

SONIA LEBER & DAVID CHESWORTH
ALMOST ALWAYS EVERYWHERE APPARENT



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FOREWORD

This third instalment of the Helen Macpherson Smith Commission at ACCA, devised by Sonia Leber and David Chesworth, was a massive architectural and sound event. Employing the voices of hundreds of people in a composition of utterances inside a fantastical chamber of experience, *Almost Always Everywhere Apparent* offered a sensory overload to visitors.

Once again ACCA's unique exhibition space, which is both accommodating and challenging, was transformed by the vision and imagination of artists whose ambitions were encouraged by the opportunities offered through ACCA's most generous commissioning project for Victorian artists.

From its inception four years ago, the Helen Macpherson Smith Commission was devised to benefit multiple recipients. As well as providing a major opportunity for artists, an important part of the concept was to bring great contemporary works of art to regional galleries. Past regional gallery recipients have been Bendigo, Geelong and Ballarat, each receiving works for their collection by significant Victorian artists - Callum Morton, Daniel von Sturmer and Rosslynd Piggott respectively.

This year Mildura Art Gallery is the lucky recipient of *Almost Always Everywhere Apparent*. It has been no small undertaking to reinstall such a complex and massive work, and we are very grateful to Arts Victoria, who through its Touring Initiatives program, has enabled the rebirth of the work in regional Victoria.

Two of ACCA's fabulous Associate Curators are to be thanked for their work on this project. Charlotte Day who worked closely with Sonia and David to achieve the smooth logistical management of its first manifestation at ACCA, and Hannah Mathews who has taken on the coordination of its regeneration in Mildura. We have been pleased to work with our colleagues Julian Bowron and Antonette Zema at Mildura Art Gallery where *Almost Always Everywhere Apparent* will open in November 2008.

Finally, it has been a great pleasure to work with Sonia and David over the past two years. Their creativity, dedication, and intense attention to every detail are exemplary and it has been wonderful to see *Almost Always Everywhere Apparent* evolve from concept to dramatic reality.

Kay Campbell
Executive Director



INTRODUCTION
JULIANA ENGBERG

A penitentiary or a heavenly space? A strange sci-fi vessel or an arcane henge? A life pod for entry and exit from this world, or some weird hybrid incubator? According to its makers, Sonia Leber and David Chesworth, *Almost Always Everywhere Apparent* takes its physical shape and philosophical dimension from the all-seeing great power that is made manifest in the architectural design of Jeremy Bentham's 'panopticon'. But in encountering it, I am compelled to venture that it plays with numerous structures that, over the ages, have inspired, or are metaphors for many spiritual and secular narratives.

Entering through a small door that gives onto a long, pink-throated corridor, the viewer is physically transported away from a mundane reality into a symbolic space. Ushering you into the deeper burrow of place are sounds. Clicking noises, and a kind of white chatter. In fact these emissions are morse-code: sounds on the wire, transmitting to an unseen world. The static hum suggests you are about to enter into a para-normal, alien environment of transformation and communication. Leber and Chesworth work their first sonic effect upon the visitor. You are exiting the comprehensible visual realm and entering the mysterious spatial and auditory zone.

Once through the entry canal, you arrive at a middle place, presented as a spatial ovoid – a dual symbolic shape of both life-affirming fertility and zero nihilism. If this structure were a basilica, as its architecture might suggest, we would no doubt find a choir of angels flying *di sotto in su* in a trompe l'oeil sky, suggesting a portal of ascension. Instead, overhead whirs a menacing 'eye' fan with flames fluttering around its metallic blades – a slicing kind of furnace.

If this is a heavenly gate, then its threshold is bedeviled with risk. Rather than a blue-sky heaven, the explosive flames suggest, as they do in medievalist symbolism, or fantastical evil lairs, a Hades: a place of purgatory in perpetuum. The internal centre of Leber and Chesworth's structure is a holding place, a limbo, a place of transit for those who need to be uplifted to heaven or sent to a dreadful solution. The all-seeing 'eye' will cast a judgment over its inhabitants. And so, as incumbents, we are consigned to wait, and while we do, we listen to those who have already passed either beyond the ocular aperture or into other mysterious precincts, who now only exist as auditory phantoms.

While we linger we are offered alternative places to consider. Spidering off the main pod of space, and away from the polyvalent gaze of the 'eye' fan, are tunnels. Each seductively illuminated by a blueish-greenish candescent light. Is this the light at the end of the tunnel always referenced in metaphor, in death encounters, and mystic occurrences? Are these the alternative options before final dispatch to the restless hereafter indicated by the resident spooks?

Each corridor offers a peephole to another possibility. But what kinds of destination are these? In one portal bodies seem to be sucked to a ceiling, trapped in a kind of thwarted levitation. Another view shows a shadowy place, a kind of cataract vision: indistinct and suspicious. A moon casts its silvery white light over rippling water in another: a calmer place perhaps. In yet another we seem, ourselves, to be transformed into an ocular surveillance unit hovering over the mosaic of a dome room. Mystical, spiritual, secular; the

effable and ineffable. These destinations are but intermediate states and send us back to the middle place to await a further conclusion and again encounter the play of sounds.

Sonia Leber and David Chesworth's *Almost Always Everywhere Apparent*, exists significantly in the realm of the imaginary. The ultimate power of the piece resides in the activated unconscious of the visitor who must grapple with an overwhelming barrage of sensory stimulæ and repressed memories. Key in this is the encounter with voice sounds – some are given compositional structure like choral singing, others are pre-linguistic and isolated: unmusical, primal and guttural.

The structured, harmonised voices, the ones that resemble a choir, create a kind of apparitional situation for the visitor. Voices, in concert, seem to fly above and around the space in which one stands, suggesting another dimension, another place. They inhale, exhale, exclaim, whoop, whaaa and squeal. Ha ha ha. They collectively mock and admonish you, their menacing mirth has a kind of gothic, primordial darkness, as if to say 'You think you know what's happening? ... Well, you have no idea!' This is the sound of the furies for sure, circulating in the mysterious *nyx* to torment and dement us.

Detached from the chorus of voices, individual sounds interject. A baby gurgles, a male calls out in pain, in ecstasy also. A female voice coughs, another is orgasmic, and yet another sobs. One senses the beginning of a life cycle: the coming into life, the multiple transits of the here and now, and the residual after-life that hovers in premonition, memory and loss.

