curious and curiouser...

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## CUTIOUS by Alan Rankle

When Rebecca Kormind invited me to curate an exhibition for her gallery, I chose to work with artists whom I have found interesting and inspiring over a number of years, and whose work represents a particularly intimate aspect of contemporary art practice.

The exhibition title given to the artists as a theme, *Curious and Curiouser*, whilst having an almost unbearable legacy of connections and connotations in the English language (as the phrase famously parodied by Lewis Carroll in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*) is not so obviously culturally positioned in Denmark; thus giving an opportunity to present works having a rich matrix of associations within a relatively uncluttered conceptual arena.

The title is though, intended to convey ways in which, increasingly, some contemporary artists are engaged in an intimate and awe-inspired commentary on Modern Times and are dealing with greater Universal Issues in ways which go beyond an obvious social/political reading, through a highly developed kind of personal virtuosity – visible in ideas, materials, and techniques.

The artists subsequently invited to contribute to the exhibition, aside from displaying such idiosyncratic insight, are also known, or are in the process of becoming known, for their work in expanding the accepted limits of their particular medium.

At the same time they represent a tendency which is shifting away from the bombast and cultural Imperialism of much recent mainstream contemporary art towards a more considered, exploratory approach. This is also the case in terms of the working methods of these artists. The personal virtuosity which marks them out is the kind that cannot be offered up to a slick manufacturing process as are the ideas of say, Jeff Koons or Richard Prince. Artists such as Eleanor Moreton, Samppa Tormalheto and Tim Nathan could hardly employ teams of assistants to produce their characteristic paintings for a mass market nor would they probably wish to. The participants in this exhibition are artists whose work relies on the nuances of their intrinsic skills as well as their unique perception in order to come into being.

Per Fronth is an exceptional artist: painter, photographer, film-maker; whose work has intrigued and inspired me for a number of years. This exhibition marks the third time we have worked together on projects since 1998 and I have to admit to finding his productions still surprising, elegiac and also tremendously integrated in terms of physical presence and implied meaning.

His activity has evolved to the point where all the paintings exhibit a synthesis of manipulated media and message to a remarkable degree. Each seems to be the embodiment of the other.

For Curious and Curiouser Fronth has made two new paintings. The first, Bridge/Teenage Lux (archipelago), is of young people on the threshold of adulthood, fishing for crabs with lanterns in the Norwegian Summer night. A second work is of a girl looking from the canvas and checking out you. the viewer with an intense curiosity. Like much of Fronth's recent ouvre these images function as both icon and energy. They approach in their presence as objects the intensity one finds in the portraiture of great artists. Bacon, El Greco, Velásquez which at a certain point in their making become not just pictures of men and women but gateways to an almost tangible cosmic void, the place where humanity comes and goes. These paintings are always places to search as much as they are ever a thing revealed.

I was introduced to the work of **Rebecca Rome** by Brian Sherwin who had interviewed us both for the internet art journal *MyArtSpace*. Her photographs, made with a pinhole camera, speak of covert goings-on in the backwoods of Maine and Vermont. Interestingly for this exhibition there are several pieces from her *Submission* series which have a striking correspondence with the painting of **Tiina Heiska**. The two women share a common initial approach. They are

both photographed as protagonists in a tableau. Rome using the optical effects of the pinhole camera to distance the images from the conventional. Heiska to use the selected images as the basis for a painting or series of paintings.

Scenes evoked by both artists are at once ambiguous and precise. At first glance they provoke an overt sexually charged response, and yet with both there is a lingering feeling that we are being slightly led by the nose. Enticed to read the images in this or that way only to be further tricked into finding signposts to other layers of possible interpretations.

Is anything here what it seems or is it not?

Heiska plays a careful game with her experience – real and imagined – and our perception and expectations.

In the words of Finnish art historian Juha-Heikki Tihinen, "Tiina Heiska's art reveals its insightfulness furtively, as if seducing the viewer. Her works seem peaceful and arranged at first, but their flow and movement will soon emerge and instil a sense of excitement and anticipation in the viewer. What is happening in her pictures? What will be the final twist of plot? Heiska offers no simple answers, however, and leaves her audience tingling with uncertainty. Her art simply will not accept simple definition or clean catharsis."

Rebecca Rome in some works plays a furtive figure half-hidden in undergrowth, at other times a voluptuous victim of some unknown (though possibly not unwanted) assailant.

The awful crumpled figure by a riverbank in Heiska's painting, is she lying there in the aftermath of an horrendous crime yet to be discovered, or is she a small child crying to be picked up and carried home?

The device of using powerful yet ambiguous imagery is clearly discerned in the works of other artists in this exhibition. For **Samppa Törmälehto** a tree is a face is a tree and it's edges are just a bit of paint. Things in his paintings seem to evolve obliquely towards meaning, propelled by an enlightening title.

One of the two paintings in the exhibition, *Evil Albino*, is a classic work. As the artist says, the albino bunny is meant to be evil yet it isn't above stopping in its path of destruction to look behind and sniff it's own poop.

What then are we to make of *Hell in a Cell*? Two figures in a cage. For fighting? For display? Political prison guards enjoying a break? Maybe it's a small kitchen scene in a wrong marriage remembered by a sensitive child...who knows. We read in and observe a self contained personalized insanity set in a psychiatrist's waiting room. We read out and the 'just a bit of paint' calls us to follow towards wherever our insights and insides lead us.

As Lou Reed put it "Something flickered for an instant and then it

vanished and was gone."

Chris Milton's drawings seem at first sight to be quite academically sound, freely imagined images of women, on a par with the works of Wilhelm de Kooning, Cecily Brown, even having a hint of Egon Schiele. On closer inspection the subjects are usually men, dressed to thrill. Strange characters he meets on his weekend trawls with his friend, the photographer Malcolm Glover, through the bondage and fetish clubs of London and Brighton.

"In these works Milton does not attempt to accurately record what he sees, rather they are formed through remembered emotions and sensations, conscious and unconscious thoughts. The characters are made up; a distilled essence or archetype, reminiscent of particular types of people or places. Significantly, in a time where photography and film are the accepted medium of eroticism and sexuality, these drawings return us to the more intimate and seductive media of paint and line. Milton's characters are not mortal or real, rather they are a fusion of experience and imagination".

Technically his works are as much painting and collage as they are drawings. In his studio are many assemblages of torn and over-painted sketches awaiting use. Discarded studies are layered into current pieces giving them a physical depth and texture unusual in the art of drawing.

Overtly sexual subject matter also

sculptures by Tim Nathan. A series of metaphorical depictions of a strange world of winged horses, prancing ponies, angels, ballerinas, circus acrobats and putti. Sometimes the horses are subjecting themselves to vigorous copulations - benign mares and heroic stallions. Other times they are stepping the careful steps of the dressage display as though prisoners of a chessboard matrix. Visiting his studio one day I asked him what could be the meaning of a striking painting Blind Angel wherein a blindfolded ballerina rides a stallion into a pool of projected theatrical light. As she rides, she is stabbing her mount to death with a long stilletto into his neck. He replied without hesitation, "It's about the evil that women do!" OK, what are we to make of that? Turbid, angst-ridden, the painting presumably releases the artist from a fucked-up bitter experience, it is nonetheless refreshing to be privy to works of art which are so evidently dependent on the artist's personal life. Such unselfconscious use of painting is an antidote to art as formalistic hyperbole. As with the other artists in the exhibition there are no easy solutions to penetrating the work. Unlike much highly hyped contemporary art there are no sales

figures strongly in recent paintings and

I was introduced to the paintings of **Rimi Yang** by my English art dealer Jacqui Mustard.

pitch compartments.

Small perfectly formed paintings in strong wilful colours – abstract blocks of dragged and liquid paint at first seem to obscure the finely wrought fragments of portraiture; faces, hands, costumes, shapely Oriental geisha-like figures, only to reveal them on further contemplation in a new light, as a different story altogether.

