

Sonia Leber & David Chesworth Space-Shifter

May 23 – June 13 2009

Steel with 2-pack enamel paint, 14 channel audio, audio transducers, speakers
Voices: Deborah Kayser, Jerzy Kozlowski, Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Choir

Sonia Leber and David Chesworth create a psychogeography of voice and space, using sound, vibration and metallic constructions. Human voices resonate throughout the space: babbling and uttering absurdities. Detached from their originating sources, the voices are launched like missiles, careering around and acting directly on the materials of the space.

This is an encounter with the voice as an object in itself, where it has become detached from the unseen soundmakers. It is as if the voices have an excess of energy, an unfettered 'self-enjoying' *jouissance*, which can be uncanny and unnerving, but also thrilling and liberating.

The elusive entity of the trickster is evoked. Here it is imagined as a noisy, mischievous interloper, an agent-provocateur, able to change and move about without restraint. The trickster's voice twists and turns: hatching, spitting and multiplying, delighting in its own excess, making mock, creating damage and disorder.

In his book 'A Voice and Nothing More', the philosopher Mladen Dolar notes a recurrent metaphysical concern from Plato to Saint Augustine, that lawlessness results when the voice deviates from the safe haven of the word. According to Dolar, it was often feared that the voice 'should not stray away from words which endow it with sense; as soon as it departs from its textual anchorage, the voice becomes senseless and threatening - all the more because of its seductive and intoxicating powers...Up to a point, (the voice) is sublime and elevates the spirit; beyond a certain limit, however, it brings about decay...the voice is both the subtlest and the most perfidious form of flesh.'

The artists gratefully acknowledge the support of JEA Technologies and the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body. Many thanks to Adrien Allen and the team at Conical Inc.

Sonia Leber & David Chesworth Biography

Collaborating since 1996, Melbourne based sound, video and installation artists, Sonia Leber and David Chesworth, have created a diverse body of work using the human voice as their principal medium.

Leber and Chesworth were the recipients of the 2007 Helen Macpherson Smith Commission at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art in Melbourne. *Almost Always Everywhere Apparent* was a massive sound, video and sculptural installation where a polyphonic phantasmagoria resonated through a series of corridors, all leading into a cathedral-like space that was part heaven and part prison.

Other collaborations include *The Gordon Assumption* (2004, Melbourne International Arts Festival) where a chorus of female voices called for attention from the pit of a subterranean toilet block; *The Master's Voice* (2001) where passers-by were beckoned, controlled and cajoled like a much-loved family pet from a wall in Canberra's City Walk; and *Proximities* (2006) a collaboration with Simeon Nelson on Melbourne's William Barak Bridge where voices from fifty-three Commonwealth nations travel the length of the bridge, unfurling in a sonic corridor of human voices.

5000 Calls, a permanent soundscape installation commissioned by the Sydney Olympic Park Public Art Program in 2000 was also installed in 2002 along Millennium Riverwalk in Cardiff, Wales, organised by Chapter Arts Centre, and in 2003 along Shoemaker's Footbridge, Ljubljana, Slovenia organised by Cankarjev Dom Arts Centre. *Reiterations (Elizabeth Street)*, an audio project commissioned by the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art in 2006 was also exhibited at the 2007 Madrid Abierto.

A full exhibition history and biography can be found at www.waxsm.com.au

The artists gratefully acknowledge the support of JEA Technologies and the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