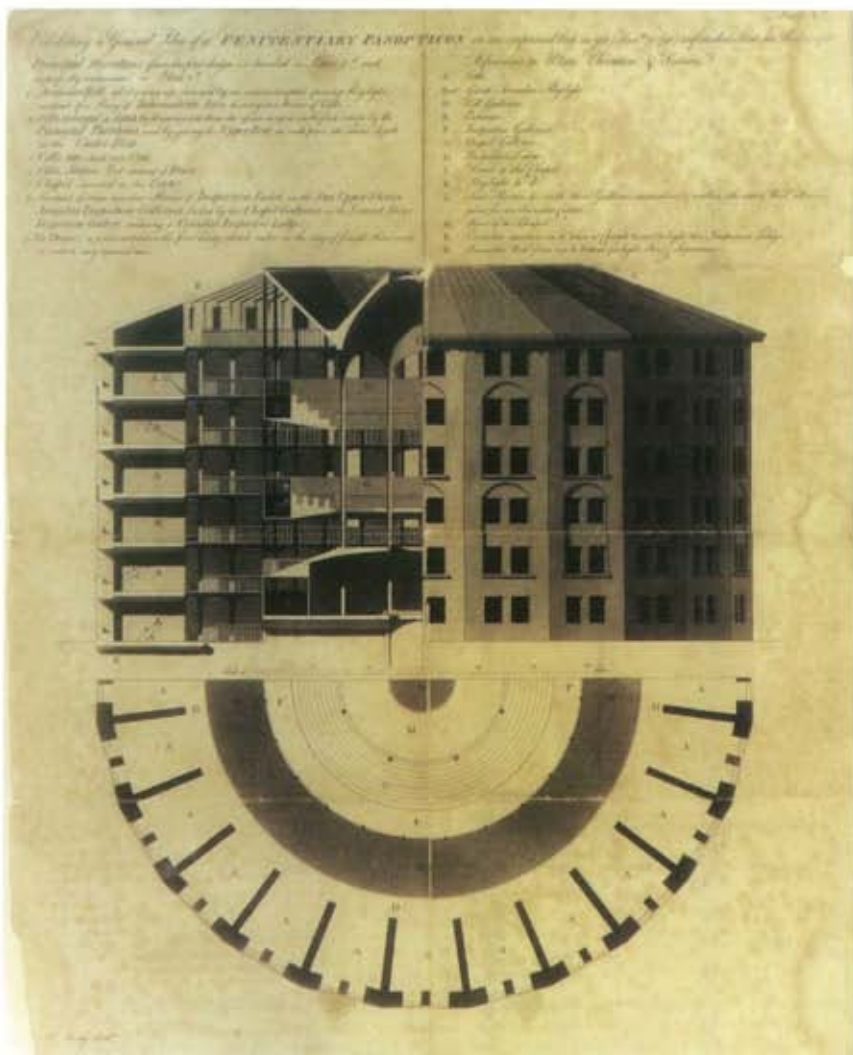
He he he he-he-he, the voices taunt in that way that suggests the worst is about to happen. Leber and Chesworth utilise the uncanny aspects of sound in a similar way to the use of a haunting, suspenseful atmosphere in cinema, which is frequently created by sound dislodged from the visual clues that clarify its ordinary presence and body. Set adrift from the vessel of person or thing, sound becomes a kind of dramatic character of its own. What Michel Chion, after Pierre Schaeffer, has called 'acousmatic presence'. Leber and Chesworth have created auditory poltergeists, set free to lurk in shadows, breath down necks, whistle in the dark, scream, creak, bang and challenge the viewer's general expectation of ocular mastery.

Almost Always Everywhere Apparent is an epic and emotional journey. One expressly experienced through a deprivation of one of our most controlling and reassuring senses: sight. Like a kind of gestalt therapy experience, the viewer is required to forego absolute knowledge for an instinctual encounter that may at times be overwhelming. Darkness lurks in the piece, and moments of frivolity have hysterical aspects. Life and death are co-habitants in this womb-like space that offers a very secular contemplation of the spiritual.

¹Michel Chion (trans: Claudia Gorbman), *The voice in cinema*, Columbia University Press: New York, 1999