Another narrative takes form from these seemingly random juxtaposed elements. The faces and figures take on a vulnerable yet emphatically resilient stance as though determined to succeed against a vortex of opposition. Are these works Yang's subconscious response to a lifetime of considering herself to be an outsider in a foreign society, at first as a Korean girl born in Japan, later as an oriental woman living in America? Who can say, perhaps her art gives her the ability to be at home in the wide world wherever she finds herself.

For all the sense of heroism in these ideas a certain wistfulness and uncertainty coexist in Yang's paintings amid the focused eyes of the female faces and the brash paint splatters and drips of pure colour. She creates a world of individual honesty where an acknowledgement of fragility reveals a true inner strength.

There seems also the sense of a conflict of interests ultimately resolved in the droning cacophony of **Colin Gibson**'s soundtrack which may be heard at intermittent intervals throughout the exhibition. There is in this extraordinary music the essence of observation and response to a world gone wrong. A world of continuous and conflicting sonic images. Sometimes exuberant

and humourous, more often darkly satirical, Gibson's soundscape presents us with an indication of the infinite expanse of the noise of our experience, combining real and imaginary in one nightmarish swoop. There is a focus on the circus: from the Ringmaster bellowing across the illuminated darkness of Bradbury's shadowy carnival to the real-life TV horror of yet another corrupt politician extending a gratuitous, smirking condolence. Gibson's vision confronts his demons with a thunderous charge, yet remains tempered by a faltering signal of (one suspects) genuine confusion. Like Nauman's noise filled Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, Gibson's piece Curious and Curiouser reminds us of the inescapable static besieging our composure. It's all across the city and it's all in your mind.

Two women artists featured here also engage directly with the slightly unnerving feeling that things are not as they perhaps should be. Barbie L'Hoste is both painter and ceramicist. She, like the English painter Eleanor Moreton, uses the language of fairytale and children's stories to reveal her worries and disquiet about the present day environment. She has written: "It could be said that throughout life there exists a continual loss of innocence, occurring with each life experience one has. Memories of these experiences may be repressed partially or in full, but still exist abstractly in our thought." She goes on to say how the porcelain slabs she uses in her work "serve as metaphors for the invisible layers of an ideal, fantasy world. The overtly sweet

parts that we don't want to see are hidden, leaving glimpses of a more honest truth through the rigidity of the material and brutish handling of the medium." She considers the personal deceit which parallels the missinformation of the mass media and continues: "In the light of the current human condition, the sentimental images are are in a visual struggle with the more concrete, tangible, and often merciless elements. This tension of parts reflects my continuing ambivalence towards the sentimental which can serve as a construct for poignancy and escape."

The 'sentimental images' seen by L'Hoste as though in conflict with a concrete world of contemporary facts are also perhaps a way of alluding to a sense of our loss of any real understanding of the World.

Eleanor Moreton's world of imaginary, emblematic characters reminds one of all kinds of childrens fables and tales yet she transcends obviousness and avoids the pitfalls of any comparisons with conventional illustration by separating her iconography characters, places and sometimes buildings - from any visible narrative structure. The objects in her paintings simply exist as themselves, though often their titles seem to allude to stories we feel we ought to recognise yet cannot recall. She also, succeeds in directing the viewer's attention to an almost unbearable sense of loss and feeling of uncertainty. Her subtle painterly technique - brushstrokes alternating lush expressionism with

paired down sparseness - develops a poignancy quite rare in contemporary art. Moreton's painting seems nervous of and almost negates conventional method to rely on precisely the personal virtuosity which I feel defines the artists in this exhibition to greater or lesser degrees.

In support of this, the abstract paintings

of Hazel Brook and the abstracted

landscapes painted on sheet aluminium by Helen Brough are at a good remove from the heroic connotations and empirical conventions of what has become traditional non-figurative art. Brook's sensuous velvet-like images give the viewer a sense of almost falling into a darkly lit other world where any discernible vestige of a narrative element is at once held hostage and kept at bay. She makes the world within the pictures seem desirable as an object to want and yet threatening as an object to fear. The sense of a subliminal uncertainty broods through the sweetness of her colours, and yet by some slight of hand she manipulates a wish to let go and just fall. In a way Brook has created a type of narrative abstraction which is the considered objective of Romantic landscape art; entirely suited to contemporary mores where the vista (like the modern politician in Gibson's sound scenario) is seductive yet not to be trusted. Helen Brough has given her recent series the title Dissembled Vistas and they have about them, almost as a raison d'etre, a sense of something dreadfully changed in the great expanse of things.

She dwells in these works on concepts of movement and illusion. Some of the paintings seem to evoke the essence of scenes of swirling desert landscapes sweeping into the haze and distance, and represent a Universe completely, utterly beyond any of our control.

The images in these smoothly brushed paintings appear anthropomorphic, almost as a personification of wind or earth deities. They are probably the closest to figurative works Brough has ever produced. Still they exist as portents only because of the abstraction which leads us towards the unconscious. Brough and Brook's concrete paintings, which continue the pursuit of Romance in art and thought, are a critical conductor for the Spiritual in Modern Times.

I have always thought of Len Shelley, another exhibitor with whom I've had the pleasure to work on several previous projects, as being a great visionary artist and also someone who is actually as mad as a hatter. This impression though is most likely due to the astonishing effect his work has had on me, the attentive viewer. There is something about Shelley's dark, surrealistic scenarios of anthropomorphic mannequins which acknowledges the inner state of fragile hopes, wild uncertain fears and enthusiasm curbing worries about inadequacies which to a greater or lesser degree obsess us all. That his work is influenced in part by the rich tradition of Central European puppet theatre reveals a good deal. There is a lot of the shaded satirical edge of cold

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Northern confrontational realism in his work, albeit made pliable and entertaining by the absurdity of his little character's dreams and ambitions. The remarkable piece of sculpture he has made specially for the Rebecca Kormind gallery is, like much of his output, both hilariously funny and dreadfully sad. A few lost souls in the wilderness (or 'triers' as my father would have said) are in the business of setting sail across more than likely uncharted seas, to find, what? We, in the business of being art aficionados will more than likely never know. And yet, as the Zen migrant said...and yet.

When I first encountered **Liz Finch**'s oddly engaging little paintings and collages it was to write a review for Mike von Joel's *Art Line Magazine*. At that time my initial thoughts were that these were delicately drawn depictions of a kind of hushed-up domestic crisis.

They seemed to me to be the preoccupations of someone at once unsatisfied with a continuing pattern of predictable events and also someone determined to find a better scenario through exposing this realisation through a quirky yet totally focused satirical commentary.

A commentary which she might like also to remain ambiguous. When I once told her that I had 'got' one of her works she responded, "Well that's funny because there's nothing to 'get'." The ambiguousness of Finch's observations is essentially the point though. In her own words: "Artistically I am both Insider and Outsider. My work

illustrates what I perceive as I pass from one side to the other. It is this atmospheric tension I am interested in more than aesthetics or accuracy... I both question and court the concept of random."

Almost in sync with the

characterisations of Liz Finch, the exquisitely presented woodblock prints of Oska Lappin also draw on aspects of domestic life - are these though real or imagined? Lappin has written of her interest in film and the way in which "filmic imagination surreptitiously replaces personal memories with freeze-frame imagery." As a discourse this notion could be academic - as an actual internal dialogue it would be alarming. Yet the question of inner and outer 'reality' is essentially the subject of all the works in this exhibition. The input to an artist is their perception of life coloured by the way in which they are able to perceive, itself governed by their vulnerability to influences in their make-up and psyche. The artist's output is always an attempt to impose a directive towards how they want others to perceive. The art is the dialogue we are all trying to achieve.

A dialogue certainly features at the heart of recent works by Lorraine Berry and Kirsten Reynolds. Both artists work with extremely unorthodox methods and techniques. In her specially made contribution to the exhibition, *Through the Looking Glass*, Berry utilizes state-of-the-art technologies to create an etherial other-worldly tableau where sound and vision combine to entice the viewer into a strangely shocking

confrontation with manipulation and desire. Taking as her theme the story of *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw, she has made an animated video about a woman 'created' exactly as her 'creator' wants her to appear. Like certain aspects of popular cinema or cinematic gaming her work challenges us to expand our suspension of disbelief by making the experience 'super real'.

