

In that way, "hyperbolic or enlarged communication" responds to a socio-cultural necessity just like other periods in History when hierarchization, linearity or sequentiality were the social attributes ordering and structuring citizenry. But nowadays, the communication and information society has brought disorder to the narratives we used to built our reality with. Virtuality, intermedia, accessibility, speed ... are nouns we must take into account because, faced with this new situation, the traditional canon of cultural action becomes ineffective for many domains, of which the museum is indisputably one. And those are the reasons encouraging us to propose museum spaces more in consonance with the new times.

In this regard, we will have a better understanding of recent history and its criteria if we view it through the prism of the characters who built and experienced it.

And notwithstanding the fleetingness of those artistic experiences and actions, all of them endure and are kept alive with an intensity and a dramatic tempo measured in such a way as to survive eternally within the memory of the spectator, in the experienced sensation given that the work in itself usually consists of an ephemeral temporality. That paradoxical level of atemporality is achieved, in spite of the transient nature of the effects of the work, thanks to the imagination nourished by the most basic human instincts.

New art creations find room for themselves in the existing scenarios of life, irrupting in them and taking as referents all the elements that are common to it in order to depict a reality that sometimes escapes us. In this process, art pauses in the perhaps most unadventurous instants of a life to help spectators to raise awareness and trigger a reaction to the monotony based on denouncing, criticising and reflecting. Art uses these situations in an attempt to establish a complicity with the spectators, to tell them, perhaps from a different angle, what is not alien to them, what is happening to them on a daily basis ... And it frequently does so using the media that the technological revolution puts at its service.

As made evident by *Speed 3*, this type of present-day art exists in the world of ideas beyond the purely manual, repositioning itself within a mutant society where time generates a certain tension and is thus valued in its true dimension, by its own fugacity, because the excess of speed gives rise to a fleeting art that becomes lost within the new technological channels.

In other words, I believe that, in the future, art will continue being, in one way or another, the epicentre of a society in progress and the spiritual nourishment for sustainable cultural growth.

Consuelo Císcar Casabán
Director of the IVAM

Running Out of Time

Exactly what do we mean when we say that time is running out? What is this experience that we all seem to share, of the accelerated slipping away of time—a feeling that is at once achingly real, and nearly impossible to describe? After all, most of us experience life, time's truest measure, as a string of interconnected days that gradually loop into seasons. All the while, however, we also tend to maintain the unspoken inner fiction that time is really a continuum, hurtling from past into future on a more or less unbroken linear path. If, however, neither of these belief-systems actually supports the hypothesis that time is something to be feared, to chase or be chased by, then from where does such anxiety arise? If the future continues to lie directly ahead of us on the temporal highway, then how does it also manage to be simultaneously looking over our shoulder, even breathing down our necks?

We tend to say that time is running out when faced with a situation in which we are not so much racing against the clock as against zero, a backwards-moving process for which the ultimate paradigm is the countdown. The steady, drip-drip intonation that characterizes the launching of a missile into space may be the most neutral variant of that model, but the more pertinent example is the unbearable tension leading up to the universally 'remembered' moment of impact of two atomic bombs on two Japanese cities more than six decades ago. As the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki slowly became evident to the rest of the world, a gradual metamorphosis started to take place with regard to the countdown itself, as all of us slowly learned to fear the inevitability of global warming, of nuclear Armageddon, of death itself, by means of this unstoppable approach to time. The 'zero' moment of impact, when the meaning of life becomes utterly transformed, is especially terrifying to us because it removes the factor of the unknown, replacing it with the sickening awareness that as the remaining moments before impact dwindle away, each tick of the clock brings us that much closer to the moment when time itself comes to an abrupt and complete halt. In the instant of detonation, everything beforehand attains a kind of ending, while everything that comes afterward is tinged by fear that the same devastation is likely to be repeated.

Nonetheless, a question lingers around this scene of destruction: is the countdown, as a type of race against time, so different in its nature from the speed trials that traditionally set one internal-combustion engine against another, or send a field of runners into a sudden blur of motion? Given that many sports also rely on the 'against zero' model of experiencing time—football and basketball might be the two most popular examples—it seems worth noting that the

struggle to prevent the human race from destroying itself has also assumed the more unpredictable form of the race against the clock. For example, the nuclear 'arms race' between the US and the USSR, which occupied much of the popular imagination in both countries for three decades, managed to pit the two models of time against each other. To ensure that any first use of a nuclear weapon would be met with an overwhelming response from the other side, each country had to convince the other that it was capable of just such a response, which entailed building as many deadly weapons as possible in the shortest available time. While in theory the 'race' would be won (as in actuality it was) by the country with the greater technological superiority, the stakes in the arms race were also made clear by the omnipresent shadow of the countdown looming over the more public face of the competition. In other words, to prevent a replay of the original atomic bombings' nightmare, it was deemed necessary by both sides to engage in a fast-paced accumulation of nuclear warheads, with the result being a clandestine proliferation of nuclear technology that has in turn been responsible for numerous additional countries possessing The Bomb. Today, we might continue to fear the known quantity of the countdown in the marrow of our bones, but we also have the additional fear of no longer knowing when and where the countdown will begin.

