

Director's Statement - Stephen Danzig

In this exhibition, titled "The Vernacular Terrain", works have been selected from artists that respond to their environment in a broad philosophical manner.

Is it possible to speak of local dialects of the terrain? Are the artists presenting specific viewpoints of the landscape within a contextual framework? What are the influences of hyper-techno landscapes surrounding the vernacular in virtual worlds, interactive design, gaming, locative/mobile technologies and web culture?

What we see in this exhibition is an eclectic anthropological view of our world. These artists explore and engage in interdisciplinary practices and hybrid processes that go beyond any single art form.

IDAprojects creates a scenario of open disciplines, and is an inclusive hub promoting narrative drawing on social and physical structures that make up the environment we live in. The intention is to guide people into a reading about their terrain and of the 'other'. The result is an interrogation of locality and its history. This relationship incorporates global consumerist culture, the convergence of new models of spatial thinking, vernacular creativity, popular culture, corporate branding and hybrid economies.

IDAprojects is supported by Queensland University of Technology, the City of Yokohama, Yokohama Art Project, Beijing Film Academy and Platform China Art Institute. IDAprojects has also received assistance from the Australia China Council and the Australian Embassy in China.

More information about IDAprojects at www.internationaldigitalart.com.

2007 – 08 IDAprojects participating artists

Adad Hannah (Canada)
Andrea Innocent (Australia)
Anita Johnson (Australia)
Annie Wilson (Australia)
Briele Hansen (Australia)
Ben Hibon (England)
Brett Leavy (Indigenous Australia)
Brendan Lee (Australia)
Bu Hua (PR. China)
Ben Morieson (Australia)
Chris Barker (Australia)
Christopher Bennie (New Zealand)
Christopher Denaro (Australia)
Cynthia Howard (Australia)
Cheng Ran (PR. China)
Chen Wei (PR. China)
Cui Xuiwen (PR. China)
Chen Yung-Hsien (Taiwan)
Dan McKewen (Australia)
Daynor Missingham + David Sudmalis (Australia)
David Rosetzky (Australia)
Faiyaz Jafri (Japan + USA)
Germaine Woodward + Linda Murry (Australia)
HFRLab – Davide Quaglioli + Chiara Horn (England)
Huang Xiaopeng (PR. China)
Istvan Horkay + Peter Greenaway (Hungary + England)
Jongbum Choi (Korea)

James Lynch (Australia)
Jason Nelson (USA + Australia)
Julie Pitts + Miles Blow (Australia)
Jin Shen (PR. China)
Kel Glaister (Australia)
Kasia Janczewski (Australia)
Kim Joon (Korea)
Katrina Neiburga (Latvia)
Maleonn (PR. China)
Marco Fantini (Italy)
Meng Jin (PR. China)
Magda Matwiejew (Australia)
Michael Roulier (France)
Monika Tichacek (Australia)
Nathalie Grenzhaeuser (Germany)
Natalie Woodlock (Australia)
Oliver Lyon (USA + PR. China)
Stephen Fox (Australia)
Scout Kozakiewicz (Australia)
Seren Pugh (Australia)
Sun Xun (PR. China)
Van Sowerine (Australia)
Wang Bo (PR. China)
Wang Honghai (PR. China)
Wang Ya-hui (Taiwan)
Xu Shen (PR. China)

IDAprojects Team

Curatorial

Stephen Danzig, Founder/Director, IDAprojects
Lubi Thomas, Creative Projects Coordinator, QUT Precincts
Ryuji Enokida, Director, Yokohama Art Project
Xu Dawei, Lecturer in New Media Art, Beijing Film Academy

Advisory Committee

Pauline Doutreluingne, Assistant Director, Platform China Art Institute
Matthew Perkins, Studio Coordinator – Photomedia, Monash University
Professor Peter Lavery, Director, QUT Precincts
Professor Wang Hong Hai, Dean of Fine Art, Beijing Film Academy
Professor Liu Xugang, Director New Media Studies, Beijing Film Academy

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Benjamin Milton Hampe (IDAprojects)
Kate Woodcroft (QUT Creative Projects Intern 2007)

Regional Tours Coordinator

Benjamin Milton Hampe

Exhibition design

Lubi Thomas

Presented by



In conjunction with



IDAprojects print exhibition sponsored by



Cover Image: **Ben Hibon** *Codehunters* 2006, still from digital video. Courtesy of the artist and Blinkink.