It also has the effect of expanding our attention so that a rapport is felt even within the clearly perceived falsity of the technological illusion. She directs us towards a dangerous area within modern art and society.

Kirsten Reynolds brings to the gallery a specially designed piece evolved from her large-scale work which featured in the sound and light event Power Plant as part of the Liverpool Capital of Culture 2008. In this outdoor installation, an avenue of tall, elegant standard lamps were set to illuminate a long row of park benches within the setting of an old English garden. As well as functioning as sources of illumination in the usual way, these specially adapted lamps were transformed by Reynolds to also emit sounds of varying pitch and intensity. As the individual pieces in the installation were interactively connected, the overall impression was one of the lamps actually conversing with one another in an ever-changing confluence of sound and vision.

For Galleri Rebecca Kormind, Reynolds has prepared an intimate variation on the sculpture which will enable visitors

to encounter the slightly disorienting, yet strangely familiar, experience of feeling they are almost entering into a dialogue with what otherwise appear to be ordinary household objects. The surreal aspects of the piece are evident as is the sense of it recalling to mind ideas we have about alien and foreign cultures, and how we might be alarmed and intrigued in equal measure by such encounters. The experience of hearing sounds which are like a language and at the same time are not understood, is of course disconcerting as well as entertaining. Yet this is perhaps not the entire point of this installation.

In Liverpool the artist noticed that people seemed charmed and in a way comforted by the continually fluctuating presence of the 'talking' lamps. While it is a strange notion, the idea of entering into some kind of relationship with animated mechanical items is, interestingly, exactly the point of the video presented by Lorraine Berry. The stories referenced by Berry, Pygmalion, and Through the Looking Glass are also about the way in which projected fantasy can become a tangible aspect of everyday experience. These two art works explore in different ways the need for us to actually connect on a continuous basis with the totality of our environment, inner and outer. From this standpoint the world of fantastic tales and dreams is as much a part of 'reality' as anything else, and which is precisely where the story that inspired this exhibition begins.

### Alan Rankle

Copenhagen, 2008

# and curiouser

by Suzanne Patterson

The exhibition title itself is a slightly skewed quotation from *Alice in Wonderland*.

As a way into the whole show, the white rabbit figure is personified by Törmälehto's *Evil Albino* 

Although the Alice reference is relevant in respect to the thematic structure, given the fairytale-like qualities of some of the works – I would say that because of the artistic and inherently artisan nature of the project, this show is more like a well-chosen cabinet of curiosities.

Big statements are not available here—the farmed out work of the larger scaled (and also larger paid) art producers are not here. These works are chosen both for their deceptively simple handmade approach which at the same time is a distillation of both art knowledge and virtuosity.

These works demand a close focus, concentration, a sense of the micro rather than the macro. This has always been the position of the artist who has no group atelier or production line – although there are definite affiliations between some of the artists. It seems that some artists speak to each other whether they are sharing a studio, working in different parts of the world, or even sharing an awareness of the pre-existing centuries of artistic endeavour.

'A Personal Historias' says **Oska Lappi**n – whose small edition woodcuts encompass both middle European fairytales, the early *Vivian Girls* series

by Henry Darger - whose influence was also picked up and used visually by both the Portuguese artist Paula Rego, and also the very British Grayson Perry. Lappin's work for Curious and Curiouser includes a rather creepy and resonant Children of Chickens portraying similarly scaled children and chickens suspended from a kind of chain, something you could find in an abbatoir or factory farm. The works are resonant of the dark fairytales of Grimm, in which children are often seen as prey rather than happy innocents. Lappin makes small handmade editions of her work, making the production of the works more portable - less confined to using a large piece of printing press equipment.

The work of Kirsten Reynolds is more obviously musically based - making 'vinyl' records out of crispbread, alongside other materials. A founder member of Project Dark art/ music collective, Reynolds has previously contributed to Sonic Boom at the Hayward Gallery. More recently, she has just completed an outdoor installation in Liverpool 08 as one of the artists in *Power Plant*. Amongst many multimedia events she is currently working on a collaborative show with Neil Frazer of Tindersticks. She is currently showing/ is developing a set of standard lamps which talk to each other, and also respond to approaching visitors. In the Liverpool installation, her work was interjected between park benches on which was inscribed memorials to the dead who used to visit the site. It was as if these twinned lamps, like old couples sitting indoors,

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were still exchanging comments.

The idea of couples, alongside themes of sexuality, permeate the 'Curious' show. While some of the images are overtly heterosexual, almost abjectly so - to the point where there is no possible communication between the sexes. One example is Samppa Törmälehto's Hell in a Cell - where what appear to be a naked male and female appear to be either trapped within the ropes of a boxing ring, or perhaps they echo the torment of the boxed Pope figures of Francis Bacon, which themselves echo Velasquez. Another take on a similar dilemma is the work of Tim Nathan, whose images of horses take on not only a mythological status, as in figures which resemble Pegasus, or the friezes to be found in the caves at Lascaux, but these paintings also embody brutal versions of the sexual battleground of human relationships.

In contrast to this fraught relation to sexuality, the works on paper of Chris Milton, while appearing at first to perhaps be a response to works such as the intense and fractured women of Willem de Kooning on the other hand display a relaxed and comfortable relation to both the female and male. Although at first his images seem to be explicitly sexual and female, his work is actually much more sexually ambiguous when given a closer reading. Milton's images of pudenda are specifically and unapologetically shown in a way that, say, two dangling orbs between the legs of a woman can be seen as either labia or balls. Milton

talks about "the 'revelatory chaos' of painting and drawing", in which these disparate parts of the personality emerge.

Lorraine Berry's work *Pygmalion* shows an idyllic version of the female form – a computerised construction of a normal woman figure, who is almost in line with Lara Croft as a perfect version of womanhood. Although the image itself is lifted from a man who posted this figure on the internet, the very title gives a nod to forced nature of female perfection. It now becomes clear that the 'framer' of this piece is a woman. Berry's other work relates to the idea of a huge iceberg melting and flooding Copenhagen.

Per Fronth's influences at first seem to be classical in nature, as in the emphasis on figures, objects appearing out of darkness – one thinks of the Romantics, and a Nordic vision of the world. Yet, on further inspection, the techniques used here are quite new, as in his use of phototransfers onto different media.

Similarly, with the paintings of

Alan Rankle, you get Romanticism – a
landscape which is almost Caspar

David Friedrich in feel, yet undercut by
the contemporary edge of
splashes/slashes of paint – even graffiti
which undermine the possible froideur
of the image. There are uninhabited
landscapes except for the eerie
presence of feral beasts – sometimes
the head of the wolf-like animal is seen,
or perhaps just the eyes – which seem
to implicate our own animal nature.

With **Rimi Yang** there is a direct relation to classical painting – portraits of women – *Lookers* who have been lifted directly from earlier paintings, they seem to be pensively gazing out from a bygone age. Like Rankle, Yang has changed the meaning of these images by her use of paint overlay.

The image by **Barbie L'Hoste** titled *Soiled Bandage* is intimate yet revelatory, a small figure gazes upward at something enormously painful. These works which are painstakingly produced on porcelain, as is *Buck Dispute*.

In some ways this feel of intimacy links to the work of **Liz Finch** in which she portrays herself sketchily yet somehow very accurately on a small cushion, using paint and stuck on pieces of her own hair. Finch states that she likes to use this kind of object in her work, things that are ordinary, used for many years, perhaps – the cushions have possibly even been farted on.