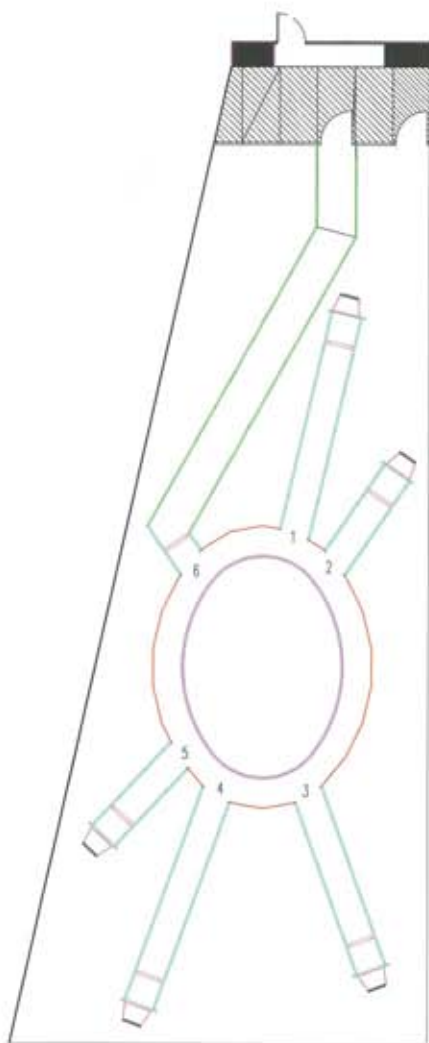


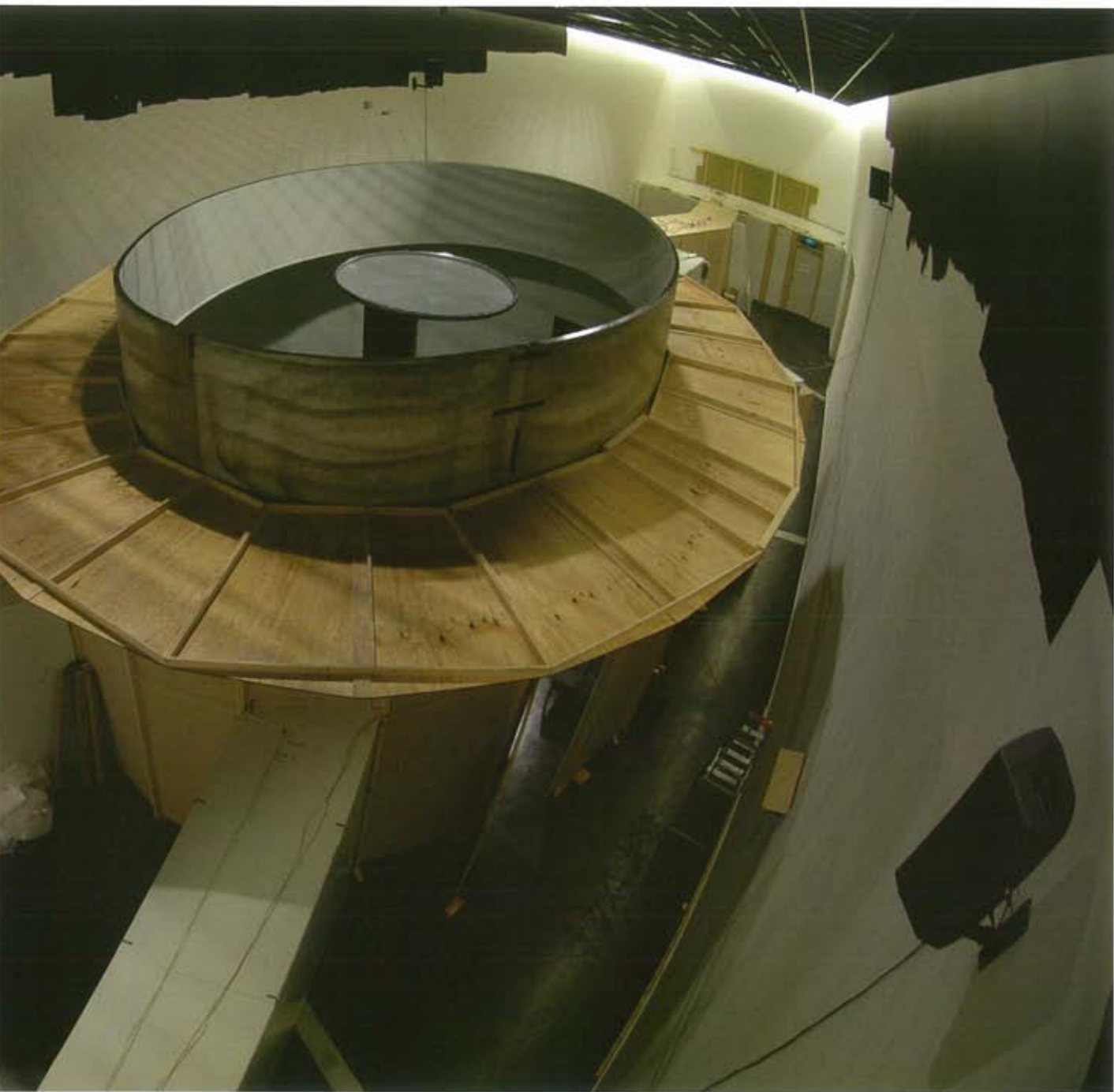


this page:
The Bentham Papers, courtesy University
College London Library, Special Collections.

opposite page:
Auto-Icon of Jeremy Bentham, courtesy
University College
London Library, Special Collections.









opposite page:
Assumption of the Virgin, from the ceiling
of the dome, 1526-30 (fresco) by Correggio,
(Antonio Allegri) (c.1489/94-1534)
© Parma Cathedral, Italy/ Alinari/ The
Bridgeman Art Library



① Almost Always Everywhere Apparent

①

Ah Ah $f > p < f > p < f$

② slow then fast

Ex ta Ra Oo Ah Ha Sss Sss...

Repeat ② a tone higher.

③

He He He He He He He

④

Ha Ha Ha Ha He He He Ee ya

⑤ legato

Ee Air Ah Oh Ab heard first Oo Ee

repeat 3X Each repeat begins with different note starting before others





NIKOS PAPASTERGIADIS

Some conversations that are held in private once replayed in public can assume another life. It is with this axiom, which I believe is central to Sonia Leber and David Chesworth's practice, that I start my own reflections on their recent work. Sonia Leber and David Chesworth have distinguished themselves in Melbourne by their ability to combine sonic and spatial elements. They have captured sounds and replayed them in unexpected places to produce a new experience of the original sound and its environment. Of course, they don't simply transfer one sound, or simply inhabit a given space. They work very carefully, modifying the architectural properties and modulating the sonic elements. However, the transformations that occur in the studio, as part of the research, design and experimentation process, are not what concern me in this essay. I am more interested in the effect of the transposition of one element into another location. It is the taking of images and sounds that exist in one place and their relocation into another environment that produces a form of visual and aural dissonance. Sonia Leber and David Chesworth transform both as they create new kinds of relations between elements that might not otherwise be put together. This is the basic principle of their art.

I also believe that ideas experience a similar trajectory. In classical Greek thinking, a person who remained utterly private and refused to engage with the public was described as an idiot. Similarly, an idea that exists exclusively in a private form, that remains inside the mental or physical space of an individual, is not quite released from its idiocy. It becomes an idea as it responds, reacts and engages; that is, it becomes itself as it enters the public space. I do not believe in the prior purity or primacy of the idea that is somehow formed without being sullied by its own context. On the contrary, it is in the way it emerges from and seeks to intervene in a given context that the idea begins to find its form. Hence it is in conversation, or in that space between or after interactions with others, that we realise our most precious thoughts.

Something like this happened on a pleasant Sunday morning on the hillside of Tarrawarra Museum of Art on the outskirts of Melbourne. Both Sonia Leber and I were attending the opening of Charles Anderson's installation *A House for Hermes #01*. While we were enjoying the autumnal sun Sonia asked me what I was working on. I replied by describing the two books that I had just read: Stephen Grey's *Ghost Plane* and Christos Tsiolkas' *Dead Europe*. She was immediately curious about *Ghost Plane* and also desperate to check her own interpretation of Tsiolkas' novel against mine. She interjected my reply by stating that her recent collaboration with David was concerned with issues of imprisonment like Grey and a fascination with spectral forces like Tsiolkas.

Before I proceed to describe my response to the subsequent installation of *Almost Always Everywhere Apparent* I will outline some of the dimensions of what I see as the spectral logic that haunts contemporary society. These references to the ghostly remnants in everyday life not only formed the basis of our original conversation, but also provide the key to my interpretation of their installation.

