

## Wax Tablet

Eric Baudelaire (FR/US) // Evangeline Riddiford Graham (Aotearoa NZ) // Emily Wardill (UK)

curated by Andrew Kennedy

09 June - 21 July 2019

### Eric Baudelaire

*Letters to Max*, 2014

HD video, colour, 5.1 Surround

103 mins

courtesy of Eric Baudelaire and LUX, London

Abkhazia is something of a paradox: a country that exists, in the physical sense of the word (a territory with borders, a government, a flag, and a language), yet it has no legal existence because for almost twenty years it was not recognised by any other nation state. And so Abkhazia exists without existing, caught in a liminal space, a space in between realities. Which is why my letter to Max was something of a message in a bottle thrown at sea.

- Eric Baudelaire

Eric Baudelaire wrote 74 letters in 74 days to his friend Maxim Gvinjia, who was the Abkhazian Minister of Foreign Affairs between February 2010 and October 2011. These letters provided conditions in which the film was to be made. Max recorded himself reading the letters he received and responded to Eric's questions within them, acting as both the subject and the narrator.

Dear Max,  
Are you there?

How do you send a letter to a country that does not exist? What forms of representation prove the existence of a State to be real? Further, through Max's responses, we get a sense of what and how state structures affect us individually. Can we be without State influence on our identities?

**Eric Baudelaire** (b. 1973, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA) is currently based in Paris. He has developed an oeuvre primarily composed of film, but includes photography, silkscreen prints, performance, publications and installations. In his research-based practice, the artist examines the relationship between images, past events and their documentation. Interested in the role of the cinematographic image as an index marker, Baudelaire creates narratives in which recorded facts serve as a starting point for an

exploration of the unknown. In examining the changes in human behaviour though interrogating the great political structures that govern the global, national and micro-communities, Baudelaire's practice could be read through a bio-political perspective. Navigating the experience of urban living, the global, technical and economic dependencies of war, movement and the contemporary paradigm of geographical proximity and distance, Baudelaire's practice evokes a hauntingly provocative perspective on the current political climate.

### Evangeline Riddiford Graham

*Party Line*, 2019

sound, telephones

18 mins 19 secs

commissioned by Te Tuhi, Auckland

As I remember it, the surgeon used to say, *Just get on with it—Just get on with it, girl*. Very sporting in his suit and tie: blue blazer, gold buttons, game of golf to get to.

I'm not joking, he had his golf and an Alfa Romeo waiting, the only thing between him and his afternoon was a routine procedure with us standing by—the trainees and the registrars—eighteen of us queued to have a feel before his incision.

It's hard to learn like that, the doctor clocking the weather, the anesthetist cocking his watch, and the women—

The women had absolutely no idea..

—Dr. A, *Party Line*

In 1987, journalists Sandra Coney and Phillida Bunkle published an exposé of the experiments conducted on female patients at National Women's Hospital, Auckland. "An Unfortunate Experiment" documented practices in which cervical cancer patients were used as test subjects without their knowledge or consent. The experiments subjected women to sub-optimal care, sometimes with serious or fatal long-term consequences. The public outcry that followed Coney and Bunkle's article inspired the Cartwright Inquiry,

which ultimately led to the establishment of a national cervical screening programme and reforms that strengthened patient rights.

*Party Line* revisits the impact of “An Unfortunate Experiment” and the culture surrounding women’s health in Aotearoa in a reconstructed interview with Dr. A, who trained at National Women’s as a medical student shortly before the article was published.

Coney and Bunkle’s article was originally published in Metro magazine, June 1987, and is today available online.

[www.metromag.co.nz/society/society-etc/an-unfortunate-experiment-at-national-womens](http://www.metromag.co.nz/society/society-etc/an-unfortunate-experiment-at-national-womens)

**Evangeline Riddiford Graham** is a writer and artist, primarily based in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland. Her research explores persona, gender, power and mythology through performance-based poetry and mixed media. Evangeline has exhibited in Berlin and New York, and with The Physics Room, Artspace, and The Adam Art Gallery in New Zealand. Her poetry and prose has been published by Un Magazine, Takahē, Sport, SWAMP, Hamster, Minarets (upcoming), and by Otago University Press. In September 2018, Riddiford Graham began a two-year Master of Fine Arts in Poetry at The New School, New York City, for which she has been awarded a Provost’s Scholarship. In 2017, Evangeline published her first chapbook of poetry, *Ginesthoi* (Hard Press, NZ), a sequence which contrasts linear historical narratives with the ‘whiplash’ of lived experience’s pluralities. Her recent solo exhibitions include *Look out, Fred!* (Enjoy Gallery, 2017) and *La Belle Dame avec les Mains Vertes* (RM Gallery, 2018).

What Simon sees, or does not see, has an immediate impact on his physical agency. If he is unable to see himself, his movements and gestures become untethered from his body, acting adjacent to his mind’s control. Dominique is compelled by Simon’s affliction and its implication on the mind-body relationship.

*When You Fall Into a Trance* layers components of perception, creating a fugue of vision, speech, and physical presence. Using this distorted framework, Wardill explores relationships and human experience. Fragments of sound and movement lead the characters and viewers to question what is real and what is distinct.

**Emily Wardill** (b. 1977, Rugby, England, UK) lives and works in Lisbon, Portugal and Malmo, Sweden. Wardill’s work was exhibited in solo shows at Bergen Kunsthall (2017), Gulbenkian Project Spaces (2017), INDEX, Stockholm (2014), The National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen (2012); de Appel arts centre, Amsterdam (2012); The Contemporary Art Museum St Louis (2011) List Centre MIT Boston and ICA, London (2007–08). Her work was awarded the Jarman Award in 2010 and the Leverhulme Award in 2011. She participated in the 54th Venice Biennale (2011) and the 19th Sydney Biennale (2014). Some of the international collections holding Wardill’s work are Tate Britain, MUMOK Vienna, Gulbenkian Art Museum, Fonds Municipal d’Art Contemporain de la Ville de Genève and the Arts Council Collection as well as numerous private collections. She is represented by Carlier Gebauer (Berlin), STANDARD (OSLO) and Altman Siegal (San Francisco).

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## Emily Wardill

*When You Fall Into a Trance*, 2013

HD video

72 mins

Emily Wardill’s *When You Fall Into a Trance* is centered around a neuroscientist named Dominique and explores the relationships she has with her patient, Simon, her daughter, Tony, and Hugo.

Simon’s condition has led to the loss of his proprioception, his ability to know the position of his body’s location in space, and the ability to move his limbs without seeing them. If you turn the lights out, Simon will fall over.

PRINCIPAL FUNDERS



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