Len Shelley is similarly homemade and hands-on, as in these works, which invent anthropomorphic tableaux from the skeletons of dead birds. Shoe Navy is a construction of some kind of odyssey in which the bird protagonists appear to be intent on action. Yet, on closer inspection of the vessel, we see that the ship is just a fabrication consisting of the pieces of a found object, an old boot or shoe. Hardly seaworthy, but as Baudelaire points out in Short Poems in Prose, living beings are those who are 'condemned to hope'.

Enjoying the chase through this show, we find that **Eleanor Moreton**'s works are accomplished painting in the guise of a faux naif sensibility. Her acidic colours are pared down, yet her precise forms belie an inherent grasp of painterly language. Her forms portraying heads seem to reference both Fauvism and Vorticism.

Like Moreton, Tiina Heiska's work is

very consummate and sophisticated, partially due to her use of subtle palette and brushstrokes. On the one hand her works are sexualised, soft versions of the female form – but some of the girls can seem vulnerable, almost in danger - perhaps a still from a film in which the female protagonist is the victim. In one image we see what seem to be legs crawling away from someone, crouching to hide from some predator, perhaps. But as we only get one still from the scenario, the fixed image must remain equivocal. Rebecca Rome's work is similarly ambiguous, vulnerable, yet in control, as she produces the images herself in disturbingly natural settings, semi naked, through a pinhole camera. This is like an artistic adventure into the past, when visuals where not always handmade, but also arbitary and subject to change in their manner of production.

Helen Brough's use of oil on aluminium has a contemporary, yet controlled and technically aware feel in the way of an artist like Heisksa, with it's manually dragged paints and considered colours. Her images of New York take on a distilled or archetypal quality – the

vertical blues with occasional streaks of hot colour.

The work of **Hazel Brook** seems related almost stylistically, both in their predominantly blue tones, which are occasionally punctuated with hot colour, and their almost abstract nature. The feeling here is of confidence with the medium, and a handmade approach, a thread which runs throughout this show, resulting in an intriguing and imaginative selection of works which allow the viewer to follow the linked but disparate connections as Alice follows her adventure from one scenario to the next.

## Suzanne Patterson London, 2008

#### Suzanne Patterson

After graduating with a First Class degree in Fine Art and Critical Studies from Central St Martins School of Art, Suzanne Patterson then produced catalogue essays for both Underwood Street Gallery, and publications for the Saatchi Gallery, including an essay on Sophie von Hellermann for her one person show. Patterson has recently been published in *ArtWorld* magazine, and has interviewed Grayson Perry.



# Lorraine Berry born 1962, Bolton

After obtaining a BA First Class Hons degree from Lancashire, she went to City College in Manchester for her PDQ in New Technology for Designer/Makers and two years ago she was awarded a Distinction in her MA in Creative Technology at Salford University.

Her work with modern media has led her to exhibit extensively in Great Britain, USA, Spain and China. More recently she has exhibited in Queen Street Mill, Burnley; Egg Space, Liverpool, in conjunction with the Liverpool Biennial; Tate Britain as part of the conference Embedding ICT in Art and Design, which was a collaboration between Tate Britain, NSEAD and A4; and Project with Folly, Lancaster as part of a GYOML series of events. She has also had a solo installation at Gallery Oldham, Manchester.

Central to her curriculum is her work in Cyberspace, to be more specific, in the on-line game Second Life where she maintains her own gallery, The Glass Box Gallery.

Lorraine Berry lives and works in Lancashire.







# Hazel Brook born 1946, London

Hazel studied Fine Art Painting at Croydon College of Art, 1962-67.

She has exhibited her oil paintings and monotypes throughout the UK and has undertaken a number of public and corporate art commissions in vitreous enamel, etched glass, monotypes and oil paintings on canvas.

Solo exhibitions include: To paint the portrait of a bird, Hastings Museum & Art Gallery and Royal Festival Hall, London, 1994; New Works on Paper, Paperpoint, London, 1997; White Gallery, Brighton, 2002; Trinity Gallery, Tunbridge Wells, 2004.

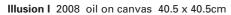
Group exhibitions include: Boundaries, Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, 1995; Permanent Waves, Hastings Museum & Art Gallery, 1995; On Reflection, Hastings Museum & Art Gallery, 1997; Works on paper +, Clink Wharf Gallery, London, 1998; Images 23, Royal College of Art, London, 1999; Images 27, Mall Galleries, London, 2003; Encounters, Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, 2003; Originals 04, Mall Galleries, London, 2004; Sea Voices, Hastings Museum & Art Gallery, 2005; A is for Art, Star Gallery, Lewes, 2005; Originals 07, Mall Galleries, London, 2007; HQ Gallery, Lewes 2007 (three person exhibition) and Stark Gallery, Canterbury, 2008.

She has also been involved in creating images to texts. Her first book, To paint the portrait of a bird, based on a poem by Jacques Prévert, was published by Graphic Ideas in 1994.

She is currently working on a second book, At the limits of nature, for which she is creating a series of images based on twentieth century poems on the theme of liberty and the environment.

Hazel Brook lives and works in Hastings.







Illusion IV 2008 oil on canvas 40.5 x 40.5cm



# Helen Brough born 1966, London

Helen is a British painter, sculptor and installation artist.

She was educated at Chelsea School of Art in London, achieving a BA Hons First Class and a MA in Sculpture. Her awards in England include the Prix de Rome Prize at the British School in Rome and the Prince Charles Travel Scholarship. The Soros foundation has funded her exhibitions in Romania and Hungary. In America she has received funding from the Pollock/Krasner Foundation and the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts.

In 2003 she had her first solo show in New York City at Kristen Frederickson Contemporary Art in Tribeca. Since then she has been awarded a Triangle residency for six months in DUMBO/ Brooklyn, New York and selected for the Triangle workshop in 2004.

Group exhibitions include: Projects '04 at the Islip Art Museum, Islip, New York; Building Blocks, New Jersey; AAF Fair with Lamont Editions, New York; The London Art Fair with Waterhouse and Dodd, and American Exposure curated by Michel Allen, Memphis.

In May 2006 the permanent sculpture commission Emulated Flora opened at 70 Washington Street, DUMBO / Brooklyn, New York. This piece was commissioned by Jane and David Walentas.

In November 2006 until February 2007 she had a solo exhibition Cataclysmic Hypotheses at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha, Nebraska. In February 2007 she was in a two person exhibition of new drawings and glass pieces at Allen Gallery in Chelsea, New York.

Helen Brough presently lives and works in New York.



Outland 2008 oil on aluminium 61 x 61cm



Desert Landscape 2008 oil on aluminium 61 x 61cm

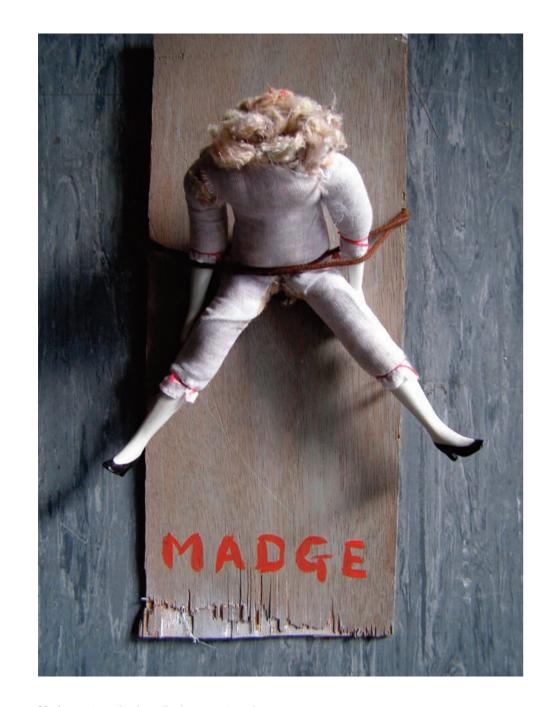


# Liz Finch born 1951, Blackburn

Liz studied art at Burnley College of Art 1968 and Bideford School 1971, since when she has enjoyed an eclectic career, working in diverse areas of artistic activity, performance, painting, drawing, and writing, and as a critic on such journals as Art Line International, and New Musical Express in whose pages she was one of the first champions of the Punk Rock movement.

