Critical Fixtures
RMIT Gallery, 17 April – 23 May 2009

Critical Fixtures explores the phenomenon of the RMIT Gallery through the eyes of six contemporary Australian and International installation artists who have created a series of site-specific works for this exhibition.

From architecture to subtle sounds to etheric resonances read by a clairvoyant, Critical Fixtures reinterprets this historic building by redefining the way we interact with it through our senses.

Sydney artist Mark Brown has drawn together Mimi Tong, Robbie Rowlands, Denis Beaubois, Kate Fulton and Mark Themann to expand our experience. It is also fitting as the Gallery celebrates its recent renovation and new look, that we are called to see the Gallery in a different way.

Brown said, “The term ‘fixture’ and the connotations of permanence that it invokes are somewhat contradictory when considering the ephemeral nature of installation art.

“If we draw an analogy between architectural ‘fixtures’ and the work of art itself as a fixture installed in the gallery one begins to speculate about the purpose of its presence,” he said.

Mark Brown’s work GAP/ METACORNER/ RETROFIT explores the hidden dimensions of space, architecture and acoustic atmospherics through an audiovisual transfer between the real architecture of the Gallery and virtual video feed of the architecture in remote sites and spaces on the RMIT campus.

Mauritian born artist Denis Beaubois, shows the present and the absent in Video for Then. He began with a video recording of the Gallery, which he then sent to a clairvoyant, or medium to read the room and see what technology could not. The work will show both sides on a two-part video installation.

Robbie Rowland’s interprets two elements of the Gallery. His work Green Doors gives new life to the RMIT Gallery’s dismantled green doors (designed by architects Ashton Raggart MacDougall in 1996), while White Elephant involves a 10cm solid section of the Gallery wall, which he peels back and rolls in a cascade to the floor.
Melbourne artist Kate Fulton’s *Intangible Sounds and Sights In Comprehension* is a dispersion of fragments, and partial views that remind us of stray things, lost thoughts and how the familiar can be foreign when it is displaced.

Mimi Tong is a Sydney based installation artists whose work *Picture Fixture* is a photographic installation that explores the geometric and decorative qualities of the Victorian RMIT Gallery ceiling. Mark Themann’s *Occurrence* invites the viewer to engage with language and time.

The exhibition catalogue also attempts to break with conventional formatting, documenting the usually unseen processes both logistical and technical that shape an exhibition’s parameters.

The sequential sections map the exhibition’s phases from conceptual formulation through installation, display and de-installation as well as incorporating aspects of the recent RMIT Gallery renovations.

Email communications generated during the lead up to the exhibition and beyond have been printed throughout the sections of the catalogue and stand in place of a formal curatorial essay and other author texts.

Brown said that the legacies of influences like the late ‘60s institutional critique of the ‘white cube’ and a renewed investigation of architecture continue to provide fertile ground for these artists.

*Critical Fixtures* suggests that while ephemeral in nature, site-specific works prove a sustained investigation into context, place and permanence.

For more information, interviews, images, regarding the exhibition or the individual artists please contact Vanessa Gerrans at RMIT Gallery Tel: 03 9925 2686; vanessa.gerrans@rmit.edu.au

Tel: 03 99251717