

# GO FIGURE

## Notes on the video selection for d/Art/07Screen

ONLINE: 13-29 JULY 2007, [WWW.DLUX.ORG.AU/DART07/SCREEN.HTML](http://WWW.DLUX.ORG.AU/DART07/SCREEN.HTML)

EXHIBITION: 13-29 JULY 2007, AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY, 257 OXFORD ST, PADDINGTON

SCREENING: 7PM SATURDAY 21 JULY 2007, CHAUVEL CINEMA, SYDNEY

d/Art/07  
the post-cinema experience

d/Lux/MediaArts' annual showcase of  
international video, mobile and web art

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People-watching is a pleasurable pastime for my Mum. When I was in my teens, she was more than happy to wait on a shopping centre bench while I tried on some denim at Just Jeans. 'I just love it,' she recalls, 'it makes you feel that you are not alone with your quirks and all.'

Over a week in May, I watched 150 short videos submitted to dLux from around the world, in order to assemble this year's d/Art Screen program. A common theme that emerged amongst the following outstanding videos, was the observation and representation of the human figure in the real world.

An observational video of Sydney commuters striding to work, takes on a satirical quality when Atanas Djonov overlays a soundtrack of a popular song during the Russian revolutions of the early 1900s. However, it also becomes foreboding with its marching tempo and dramatic call to battle the 'dark forces [that] maliciously oppress us'. Christoph Oertli's video captures pedestrian and vehicular movement around the exotic city of Cairo. With the artist's intervention of slow-paced walkers, the work has a performative aspect, like many other videos in this collection.

Dressed and sounding like Santa helpers in a North American summer, The ManosBuckius Cooperative is shown frenetically shifting equipment and checking other mechanical parts of an unidentified building. Another duo, Mai Yamashita and Naoto Kobayashi, are documented in a public park, performing a repetitive activity of what could be seen as a terrestrial attempt at communicating to the makers of crop circles.

In the privacy of a domestic space, Christopher Bennie reveals his 'alien' back muscles, which he developed during his teenage years as a competitive swimmer. His video was made at the height of his triathlon training last summer, as a means of incorporating athleticism in his work: 'in particular, the mental and emotional state resulting from increased physical activity, as a method in which to gauge profound experience'. Similarly, Rachel Scott shares a personal moment outside her suburban home, dancing like an ex-Pussycat Doll while contemplating her figure. And against a stark black background, Dana Sederowsky proclaims the condition of pioneer thinkers of biological and cultural evolution to an audience she chooses not to see.

Wearing cardboard head-masks, the players in Damir Očko's video act out scenes based on Richard Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung* amidst an immense derelict construction near Zagreb, Croatia. The hero arrives too late in an actual setting that will most likely remain in transitional tension, between reality and fiction. In the natural environment of his home country, SJ Ramir records the sound and distorts the imagery of rainforest and grasslands in New Zealand, including a shadowy presence.

Peter Alwast's video animation illustrates his own body in the form of chrome blobs of x-ray scans plopped on the construction grounds of a suburban housing estate, indicating connections between the mind, physical body and place. And Ryszard Dabek presents a video portrait of someone reflecting in a lounge room, using music and song titles that appear to trigger memories of past places and experiences.

This year's d/Art Screen program shows a broad preoccupation with the human figure in both the built and natural environment. I hope you enjoy this compilation of people-watching.

**Ricardo Felipe**, d/Art/07Screen curator

## d/Art/07Screen

ONLINE: 13-29 JULY 2007, [www.dlux.org.au/dart07/screen.html](http://www.dlux.org.au/dart07/screen.html)  
EXHIBITION: 13-29 JULY 2007, ACP, 257 OXFORD ST, PADDINGTON  
SCREENING: 7PM SATURDAY 21 JULY 2007, CHAUVEL CINEMA,  
PADDINGTON TOWN HALL, CNR OXFORD ST & OATLEY RD  
—TICKETS \$20, INCLUDES D/ART TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY  
LIST OF VIDEOS, IN ORDER OF SCREENING:

**d/Art/07**  
the post-cinema experience

d/Lux/MediaArts' annual showcase of  
international video, mobile and web art

### Atanas Djonov

Country: Australia  
[members.optusnet.com.au/ozaharieva/AtanasDjonov.html](http://members.optusnet.com.au/ozaharieva/AtanasDjonov.html)

### Postcard from Australia

Year: 2005-2006 / Duration: 2:14

Synopsis: *Postcard from Australia* is an observational video of commuters walking through a pedestrian tunnel. It is accompanied by a soundtrack of *Varshavianka* – a Polish song written at the end of 19th century and popular in Russia during the revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

### Sarah Buckius & Melanie Manos, The ManosBuckius Cooperative

Country: USA  
[www.sarahbuckius.com](http://www.sarahbuckius.com)  
[www.voyeurcollective.com](http://www.voyeurcollective.com)

### 101 Ways to Humanize Technology

Year: 2007 / Duration: 3:11

Synopsis: In *101 Ways to Humanize Technology*, the ManosBuckius duo interact physically with technological devices by using them to perform unconventional, bizarre and highly non-productive tasks. The work proposes that everyday technologies might be reinterpreted in absurd, playful, and strange ways, and that the nature of productivity and function be re-examined. ManosBuckius says: 'The dynamic is hardly one-sided: the objects often indicate the nature and rhythm of our movement and inspire mischievous, albeit highly serious, responses from us.'