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Exhibition dates

QUT Art Museum • 1 August to 30 September
Creative Industries Precinct • 28 August to 15 September

QUT Art Museum is proudly sponsored by



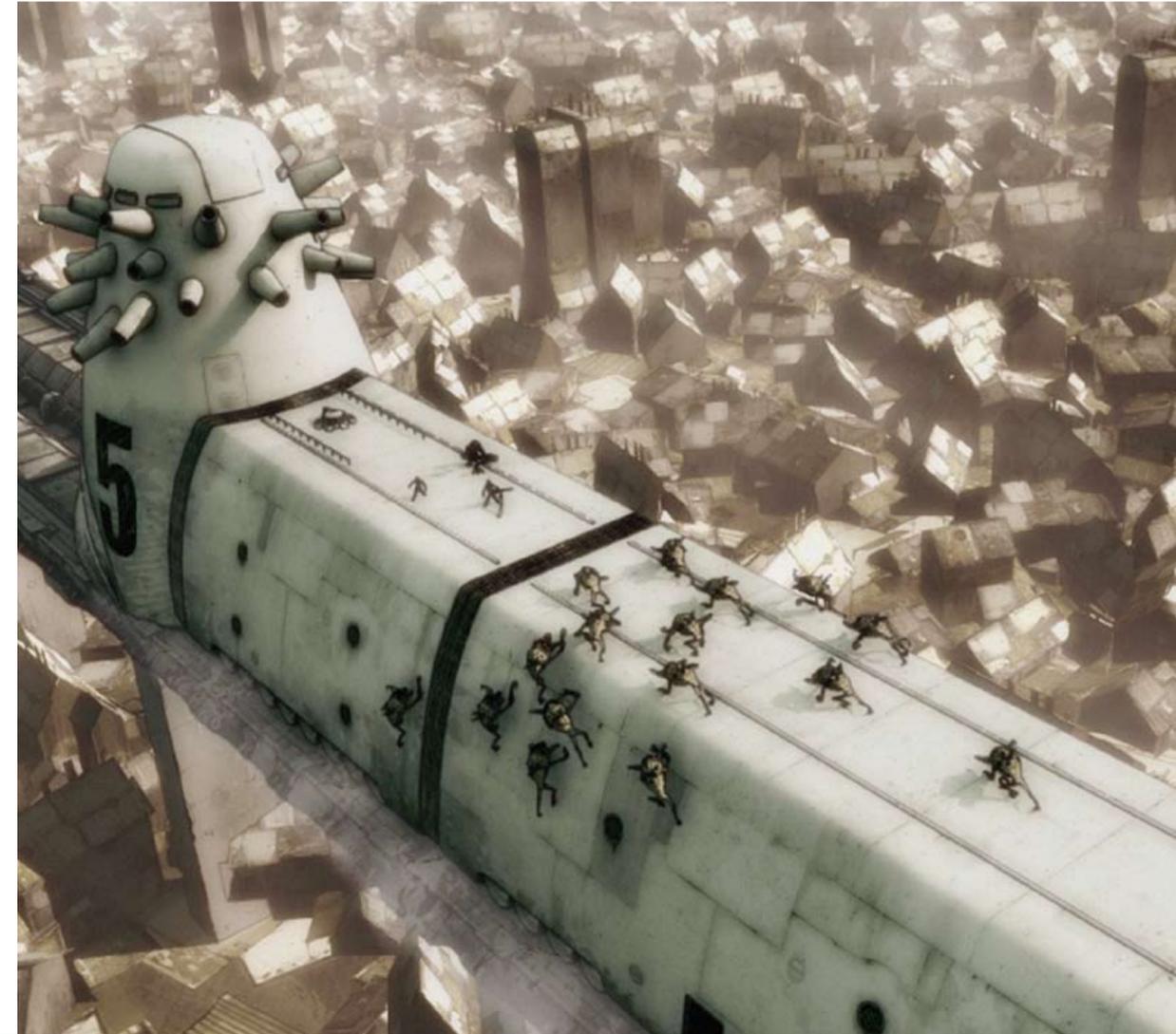
Kay and Robert Bryan,
Diana Gibson and
The Lee Foundation