Such paradoxical responses follow from the peculiar combination of architectural, visual and sonic elements that Sonia Leber and David Chesworth have employed in this installation. I imagine that upon entering a site where they are commissioned to design a work, they often ask themselves: "What are the stories that lurk within this place?" "Are the voices and traces from the past still audible and visible?" This is not to suggest that their practice is like those heritage excavations that make bland commemorations. Their engagement with the space is more complex. It involves questioning the sphere of resonances in the present as much as it is a re-invention of things past. In a public site, this line of questioning often reveals uncanny associations with social traumas that were almost forgotten. It can lead towards a reactivation of buried memories as well as an exploration of novel cultural possibilities in the present.

What is most pertinent for this installation, and has a bearing on my original conversation with Sonia in relation to ghost prisoners and Tsiolkas' novel *Dead Europe*, is the belief that architectural forms and, in particular, the introduction of a new visual and spatial apparatus can change the nature of inhabitants. This, of course, is a long-standing belief in almost all civilisations. The effort to make churches, temples and shrines into places of great significance is not simply to demonstrate the capacity to realise a spectacular display of power and art, but to render a specific set of relations between the deity and the subjects that shapes the consciousness of those who enter this space. It is as if the building's main purpose is to communicate the awesome omnipotence and the breathtaking omnipresence of the deity. The scale of the building and the use of materials (like stone that suggests permanence, and stained glass that plays with light to produce multiple nuances) are designed to create not just a reverential ambience of submission, but to define the sources that give form to the spirit of absolute power. Even the scale and volume of these buildings is designed to enhance both the reach of a single voice that speaks from the pulpit and the sustained reverberations of the choral cadences. This combination of authorial clarity and wafting notes creates an ambience in which the message from God is both specific and almost everywhere.

In Sonia Leber and David Chesworth's installation we are given the opportunity to enter a space in which there is a similar tension between containing and unsettling forces. Upon entering the long corridor, my initial reaction was that I was proceeding down into an abyss. As I arrived in the centre of the work, there was an overwhelming feeling of being confined even as I stared down various alternative corridors. However, the music stimulated a feeling that my body could rise above this confinement. And yet, as soon as I turned my eyes upwards seeking the heavenly image that was just starting to form in my mind, this image was interrupted by the presence of a fan that turned in a menacing circular motion like a cylindrical guillotine. The image from Saint Paul's cathedral in London that Sonia Leber and David Chesworth have incorporated into this installation acts as a telling instance of that which induces this experience of awesome power. They have chosen to reverse the gaze: rather than displaying the massive structure from the perspective of a seated visitor, they have captured the peep-hole view from the top of the heavenly dome towards floor, which reveals both complex pattern of the mosaic but also reduces the appearance of the visitor to a minute ant.

The primary site that inspired the investigations for this project is a prison that was modelled on the idea of the panopticon. A great deal has been written on the history of the panopticon. The appearance of the panopticon revolutionised the design of prisons. It also materialised contradictory projects: on the one hand it was the embodiment of the enlightenment's principle of instilling individual responsibility and self-policing into people's consciousness; on the other hand, it sought to change the evil nature of man and to bring him closer to God. The panopticon was the product of both a scientific logic and a socio-religious system of belief. It reflects both enlightenment principles of social organisation and the Christian cosmology of a God with an all-seeing eye. It is a building that not only give form to this idea of total vision, but it is also a structure that seeks to redeem criminals by subjecting them to a form of surveillance that makes them think that they are under the constant gaze of an invisible guard. The redemptive aspect of this device is premised on the assumption that eventually the prisoner will internalise the image of the guard/God and become a real subject under the law. Sonia Leber and David Chesworth reflected on this ambition to make something 'good' out of these 'criminal types'. However, what they were also struck with was the loss of faith in such structures. They draw attention to the dimension of the prison cells, which like monastic cells are meant to be a space that is disconnected from everyday life. However, for the monk or nun, the solitary space is meant to help focus the mind on the spiritual realm, whereas for the prisoner it is the opposite of a private room – both a punitive site of material privation and a starting point that leads back to society. In their installation, Sonia Leber and David Chesworth pushed further this idea of the cell as a lifeless place, and constructed a zone that is somewhere in a place like limbo. The images of confinement that they depict are all of people in boundless but claustrophobic spaces. They appear boundless because the relation between floor, wall and ceiling seem to be inverted or blurred. They are also claustrophobic because the people inside these spaces seem to writhe and choke. This brings to mind the more sterile and atopic images of the prisons and detention centres for refugees and suspected terrorists.

Whenever I see historical images or visit the 'heritage preserved' prisons that were built according to the principles of the panopticon, I have the same sense of dread and relief that I experience when I drive by some of my old primary and secondary schools. There is the immediate feeling that these are repressive and cruel places. The good intentions of redemption are cancelled by the cold and austere ambience. There is also relief that these places are no longer built or designed to function in the same way. However, the relief is quickly tempered, when you pause to consider if the new is any better. For example, in almost every instance that I have seen an image of the cells in Guantanamo Bay my response has been numbness. They are presented as if they were simple and sterile, not that different to the interior of a local hospital ward. Yet, what is invisible and immediately apparent when you spend any time in a public institution is the torture of noise – in waiting rooms for instance, the tortuous sound of commercial television. This, of course, is the mild version of auditory distraction that almost always appears everywhere apparent: ambient music and images. And now one of the prime techniques for converting the nature of the prisoner in prison camps is the use of ambient music. Unlike the panopticon that used the principles of light and surveillance to bring prisoners closer to

into her family's care. As Isaac proceeds through Europe, his delirious conversion into a vampire becomes a metaphor for the tethering to his mother's curse and the severing of his paternal bonds. Isaac's father is a Greek-born, Paris-educated communist who fled persecution in his homeland, struggled to support his family while holding various factory jobs in Australia, and finally died from a heroin overdose. Throughout his life he was fiercely secular and displayed a disdainful attitude towards what he regarded as the shallow and complacent Australian political culture. The story of the father's haughty superiority and fatal end is contrasted to the mother's earthy attachments and her entrapment in the vortex of supernatural powers. She was born in a Greek village that was mired in superstitious beliefs. Her exotic beauty is shadowed by the appearance of a demonic ghost. As the figure of the father disappears into the urban debris and the collapse of any vestige of civil life, Isaac's vampiric transformation is coupled with the mother's return to her earthy and pre-modern belief systems. The trinity of father/city/culture marks the death of Europe, while the other trinity of mother/nature/spirit conjures the life of a brutish Europa. The novel ends with Isaac in a catatonic state. His mother returns to Europe. She saves her son by sacrificing her soul to the devil. The accursed power of a pagan spirit emerges triumphant.

