.the-diplomat.com/article.aspx?aeid=3323>

Thom, J. 2007. The Aristocrats: Roger Ballen at the Johannesburg Art Gallery *Art South Africa*, Vol 6 Summer 2007: Bell Roberts Publishing: Cape Town

Thom, J. 2006. The answer is under the rock. *Art South Africa*: Interview with Willem Boshoff. *Art South Africa* Vol 4, Issue 3, Autumn, 2005: Bell Roberts Publishing: Cape Town. *Available Online*: <http://www.artsouthafrica.com/?article=76>

Thom, J & le Roux, M. 2006. The Minotaur series 12: Johan Thom with a collaborative Soundtrack by Christophe Fellay. CRIC (Centre de Reflexion Sur l'Image et ses Contextes) & Johan Thom: Johannesburg

Thom, J. 2005. Cobus Haupt. MAP ZAR: South Africa

Thom, J. 2005. Sekoto to Sihlali at Warren Siebrits, Modern and Contemporary, Johannesburg. *Art South Africa* Vol 2, Issue 3, Spring, 2005: 25. Bell Roberts

#### SELECTED CONFERENCES/SEMINARS/ WORKSHOPS PRESENTED

Two performances held as part of the conference 'Sexuate Subjects: politics, poetics and ethics', held at UCL, London, 3-5 December 2010

'Decoy', Performance lecture as part of 'Tables of Thought', organized by the Finnish Academy of Fine Art and the European Artistic Research Network, Helsinki 28-29 April 2010

'ProSpecter', lecture presentation/ performance held as part of 'Arts research: publics and purposes', hosted by GradCam (Graduate School of the University of Dublin) as part of the European Artistic Research Network, 18 February 2010

'Mobilizing forces' lecture presentation/ performance with Slade Fine Art PhD group at Making Sense Conference organized by the French Department, Faculty of Modern & Medieval Languages, The University of Cambridge, 25 September 2009

'Rites of passage / Rites of fealty', a 10 day workshop in performance art, Bag Factory (Fordsburg Artists Studios), Johannesburg

Invited speaker: Wits (University of the Witwatersrand) Student Architecture Film Festival, Wits Great Hall, 16 July 2008

Workshop in Performance art, Wits School of the Arts, Johannesburg: 31 March–18 April 2008

'Root to route: Workshop in Video Art' co-presented with Gareth Fradley, Bag Factory (Fordsburg Artists Studios), Johannesburg, 2008

Workshop in Performance Art, Bag Factory (Fordsburg Artists Studios), Johannesburg: 'RE/Action: Performance Art Now', 18 July–8 August 2007

'Filter', a three week workshop in Video Art co-presented with Gareth Fradley at the Bag Factory (Fordsburg Artists Studios), Johannesburg, 2007

'Reconfiguring the archive: Art education in Post-apartheid South Africa', research presentation at the 40th Belgrade International Theatre Festival, Belgrade, 20 & 25 September 2006

'Personal Geographies: the body, action and context', workshop in Performance art Wits School of the Arts, Johannesburg: , 24 June–15 May 2006

'The Minotaur Series 12' artist presentation at the Johannesburg Art Gallery Johannesburg, South Africa, 2006 'The state of emerging art in South Africa', presentation and panel discussion, The Fordsburg Artist Studios (Bag Factory), Johannesburg organized by SA Arts Emerging, 2006

The Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, as part of 'Real Presence: Floating Sites' 2005 a parallel event and workshop curated and organized by Bilyana Tomic and Dobrilla Denegri, 2005

'The Exorcism Series: Identity in a Postcolonial South African Context' – a research methodology seminar held at the Technikon Witwatersrand, 11 August 2003

'Postmodernism as a continuation of western dominance: discourse, power and the other', a research presentation held at the Technikon Pretoria as part of the TUT Annual Research Conference, 2003

'Taming the Trojan Horse: Disarming the Politics of Otherness in a Postcolonial (African) Context'. Paper delivered at "The 18th Annual Art Historians Conference hosted by the University of Pretoria, 2002

'Consumerism and Transcendence: Defining freedom of choice within Postmodern South Africa'. Paper delivered at the 16th Annual Art Historians Conference hosted by the Department of Art History, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 2000

## SELECTED CITATIONS

Thorolf Lipp & Tobias Wendl 2010. Performance, Media & Memory: South African Artists in Dialogue II – Terrorizing the Concept of Meaning – Conversations with Johan Thom. Documentary film: 43 min. Produced by IWALEWA-Haus & DFG (Federal German Research Council)

Halliday, A. 2008. From here to there: .ZA: Giovane arte dal Sudafrica at the Pallazo delle Papesse, Sienna Italy. Art South Africa. Vol 6, Issue 4, Winter. Bell Roberts Publishing: Cape Town.

Available Online: <http://www.artsouthafrica.com/?article=621>

Du Preez, A 2008, '(Im)Materiality : on the matter of art', *Image & Text*, no. 14, pp. 30-41

Sassyn, R. 2007. Johan Thom: Bag Factory, Johannesburg, 1–30 November 2007. *Art South Africa*

Available Online: <http://artsouthafrica.com/?article=377>

McInnes, J. 2007. Johan Thom. In: *A Legacy of Men* (Exhibition Catalogue for group exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in support of 16 Days of activism against domestic violence, p26-29). Johannesburg: David Krut

Le Roux, M. 2007. Johan Thom. *A Look Away*. No7: Cover, 10-11

Gomez-Baeza, R (ed). 2006. *The First Architecture, Art and Landscape Biennale of the Canary Islands*. Spain: Graficas Sabater

Farrell, L. 2006. Interview with Johan Thom. In: *Johan Thom – Diary of New York*. MAP ZAR: Johannesburg

Stevens, I. 2004. Johan Thom. *Art South Africa*. Vol 2, Issue 3, Autumn. Bell Roberts Publishing: Cape Town

Farber, L. 2004. Embodying the Other as Self in Johan Thom's exhibition 'exorcismseries'. *De Arte*. No 69 2004: 26-46

Staden-Garbett, M. 2003. From the sublime to the ridiculous: Johan Thom courts controversy in his art. *Pretoria News* 29 April: 18

Vettese, A, Walther, M & Calderoni, I (ed). 2003. *Recycling the Future: viverevenezia 2*. 50th Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte, La Biennale di Venezia. Marsilio Edizione: Italy

## AWARDS/ RESIDENCIES / FELLOWSHIPS

Awarded Commonwealth Scholarship for PHD studies at the Slade School of Art, UCL, London 2008-2011

Nirox Foundation Residency, Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site, Johannesburg, 2007

South African National Arts Council Award, 2007

Britto Arts Trust Residency, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2006

The Ampersand Foundation Fellowship (New York/ Johannesburg), New York, May-July 2005

South African National Arts Council Award, 2005

CRIC/Pro Helvetia Residency, Ecole Cantonale d'Art du Valais, Sierre, Switzerland, 2004

PPC Annual Young Concrete Sculptors Awards, South Africa, 2002 (Merit Award: New Media)

SASOL New Signatures Annual National Art Competition, South Africa, 2001 (Merit Award)