This added factor of the unknown might be the greatest contributor to the contemporary malaise that fuels the widely shared conviction that we are all living on borrowed time. Granted that it is possible for a large comet to suddenly slam into our planet and end life much more efficiently than we humans ever could. The main reason we tend to fear one and not the other is that there is nothing we can do about comets, whereas nuclear arms are very much in the hands of other members of our species, so that a hypothetical scenario always exists in our respective imaginations of preventing the trigger finger from pushing the 'launch' button. Unfortunately, that scenario does not figure into the more updated, countdown-based threat of global warming, which has effectively replaced nuclear Armageddon in the twenty-first century as most people's predominant doomsday fear. And just as global warming is not the kind of threat whose danger is contained in a single moment's impact, it cannot be averted in an instant, either — if indeed it can be averted at all. According to some scientists, the best we can manage is to limit the effects of the damage which has already taken place, and perhaps, if we move quickly and have luck on our side, prevent the damage from getting much worse. In other words, from a time-based perspective, global warming presents a new variant on the 'against zero' paradigm: for all intents and purposes, the countdown has already begun and cannot be stopped, none of us actually knows when 'zero hour' will arrive, and the best we can hope for is an incremental slowing down of disaster's imminent arrival on our doorstep.

Instant Replay

Since in fact the future hasn't taken place yet, but will do so regardless of whether or not we are there to see it, most of us, unable to fight or even escape its looming presence, choose instead to enter its embrace with a resigned sense of the inevitable, seizing on the acceleration of our days and months as a comparably optimistic message from the even more distant and buried past: the road ahead is broad and open, and forward is still the only direction we are allowed. Or perhaps this perspective is too limited, and history is already disappearing in our rearview mirror, while the present has been superseded by the fortuitous invention of the nanosecond, an increment of time which no organism can detect. Or maybe the future is actually settling around us all like a comic-book force-field, crackling with electromagnetic anticipation, no longer requiring us to surge forward and grab hold of it, but ready to envelop us in its ambiguous future-conditional tenses (already-would-have-been, etc), and pull us along.

This paradoxical push-and-pull — between our perception of speed and our mental image of the future — is deeply rooted in our faith in technology. We tend to believe that machines will only get smaller and faster because this is what our experience has shown to be true. As microchip capacities and processor speeds completely outstrip what previous generations could have even imagined, our behavior and imaginative capacities have adapted as well, enabling us to invent countless new uses for personal computers, the Internet, and our ubiquitous camera phones. The broader sociological change implied by this development rivals that of the assembly line or the automobile, in that it introduces new means of instantaneous written, visual and audio communication between groups and individuals who are separated from each other by great distances, but are nonetheless learning to extend their perceptual interactions outward to the rest of the world, without having to actually travel.

Despite the innumerable advantages to living in a society where such boundaries are ceasing to have as pronounced an impact on people's civic and economic lives, our perception of speed continues to be almost exclusively determined by our earthbound limitations. Athletic competitions push the body toward ever-greater speeds, and are won by ever-smaller fractions of seconds, while magnetic elevation is harnessed to propel trains in Shanghai at speeds rivaling those of airplanes. Of course, for those whose lives are spent striving to break the next speed record, whether this applies to computer processors, jets, or a regatta, the clock's judgment is not relative at all, but mercilessly precise. And if simultaneity and convergence are at the forefront of the current stage in our quest to overcome speed's limits, this has come about because they are linked with the precision of the instruments that we have developed to do the measuring for us. Just as

there are speeds the naked eye can't follow, so there are distinctions of milliseconds detectable only by computers, and our ability to do our jobs is increasingly dependent on billions of such fine distinctions being calculated on an hourly basis.