After *Dead Europe's* publication, much of the critical attention focused on its portrayal of the violent mistreatment of Jews. Robert Manne, one of Australia's most prominent cultural critics, judged the book to contain anti-Semitic writing. In my opinion, Manne's critique overlooked the bigger question regarding the sources of energy that drive Tsiolkas' narrative. The novel proceeds by expressing contempt for the decline of Western political culture and ends by embracing the atavistic pre-modern forces. The energy that drives the novel to its conclusion is not exclusively sourced from a deep-seated racist hatred towards the Jews. Rather, the interweaving of the stories of the father's death and the mother's damnation embodies a larger destructiveness in the moral and political worldview. Male authority, monotheism and the whole enlightenment project are pronounced dead. European values are presented as either hollow or defunct. The civic and political ideologies are represented allegorically as rulers capitulating in shameful circumstances and the only successor to this void is a pagan devil with ghosts and zombies at his command. As Isaac is reclaimed in the monstrous maternal space of demonic self-sacrifice, the novel not only raises disturbing fantasies about the figuration of woman, but also suggests that the process of becoming a fatherless son is akin to being in a world where there is no rational explanation of cause and no basis for hope in ideals. Tsiolkas' novel ends with the alienating conclusion – that supernatural forces have the ultimate power over human destiny.

Monsters and Ghosts

It is worth recalling that the emergence of ghost stories in the modern era is linked to the enlightenment and the French revolution. Enlightenment principles had a tremendous influence on the modern forms of governance. They sought too establish a fact-based mode of knowledge making and, by definition, were opposed to forms of rule that relied on capricious myths,

malevolent superstitions and irrational belief systems. They sought to construct a transparent system of governance that was based on rational modes of explanation. It is now well accepted by cultural historians that the emergence of the ghost genre is a vehicle for expressing the mysteries that exist at the edges of the illuminated spaces of reason, and the passions that elude the powers of rationality. The end of enlightenment principles is not just evident in fiction. After 9/11 the rhetoric employed by the Bush administration was increasingly defined in terms of what his advisors defined as imperial realism. From this perspective, there was the firm belief that global reality could be shaped by American dreams. Hence, when faced with the perplexing image of Osama bin Laden, Bush's response was structured by a phantasmagoric "search for monsters and ghosts". In the ascendance of ghost genre in literature and the conviction-based politics we witness another level of this loss of faith in the rationalist worldview. Political debate is increasingly structured by what George Bush called his 'gut feelings', and alongside this form of judgement is the creeping return of supernatural forces that are represented as if they were always lurking within the body-politic. This shift challenges the border between rational order and monstrous passions, as it suggests that the passions not only co-exist with reason but that they enjoy ultimate power. My focus on Tsiolkas' most recent novel is inspired by the entreaty towards the spectral figures. A decade earlier, Tsiolkas conveyed the rage against social inequality and moral corruption in political terms. The appeal to the supernatural represents a significant departure in the source of moral authority. It is both a concession over the loss of faith in rational political argument, and a submission that a demonic sovereign has transformed society into a swirling vortex.

Voices in the Horizon: Almost Always Everywhere Apparent

The account of the spectral figures in Tsiolkas' novel has parallels to the articulation of voices and representation of figures in the installation by Sonia Leber and David Chesworth. Voices seem to come from elsewhere and linger in ways that defy the hard logic of science. Images of people through viewable through peep-holes disturb conventional understanding of where they are located and where they belong. Even the appearance of other viewers in the space of installation has spooky effects. On the occasion that I first visited the work, I noticed the arrival of an elderly statesman. He was tall and still rather lithe as he made his way towards the central atrium. From there I noticed him heading down one of the corridors. He gently placed his hands behind his back and as he approached the end he began to stoop. The effect of the light around his body and the necessity to bend into the peep-hole suddenly created the image of a hunchback. In my mind he was no longer the public figure that I recognised but more like one of the fictive images that dominate our gothic fears. In this new imaginary of ghosts and zombies there is a new dimension of fear. There is now the dread that everyone is not only confined to an abyss, but that they maybe transformed into their worst enemy. What I am suggesting is that the general fear of instability and movement have produced a new kind of perceptual feedback so that spectral figures now appear in the guise of the wog zombie.

the clarity of God's infinite power, the new camps are organised to achieve the goal of breaking down the deceitful defences and uncover any knowledge of future destructive missions. The aim is no longer to convert the prisoner but to extract information and then neutralise damage. Each prisoner is considered as a ticking time bomb that is linked to other detonators who may be moving freely on the outside. Hence the aim of detention is deactivation; it is to not only defuse the individual but also disarm the network.

To achieve this goal the US intelligence agencies have used irregular and discordant blasts of music. On occasions they have saturated the space for long periods with what they consider music that will confuse, confound and ultimately conquer the will of the prisoner. When Brian Eno defined ambient music as a process of combining available sounds in order to create a total environment, he also imagined that this would enable the listener to discern and create new patterns of sonic flow. The process of communication was intended as one of heightened contemplation and a new form of creative agency. What we now bear witness to is a process of communication that seeks to destroy the existing consciousness of the prisoner and then leave the individual in a state of ruin. The communion is not to bring the prisoner back to society, but to use music as a drill that can break down the walls and then enable the interrogators to extract anything of value from the mine of the evil mind.

The assumption that music can heighten creative contemplation or even destroy defensive shields grants it a great deal of power. Sonia Leber and David Chesworth's practice operates somewhere between these two extremes, but I suspect that they also share the view that music, and sounds in general, transform not only our experience of space but also take an active role in shaping our consciousness. However, there is something even more unsettling about the aural domain than the paradox of visually that framed the idea of the panopticon. It is impossible to fasten the experience of listening. I am obviously referring to the multiple and non-reproducible interpretations of any live sound. However, there is another dimension to the elusive qualities of sound that provokes questions like: "What is the life span of a sound?" "Once something is emitted where does it go?" "After we comprehend them do words and noises simply dissipate and disappear, or do they continue to reverberate in infinitely small but continuous rhythms?" I imagine that Sonia Leber and David Chesworth have become attuned to the way sonic and spatial elements are combined to both control our consciousness and then also produce effects that defy any kind of rational logic. Sound is perhaps the most elusive element. It has no real end, and it cannot be relied upon to achieve social ends in a linear manner. It can be brittle and triumphant. This contradictory possibility brings us back to the realm of the spectral. It is through sounds that Sonia Leber and David Chesworth suggest that the trace of things that are not apparent in the here and now can become faintly present. The imperceptible and the departed can return with a hint or a whisper. Hence we should note that the sonic effects in *Almost Always Everywhere Apparent* do not find a crescendo or follow any serial sequence: they interrupt, intrude and cut across each other to reproduce and stimulate our consciousness of the aestheticised politics of war in the age of ambient fears.