In recent years she has concentrated on fine art, exhibiting in numerous group and solo shows and performance festivals, including: The Neo Naturists Ladies Choir (various festival venues throughout the United Kingdom), 1996; Slave Plan, Electro Studios, Hastings, 1996; 1067, Electro Studios, Hastings, 2002; 1067 Invasion, SoCo Gallery, Hastings, 2003; Smelly Filthy Minge, Hastings Museum & Art Gallery, 2002; London Dada Performances of Naked, Ventriloqutheraphy, Wedding Rubbish, at Tate, 2006; Fast and Loose, My Dead Gallery, curated by Centre of Attention, London, 2007; and 4 Modern Sussex Women, Fairfax Gallery, London, 2008.

Liz Finch lives and works in Hastings.







Self portrait on velvet 2008 oil and artist's hair on found velvet 32 x 24cm



# Per Fronth born 1963, Kristiansand

Per is among Norway's leading artists with continuous exhibitions internationally as well as in his native Scandinavia.

Fronth works with photography as the raw-material for his artistic output creating works of unique nature aided by his artistic visions.

He is represented in many museums and public collections including: US Library of Congress; Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, Japan; Sørlandets Kunstmuseum.

In 2007 Per Fronth delivered the first of two monumental artworks in collaboration with Bentel & Bentel Architects of New York (Museum of Modern Art, New York): Split Sky -Atlantic Timeline, a one-ton photographic installation commisioned by Boca Raton Resorts, Florida. This collaboration resulted in the prestigious GANA Awards 2007, Glass Association of North America.

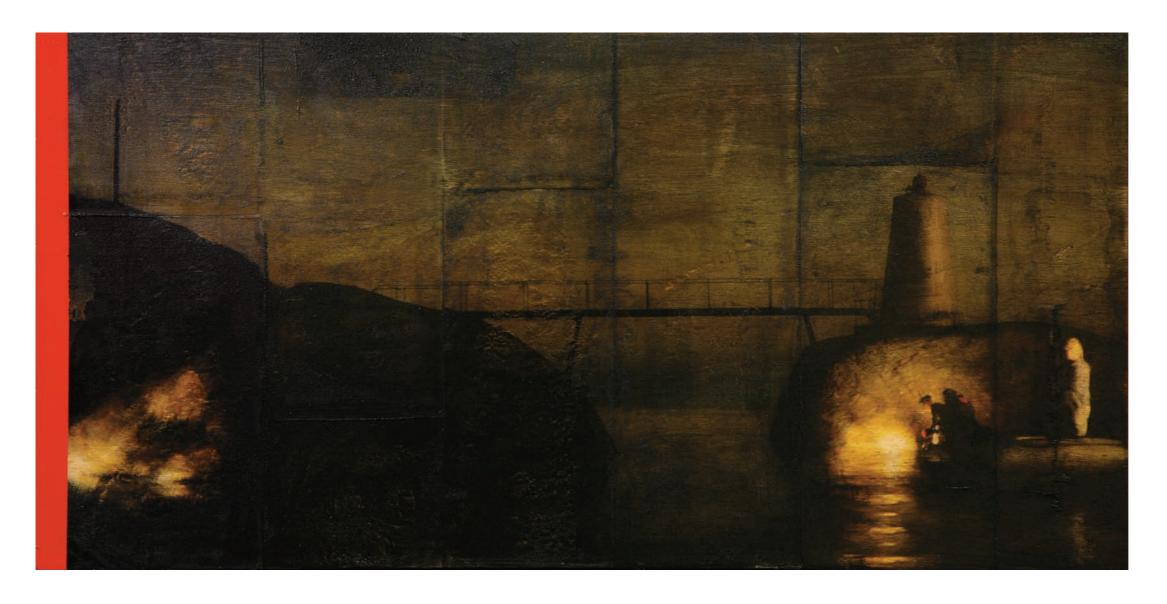
In October 2008 another monumental photographic undertaking Photosynthesis 8:31 was installed at Rouge Tomate Restaurant on Fifth Avenue in New York. Again a collaboration with Bentel & Bentel Architects, Photosynthesis 8:31 is a work in glass, 18 glass panels, 30m<sup>2</sup> in size, installed as a massive grid to become the main artwork on the premises.

Per Fronth is currently exhibiting his new body of work Carbon Compositions at the Dillon Gallery, New York (his main representative) from October to November 2008.

Fronth has also received critical acclaim for his award-winning short films such as Ode To a Hunter, a filmwork from the controversial exhibition Bloodlines in London, exploring the Duke of Beaufort's Foxhunt. In 2001 he was represented in the Berlin, Toronto and Sundance film festivals.

At Bergen University in 2006 Kari Hellesøy undertook a MBA in Art History based on Per Fronth's collaboration with Rainforest Foundation International among indigenous peoples in the Brazilian Amazonas, known as the Xingu Chronicles.

Per Fronth lives and works in Kristiansand.





The way the sun attaches to her (archipelago) 2008 photo transfer, oil on wood panel 50 x 20cm



# Colin Gibson born 1945, Newcastle upon Tyne

Colin has been a professional musician since the late sixties, when he founded cult psychedelic band Skip Bifferty. Their first album recorded in 1967 for RCA records, which features in Record Collector's Top 40 psychedelic albums, has been recently repackaged and released by Sanctuary Records, together with single releases and rare BBC John Peel sessions, as The Story of Skip Bifferty.

Since then he has worked with many international artists including: Ginger Baker, Van Morrison, Shirley Bassey, Yes, Alvin Lee, Stefan Grossman, Bert Jansch, Lindisfarne, Charles Mingus' drummer Danny Richmond and Reggae legend, Lee 'Scratch' Perry, in England, Ireland, USA, Europe, Mexico, Canada, South America, Jamaica and Africa.

In 1984, with the late Kenny Craddock, he began composing music for TV series such as Little Armadillos (for which he also co-wrote the script, with The Comic Strip's Pete Richens), Small World, a dramatisation of the David Lodge novel, and *Upline* by Howard Schuman.

He later branched into film, the most recent being, Kevin of the North, featuring Leslie Neilson.

He currently plays with long time drum partner, Liam Genockey, in Buick 6, Pass the Cat, Nightshift and John Pearson's Blues & Beyond.

His graphic design work includes covers for The Blockheads (Where's the Party?, Mona) and Liane Carroll.

His collaboration with artist, Alan Rankle, on video installation and prints began in early 2005, and includes exhibits in Galleri Nordlys in Denmark, Galleria Seriola in Finland and Gallery Oldham in the UK.

Colin Gibson lives and works in St Leonards on Sea.



# Tiina Heiska born 1959, Helsinki

Tiina studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki (MA 2001).

Since her first solo exhibition at Gallery Artina, Helsinki, 1991, Tiina Heiska's work has captured the attention of the public and the art establishment. Numerous critics and reviews have brought her work to a wide audience.

She has held six solo exhibitions in Helsinki as well as in Paris, 2005 and 2007. Her most recent was Butterfly Caught at L'Usine Galerie in Brussels.

Recently shortlisted for the prestigious Sovereign Art Prize in London, she has exhibited internationally in galleries and museums in London, Berlin, Copenhagen and Lisbon.

She has been the recipient of many grants from Finnish Cultural Foundations.

Her work features in numerous private collections and in the collections of Helsinki City Art Museum, Amos Andersson Art Museum and the State Art Collection.

Tiina Heiska lives and works in Helsinki.





Butterfly Found 2008 oil on canvas 80cm x 65.5cm

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# Oska Lappin born 1972, Eugene, Oregon

Oska was born on the Pacific North West coast of America and spent the first ten years of her life submerged in the hippy counterculture.

Resurfacing, her formative years were spent in New England and East Coast cities.

Oska's foremost influences come from comics, punk, Hitchcock, and German Expressionism. Her work is often described as being somewhere between George Grosz and Robert Crumb; hard bitten and dirty.

