

BRACKET CREEP (A Projected Committee)

Adrien Allen, Katie Lee, Jason Maling, David Simpkin, Harriet Turnbull with special guest: Richard Lewer

April 14 – 28

Gallery | Enclosure

Bracket Creep is an exhibition responding to the *Making Space: Artist Run Initiatives in Victoria* event. A collaborative work (with two components) is presented alongside a single artist's video work. As Artist Run Initiatives are typically run by committee this exhibition playfully observes the backbone of the community organization: The Group Decision. Our decision as Conical Committee members was to reinterpret the small, π yet functional room that is the Gallery office in a most dysfunctional way, resulting in an engine room that chugs to a different beat. Whilst the office and its occupants have become somewhat fugitive, Richard Lewer's video *The Committee* offers the far more colourful members of the Northside Boxing Club Committee as a type of proxy.

The Committee Richard Lewer 2007

Conical began with a fight. In August 2001 the first exhibition: *Adrift: Nomadic New Zealand Art* was a group show curated by two Melbourne-based ex-pat New Zealanders: Emily Cormack and Richard Lewer. The cultural relationship between Australia and New Zealand was a theme evoked in the work of all eight artists involved but it was one particular work – a live performance – that dominated the opening night. *Rickie the Rash VS Luke Sinclair* by Richard Lewer culminated in a one-off boxing match in the new gallery space. I say culminated because an important aspect of the work was Lewer's complete immersion into a local boxing community for an extended period of time (the year prior he experimented with wood chopping). For Sinclair preparation was equally rigorous but solitary and studio-bound. Lewer's process of *becoming* (accepted/trained/specialised/professional) informed the work at least as much as the dramatic outcome. Having never boxed before Lewer joined the Northside Boxing Club where for six months he was intensively coached as if for a professional lightweight event. A slightly scaled-down competition ring was constructed in the gallery, sitting rather uneasily with the other predominantly wall-based and video works. A monitor was installed in the shop-front window below, beaming live footage to the passer-by. As the MC introduced the fighters/artists, a crowd – made up of the local boxing fraternity combined with a solid showing from the art establishment – jostled for position. The first punch from Lewer caused Sinclair's head to snap back violently, immediately stilling the crowd. When the second punch drew Sinclair's blood the boxing fraternity pressed forward through the art-crowd, up to the ropes.

In the spirit of historicizing, Conical invited Lewer to make a companion piece to *Rickie the Rash VS Luke Sinclair* for the *Making Space: Artist Run Initiatives in Victoria* event. The new work titled *The Committee* is an edited video of a typical committee meeting of the Northside Boxing Club where, six years later, he is still a regular competitor and committee member, coinciding exactly with Conical's own six year history.

Richard Lewer wishes to thank Northside Boxing Club and the committee members, Mike Metzner, Ben Milbason, Ben Doundney and Conical Inc.

This above text is an extract from *Bracket Creep* an essay by Conical's Director Adrien Allen for *the Making Space* publication.

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