¹ Xan Rice, 'Africa's secret trail of 'ghosts'', *Guardian Weekly*, 27 April-3 May 2007, p.3.

² Rachel Meeropol, (ed.), *America's disappeared: secret imprisonment, detainees and the 'War on Terror'*, Seven Stories Press: New York, 2005.

³ Stephen Grey, *Ghost plane: the true story of the CIA torture program*, St. Martin's Press: New York, 2006.

⁴ This fear has already been the subject of numerous literary works, including Richard Flanagan, *The unknown terrorist*, Picador: Sydney, 2006.

⁵ David Rose, 'How US hid the suicide secrets of Guantanamo', *Guardian Weekly*, 23-29 June 2006, p.3.

⁶ See the collection of letters from refugees in which the very first letter cited by Julian Burnside in his introduction ends with the line: "Please do not forget us - we are humans." "Letters from refugees in Australia's detention centres", *From nothing to zero*, Lonely Planet Publications: Melbourne, 2003, p.v.

⁷ Quoted in Michael Gordon, 'Living in limbo', *The Age*, 30 September 2006, p.1.

⁸ This quote is taken from a film entitled *Hope - A documentary film about Amal Basry and the SIEV X disaster*, directed by Steve Thomas, Flying Carpet Films, 2007.

⁹ Hayden White argues that this practice, "arises out of the need for men to dignify their specific mode of existence by contrasting it with those of other men, real or imagined, who merely differ from themselves." In his brief history of the figure of the wild man, he notes that while this figure recurs in history its meaning shifts. Hayden White, 'The forms of wildness', *Tropics of discourse*, Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1978, pp 150-82.

¹⁰ Christos Tsiolkas, *Dead Europe*, Vintage: Sydney, 2005.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.336.

¹² Robert Mapplethorpe, 'Dead disturbing: A bloodthirsty tale that plays with the fire of anti-semitism', *The Monthly*, June 2005, pp 50-3.

¹³ Timothy Roberts, 'Dead ends: the spectre of elitism in the zombie film', *Philaent - Liminal*, December 2006, p.75. For a more general discussion of the appeal of natural authority and supernatural forces as a negation of humanist perspectives see Kenan Malik, *Man, beast, zombie*, Rutgers University Press: Rutgers, 2002.

¹⁴ Roger Burbach & Jim Tarbell, *Imperial overstretch: George Bush and the hubris of empire*, Zed Books: London, 2004.

¹⁵ Richard Devetak, 'The gothic scene of international relations: ghosts, monsters, terror and the sublime after September 11', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 31, 2005, p.622. See also Cynthia Weber, 'Flying planes can be dangerous', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2002, pp 129-47.