But once these increments of time and speed have moved beyond the ability of the human eye and mind to detect them, then we are effectively inventing machines that operate so fast, we need to invent other machines to measure them, and so on. In other words, a divergence starts to take place between that which is in actuality moving very quickly, in which case it may as well be standing still for all we can witness, and that which causes us to *perceive* something as moving very quickly, something that can generally be attained only through a kind of trickery, or by means of a bona fide technological breakthrough (which often amounts to the same thing). As Eadweard Muybridge's motion studies of a horse demonstrated in the late 1800s, certain speeds can only be detected after being literally frozen in time, captured at the precise instant when the human eye can no longer distinguish between form and movement, and rendered as harmless as a butterfly pinned to the page of a collector's album. Even a bullet passing through solid form can be isolated and represented this way, either as a direct image, or through such indirect evidence as a body falling on the battlefield. We do see the deadly impact, but only long after the moment of danger (for us) has passed. The irony here, of course, is that the most direct way to capture an object in super-fast motion is to freeze the moment, rendering the event immobile, and then sealing it in the aspic of immutable time through stop-action photography, or some comparable technique. This circumstance leads in turn to something akin to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, wherein certain phenomena cannot be measured without interfering with their subatomic structures, thereby inadvertently changing them into something else. By the time we perceive it, that is, the thing we have been intent on studying has already become something else, due mostly to our own efforts in making it visible to us. The speeds of a bullet train or a fighter plane far outstrip the ability of any artist to render them visually comprehensible, so what we are left with are perceptual codes and shortcuts that relay the idea or the impression of such velocity, but without reference to things that are understood in a more direct manner. In movies, we are often tricked into seeing things moving faster than they really are, either because the event itself has been accelerated in the editing room, or, more often, because adjacent events have slowed down in time, giving the impression that we are perceiving the world from the perspective of a tortoise.

It may actually be the case that, as a result of our great successes in building planes, cars, trains, weapons, and computer processors that invariably break all existing speed records, visual art's ability to directly represent speed has diminished to the point where

any connection between the artist and technological triumphalism has been worn completely away. A more likely explanation, however, is that whatever romantic attraction that artists had for the machine became problematized early in the twentieth century, particularly in the wake of the two World Wars, with their introduction of techniques of mass killing that proved morally revolting to all of civilization. This in turn produced a skepticism on the part of many artists, not toward machines per se so much as their misuse at the hands of leaders whose ambitions consisted largely of subjecting their own and other populations to violent conquest and/or genocide. Machines for destruction may have been nothing more than a means to end, but as that unusually bloody century drew to a close, artistic interest in the subject of speed, when it existed at all, was not involved with lauding its triumphs, but rather in expressing a concern with the dehumanizing effects of the quest for technological dominance at all costs. Art became, to all intents and purposes, an instrument for expressing the very mixed feelings stirred up by this collective drive to accelerate life itself, and to sound a note of distrust and skepticism about how we have come to embrace of the culture of speed as the ultimate symbol of power.

Accelerated Dystopia

The participating artists in this exhibition have all, to some degree or another, investigated the phenomenon of speed in their work, but in most cases these investigations have occurred indirectly, by way of exploring our perception of speed, the effects of speed, and even time as a general phenomenon, particularly our subjective experience of it. To a degree, this must be considered an arbitrary selection, in the sense that there does not appear to be a core group of artists working anywhere who are connected by way of their involvement in the subject of speed. What one does tend to find, however, especially among artists whose work engages technology from a critical perspective, or who see the problem through the lens of racial, ethnic and cultural identities, is a broad cross-section of perspectives and intentions, along with the overall sense that a preoccupation with speed tends to be looked at as symptomatic of a deeper malaise, in which the drive to move at ever-faster speeds reveals a need to no longer be bound by the limits of the planet earth.

In Cory Arcangel's art, an apparently whimsical approach to communications technology deftly conceals a more sardonic philosophical perspective into how machines tend to control us, rather than the other way around. Many of Arcangel's works, in fact, present themselves as full parodies of the full-access, 24/7 lifestyle that has proved so attractive to consumers of high-tech gadgets. Through such mirthful indulgences as *Doogle*, a mock search engine that only delivers results directly connected to the TV sitcom character Doogie Hauser M.D., or his well-known collaboration with Paper Rad, *Super Mario*

Movie, in which the video game character becomes a metaphysical voyager, Arcangel tries to impose a new facade onto the information superhighway, in which eccentricity, absurdity, and time-wasting cul-de-sacs replace our cultural obsession with pragmatics.

Arcangel's representation in this exhibition consists of two works. *Super Slow Tetris* is exactly what its title suggests: a video game whose numbingly slow pace defies any would-be challenger to last more than two or three moves; and *Mig 29 Soviet Fighter Plane and Clouds*, a two-channel projection that contrasts the static image of a Cold War-era jet (taken from a video game) and gently swaying cartoon clouds, with the resulting illusion meant to suggest an entirely childlike illusion of a speed capable of breaking the sound barrier.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, Tehching Hsieh, a Taiwanese artist who had moved to New York some years earlier, practiced an artform that was nearly without precedent in its complete abnegation of most of the attributes of new art. Refusing to produce conventional objects, and basing his investigations largely on his direct engagement with what he perceived as the essentials of life, Hsieh committed himself to a series of one-year undertakings, called *One Year Performance*, that frequently tested the limits of his body's endurance. For one year, for example, he lived completely out of doors, never once entering any kind of shelter to eat, rest, or relieve himself. For another year, he remained physically tied to another person, the performance artist Linda Montano, and during yet another he had no contact with any form of art-making, including his own. Such renunciations on Hsieh's part were less connected to the parameters of conceptual art, which they do resemble stylistically, than with questioning the fundamentals of his own artistic vocation—to the point where the borderline between artistic intention and the action that results from it seem almost superfluous.