On moving to Great Britain, Oska studied Fine Art Printmaking, first at Brighton University (BA) and later at Camberwell School of Art, London.

She has taken part in exhibitions at: University of Brighton Gallery; Broadbent ShowSpace, Los Angeles; Claremont Gallery, Hastings; Kleine Rathaus Gallery, Landshut; and Portland School of Art, Maine. She has also exibited five times at SoCo Gallery in Hastings.

Oska Lappin lives and works in St Leonards on Sea.





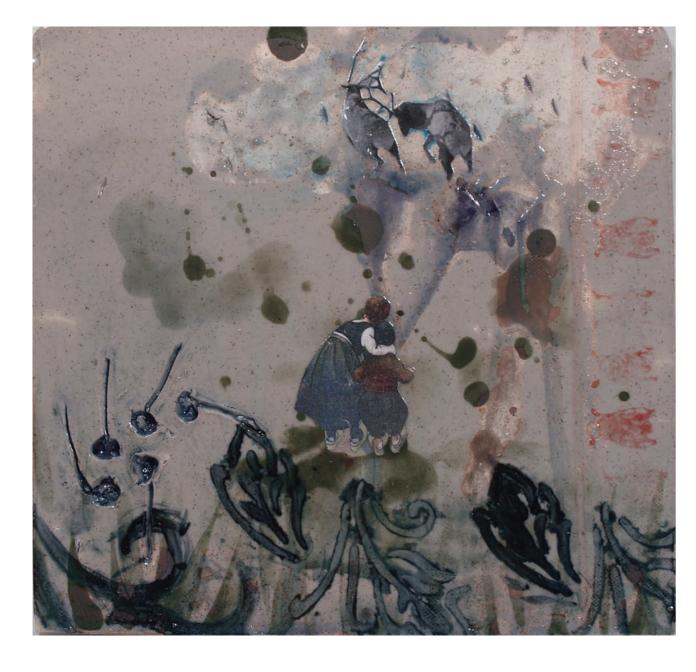


# Barbie L'Hoste born 1981, New Orleans

Barbie recently finshed her MA in Fine Arts at the Tulane University in New Orleans, but despite her young age her work immediately began to attract interest in the USA.

She has had exhibitions at Beca Gallery, the Carroll Gallery and the Terrence Sanders Gallery, all in New Orleans, and has also exhibited in Chicago and Baltimore. Lately she had her first solo exhibition at Mississipi Gulf Coast Community College, Gulfport.

Barbie L'Hoste lives and works in New Orleans.







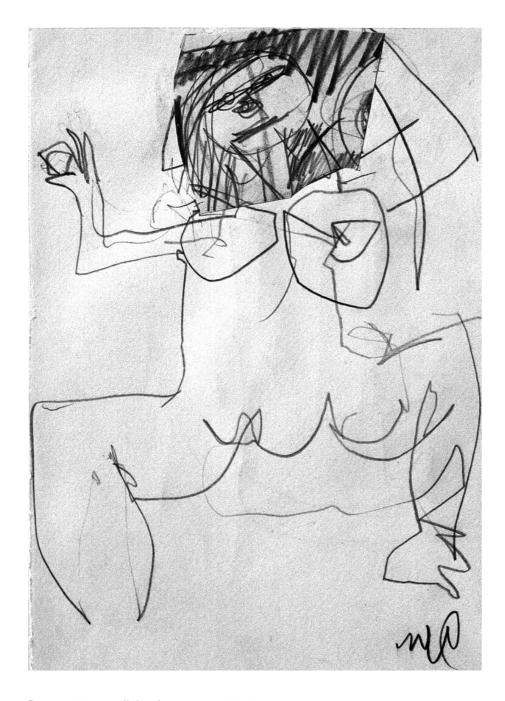
# Chris Milton born 1956, Gwent

Chris has pursued three parallel careers after obtaining his First Class BA Hons Degree from Middlesex University in Art and Design, one as a highly respected art lecturer in various British Art Colleges and Universities, one as an illustrator and one as an artist.

The latter has led him to numerous group exhibitions in for instance Harcourts Gallery, California; Circle Fine Arts, Chicago; Whitechapel Gallery, London; and The Metropole Galleries, London.

Solo exhibitions have taken place in Ravensdale Gallery, Soho, London; Electra Gallery, Toronto (arranged by the British Arts Council): and twice at Hastings Museum & Art Gallery. Milton has also been commissioned to do work for feature films, TV and record companies

Chris Milton lives and works in St Leonards-on-Sea



Dancer 2008 pencil drawing on paper 33 x 24cm



Mousey Antlers 2008 mixed media on paper 133 x 75cm



# Eleanor Moreton born 1956, London

Eleanor studied Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art, London where she received an MA in Painting in 1999.

In her early career her work was exhibited at numerous galleries throughout the United Kingdom including: John Hansard Gallery, Southampton; Winchester Gallery; Angel Row Gallery, Nottingham; and Ikon Gallery, Birmingham.

In recent years she has taken part in group exhibitions at Norwich Art Gallery, Norwich; The National Gallery of Albania, Tirane; and the Transition Gallery, London.

Solo exhibitions of her work have been held in the famous Bearspace in London; the Reg Vard Gallery, Sunderland and at the Ceri Hand Gallery in Liverpool.

Recently she was awarded the honour of being selected as Artist in Residence 2008 at Durham Cathedral.

She was also shortlisted for the prestigious John Moores 25 Painting Award, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 2008

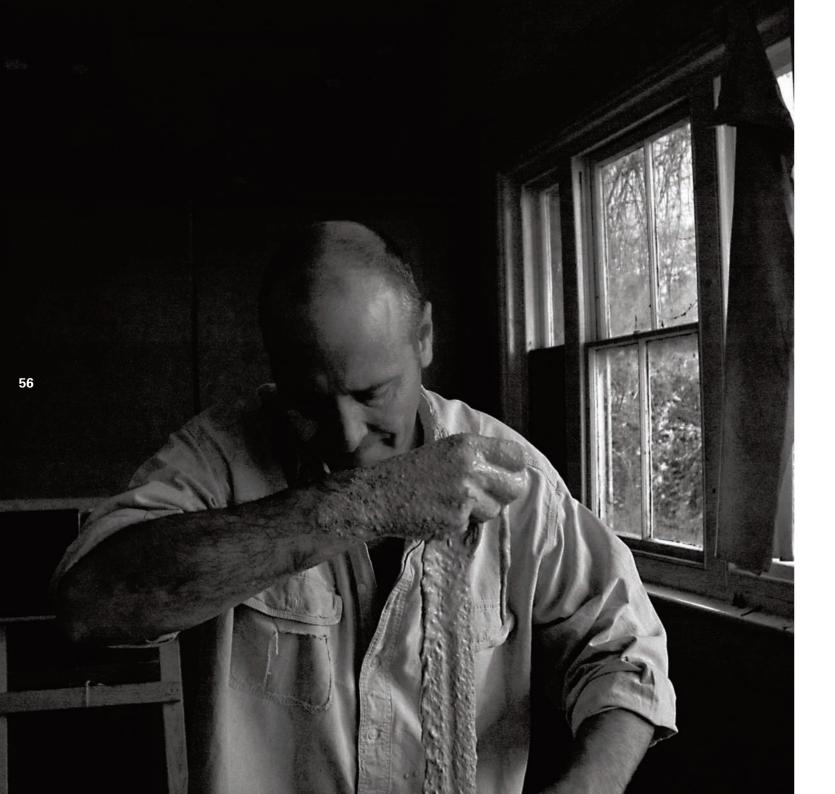
Eleanor Moreton lives and works in London.







Herr Jaeger 2008 oil on canvas 30 x 24cm



# Tim Nathan born 1960, Chester

Tim has been committed to portraying horses and horsemanship for over a decade

After obtaining his art degree at Canterbury College of Art he has had an extensive academic career lecturing art students at various colleges, including the University of Kent and Croydon College of Art.