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Alison Martin

IDAprojects PRESENTS THE VERNACULAR TERRAIN

AN EXHIBITION EXPLORING ENVIRONMENT, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL PLACE ■ ■ ■



1 AUGUST TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2007
QUT ART MUSEUM
Gardens Cultural Precinct
2 George Street BRISBANE

28 AUGUST TO 15 SEPTEMBER 2007
THE BLOCK
Creative Industries Precinct
Musk Avenue KELVIN GROVE



Peter Greenaway + Istvan Horkay *Peter the Great* 2007, still from digital video. Courtesy of the artists.



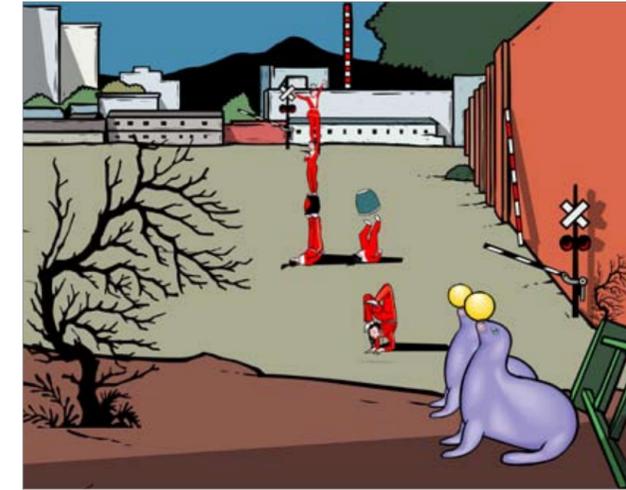
Andrea Innocent *Falcon Girl* 2006-07, digital prints. Courtesy of the artist and KAZARI Collector, Melbourne.



David Rosetzky *Worlds Apart 1-4* 2006, Type C photograph. Courtesy of the artist.



Monika Tichacek *The Shadows* 2004, still from digital video. Courtesy the artist and Karen Woodbury Gallery, Melbourne.



Bu Hua *Youth does harm to health* 2007, still from Flash animation. Courtesy the artist.



Marco Fantini *T* 2006, still from animation (detail). Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Poggiali e Forconi, Italy.

The Vernacular Terrain

Video in 2007 is not the exclusive medium of technicians or specialists or journalists or artists - it is the peoples' medium. The potential of video as a decentralized communications tool for the masses has been realized, and the twenty-first century will be remembered as the video age. Surveillance and counter-surveillance aside, video is the vernacular form of the era - it is the common and everyday way that people communicate'.

Tom Sherman

With the introduction of YouTube for the distribution of video and Flickr for the distribution of photographs the sharing of digital content to a large audience is accessible to many. The presence of this technology and its affordability has contributed to the medium shifting into the popular domain via software and portable electronic devices such as mobile phones, laptop computers and PDAs. This has marked a democratising of the communication networks of sorts but also the popularity of a particular type of content characterised by point-of-view perspective of personal video, fuelled as it is by passion and sometimes advocacy, and can be the antithesis of traditional expectations of balance and objectivityⁱⁱ. The commonality and accessibility of this visual language has seen this genre termed vernacular. This exhibition recognises that the realm of digital technology has moved into the vernacular and that in turn the dialogue generated through this visual language has influenced not only the content of artists' work but the very context of its reception.

