

GEORGE POLKE

TWO

Every three weeks, two artists are invited to each exhibit just one work.

SALONS held on the last day of each exhibition are an integral part of the series, continuing the conversation. Please join us for talks by the artists and discussion with invited commentators.

BURTON + PALMER

SALON: SUNDAY 15 JUNE 2008 3PM

Doug Burton graduated in 2002 from the Royal Academy Schools. He was selected for an international exhibition for young sculptors in Milan in 2006 and was involved in a residency and group exhibition at the European Centre for research into Nuclear physics, CERN Geneva in 2004. Earlier this year he exhibited with Nicky Hirst in *Morphology* curated by Michael Petry and with an extensive catalogue essay by David Lillington. He lives and works in London.

Katrina Palmer graduated from Sculpture at the Royal College in 2007, and is continuing her PHD research there. She was recently at Café Gallery Projects (March 2008) and features in the first issue of *Material* (www.materialpress.org) a new journal of writing by visual artists. Palmer was selected for *Radar 2005*, Catriona Warren's pick of the degree shows, and *Contained* at Hiscox in 2007. She lives and works in London.

3.5 FREDERICK TERRACE
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For further information
contact Louise 07813306451
two@georgepolke.co.uk
www.georgepolke.co.uk

DOUG BURTON and KATRINA PALMER

Salon: 15 June 08 3pm

Transcript of a round table discussion with Katrina Palmer, Doug Burton, Louise O'Hare and invited commentator Lee Reagan, practicing artist and exhibitions manager at the Architecture Association

DB

What is it about Zizek's character that interests you? Is it his ideas or his character?

KP

It's both his visceral style and the way the ideas of the mind fit with the object world. He's a nervous character, has such a fucked up body and there are these transcendent ideas in the story... I am interested in the contrast between this and this material failing body.

LR

To what extent are the objects in the installation literal embodiments of what you are reading in the book?

KP

I think they are related. The chair is a bed, it folds out to be a bed as well... They tie in, but only just. I didn't want to make it too literal... just enough to be a comfortable place to be. I am interested in making provisional objects... in the past I have used plasticine and plasticine figures... and the work is still very much provisional. It's not a proper room, it's just enough to make a space... the writing is quite shorthand, the style of the space should fit with the writing.

LO

Normally in a gallery you pick something up to take away to read, or if it's a press release you read it before. Is it a challenge to ask someone to participate, to sit and read something in a gallery?

KP

I think it is strange to come into a gallery and read a book

DB

If you are interested in that side of the gallery becoming an environment you can manipulate; that someone comes in, sits down and reads and you've orchestrated that, where does it sit? Its crossing the line between the object and performance... are they props or are they physical embodiments of the story? Are they real usable objects, or are they representational?

KP

Yes, the objects are all those things, I'm pleased you picked up on that. I use fictional tropes in the work and that runs through both the story and the elaborated environment, so the meanings of the objects are unstable and precarious, open to interpretation, revocable even. I present found objects but they represent in a similar way to how real things are represented in fiction. They're real things but they're fictionalised. The status of the objects is deliberately unstable.

LR

I like that not knowing where they are, not knowing what side of the fence they are sitting on ... I was drawing my own parallels making my own narrative... I liked not knowing, the economy of the experience, without being dumbed down. These three emotive objects, placed in relation to the book. I found the subdued factor – refreshing. And the book was really fun, you thought you were a cat... then Begbie from train spotting....

LO

Once you had made the decision to read you were in that private zone, it was dualistic, you became both a reader and a viewer?

LR

It's quite a domestic thing, reading a book. A book in a gallery...I feel that video has a similar domestic history... video in a gallery ...

DB

There are formats you can't escape, a book needs to be read...and usually on your own.... you take it away it has a structure a beginning and an end.... video is exactly the same. If its shown on the TV we already have a preconceived idea of what to expect from it. You can't expect people to come and read it in a different way...

LO

Sometimes we distinguish art video as something harder... something that that doesn't suck in like TV- something you work at.

DB

If as an artist you break the formal structure of how we all know to read something, more often than not it won't hold peoples attention...I think video art can fail because it is not handled in the way we are used to reading that media. It fails to follow those rules of keeping the attention. But I don't see the animation as video art.

SP

...because its created, you created everything. It's more like a painting or a drawing...

LO

Within your practice, did the sculpture come first?

DB

I don't make something and then use it in the animation, but I might use something that I made in the physical world and think about it and the other way...

LR

I think a lot of people would assume... whether wrongly or rightly... you have gone onto another level with the advanced technology, perhaps you can do more with the computer?

DB

It's really dangerous to feel that... I am always aware that the physical is still as important. I think that as the world gets more technological we can get seduced by that. It's important to maintain some integrity.

