

# apexart

## neo-con.

### Contemporary Returns to Conceptual Art

The show will display the work of 5-6 contemporary artists re-making (with a twist) famous conceptual artworks.

Artworks that reference other artworks as their main subject matter run the risk of being little more than esoteric in-jokes for those who know their art history. Whilst the pieces displayed in this show are on one level exactly that, they are also far from being just a dry homage or conceptual one-liner. Re-enacting (with a twist) famous conceptual works, the artists in neo-con level and humanise, by quirky humour and down-to-earth sensibility, the key principles of Conceptualism like the favouring of ideas over object-making, the dematerialisation of the art object, the production of work in collaboration and often without a studio. Far from the low resolution, degraded black and white images associated with the art from Sixties-Seventies, they infuse the sophisticated and cryptic aesthetics of Conceptual Art with mass culture. Beneath this playful, ironic take on art making, however, is a serious scrutiny of the very idea of art, its status, appearance and market value, as well as the myth of the artistic genius.

Although being based on appropriation, a constant in postmodern aesthetics, the power of the works exhibited is experiential as well as referential. They are a combination of reconstruction and revision, a double-take, a superimposition paralleling two eras, two forms of cultural expression and two dialogues; the dialogue with the reference work and the dialogue with the present. By creating warps in time, they intend to promote connectivity instead of competitive dialectics of history.

Works exhibited:

**Joao Onofre (Lisbon, Portugal, 1973) Catriona Shaw Sings Baldessari Sings LeWitt Re-edit Like a Virgin Extended Version, 2003** In the video artist Catriona Shaw interprets Madonna's song Like a Virgin, but with altered lyrics: excerpts from Sol Le Witt's Sentences on Conceptual Art (1969)--which had already been sung by John Baldessari in 1978. The work pushes to the limit the ironic intersection of two systems - arcane theoretical discourse and popular music-- addressed by Baldessari while interpreting Le Witt..

**Ian Forsyth (Manchester UK, 1973) Jane Pollard ( Newcastle UK, 1972) Walking After Acconci (Redirected Approaches) 2005** The work references a seminal video work made in 1973 by Vito Acconci. In it, Acconci paces the length of a corridor, talking to an absent ex-lover. Forsyth and Pollard worked closely with Plan B, a sharp-tongued young MC, to update the script and re-shoot the video, liberally adopting the style and aesthetic of contemporary urban music videos. Walking after Acconci appropriates Acconci's confrontational strategies but mixes them with contemporary references and techniques, producing a multi-layered result that is clearly sited in the here and now.

**Jonathan Monk (Leicester, UK, 1969) None of the Buildings on Sunset Strip, 1997** A self-explanatory work. A riff on Ed Ruscha's seminal artist's book Every Building on Sunset Strip, 1966. Monk simply photographed all the streets leading to Los Angeles's infamous Strip, that is: none of the buildings. Still alluding to the types of systems and processes that artists such as Ruscha employed so rigorously, what a little shift Monk demystify the creative process, suggesting alternative models for how art and the role of the artist can be interpreted.

**Francesco Vezzoli, (Brescia, Italy, 1971), Good Boy, Bad Boy, 2006** Being influenced by his fascination with the era of the "glamour cinema" and its divas, Vezzoli re-enacts, using celebrities, the video installation which Bruce Nauman made in 1985. It consisted on a pair of side-by-side monitors. On one a woman conjugates a series of judgments and attitudes while a man on the other screen spits them out in a slightly staggered sequence. Nauman's implications for racial as well as gender conflict, are mixed with ease genres deriving from the universe of television, Freudian psychoanalysis and Hollywood cinema.

**Yoshua Okon (Mexico City, 1970), Coyoteria, 2003** Coyotería is a re-make of and contemporary commentary on Joseph Beuys' legendary 1974 performance I like America and American Likes Me, during which Beuys spent a week living in a New York gallery with a coyote, with only a felt blanket and a cane to protect himself, as a meditation on the relationship between nature and culture. In his update of the performance, Okon evokes a post-colonial version of the coyote by employing a human "coyote" from

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Mexico City - a man known for trickery, greed and exploitation who is hired by average citizens to mediate between themselves and the government. Okon interacts with the "coyote" armed only with a blanket and a police nightstick. Not only does Okon's Coyoteria revisit Beuy's examination of man's relationship to nature, he also addresses issues of class, corruption, and the subjugation of man by man.

**To coincide with the opening of the exhibition the re-enactment of a seminal panel discussion (to be selected together with the artists) held in New York in the 60s/70s, will be organised. The same topics of the original symposium will be discussed by the artists in the show.**