

## New-remembering

### c3 Contemporary Art Space

17 August – 11 September 2016

Curated by Stephanie Han

Emma Waltraud Howes (Berlin, Germany)  
Katarina Zdjelar (Rotterdam, Netherlands)  
Louis Porter's (London/Melbourne, UK/Australia)  
Makiko Yamamoto (Melbourne/Australia)

My daddy told me one time, you never know where you going till you  
know where you been.

- Will Smith, Will 2K, from the album Willenium

*New-Remembering* is an exhibition of four artists examining identity through memory and legacy, as they attempt to divine meaning from artefacts of their making.

To remember is a kind of time travel, and you are invited to travel back and forth with the artists as they acknowledge moments of shared history and pain.

Thinking back to the past can help us reflect on the present, or alternately we can have a say in creating the future. The mutability of our memories and the fallibility of language to misdirect, humour and mystify us, can equally provide new insight as identity is intensely connected to language and (mis)interpretation.

'A Girl, the Sun, and an Airplane Airplane' (2007) by Katarina Zdjelar, records a generation of individuals that lived under the communist regime of Enver Hoxha, to recall the Russian they were forced to speak. As they hesitate over forgotten phrases, we witness how their 'personal memories are interwoven with political memory' (Zdjelar). The artist herself has faced the fall of the Yugoslavian socialist regime and as the subject pauses to recall their Russian, the subject and artist share a common past.

We watch and can see the subjects in Zdjelar's video searching the past for disjointed memories and snippets of *ruski*, self conscious and uncomfortable in the rematerializing of the past; in a sense holding up a mirror, silent just for that little too long, finding that slightly awkward expression when you look back at yourself.

Two men from Belgrade in Zdjelar's video 'Shoum' (2009) work diligently on the song 'Shout' by Tears for fears. Language is at the core of how as individuals we apply reasoning, of scene perception, and expression. The video highlights what we take for granted, as the two men labour over interpreting and translating sounds. One of the men, holding a pen talks over the phonetics with his friend as they attempt to decipher the English lyrics: *Shoum Shoum Lajdi o Lau* they write, and 'with

perseverance...create something of their own that lies between the foreign and familiar' (Zdjelar).

Emma Waltraud Howes is concerned with communication across boundaries, and the possibility for movement to convey meaning. The artist comes from a dance background and her practice translocates expression and visual language. Her video work 'An Archive of Accident Gestures' (2011) exemplifies the body as an artefact of memory.

An interesting aspect of this work is the observation of muscle memory and idiosyncratic movement. Both body language and spoken language shape the way we think, and informs how meaning is constructed and communicated. This work retells a story through text and hand gestures, to help isolate how we interpret, assess and are persuaded by visual queues of gesture and expression.

Louis Porter's 'The Wall' (2013) series has a poetry of absence that documents his 155km walk of where the Berlin Wall once stood. Curiously looking for any sign of the turbulent past, fragments found from his walk are photographed in monumental detail, searching for a different kind of artefact to somehow convey the sites potency and indicate the significance of the Wall on our collective consciousness.

Found objects from his walk are also collected and these become artefacts for remembering a place and time past, both for the artist and as a collective memorial of the Berlin wall.

Repetition, documentation and voice are used to re-imagine past experiences for future propositions in Makiko Yamamoto's work. Through ephemeral means, the artist resists and revels in the impermanent nature of her life and the residue left in its wake. Yamamoto's artefacts are myth making: 'Funeral Piece' (2012) records her future passing in detail, to highlight the absurdly transient and malleable sense of self.

Yamamoto also emphasises the importance of language and communication in her oeuvre, mostly through sound recordings.

The voice is one of the first signs of life. Various tones and differences make up the complex sounds of the spoken word defining the individual...

The voice creates the means of expression. It initiates a relationship with meaning or possibly the voice is an opening towards meaning. Whenever I listen to someone speak I am aware of his or her voice and its unique qualities. Someone's accent can reveal the type of person they are and the places they have been, making their speech a form of exposure. (Yamamoto, 2011)

In this installation however, Yamamoto has disappeared with no recording of her voice (identity), just a lonely office remains. There are only a few typed letters on a page: a sign up sheet for people to attend her funeral. Through this imagining, Yamamoto hopes to divine and mine an accurate vision for her future; the only certainty any fortune-teller can give us is death.

It is as though language, image and movement alone are not enough to time travel, but a reconstruction, an interpretation, an artefact is needed to truly be moved. And in sharing these artefacts, to remember and 'to think is...to pass through...to wonder what made it possible...to discover in these histories supposedly laid to rest' (de Certeau, 1986) as they ultimately fail to contain the past but instead feed our present for a new-remembering.

Stephanie Han



Silver gelatin print of a crushed car, part of *The Wall* series by Louis Porter

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