In 1980 Tehching Hsieh created what has become his most widely disseminated work, its fame due perhaps to his approach having incorporated a form of self-documentation that is especially suitable for our time. Exploring the underlying notion of art as work, Hsieh spent an entire year punching the clock every hour on the hour. As 'proof' that he has done so, the artist had his 16mm camera rigged to shoot a second of film each time the clock was punched, with the result being an utterly compelling document of what happens when a man turns himself into a machine. But more than just a document, it is also a portrait of time as measured by a human life. Besides undergoing the expected sleep deprivation, Hsieh chose not to cut his hair or shave his beard, and the resulting movie of his transformation from downtown Manhattan artist to a veritable wild man of the woods remains quite unlike any other artwork of the late 20th century.

Although his work first came to attention in the early 1990s through a series of large-scale photographic works, for the past ten years Willie Doherty has been predominantly creating short, often fast-paced, video installations that rely on editing techniques of studio filmmaking, and the sculptural transformation of the viewing space, to create a fairly convincing variation of the cinematic experience. Generally speaking, Doherty's videos evoke a kind of claustrophobic landscape, one in which we have the sensation of being pursued, or perhaps of searching for a way out of wherever it is we happen to be. Even when the apparent subject is as simple as a single figure within a landscape, we are constantly aware of a sinister undertone that informs the lighting, the soundtrack, and the camera's movements.

Drive, the two-screen video installation being presented on the present occasion, is set on the outskirts of a large, forbidding city. Two screens at opposite ends of the viewing space show what is essentially the same image: a very tired man driving along a grimly anonymous highway at night in the rain, with virtually nothing to relieve the visual tedium. As the camera jumps back and forth from the view out the windshield to the man's face, we observe that in about half of the takes, the man's eyes have closed, and he has inadvertently fallen asleep. The question suddenly flashes in our mind: are we only a few short seconds away from witnessing a major traffic calamity, or will the man wake up before suddenly losing control of his car? Because we are never sure at what point we have entered the narrative, we keep waiting for the inevitable one-car collision that never comes.

Guy Hunderer's projected animation *Tumbolina* takes the premise of Doherty's video one step closer to the realm of J. G. Ballard, author of the pop-apocalyptic novel *Crash*, in which automobile drivers deliberately run into others because of what they believe to be the innate erotic appeal of human flesh giving way to the force of twisted metal and broken glass. Hunderer has produced a handful of works in which a phenomenon which is categorically impossible—a car on a highway passing a farmhouse that never disappears, a sky crammed with airplanes that gleefully swoop and chase each other—becomes so matter-of-fact as to border on the mundane. Not surprisingly, Hunderer has little interest in bringing out the gory dimension of his subject, preferring instead to focus instead on aspects that almost serve to test our credulity.

Tumbolina is only a minute and a half in length, but delivers a concentrated dose of speed-induced euphoria that invites multiple viewings. A late model car moving at very high speed has just completely spun out of control, and our full-frontal perspective enables us to catch every nuance of its skids, bounces, and scrapes. But rather than grind to a charred halt, or burst into flames, the car simply keeps on bouncing and tumbling, as if in fulfillment of the fantasies of

person who has watched a dramatic crash on a stock-car or drag-racing track, and couldn't resist admiring the beauty of one of our most precision-tuned, speed-based vehicles, on its last aesthetic convulsion before it completely self-destructs.

Future Shock

The idea that the near future consists at least in part of a speeding up of the experience of time seems to require an unconscious validation of the premise that technological progress will always deliver an improvement over yesterday's scenario, despite our awareness that progress is itself a kind of cultural fiction that requires a degree of optimism to convey its message of forward momentum. Although considering the future as a kind of perpetual unknown seems far less promising, it may, in fact, be a more accurate image, since we appear to be perpetually on the verge of losing control of portions of our vast technological superstructure, in form of an accident or even sabotage. In fact, it may well be that the future holds many more surprises than we can possibly anticipate, and that our best approach to its advancement is a form of wary uncertainty.

The artist Vadim Fishkin has long sought to investigate technology from a primarily poetic perspective, one in which the practical application of whatever apparatus he deploys is redirected to a kind of spectacle of the absurd. During the peak years of the fax machine, for example, Fishkin created a work in which the events of a multi-day biking expedition were continually relayed back to the museum where the exhibition was held, with the result being an ongoing travel diary that emerged out of the fax machine on an entirely unpredictable basis.

