



Photography and design

by Stephen Cleland.

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Window is an artist-run curatorial project with an OnSite/OnLine premise, running parallel programs of experimental media and virtual art

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W i n d o w

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[ curated by Michelle Menzies ]

NICK AUSTIN

JOANNA CHOW

STEPHEN CLELAND

LUKE DUNCALFE

KYLIE DUNCAN

CATHERINE GARET

HANNAE KIM

JASON LINDSAY

TIM LUSH

MICHELLE MENZIES

VICTORIA O'SULLIVAN

ADAM WILLETTS

27 July - 26 August 2004

a collaborative project between  
Window and the George Fraser Gallery

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Quick

In the elegiac *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Italo Calvino elucidates 'lightness' and 'quickness' as tropes for our time—poetic figures to express an aesthetic of economic expression and conceptual clarity. Lightness can refer to the scope of a work whose aim might be to explore one element of one aspect of an idea: executed simply, within clearly perceived limits.

For artists these ideas offer appealing possibilities for thinking through form and content, both perceptually and in terms of concept. I'm particularly intrigued by work in which the communicative dimension is relayed with a degree of discretion: by which word I'm gesturing towards a quality of containedness, a sense of self-conscious restraint and subtlety, perhaps even humour. When 'meaning' is positioned at this kind of oblique angle to 'subject', there is space left for the un-prescribed.

The open-ended ruminations of the *Six Memos* compose a text of meandering deviations, tangents and digressions. Calvino's agenda, if one exists beyond an attractively idiosyncratic theory of literature, is to fuse aspects of perception with a particular sense of the representational powers of language. Thus his emphasis, *a posteriori*, on a vocabulary of precise ephemerality: 'quickness', 'lightness', 'exactitude', 'visibility'. In this discussion the visual image takes on reverberant potential for 'emblematic value', as the apotheosis of laconic expression. The Chinese fable with which Calvino closes his discussion of 'quickness', for example, uses lucid prose to collapse time and space into a breathtaking image of painterly gestalt:

*Among Chuang-tzu's many skills, he was an expert draftsman. The king asked him to draw a crab. Chuang-tzu replied that he needed five years, a country house, and twelve servants. Five years later the drawing was still not begun. "I need another five years," said Chuang-tzu. The king granted them. At the end of these ten years, Chuang-tzu took up his brush and, in an instant, with a single stroke, he drew a crab, the most perfect crab ever seen.<sup>1</sup>*

*Muscae Voltantes* are the moving specks or threads often seen in front of our eyes, caused by dust and other fragments floating in the film, or a defect in the lens. In cinema they are the accidental dust and scratches that have spoiled the design of the final cut, an unintentional addition onto the surface of the filmic material. As they are projected, the partition between the intentional and accidental image is negated. The two images merge in a single flattened plane. The presence of these new additions being neither a disturbance nor an obstruction, just a presence.

—LUKE DUNCALFE, *Interlayers for Window*, 2004

If this notion of quickness denotes speed, the idea of time involved is much more complex than might first appear. *Quick* can mean 'fast', but suggests also virtuosity: a sense of dexterity, skill, grace, and a familiarity acquired over time. Folded, then, into a word which exemplifies swiftness is a sense of its temporal opposite: our concept of rapidly turning on an appreciation of slowness and weight, and so implicating both long periods of time and an instant.

The works in this exhibition are sited at various angles to my ideas around *Quick*: my curatorial project in some sense approximating an act of reading. I'm interested most in the oblique connections which arise from context, and the subtle points of friction unearthed by positioning one work against another. Notes the American poet Lyn Hejinian:

*One of the results of this compositional technique, building a work out of discrete units, is the creation of sizeable gaps between the units. The reader (and I can also say the writer) has to overleap the period, and cover the distance to the next sentence. But, meanwhile, what remains in the gaps, so to speak, remains crucial and informative. Part of the reading occurs as the recovery of that information (focus backward) and the discovery of newly structured ideas (focus forward).<sup>2</sup>*

- Michelle Menzies, July 2004

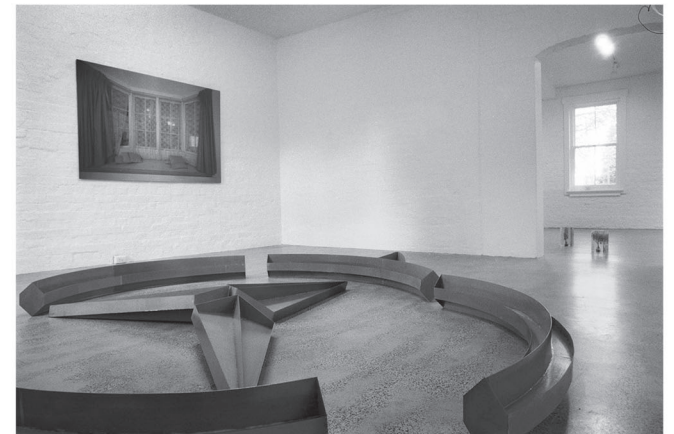
<sup>1</sup> From 'Quickness': Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*. (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Lyn Hejinian, 'The Rejection of Closure' in *Writing/Talks*, (ed.) Bob Perelman (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press), p. 274.



*I am attracted to objects already possessing a logic of temporality, one which frequently oscillates between the intimate and the local, the infinite and the galactic. In a sense the objects are pre-miniaturised, in that they are substitutes for larger experiences and events. As such, they talk more of dispossession than possession. ... It has been important to retain the truth factor of the objects, so that in as many ways they present themselves as they might ordinarily, so that they appear familiar, and yet foreign because of the way they have been juxtaposed with other objects. The issue then becomes one of juxtaposition.*

—VICTORIA O'SULLIVAN, 2003



TOP: Adam Willetts *Sunny Songs and Carbon Tones* 2004  
 BOTTOM: [foreground] Jason Lindsay *Bury* 2004; Stephen Cleland *Bay Windows* 2003; Victoria O'Sullivan *Bonsai* 1-3 2002  
 LEFT: Joanna Chow *one hundred feet* 2004  
 REVERSE: Victoria O'Sullivan *Bonsai* 2002;  
 [background] Michelle Menzies *City and Quarry* 2004