

Entry Points.

Curated by i-cabin for Subvision Festival, Hamburg, 2009

What is the most important thing an artist can do? What should artworks aim to do? Should we expect more from art and artists? What constitutes an important action?

These questions are central to the ideology i-cabin maintains as an organisation and begin the critical exchanges that have led to the exhibitions over the last 5 years.

Entry Points is designed to initiate a debate on our expectations of artwork. Works that display a range of methodological approaches to these questions are displayed to tackle, alongside the viewers, the question of the works' motivation, success and the artists' validity in a debate of cultural value.

The term 'entry points' refers to the position from which an artist's practice is directed and to the decisions taken prior to producing an artwork. These decisions take place in the realm of personal social and political beliefs, they inform the actions which constitute a practice and construct an opinion of what an artist should do. Some artists believe that they should function as a commentator, whilst others see themselves as an activist - a catalyst for change, for some, the role is that of a facilitator, whilst for others, the production of art is only a part of their practice, and they choose to take on other responsibilities.

Each artist has been selected in fulfilment of two criteria.

Firstly, the practice, work or lifestyle of each artist shows a different set of ideological beliefs as to what the role of the artist is in response to questions posed by particular political and/or cultural regimes or by a personal agenda.

Secondly, the artists have a working knowledge of the artist-residency scenario, whereby artists are invited to operate in a foreign context or environment. This scenario is important to us as it forces artists to consolidate their politics and put them into effect.

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Christina Mackie's work *How to Begin - Karachi Eyes* is the starting point for this exhibition. It was produced during a residency in Karachi. The work re-presents the artist's view from the studio window. Is it not the artist's job to do more than look; should they not analyse and critique information gleaned by looking or other forms of research? This work reminds us that looking is in itself a vital political action, which is at the heart of religious practices, ideas of decency, individual privacy and the freedom/protection of information. The taking of these photographs was such a controversial act in Karachi that Mackie was attacked and accused of indecency.

Brandon Alvendia is an artist, curator and co-founder of artLedge project space in Chicago. His work for *Entry Points* was made during a residency in the USA. Alvendia's practice revels in a profound commitment to collaboration, exchange, networking and a respect for others which run throughout his activities. The relentless breadth of content, from the digitisation of cultural archives to the design possibilities of postcards, indicates that it is this respect for art and artists, rather than subject, which drives the production of his artwork.

Alec Dunnachie, artist, playwright and chorister, eschews high-art methods in favour of craft and folk art techniques. He has curated exhibitions in public libraries and his marquetry rendition of *Guernica* hung for several years in a Marxist bookshop in Kings cross, London. His work asserts the belief that high-art is in fact low-art and his subversive portrayal of the class structures of art production functions as a pertinent rejection of hierarchy.

James Hardy is one of the artists who took part in the first i-cabin residency this year, during which he lived on i-cabin's land in the role of an ultra-local shaman, conducting rituals that became appropriate in the process of surviving. With no tent and only nuts for sustenance, he underwent a form of mind-altering experience brought on by self-control and self-analysis. Hardy's work reveals an individual with a tendency to opt-out of mainstream social values and live out various alternatives based on experiments in his lifestyle and public-image.

Richard Healy's work *Testing Ground* was developed during a residency in China and proposes a space for people to come together to work out an alternative to democracy. The agenda for the proposed conference has undeniable global implications, however, the overt modesty of Healy's role in it is an underlying motif of the work. In opposition to the tendencies of other artists in the show, Healy's work implies a belief that art should not, in itself, perform political acts but suggest them, and that an artist is an enabler who should offer possibilities for change, rather than impose them.

Healy's second work *Untitled (A Temporary Gallery for i-land)* was developed at i-cabin land in 2009.

Tyler Coburn is an artist, curator, contributing editor to Art Review and a formidably well networked and well informed individual. Coburn puts huge amounts of energy into the job of publicly presenting the work of other artists, in print and exhibitions, which implies his readiness to accept a certain responsibility for the public profile of art itself. Several artists in *Entry Points* display an investment of time and money into the promotion artists and a desire to involve themselves in the debate on what art is. As an art journalist Coburn represents an artist with both a call to service and a will to influence.

Sebastian Craig is an artist and the director of i-cabin project space, which operates on a piece of rural land it managed to purchase in 2008. His work is characterised by critical exchange in the fields of architecture, design, education and curation and reveals his belief that an artist should aim at cause-and-affect through whatever strata of activity he chooses to infiltrate. This tendency to directly affect things by involving oneself in them led to his opening i-cabin in 2004. Craig's current project *Urban Planning From Below* is a new manifesto for urban planning which shows a DIY infiltration of public systems at ground level.

Duncan McAfee's work *Err* was developed during a year long residency with Whitechapel Gallery and Tower Hamlets Schools. McAfee's practice shows an ongoing commitment to education and outreach projects. Whether this stems from a philanthropic drive or a desire to collect material for the production of his work is unclear. *Err* shows an interest in the reduction of speech to abstract utterance, whilst simultaneously maintaining the educational nature of the commission as the given content. Institutional commissions provide a supply of content and funding for McAfee to carry out his personal activities.

In **Darren Norman's** film *The Sentence* there is no separation between actions of personal emotional importance and actions which constitute artworks. The film follows him on a personal journey to deliver a message. Viewers are not implicated in the production of Norman's work, but instead they may observe disparate narrative objects, into who's vernacular are woven layers of human interest. Norman demonstrates a belief that an artist's works should deal with himself; viewers are left to observe.

Lewis Amar produces both film and painting with the conviction that art should have a social affect, but that this is best delivered via causing emotional responses in individuals. Incredibly, some of the works are intended for one specific viewer. Other works, which use his own image in fetishized bodily actions, can only inspire the intended discomfort in those people who know him enough to recognise his image. Using the paintings as functional objects, to flatter, amuse, repulse or deride, Amar forges real world sexual, emotional, and critical encounters.

WORKS.

1. Brandon Alvendia, *How to Disappear in America (for \$500 or less)*, 2009, digital film.

2/3. Alec Dunnachie, *The Two Headed Turkey*, 2008, recording of play / *Blondie*, 2007, digital print.

4. James Hardy, *Teeth and Tail (Bau Wild)*, 2009, bronze mesh, cotton, golden pheasant, mallard duck, teal duck, hare, roe buck, sheep skin, squirrel, maribou turkey.

5. Christina Mackie, *How to Begin - Karachi Eyes*, 2006, digital prints.

6/7. Richard Healy, *Untitled (taken from 'Testing Ground')*, 2009, digital print / *Untitled (A Temporary Gallery for i-land)*, 2009, timber and fireworks.

8. Tyler Coburn, *WL14/TC09*, 2009, facsimile (printed on reverse of exhibition text).

9. Sebastian Craig, *Urban Planning From Below (Documents relating to Luncheon Pavilion in collaboration with Laura Gill)*, 2009, ink on paper, bamboo & cable ties.

10. Duncan McAfee, *Err*, 2009, sound.

11. Darren Norman, *The Sentence*, 2008, digital film.

12. Lewis Amar, *I Would Love to Love You Baby*, 2001, oil on copper.