The work on view, *A Speedy Day*, is a variation on a work that Fishkin has developed during the past couple of years. Part of the inspiration for the installation seems to be rooted in the notions of work and efficiency, in particular the desire on the part of a number of ambitious workers to more closely emulate the machine in terms of their productivity. Fishkin tends to view such desires as inherently dehumanizing, and his room-scaled artwork, which accelerates the changes in natural light inside the room so that a single day seems to zip by in a matter of two and a half minutes, tends to produce a contradictory reaction on the viewer. While on the one hand there is something inherently thrilling in being able to observe time moving past at such accelerated speeds, it is impossible not to experience a degree of loss as well. If all our days are lost in productivity, the artist seems to be telling us, then what experience is left to extract from a single day, other than the very short interval before the next one begins?

Over the past fifteen years, the artist Kimsooja has created an extensive body of work that attempts to codify certain aspects of the nomadic existence in quite

enigmatic terms. For many viewers, her most well-known sculptures consist of tied bundles of silk and other exotic fabrics, that, despite their intimations of wealth, give the appearance of being the sole worldly possessions of some transient. To the artist, such images reflect the complex reality of the person who has traveled enormous distances to try and establish herself in a new world, and whose possessions are thereby transformed into a form of self-representation, as both a nomad and as somebody who clearly belongs to someplace else.

Kimsooja's multi-channel video work, *A Needle Woman*, which has been shown in numerous variants and configurations, takes as its starting point the image of the artist as voyager. The work has been filmed in a number of different cities, using the same composition: the artist stands center-frame, unmoving in the middle of an extremely crowded sidewalk, her back to us. Although we cannot observe the artist's facial expressions, it is obvious from the faces of those passing by that she is both obstacle and spectacle, blocking a narrow sliver of the sidewalk with her body while simultaneously acting as the control agent within a scene of constant mixing and intermingling. The woman of the work's title does not change or interact, but by way of her static position, we can observe that the frantic, anonymous motion all around her is capable of being particularized, if only through the momentary reactions of the people who see in her presence the embodiment of the stranger in a strange land.

Camille Utterback is an artist who makes digital installations that are directly interactive with the viewer. Typically, her installations make use of a camera set into the ceiling directly above the viewer, or concealed somewhere on the projection surface, in order to incorporate each person's real-time image and/or position into the work as we experience it. In the piece known as *Text Rain*, a mirror image of the viewer combines with that of individual letters that drift down from the top of the screen like snowflakes, covering the top layer of our head and arms to produce lines of a poem that melts away as the next line lands. Whenever we move our image moves with us, but so do the letters, which can be scattered, cupped, or flicked away in a spontaneous dance between our bodies and the lines of text.

The core image of *Liquid Time*, the Utterback work shown for this occasion, serves in many ways as the visual quintessence of a futuristic society: the Tokyo subway system during rush hour. Filling the wall in front of us, a video image of thousands of people moving as quickly as possible through densely packed urban spaces is positioned so that they seem to be rushing directly at us. If, however, we move closer to the projection surface, to the point of almost touching it, a visual 'rip' opens in the projection, and suddenly that portion of the image where we are closest jumps

backward in time. This jump in time is of only a few seconds' duration, so that somebody who has just sped past in front of the viewer might suddenly do it again. Moreover, the aberration in the image can never be larger than one person's body, and it disappears almost as soon as we move back, nor does it last once we step back again, but for a fleeting moment we can experience the illusion that we are able to step through from one time-space continuum into another—one of science fiction's most cherished myths about the not-so-distant future.

Against Time

The astounding growth in intercontinental air travel over the past few decades has brought with it one of the most distinctive characteristics of our hyper-accelerated age: the measurement of travel distances between far flung places in terms of hours, as opposed to weeks, months, or even years. The speed with which we appear to have adapted to living in a world where it is not only possible but also desirable to be in three different continents in the course of a single week, should not, however, cause us to automatically assume that such adaptation has come without a price. On the contrary, the more time one spends flying from place to place, the more of one's life is determined by the prerequisites of equipment, airports, and computerized timetables, and the less of what one is experiencing comes across as real. In the end, what first appears to be a form of freedom often turns out to be the very opposite, and our habit of mentally reducing the world's expanse to a string of destinations often comes at the expense of our ability to fully inhabit the place where we happen to find ourselves at any given moment.

Landlands and Bell's art has often explored the conceptual gap between representation and reality, and in their projection *Frozen Sky* the subject is ostensibly the broad expanse of the earth, insofar as that expanse consists of a given number of international airports, linked together by the most complex system of telecommunication in the world. The visual rendering of some parts of this system would be completely unfathomable to anyone but an outsider, so Landlands & Bell have used both the mapping of air routes and three-letter airport codes as the basis for a handful of works, and *Frozen Sky* belongs to the later category. Dozens of city-codes, in white letters on a black ground are arranged in a perfectly symmetrical grid, with each destination gradually changing 'names' at regular intervals. A kind of one-point mapping of the planet, *Frozen Sky* suggests a device for tracking the routes of jet-setters, who change international destinations as often as other people change clothes, but invariably always find themselves occupying the same space.