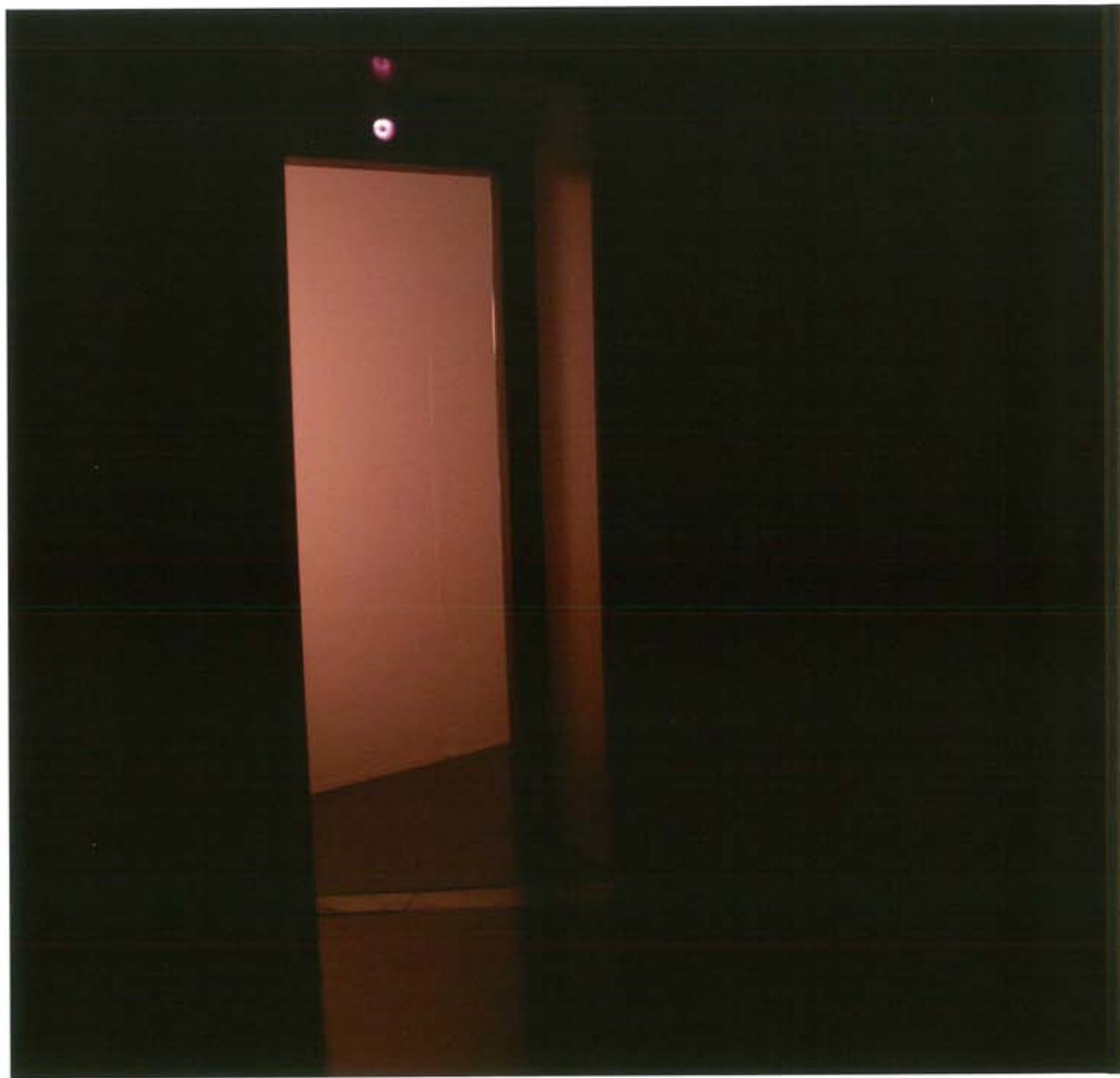
















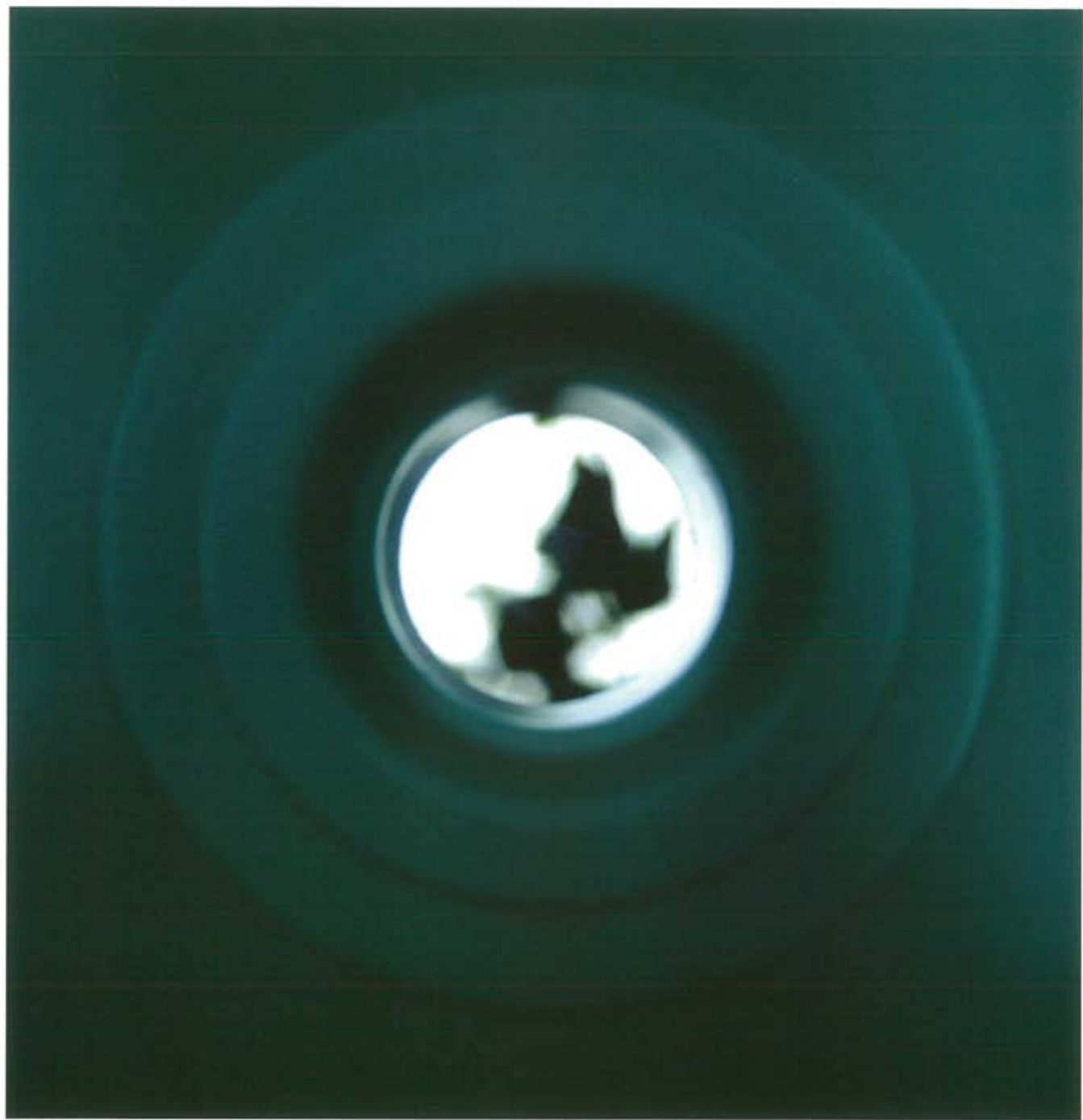


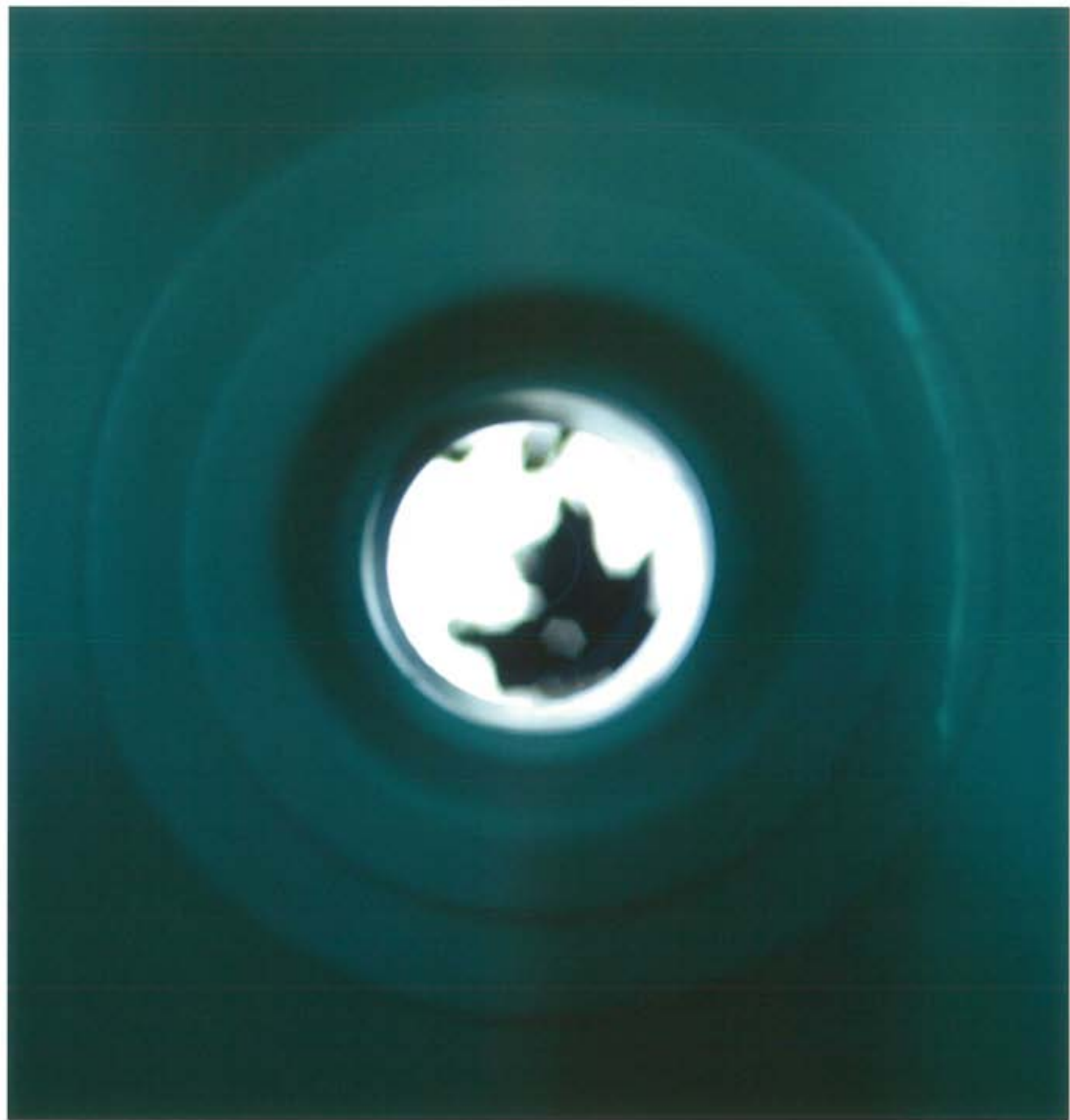




















SONIA LEBER AND DAVID CHESWORTH
ALMOST ALWAYS EVERYWHERE APPARENT 2007

16-channel audio (36:00)
6 channel video (1:19, 1:31, 1:39, 2:14, 3:00, 3:02)
Bondor, chipboard, plywood, MDF, polystyrene, acrylic sheet,
fluorescent lights, acrylic paint, speakers, computer
12 x 27 x 4.8 metres

Helen Macpherson Smith Commission 2007

Video compositing and digital enhancements
Peter Webb

Electrical and audio installation
Rowan Cochran

Sound support
Michael Hewes

Extra photography - London
Christopher van der Craats

Performers
Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Choir, conductor Andrew Wailes

Performers in video elements: Zofia Witkowski-Blake, Teresa Blake,
Adam Broinowski, Christy Louise Flaws, Luke O'Connor, Sarah
O'Donoghue, Lee Serle, Ingrid Weisfelt, Dan Witton

Touring To Mildura Arts Centre
28 November 2008 - 11 March 2009

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ACCA and the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust.

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commissioning curator Juliana Engberg and project curator Charlotte Day,
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ACCA

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Almost Always Everywhere Apparent will tour to regional Victoria and will
reside in the Mildura Arts Centre courtesy of Arts Victoria's Major Touring
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contemporary art to more Victorians.

Almost Always Everywhere Apparent was made possible through the
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significant contribution towards creating ambitious new works by Victorian
artists.

BIOGRAPHY

Sonia Leber born Melbourne, Australia, 1959
David Chesworth born Stoke, England, 1958

Sonia Leber and David Chesworth have collaborated since 1996, creating unique multi-channel sound and multimedia installations for a diverse range of arts and public spaces. A particular focus is the creation of sonic event spaces in the public domain.

Public artworks include *The Master's Voice*, a permanent soundscape installation for City Walk, Canberra, commissioned by ACT Public Art Program in 2001 and *5000 Calls*, a permanent soundscape installation commissioned by the Sydney Olympic Park Public Art Program in 2000. *5000 Calls* was also installed in 2002 along Millennium Riverwalk in Cardiff, Wales, organised by Chapter Arts Centre, and in 2003 along Shoemaker's Footbridge, Ljubljana, Slovenia organised by Cankarjev Dom Arts Centre.