KP

Especially as it seems that it is so much about excess, a visceral material presence is integral to it.

DB

I am not sure I would ever show an animation, without some physical object in the room as well... with a painting it would read in a very different way. There needs to be something object-wise, something to bring it back to reality...

LO

The objects you make aren't from reality either... they are also from an imagined world, but they are made of real things...

DB

It's an interesting conundrum... I went to this symposium at the Tate Modern, 'Supernatural presents... Digital Dreams' examining the development of 3D in Digital Visual Arts, they were talking about digital and analogue- the issue seemed to be that there was no way to extrapolate one into the other. The virtual, whether it's cinematic or CGI, stays virtual. You can do mapping... prototyping... where you can take a small virtual 3D thing and make it real... but it's still a very small line to travel down. For example, this guy had modelled this beautiful life size nude figure on the computer, it was modelled in clay but virtual. They showed the time lapse of him doing this, the craftsmanship was amazing, but the exercise was to do it virtually and then create it in reality.... And it failed because although he did create it in reality, all he ended up doing was doing the exercise again. He didn't send to the manufacturers a virtual file, and say, 'Print this out in 3D'. They couldn't do it. I started to think maybe they are meant to stay separate, maybe this desire to link the two isn't really that big, or maybe it is and we just haven't got there yet

LO

If they did line up, the virtual could become real... and then where would we be?

DB

I didn't know where I stood with all this!

LR

You would be able to do it... but they haven't got rapid prototyping that's big enough, so you'd have to rapid prototype it in segments.... you would slice it and then pile it....

DB

They could have done it ... I was hoping he would have done... but I suppose that then highlights the cost, and the time involved... it would be easier just to make it again in the real world. It's still not accessible.

LO

It's to do with practicalities, whether it's needed? Not to do with if its possible...

DB

Like everything with technology... whether it's relevant.

LR

5 years ago this animation would have been impossible?

DB

Yes, I think 5 years ago it would have been very difficult.... I've been working in this area for 10 years and 3D graphics have only been around for 25, it's still in its infancy...

LO

How will this animation date then?

DB

The context becomes important.... I've invested a lot of time in thinking about the idea behind it.

KP

Is narrative very important to the work then?

DB

Narrative seems to be a dirty word in the art world.... I see narrative as being used in a structural way... back to this idea of needing a structure a format within which to read. I'm not trying to tell a story, but need to deal with a structure. You've got to have a beginning and an end, even in a loop. There is a context that is within it, so it's similar in ways to your story... but not telling a story.

LR

So the animation has a beginning middle and end? It's this spewing mass doing stuff and regurgitating itself and developing and evolving, and then dying....

DB

Yes, there is a death at the end

KP

I'm interested in the way it does both, it flits about. It is like a flood its carrying along debris and detritus and stuff, and is really nasty in that way, and it is also like a big bang.... Beginning with things and all coming together, it's a dual dynamic...

DB

That's spot on ..It comes from my interest in teleology - a belief in a doctrine of final causes, that the thing that happens in the beginning ultimately causes its final end, because of the purpose that will be fulfilled by it. In Christianity, teleology is 'Christ is born, and the cost of him coming therefore meant he would be resurrected and die'. Religion uses teleology to reaffirm, to explain the unexplainable.... but religions have appropriated teleology unfairly. and now science is appropriating it back... there is a sense that the big bang is a very special thing, and it's why we are here now, and where are we going to end up. We know it's a special point, because the Newtons 2nd law of thermo dynamics (stay with me it's a hobby interest...) states that everything is getting more and more chaotic, and so ultimately everything flattens out. If you think of it as an arrow of time, then in the very beginning it must have been very special... The big bang, whatever it was, has to have been this incredible singularity ... we can follow it backwards, that's science, you can't argue with that....

LO

Everything previously has more potential?

DB

Well... was simpler. Things start simply and then get more complex....

LR

And end up simple?

DB

Then they end up dead.

LO

Everything comes back to one thing.

KP

does it disappear at one point?

DB

It does completely go, for just a split moment and then its back...

LR

The length is good.

DB

Back to the issue of attention, and established modes of reading work- attention spans- I knew it had to be within a certain time limit... its 3 mins, 20 seconds...the same time issue as with a short story..

LO

It sucks you in the first time and then you want to watch it again and again

DB

there was this joke at the private view night that drool was hanging... Everyone was in this tranced state

LO

Like when the TV is on in the room and eyes wander to it.

DB

I think people are happy to keep looking because there is so much detail, always more to see... I am happy to play with that... manipulate the audience... Maybe I'll put in some subliminal messages...

LO

Why are we all wearing blue t shirts?

DB

I really want to see that film Speed Racer... apparently if you go and see it at the IMAX it gets you into some kind of trance, a drug like induced coma. I'm kind of intrigued by that... on a feature length level.

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