In time that can be measured through human experience, nothing is shorter than the instant in which a flash of light or an explosion occurs, and much of the art of Cai Guo-Qiang, whose original background

is in the theater, is founded on the notion that one way to get people to pay attention to something is to make sure that it is over almost as soon as it has taken place. For Cai, the perfect medium to express this instantaneity is the explosion, the discipline developed through the study of theater enabled him to create staged events that nonetheless appear spontaneous to those in the audience. The impresario whose gestural flourish lifts the theatrical curtain is the same as the sculptor of explosions, who lights the fuse and steps away, or the magician who produces a flock of doves from within a pocket handkerchief.

One of Cai's most important recent works, *Black Rainbow*, was executed in Valencia in 2005 as a memorial to the victims of the March 11, 2004 bombings in Madrid. By dint of his creation being both black and a rainbow, and hence something we've never seen before, the artist even manages to nudge us into considering the possibility that our waking life is nothing more or less than the bridge between something we cannot manage to remember to something we cannot possibly know about in advance. Sometimes the instantaneous dissolve of a symbol in an explosion can be politically cathartic, as in his work, *Red Flag*, made in Poland in 2004, which offered viewers the experience of seeing communism flare up and vanish in a single instant, rather than forty years. In one of his least-known projects, the *Ethereal Flowers* created in 2002 in Trento, Italy, Cai captures the essential structure of a chrysanthemum, evoking the brief life of a flower as the motif for a season that is also finished far too quickly.

The work of Sergio Prego deals with various modes of perception, not all having directly to do with speed, but additionally with the multiple ways we come to understand virtually all spatial and temporal modes of quantifying personal experience. In his sculptural environments as much as in his films, Prego is deeply concerned with continually adjusting the framework within which we experience our environment, whether this entails transforming the gallery into a constantly shifting platform that the viewer experiences directly, or creating an event or phenomenon inside the gallery that is presented in the form of video documentation that replays the actual events in the site where they took place.

Prego is represented in the present exhibition by two single-channel video works, in each of which thousands of still photographs are transformed into a visual spectacle of extremely rapid motion that is less perceptually convincing than an actual special effect, but more metaphysically unsettling as a result of its jumpy, fragmented interpolation of the real. In *Black Monday*, Prego has photographed a sequence of small explosions in his studio, using dozens of still cameras surrounding the flashes of light and puffs of smoke. When assembled together, the many hundreds of images line up to create a movie in which we have

the sensation of whirling around these mini-tornados through a different kind of supernatural power, one that enables us to see something from all sides, in any order, and as many times as we wish. In Prego's most elaborate installation to date, *Para-*, performers suspended from the ceiling attempt to "run" sideways along the gallery walls, an illusion that is reinforced by the camera angle, which makes it appear as if they are moving in a vertical position. The resulting movements, labored and awkward, seem less the efforts of young, athletic performers than those of a depleted, perhaps even deformed, species—a pale imitation of the human being on which it seems to be based.

End of the Line

Nothing lasts forever, not even time, and of all humankind's achievements, perhaps none is as compelling as the idea that cultural meanings can be passed down from one generation to the next until the end of time. Within living memory, movies have largely replaced artworks as the repository of our collective imaginations, and nothing captures the essence of film's belief in its own immortality quite like the Academy Awards. As virtually the entire filmmaking industry makes its annual appearance decked out in its finest regalia, an apparently impartial vote supposedly decides which of the past year's movies will definitively enter the annals of moviemaking history, despite the common knowledge that many of the greatest motion pictures of all time never received an Oscar, and that many of the Best Picture awards over the years have gone to films that have been completely forgotten, and deservedly so.

In his seventy-five-minute long video *Academy*, composer R. Luke DuBois has done something that no montage of great film moments will ever achieve, which is to present every single Best Picture winner, in its entirety, for exactly one minute apiece. Using software that has enabled him to simultaneously compress the length of the film and average the image over the course of multiple frames, DuBois' experiment in collapsing time into its smallest components seems at first glance to consist of nothing more than a succession of indistinguishable blurs. However, after a few minutes of allowing one's eyes to adjust to the stroboscopic onslaught of images, it is possible to not only pick out particular scenes and actors, but to observe the evolution in conventions of directing and cinematography. In many ways, *Academy* can even be said to function as a harbinger of the ways in which visual data will, in the future, come to be stored, so that rummaging through hundred of hours of footage in minutes will seem no stranger than flipping through the pages of a book.

If capturing motion into a single frozen instant was the invention that made it possible to eventually produce moving pictures, then the recent development of software and technology that enables us to reproduce imagery in the form of visual information that is

averaged out across a period of time, as in DuBois' work, may signal the introduction of a new mode of perception that technology has created by way of an especially persuasive side-effect. Whereas to earlier generations of film audiences there was so much novelty in showing the illusion of flight, or speed, or motion that even the most transparent special effects were enough to sustain viewers' interest and belief, today's film audiences are not only immune to most advanced special effect within a year or two after its invention, they sometimes enjoy seeing the elaborate machinations behind the illusion as much as they do the illusion itself.