His equestrian art has resulted in several residency programs in Sweden and England.

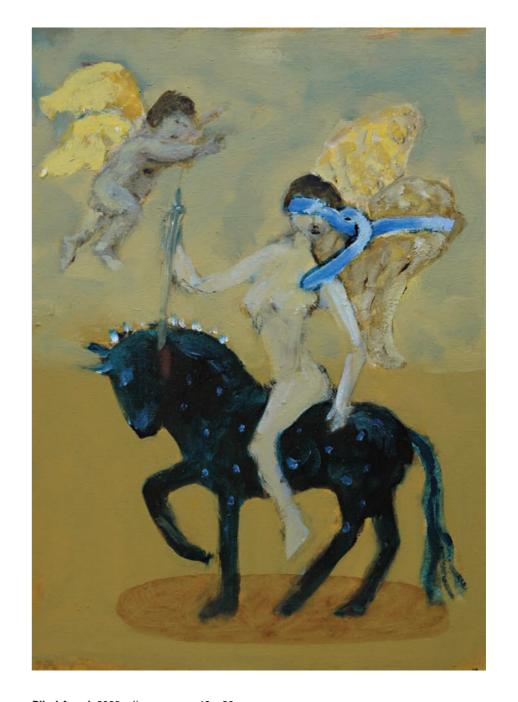
His group exhibitions include Bank Street Gallery, Sevenoaks and Hastings Museum & Art Gallery.

His solo exhibitions include the Pigs Gallery, Hastings; the Easton Rooms, Rye; the Groucho Club, London; Godmersham Park, Kent; and twice at the Swedish National Stud, Sweden.

His work is featured in private collections in Great Britain and the rest of Europe, USA and China.

Tim Nathan lives and works in Hastings.





Horses for Courses 2008 oil on canvas 30 x 42cm

Blind Angel 2008 oil on canvas 42 x 30cm



# Alan Rankle born 1952, Oldham

Alan studied at Rochdale College of Art; Goldsmiths' College, University of London BA (Hons) 1973; and The Liu Academy of Traditional Chinese Arts.

From his first exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London in 1973 he has worked variously in installation, painting, printmaking, video and photography.

A major series of paintings Riverfall, part of his ongoing series: Landscape Painting Project, shown at Southampton City Art Gallery in 1993, brought his work to a wider public.

He has remained at the forefront of artists expanding the vocabulary of contemporary painting, and contributing to the enduring relevance of 'Landscape Art', in the light of environmental issues of the day.

Other notable exhibitions include Landscapes for the North, Maidstone Museum/Radicev Museum, Saratov, Russia, 1996; Terre Verte, Danielle Arnaud/Clink Wharf Gallery, London, 1998; Gates to the Garden, Galleri Sult, Stavanger, 2003; Edge of Arcadia, Waterhouse & Dodd, London, 2004, Light + Meaning, Galleria Seriola, Tampere, Finland, 2006; Strange Territory, Galleri Nordlys, Copenhagen, 2006; and Formal Concerns, Galleri København, Copenhagen, 2007.

His work features in public and private collections worldwide including: Southampton City Art Gallery; Bain Capital plc; Bankfield Museum, Halifax; Hammerson plc; Gallery Oldham, Manchester; and PriceWaterhouseCoopers plc.

A major retrospective exhibition took place at Gallery Oldham in 2006.

Throughout his career, Alan Rankle has maintained an interest in writing about art and curating occasional exhibitions, notably Earthscape, 1991; Works on Paper + 1999; and Sublimate Sublime Subliminal, 1999.

Alan Rankle lives and works in Copenhagen and St Leonards on Sea.





World gone wrong (authorized version) 2008 oil on canvas, 35x45cm

Furl 2008 oil on canvas 40x40cm



# Kirsten Reynolds born 1968, Macclesfield

Kirsten is a founder member of Project Dark who have been creating sensory overload in the form of spectacular DJ shows using a custom sculpted catalogue of extraordinary 7 inch singles. Discs made from glass, human hair and circular saws are played using gramophones, a 10,000 volt sparkgenerating deck and finally an exploding, rocket-powered record player.

From creating metal instruments for industrial scrap orchestra The Bow Gamelan in 1990 to playing drums and bass in noise band Headbutt five years later, Kirsten has always worked in uncompromising situations She also produces many of the sculptural discs and art works for Project Dark and in a solo capacity regularly collaborates with musicians, DJs, pyrotechnicians and artists to create new live shows.

In 2000, curator David Toop commissioned a new installation for the international sound art exhibition Sonic Boom that took place at the Hayward Gallery. This piece involved three gramophones, sculptural discs and a high voltage stylus. This exhibition was the first major sound art survey in the UK and featured works by Christian Marclay and Brian Eno.

In 2003 Kirsten co-founded the label Phono Erotic releasing limited edition records and related artworks available from www.posteverything.com. Kirsten also performs with a number of Phono *Erotic* groups including, the electronic rhythm collision duo K&A, garage punk 10 piece with 4 stand-up drummers, The London Dirthole Company, and mambo pop outfit, Pommagne.

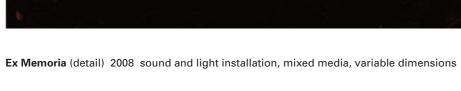
During the last few years Kirsten has collaborated on various large scale outdoor sound art events working with percussion, steam, pyrotechnics and many custom-made devices, generating spectacular sonic and visual installations and live works. These events are all site specific and made for a range of locations including Power Plant in the Oxford Botanic Gardens 2005 and Blast on the 300 metre long disused site of the original Curzon Street Railway Station in Birmingham

In October 2008 Kirsten presented a new live sound art performance in collaboration with Neil Fraser of Tindersticks. A Taste of Gramophotism was premiered at the Festspielhaus, Dresden, Germany and is a new live show that develops ideas concerning the importance of the relationship between image generation and sound production when using a range of sculptural objects and materials as original sources.

Kirsten has just produced new installation work for the outdoor sound and light art event Power Plant which was seen by over 7000 people in Calderstones Park, Liverpool over five sold-out nights. This event also featured work by artists, Anne Bean, Mark Anderson and Jony Easterby, and was presented by CMN for the Arts Council, as part of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture 2008 event.

Kirsten Reynolds lives and works in St Leonards on Sea







Ex Memoria (detail) 2008 sound and light installation, mixed media, variable dimensions



# Rebecca Rome born 1979, Bolder, Colorado

Rebecca is a photographer and visual artist whose work centers around autobiographical self portraits, as well as her mastery of Pinhole and Polaroid based techniques. She has lived and worked in New England, California, Hawaii, Nova Scotia and New Zealand, and has spent significant time working in rural, rustic and dilapidated environments.

Since high school, Rebecca has worked from coast to coast as a photographer and model. She served as a teaching assistant at the Maine Photographic Workshops, a school from which she received professional certification in photography.