Reiterations (Elizabeth Street), an audio project for +Plus Factors, commissioned by the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art in 2006 was also exhibited at the 2007 Madrid Abierto. Leber and Chesworth created *The Gordon Assumption* for the visual art program of the Melbourne International Arts Festival in 2004, and Chesworth's opera *Cosmonaut* was featured in the festival's performance program in the same year. The video installation, *The Persuaders*, was commissioned for the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne in 2003.

Leber and Chesworth collaborated with Simeon Nelson on *Proximities: local histories/global entanglements*, a built-in soundscape artwork along William Barak Bridge for the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne and *Oceanic Endless* for Melbourne's Cardinia Shire Council in 2007.

Sonia Leber's films have been exhibited widely at film festivals and contemporary art spaces including Germany's Oberhausen International Film Festival, Madrid Week of Experimental Cinema, the *Aurora Australis* tour of galleries in Canada, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and *Australian Perspecta* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In 1994, Leber curated the sound art event *Earwitness: Excursions in Sound* for Melbourne's Contemporary Music Events.

David Chesworth began creating sound works in 1978 with groups including Essendon Airport. His music compositions and sound installations have since been performed and exhibited extensively in Australia and internationally. Major festivals featuring his work include *Ars Electronica*, Festival d'Automne de Paris, Big Chill, Paris Quartier D'été, Edinburgh International Festival, Melbourne International Arts Festival, Adelaide Festival of Arts, Biennale of Sydney, SoundCulture and the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival. Chesworth's awards include a Churchill Fellowship and an honourable mention in Prix Ars Electronica.

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Mitchell Whitelaw, 'Sit, Ubu, sit. Good dog', *RealTime*, no. 46, December 2001

Alex Gawronski, 'Game over? The Olympic arts commissions', *RealTime*, no. 40, December 2000

Suzy Freeman-Greene, 'The Sounds of human effort', *The Age*, 25 September 1999.

A full exhibition history and biography can be found at www.waxsm.com.au

WRITERS

Juliana Engberg is the Artistic Director of the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art.

Nikos Papastergiadis is Associate Professor and Reader in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. He has recently published *Spatial aesthetics: art, place and the everyday*, Rivers Oram Press: London, 2006 and co-edited with Scott McQuire, *Empires, ruins and networks*, Melbourne University Press, 2005.

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