### Christoph Oertli

Country: Switzerland  
[www.likeyou.com/christophoertli](http://www.likeyou.com/christophoertli)  
[www.voyeurcollective.com](http://www.voyeurcollective.com)

### Cairo

Year: 2006 / Duration: 12:00

Synopsis: Christoph Oertli's video shows a person walking very slowly through the bustling city, quiet suburbs and peaceful rooftops of Cairo. As the districts change, so does the walker who continues his measured pace while observing the world around him without interaction.

### SJ Ramir

Country: Australia  
[www.ramirfilms.co.nz](http://www.ramirfilms.co.nz)

### Departure

Year: 2007 / Duration: 3:28

Synopsis: In *Departure*, SJ Ramir focused on the connection between emotional and geographical isolation. Using visual distortion as a tool, and accompanied by 'uneasy' audio soundtracks, he attempts to transport the viewer to 'a world where external geographical landscapes take on greater meaning and become metaphors for the journeys that we make through internal landscapes of the soul'. The entire footage was shot in New Zealand, and much of the layers used in the soundtrack feature audio 'grabs' from rainforests and tussock country during shooting.

### Peter Alwast

Country: Australia

### Relics

Year: 2007 / Duration: 2:00

Synopsis: Using CG imagery and found video footage, *Relics* is a video animation of slow panning over a suburban housing estate being built within a geodesic glass dome. Within this hermetic environment, chrome blobs lay on the ground abstracting the human form with its embedded MRI scans of the artist's body, while also reflecting nearby figures on a swing and fireworks in the distance. Borrowing the visual language of architectural visualisation, games and the Internet, Alwast's video aims to engage 'personal and collective musings about the gradual integration of constructed ideals into the psyche and body'.

### Rachel Scott

Country: Australia

### hot not

Year: 2006 / Duration: 3:17

Synopsis: Recent performance video works by Rachel Scott have been invested with ideas of failure, longing, human weakness and self-consciousness. The work *hot not* is a single shot filmed on location in the private space of the suburban front garden. Employing self-deprecating black humour and confessional-like candour, it operates as a roughly drawn sketch or diary entry: a direct and unmediated communication subverting the line between public and private. By investigating the idea of the public 'face', the work dissolves the distinction between art and life and focusses on the individual's psychological world. It also critiques the contemporary compulsion for one's existence to be expressed and inscribed through the camera lens.

### Christopher Bennie

Country: Australia  
[christopherbennie.com](http://christopherbennie.com)

### The Aliens Back

Year: 2007 / Duration: 3:51

Synopsis: *The Aliens Back* is a video of a shirtless man in a domestic setting. In it we see the artist slowly tensing and contorting his back muscles into bizarre and abstract forms. Cropped from just above his shoulders to his lower back, the video displays the artist's torso in a sculptural way. The degree of abstraction created through the muscular contortions warps any relationship to traditional figural beauty. Instead, the shapes that emerge within the frame, aim to present the figure as remarkable in its own, somewhat grotesque, right.

### Ryszard Dabek

Country: Australia  
[www.ryszard.net](http://www.ryszard.net)

### Play List

Year: 2006 / Duration: 8:47

Soundtrack collaboration with John Encarnacao

Synopsis: *Play List* was conceived as an exploration of the space between the act of listening and looking, and the ability of sound to feed certain states of mind. A single protagonist repeatedly selects and plays a series of records that bracket short visual digressions that are each preceded by the title of song (real or imaginary). Each record becomes a prompt for the reveries of the listener. As the piece progresses the act of 'playing' the records gives way to an exercise in video portraiture.

### Damir Očko

Country: Croatia  
[www.damirocko.com](http://www.damirocko.com)

### The Boy with a Magic Horn

Year: 2007 / Duration: 15:00

Synopsis: During the Transition Period, Croatia abandoned one of the biggest projects ever to be built in the northern hemisphere: a university hospital that would occupy almost 250,000 square metres. The hospital was designed in the late '70s and partly built through the '80s, but was never completed. It forms the architectural backdrop for *The Boy with a Magic Horn*: derelict halls, bare concrete walls, labyrinths of unmarked rooms and nature invading the whole environment. Based on a Wagnerian opera, the video depicts a dreamy and hallucinogenic game that alien characters play in order to describe their new social and emotional displacement ... a place that exists somewhere between hope and oblivion.

### Dana Sederowsky

Country: Sweden  
[www.danasederowsky.com](http://www.danasederowsky.com)

### Special Announcement: Evolution

Year: 2006 / Duration: 2:00

Synopsis: In *Special Announcements*, we meet a transient messenger, an announcer with her eyes closed and her face showing no emotions, commenting on different topics using a strong vocal delivery, in which there seems to be a conversation both between herself and herself and at the same time with other people. The project revolves around Sederowsky's current questioning of authorities and autocratic ways: the identification of proclaimers of truths and their (non-)reliability as proclaimers of truth. The topics of the *Special Announcements* series are: terrorism, evolution, religion, utopia, politics, doomsday and solitude.

### Mai Yamashita & Naoto Kobayashi

Country: Germany  
[www.yamashita-kobayashi.com](http://www.yamashita-kobayashi.com)

### infinity

Year: 2006 / Duration: 4:38

Synopsis: In order to determine the validity of the phrase 'paths are made by walking', Yamashita & Kobayashi kept running in a fixed path in a park for over five days. In this silent time-lapse video compiled from digital photographs taken one per second, a path in the shape of the infinity symbol gradually emerges, as they move with seemingly high speed.

Selected by Ricardo Felipe for d/Art/07Screen  
Total duration: approx. 60 mins

For artist bios and more information,  
visit: [www.dlux.org.au](http://www.dlux.org.au)



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