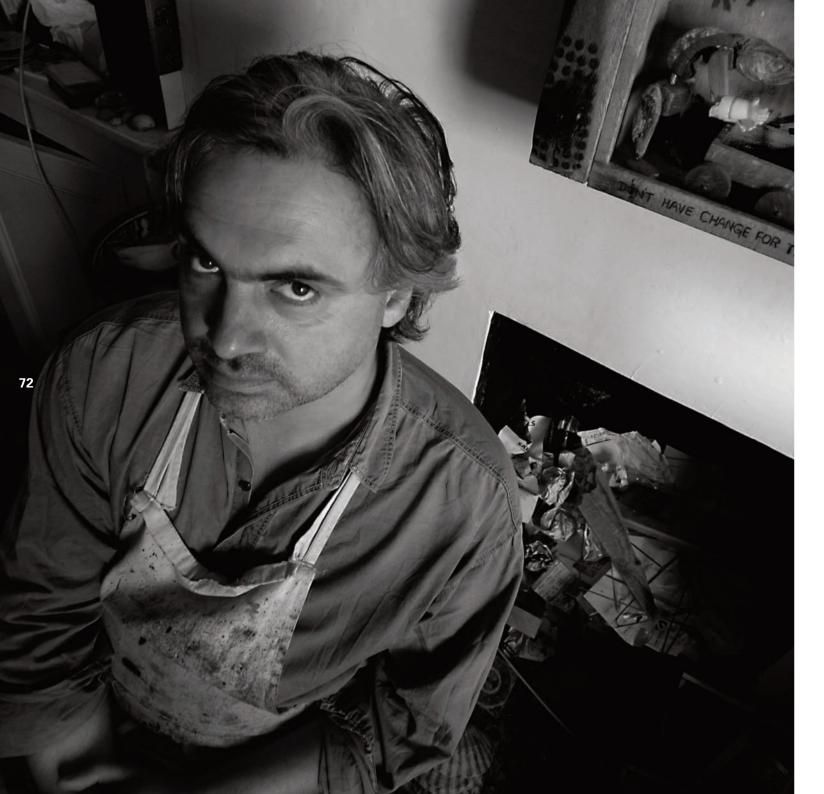
Rebecca has also presented her work and lectured to graduate level university students at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, where she began her serious photographic studies.

Rebecca Rome's exhibitions include a recent show at Rayko Photo Center in San Francisco.

Rebecca Rome lives and works in Boulder, Colorado.







# Len Shelley born 1964, Hastings

Len is a well-established artist living on the South Coast of England.

His speciality is 'Art in a Box'. These are three dimensional tableaux of extraordinary miniature figures in fantastic worlds. For materials, he scours the beach beneath his studio. Even the boxes in which the tableaux reside are made from driftwood, in order to ensure that the wood is fully seasoned.

Len Shelley studied post-graduate Film Production 1988-89, specialising in Animation, following his degree at Bournemouth College of Art.

Important solo exhibitions of his work have been held in Utrecht, Amsterdam, Brussels and London. A landmark exhibition was held in 1993 at the Booth Museum of Natural History in Brighton.

His work has been widely featured in the British press as well as on Belgian and Dutch TV. Shelley has also taken part in numerous group exhibitions in the Netherlands, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom.

Len Shelley lives and works in St Leonards on Sea.





**The Shoe Navy** (detail) 2008 mixed media construction, variable dimensions

**The Shoe Navy** (detail) 2008 mixed media construction, variable dimensions



# Samppa Törmälehto born 1977, Rauma

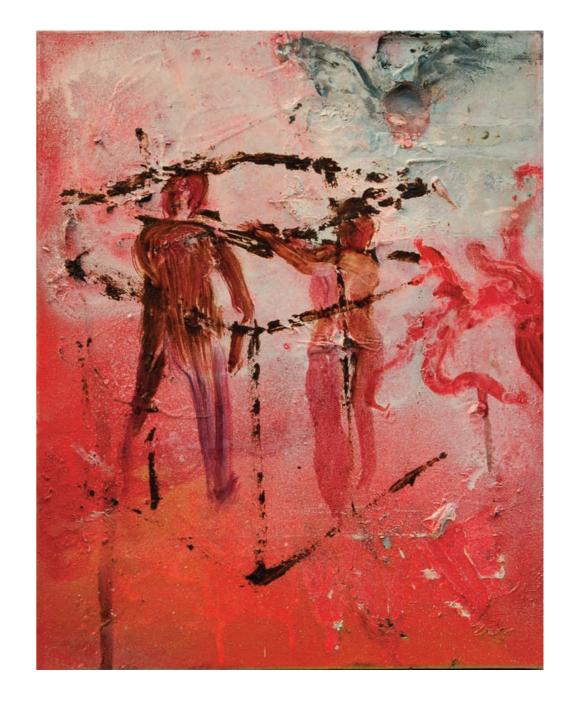
Samppa went on to the Fine Arts
Department of the University of Applied
Sciences after finishing Pori Art School
in 2000

Since establishing his studio in
Tampere he has held many succesful
solo exhibitions in Turku, Helsinki and
the Hague, and at Lönnström Art
Museum, Rauma, where he won the
Artist of the Year Award in 2006. He has
participated in numerous group
exhibitions in, for instance, Prague and
Holland. In 2008 he participated in the
Biennale in Beijing.

His work first came to the attention of the Danish public in an exhibition curated by Petri Ala-Maunus, *Finnish Breakfast*, at LARMgalleri, Copenhagen. Considering his young age, his work is featured in many public collections such as the Sara Hildén Art Museum, Helsinki City Art Museum and the Lönnström Art Museum, and was singled out as the Lottery Prize for the Finnish Art Society.

Samppa Törmälehto lives and works in Tampere, Finland.





Evil Albino 2008 oil on canvas 30 x 40cm

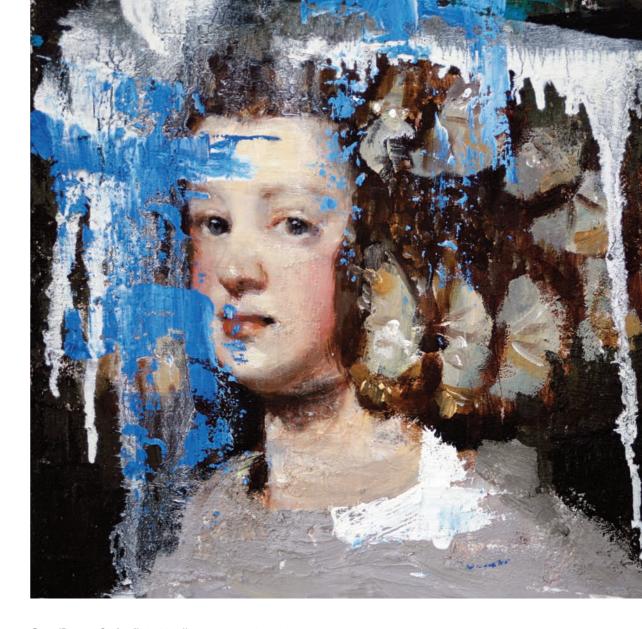


# Rimi Yang born 1959, Osaka

Rimi is an ethnic Korean who was born and raised in Osaka, Japan. In 1986 she moved to the Ohio where she studied at Bowling Green University and then in 1991 to Los Angeles where she studied at California State University and the Los Angeles Academy of Figurative Art, the Otis College of Art and Design and spent a summer in Florence, Italy, studying at the Florence Academy of Art. She has lived and worked near the ocean in Santa Monica since 1991.

Yang has exhibited in California, Florida, Georgia, New York, and Oho in the United States. British Columbia and Newfoundland in Canada and more recently her work has been exhibited in Europe.





Darling (Peeper Series I) 2008 oil on canvas 30 x 30cm

Gem (Peeper Series I) 2008 oil on canvas 30 x 30cm

Published by Inc. Editions, 2008 in association with Galleri Rebecca Kormind

## **Curious and Curiouser**

29 November 2008 – 25 January 2009 Exhibition curated by Alan Rankle

Galleri Rebecca Kormind Østerbrogade 19 2100 København Ø Tel: 35 43 66 06 galleri@rebeccakormind.dk www.rebeccakormind.dk

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Photography credits:

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Jeremy Brook, Per Fronth, Richard Hansen, David L'Hoste, Tim Nathan, Kim Nilsson, Dave O'Keefe, Chris Milton, Sabine Pearlman, Ulf Mark Pedersen, Alan Rankle, Emmett Roepke and Rebecca Rome

Alan Rankle and Rebecca Kormind would like to acknowledge the cooperation and good will of the following galleries representing artists in the archibition:

in the exhibition:
LARMgalleri, Copenhagen
Allen Gallery, New York
Galleri Trafo. Oslo
Galleria Ama, Helsinki
Ceri Hand Gallery, Liverpool
Octavia Gallery, Bath

Designed by Jeremy Brook, Graphic Ideas www.graphicideas.co.uk

Printed and bound by Garn Grafisk www.garn-grafisk.dk

ISBN: 978-0-95553068-1-5