There are distinct parallels between how contemporary on-line vernacular producers and early video art pioneers approach the medium. In the late 1960s and early 1970s video technology became accessible to artists through the release of portable video equipment. They worked against established conventions, questioned the nature of art at the time, were critically aware of the power of the media and succeeded in bringing art closer to the public. Vernacular digital works commonly investigate similar forms to these early artists – performance documentation, expanded narrative possibilities and autobiographies exploring personal, cultural and political identity. The similarities are many. Contemporary digital artists enter the public arena with an historical awareness of the past and a present-day understanding of popular culture.

Early uses of video saw artists address the camera directly [Vito Accouni's *Undertone* (1972)], parody the works of others [John Baldessari's *I Am Making Art* (1971)], appropriate popular music [John Baldessari's *Baldessari Sings LeWitt* (1972)] and television [Dara Birnbaum's *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman* (1978-79)], and use diary like modes of communications [Joan Jonas' *I Want to Live in the Country (And Other Romances)* (1974)]. In *The Vernacular Terrain* we lay witness to questions about narrative meaning [Michael Roulier's *Sub Memory Check* (2005)] appropriation of cultural currency; news, adverts, music and toys [Andrea Innocent, *Daily News illustrated* and *Otaku* series (2006-07)] and Computer Games [Anita Johnson, *CuteXdoom* (2004), Jason Nelson's *game, game, game and again game* (2007)], and new modes of expressing the contemporary global landscape [HFRLab's

Cityscan and *Bit-Scapes* (2006) and Missingham and Sudmalis, *Die Eigenheit* (2007)]. Be it the artists from the 1960s and 1970s, the producers of vernacular video and photography or the artists in Vernacular Terrain the digital has been used as an electronic mirror to reflect the social and the political, the public and the personal dimensions of the worldⁱⁱⁱ.

Globalisation has seen the world metaphorically shrinking due to electronic media. Within this environment we have seen a compression of time and space bringing into closer contact images, meanings, ways of life and cultural practices^{iv}. Jean Burgess' discussion around vernacular 'relational aesthetics' describes modes of social connection that are both made possible by and flow through images within the network. Those social connections are used to collaboratively construct, negotiate and learn visual aesthetics and techniques, where technologies and aesthetics of the 'professional', art and everyday life collide, compete and coexist to produce new forms of intensely social and playful cultural production^v. Within this environment the artworks reception has transformed as the audience becomes familiar with an alternative visual language via the network. Artists are attracted to new forms and new modes of production. Visual arts language begins to encounter vernacular form. Within *The Vernacular Terrain* we begin to see the entwining of art, history and popular culture.

The ubiquity of the digital technologies of video and

photography has moved its content towards the vernacular form of the present. This form has not just entered the virtual terrain via the home but has invaded the ever-present screens of the urban environment where the virtual and real have begun to interweave. Drawing on diverse influences such as contemporary art, film and advertising the artists in *The Vernacular Terrain* are fluent in a visual language that adopts aspects of both mass media and the visual arts. This exhibition represents a collective response to a contemporary vernacular form that has an ever-growing presence in the televisual terrain.

Matthew Perkins
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ⁱ Tom Sherman, 'Vernacular Video', accessed 16 July 2007, available from http://blog.wired.com/sterling/2007/01/vernacular_vide.html

ⁱⁱ Pat Auferheide, 'Vernacular Video', accessed 19 July 2007, available from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3613/is_199501/ai_n8726562/print

ⁱⁱⁱ Catherine Elwes, *Video Art, A Guided Tour*, (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), p2

^{iv} John Storey, 'Popular Culture as Global Culture' in *Inventing Popular Culture: From Folklore to Globalization*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), p108

^v Jean Burgess, 'Vernacular Photography 2.0: Flickr, Aesthetics and the Relations of Cultural Production', accessed 18 July 2007, available from <http://creativitymachine.net/category/vernacular-creativity/>



Cui Xuiwen *Angel #13* 2006. Courtesy of the artist and Marella Gallery, Beijing, China.