In the two decades that Jim Campbell has been producing art, nearly all of that work has been based directly on the perception of movement. From his well-known videos of reduced-pixel figures that appear to be ghosts from the earliest experiments in television broadcasting, to recent complex installations that transform entire galleries into spaces that seem to breathe and possess an audible heartbeat, Campbell has been interested in developing perceptual paradoxes that lead us to further question our construction of reality. In the past few years this interest has expanded to include the creation of static images that are in fact composites, so to speak, of a vast number of images that have been averaged out to arrive at a certain number of pixels that are one color, a certain number that are another color, and so on. The effect this produces is, not surprisingly, reminiscent of the Italian Futurists, who sought at the beginning of the last century to depict motion. What Campbell, though, is doing in his separate *Dynamism* studies of a bicyclist, a car, and a cow, from the series *Illuminated Averages*, is in effect the opposite: implicitly showing us how the illusion is made, he actually encourages us to accept the principle that the images our eyes report back to our brain are no less mediated than one in which even a cow is moving so fast that we can only see it as a blur. For us to observe this illusion of speed rendered as part of a single, unmoving image puts us in the odd position of realizing that most special effects that we encounter in the movies are not actual simulations of any reality, but fairly simple manipulations of the viewing frame that do nothing more exciting than contradict what the eye already knows to be true.

Nothing lends an air of finality to the discussion of time quite as effectively as death, and Tatsuo Miyajima, whose art has always concerned itself with questions about the measurement of time, has in the past ten years devoted himself increasingly to examining the ways in which we understand death, both our own and those of others. This dimension of Miyajima's work was initiated by the massive installation *Mega-Death* at the Biennale of Venice in 2001. In this two-part project, Miyajima created the ultimate countdown of all, in which the arrival at the end of the counting—the artist does not use zero in his work—triggered a

simultaneous shutdown of the hundreds of LED displays that had been displaying the numbers, so that the entire room is plunged into blackness. On the lower level of the work, Miyajima demonstrated that even the most devastating catastrophe, involving untold deaths, leads invariably back to life: a descendant of one tree that fully withstood the worst of the impact of Hiroshima is shown alive and growing, just as its shoots are distributed by the artist to botanical gardens around the world.

In the installation work, *Death Clock*, Miyajima delves more deeply into Buddhist understandings of death, in particular the fervently held belief that the fear of death is not only unnecessary, but, by robbing the individual of some of the pleasures of being alive, becomes wasteful as well. Hoping to encourage us to think of death in less shrouded terms, Miyajima has produced an interactive project in which viewers are invited to select a date for their own death, with any moment in the next two hundred years to choose from. Once selected and activated, *Death Clock* adds each viewer's face to its database of those individuals who have chosen their dates, and these faces, with their countdown clocks, make up the most public aspect of the installation. While at first it is jarring to see these smiling faces of children and adults, as the countdowns to their 'deaths' are displayed alongside them, sustained viewing enables viewers to appreciate that each of us has a similar, genuine countdown to death going on inside of us, and the sooner we accept that nothing can change that date, the more quickly we can get down to the important business, of being thoroughly and stubbornly alive.

