

Janet Burchill
Juan Davila
Elizabeth Gower

Maria Kozic
Jennifer McCamley
Elizabeth Newman

Ellen Pittman
Nina Sers
Constanze Zikos

Extreme Beauty: Approaches to the Real

4–24 December 2010

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Curated by Kate Briggs

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Y3K, 205 Young St., Fitzroy 3065
12–6pm Thurs–Sat

Extreme beauty can be a fierce event, like the will to live in someone who knows they are dying. Sophocles presents one such moment in the splendor of Antigone caught between the choice that will lead to her death and the symbolic erasure of what Sade referred to as a second life.

The works in this exhibition are presented against a tide of different forms of erasure, maneuvers which, in the realm of the social, are often not commented upon. The practice of these artists, it seems to me, address such forms of erasure. Their works designed not merely for acquisition or for the purposes of denial, negation or foreclosure. If these mechanisms are the ground upon which we operate and each of us act to organize a subjectivity in the face of, in the event of these maneuvers, how we chose to navigate them defines our social links.

If the beautiful, according to Lacan, points us in the direction of the field of destruction, it is because it serves as a barrier before an unspeakable truth, namely the radical desire that is this ‘field of absolute destruction’. “It is obviously,” he writes, “because truth is not pretty to look at that beauty is, if not its splendor, then at least its envelope.”

What then is conveyed in the moment of a glance? What is rendered visible? Can we speak, as Franz Rosenzweig does, of a content generated “as speech of the unspeakable, a first, speechless mutual comprehension, for all time indispensable beneath and beside actual speech”? If art transmits something of this ‘speech of the unspoken’ before speech, which defines us as human and particular, the individual nevertheless remains with this unspeakable interior. In the moment of a glance, a thread is drawn yet “the life aroused in the beholder does not arouse the beheld to life; it at once turns inward in the beholder”.

These works have been chosen for the activity they embody as approaches to the real, their generative presence in solitude asserting a social tie. The wager of this exhibition concerns these threads.

— There will be a catalogue of the exhibition with a text by Kate Briggs.

Biographical notes

Janet Burchill and Jennifer McCamley have been working both individually and collaboratively as artists since the early 1980's. A major survey of Burchill and McCamley's work *TIP OF THE ICEBERG selected works 1985–2001* was held at the University Art Museum, University of Qld and the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne in 2001. Recent projects include *COMBINE*, an exhibition they curated for Heide Museum of Modern Art in 2007 and a three-month residency in Kellerberrin, Western Australia in 2008, which resulted in a outdoor solar-powered neon sculpture *Inland Empire*. In 2009, they undertook a three-month residency at Shanthi Road Studio Gallery, Bangalore, and in 2010 they designed two solar-powered geodesic domes *Light from Light* for the Queensland State Library and the Shanghai Library, China. They are represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne.

Juan Davila (1946, Santiago, Chile) studied at the Law School of the University of Chile 1965–1969 and then in the Fine Arts School of the University of Chile 1970–1972. He has lived in Melbourne since 1974 and exhibited extensively in Australia and internationally. He had a major survey of his work in 2006 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney and the National Gallery of Victoria in 2006, and exhibited in Documenta 12 in Kassel, Germany, in 2007. He exhibited *The Moral Meaning of Wilderness* at the ANU Drill Hall Gallery in 2010.

Elizabeth Gower has had over 30 solo exhibitions throughout Australia and internationally, most recently in Melbourne in 2010, New York 2009, Paris 2008 and Sharjah 2007. She was recently awarded residencies at Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris 2007 and Australia Council's New York Studio 2008/9. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions including: *Sydney Biennale*, Art Gallery of NSW; *Australian Perspecta*, MCA, Sydney; *Isolaustralia*, Gallery Lillo, Italy; *Gramercy Contemporary Art*, New York; *Inherited Absolute*, ACCA, Melbourne; *Clemenger Art Award*, Heide Museum of Modern Art; *Arco*, Madrid; *Fieldwork*, NGV Australia; *Material Afterlife*, Urban Institute of Contemporary Art, Michigan; *The Armory Show*, New York. Gower is represented by Sutton Gallery, Melbourne and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

Maria Kozic is an artist known for her performance, music, film, video and installation art. She has had numerous solo and group exhibitions here and overseas. Her work is in the collections of the National gallery of Australia, Canberra, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Monash University, Melbourne, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, National Gallery of Victoria, Geelong Art Gallery, and numerous private collections.

Elizabeth Newman (1962, Melbourne) has been making art since the 1980s. Her work has been exhibited throughout Australia and internationally. Forthcoming projects include exhibitions at Mo-space in Manila, Neon Parc in Melbourne, and at the AEAFA in Adelaide. Newman trained as a psychoanalyst in the 1990s and now practices as an artist and psychoanalyst in Melbourne. Her work is represented by Neon Parc.

Born in Melbourne, **Nina Sers** currently resides in Los Angeles, CA. After completing a Diploma of Visual Arts from RMIT University, Nina went on to study Multimedia and Digital Art at Monash University. Nina utilizes skills from her Fine Art and New Media background to explore a variety of mediums including painting, photography, video, projection and multimedia-interaction to create work based on themes of time, memory and nostalgia. Most recently, Nina has been curating and exhibiting for a large-scale photography and projection festival in Los Angeles.

Ellen Pittman (1985, Melbourne) has lived in Hobart, Tasmania, since 2004. She graduated in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) having examined the short demise and resurgence of Berlin non-avant-garde cultural circles before, during and after World War One. She graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of Tasmania in 2010. Her first solo exhibition, *Between Rapture and Revulsion*, February 2010, focused on the confused language of touch and the manipulations of beauty by context.

Constanze Zikos (Greece) migrated to Australia in 1966. He has a Bachelor of Arts, Victoria College (1982–4), a Post-Graduate Diploma, Victorian College of the Arts (1985–6), and a Master of Arts (Fine Art), VCA, Melbourne (1996). His work has featured in numerous exhibitions including: *Australian Perspecta*, Art Gallery of New South Wales; *Fake Project*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art; *Fieldwork: Australian Art 1968–2002*, National Gallery of Victoria and *The Persistence of Pop*, Monash University Gallery. A major survey: *Anathematic: Constanze Zikos 1990–2003* was presented by Monash University Museum of Art in 2003. He has curated exhibitions and is currently showing in NY. His work is in the collections of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, The University of Melbourne Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Monash University, the National Gallery of Victoria, Corbett & Yueji Lyon HouseMuseum and is represented by Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne.