

Richard Giblett & Andrew Hazewinkel

Cluster

Conical
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by Kerrie-Dee Johns

Intergalactic Tourism and Subterranean Cities

Inside the industrial catacomb of Conical, Andrew Hazewinkel and Richard Giblett create an apocalyptic drama from architecturally inspired forms. Futuristic works use theatrical effect to evoke sinister shadows and subterranean fantasies in the imagination of the viewer.

Subcity (While You Were Sleeping) 2005, contains a tension between what is visible and what lies under the surface. A phosphorescent green glow emanates from underneath, suggesting a termite's nest teeming with activity. Like the humming of an electrical appliance, artificial energy is made explicit; it fuels the nocturnal productive drive of the dreamer, the insomniac and the dancer – whom underneath a false moon moves. An Orwellian authority asserts itself in grid lines that divide city squares. In subterranean galleys exists a system of operation that issues orders in secret. It does not discern highways or internet cables but likens them as one and the same: they're agents of connection and control. Neither triumphal bridges nor arches have been erected in this city. There is no need for entry. Its grid-like pattern already impresses itself on our reality and possibly our fantasies too.

When looked upon from above, the modern city at night resembles a macroscopic computer chip. *Subcity* offers this same vantage point. Models give us a feeling of control and mastery. In the age of the imperial crusade, the military used models for their aid in strategic planning. Before the invention of three-dimensional software programs, models were the most dynamic way to render space; today they seem a rather static way to render space. In its representation of the city's underground aspects and its emerging patterns of life, Giblett's model seems to come alive. Giblett's new work picks up a thread illustrated in his last exhibition, *Plant/Room*, 2004, with his earlier drawings of fungal life forms. Though the underground is what is conveyed when we speak of the life of laneways, the subterranean in *Subcity* refers to irrational divergences in thought and creative mutations in architectural form.

In the tabletop diorama of Giblett's cityscape, a large circular sphere sinks into the city under the weight of



Below: Richard Giblett
Subcity (While You Were Sleeping), 2005 (detail)
Plywood, pine, fluorescent lights
291 x 160 x 130 cm
Image courtesy of the artist & Conical Gallery

its cosmic significance. In keeping with its planetary appearance, the object has its own field of gravity – it makes it the focal point in the midst of the model. At the same time the dome is an ode to the sublime architectural artifice of Etienne Louis Boullée, an architect who created a cenograph dedicated to the scientist Sir Isaac Newton, (the discoverer of gravity). Like Giblett's mirror-ball sphere, the dome is a false moon designed to mirror nature. It reminds us that our position in the world is relative to the fluctuating rhythms of the universe.

Unlike our antecedents involved in imperial conquest, our new frontier isn't sky or outer space but inner space and cyberspace. Following in the footsteps of Francesco Borromini, an architect of the Baroque period, Andrew Hazewinkel creates sculptural virtuosity from light and shadow, in addition to negative and positive space. In *Gathering*, 2005, the artist presents the collective agency

Below: Andrew Hazewinkel
Gathering, 2005
MDF, 2 pac emperite & projected images
9 panels, 204 x 82 x 60 cm
Image courtesy of the artist & Conical Gallery



of static power dissolved by multiplicity and movement, where the solid components of the work are defied by its fluid components. The installation unsettles the body in space and unhinges our sense of control and mastery. As a system of optics akin to the virtual, it presents its author as master, placing the spectator in a maze of power relations. Once again, our position must be negotiated.

From the right side of the gallery strides an army of shadows, marching towards the viewer with as much force as they recede; silhouettes of empty space created from inverse human proportions. Whilst the spaces in between present the viewer with a multitude of corridors, physical entry is impossible. As with horror house trickery (all smoke and mirrors), it presents an optical playground. What is closed may appear infinite and where there's an entrance it may seem solid.

This is similar to Borromini's architectural illusion in the Palazzo Spada (Rome). Where the imagination travels freely, the physical body trespasses. Like an early version of virtual reality, the architect arrests the rules of classic architecture, creating from a dead space of 8 metres the illusion of 32. Here the architect brings the spectator into close contact with the spectacular; like a heart restricted by the bounds of the human frame the artist craves infinity. With works by Hazewinkel and Giblett, the desire for the conquest of a new frontier is fulfilled.

Kerrie-Dee Johns is a Melbourne based writer and independent curator.