Dan Cameron
Curator of the exhibition

The Annihilation of Time and Space

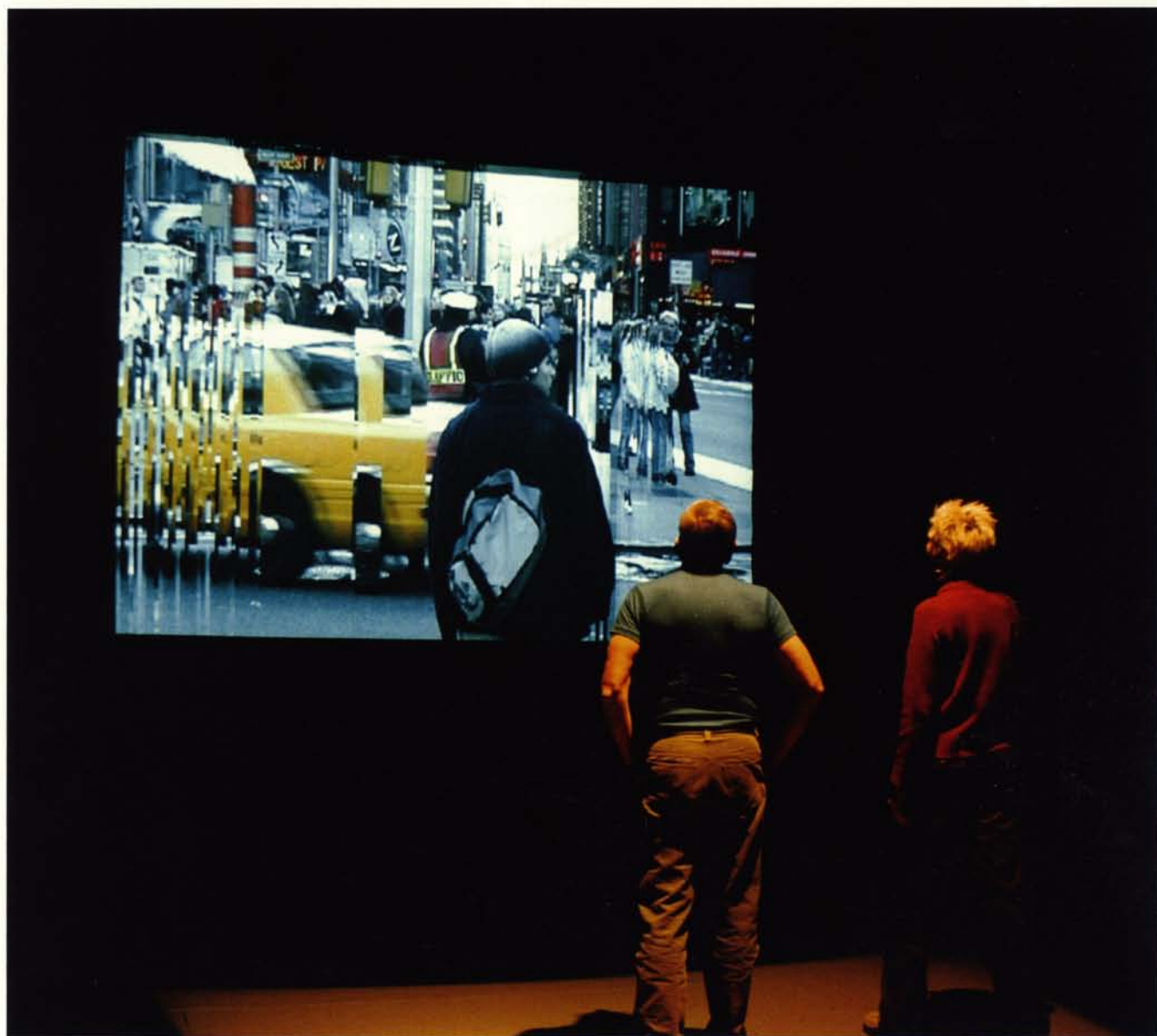
In the spring of 1872 a man photographed a horse. The resulting photograph does not survive, but from this first encounter of a camera-bearing man with a fast-moving horse sprang a series of increasingly successful experiments that produced thousands of extant images. The photographs are well known, but they are most significant as the bridge to a new art that would transform the world. By the end of the 1870s, these experiments had led to the photographer's invention of the essentials of motion-picture technology. He had captured aspects of motion whose speed had made them as invisible as the moons of Jupiter before the telescope, and he had found a way to set them back in motion. It was as though he had grasped time itself, made it stand still, and then made it run again, over and over. Time was at his command as it had never been at anyone's before. A new world had opened up for science, for art, for entertainment, for consciousness, and an old world had retreated farther.

The man was Edward James Muybridge of San Francisco, already renowned for his photographs of the West. In the eight years of his motion-study experiments in California, he also became a father, a murderer, and a widower, invented a clock, patented two photographic innovations, achieved international renown as an artist and a scientist, and completed four other major photographic projects. These other projects are also about time: about the seasonal and geological time of landscape, about the difference between the time that the camera sees and the eye sees, about a war between two societies with radically different beliefs about time and space, about the passage of a midsummer day's sunlight across a city in turmoil. The experience of time was itself changing dramatically during Muybridge's seventy-four years, hardly ever more dramatically than in the 1870s. In that decade the newly invented telephone and phonograph were added to photography, telegraphy, and the railroad as instruments for "annihilating time and space." The big corporations were spreading their grasp across wider spaces and into more subtle interstices of everyday life. The Indian wars were reaching their climax and their turning point. The modern world, the world we live in, began then, and Muybridge helped launch it.

Muybridge produced more successful high-speed photographs than anyone had before. His 1878 camera shutters were a triumph of engineering that made reliable exposures of a fraction of a second for the first time, a speed at which extremely rapid motion could be captured in focus rather than recorded as blurs. The photographs were also a triumph of chemistry, which made the film "fast" enough to record so brief an instant. They froze motion so that the legs of a trotting or galloping horse, then a leaping man, and eventually the movements of lions, doves, dancing women, water spilling, artists drawing, could be depicted as a sequence of still images. At the same time, Muybridge improved upon the

Camille Utterback

Estados Unidos, 1970





Liquid Time (Tiempo líquido), 2003
Instalación interactiva con software personalizado, cámara y proyección de datos
Dimensiones variables
Cortesía de la artista

Camille Utterback (cont.)



