OtherFilm Festival 2012
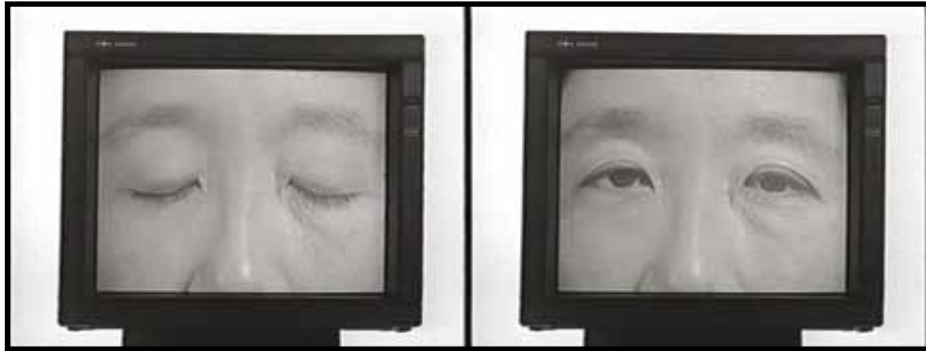
BRISBANE Thursday 29 November Queensland Maritime Museum, South Bank / OPENING NIGHT: SIEGE MENTALITY / Sally Golding (London), Jade Boyd (Oslo), Danny Wild, Audrey Lam and Caitlin Franzmann, Sarah Byrne, Jason Fitzgerald, Bonnie Hart, Kiah Reading, Ben Hayes, Horse Macgyver, Vijay Thillaimuthu, Botborg, Leif Gifford, Patrick King, and Alrey Batol. Friday 30 November Institute of Modern Art / SPACESHIP EARTH / Peter Burr (New York) and Bum Creek. Saturday 1 December Institute of Modern Art / RESTRUCTURING THE VOID / Takahiko Iimura (Tokyo) and Bruce McClure (New York). MELBOURNE Wednesday 5 December New Low Gallery / Takahiko Iimura, Peter Burr, Justin K. Fuller, and Artist Film Workshop. Thursday 6 December New Low Gallery / Sally Golding, Bruce McClure, Richard Tuohy, and Matthew Brown. Also, both nights, installations by Jarrod Factor, Kit Webster, Marcia Jane, Tara Cook, and Zoe Scoglio. MEREDITH Friday 7–Saturday 8 December Ecoplex Cinema, Meredith Music Festival / Sally Golding, Bruce McClure, and Peter Burr. ADELAIDE Monday 10 December Tuxedo Cat / Bruce McClure, Peter Burr, and Joel Stern.

Since 2004, OtherFilm have curated exhibitions of experimental film, video, music, and performance. Its directors—Joel Stern and Danni Zuvela in Brisbane, and Sally Golding in London—are driven by their curiosity about the possibilities and limits of the moving image and its capacity to reorganise perception.

OTHERFILM | Screen Queensland | IMA Institute of Modern Art | BRISBANE CITY | Queensland Government | Australian Government | Australia Council for the Arts | Australian Government Visual Arts and Craft Strategy Queensland

Technology *and* Phenomena

Since its inception in 2004, OtherFilm has wilfully resisted the unambiguous boosterism surrounding new media. Troubled by the self-congratulation, repressiveness, and historical amnesia of art's 'technocratic turn', we preferred to see Australian experimental art as a longstanding tradition, which we could be part of. We favoured film art—avant-garde experimental and expanded cinema. We were attracted to 'celluloid', with its raw materiality, its grain and exposé, its flashes of danger, misdirection, and surprise.

Recently, there has been resurgent interest in film art in art museums internationally. Yet, for us, privileging film has become problematic. While initially our commitment to film allowed us to develop critical tools and assert our distinct interests, we are now pressing up against the limitations of our critique. Although we remain in love with film, we are not exclusive.

Medium specificity is hypothetical—as expanded cinema's ongoing experiments attest. Mediums have always nested within one another, but never so evidently as in our shared digital present. As an organisation, we no longer consider it prudent to fetishise film—but nor do we consent to indiscriminate platform promiscuity. We want to deal with mediums in more nuanced, less dogmatic, ways. We are moving on.

Today, we are scouting the foreign countries of the future as well as those of the past. We ask: Is the colonisation of the old by the new complete, or is divergence still possible? Which thresholds remain unmelted or unatomised? For us, the inexorable contraction implicit in industrial approaches remains incommensurate with the vibrational potential of the moving image. Through the progressive revelation of unconscious material, the 'now' of experience remains an ongoing communicative delirium. This festival comes with a strobe warning.

—OtherFilm, 2012

IMAGES Takahiko Iimura
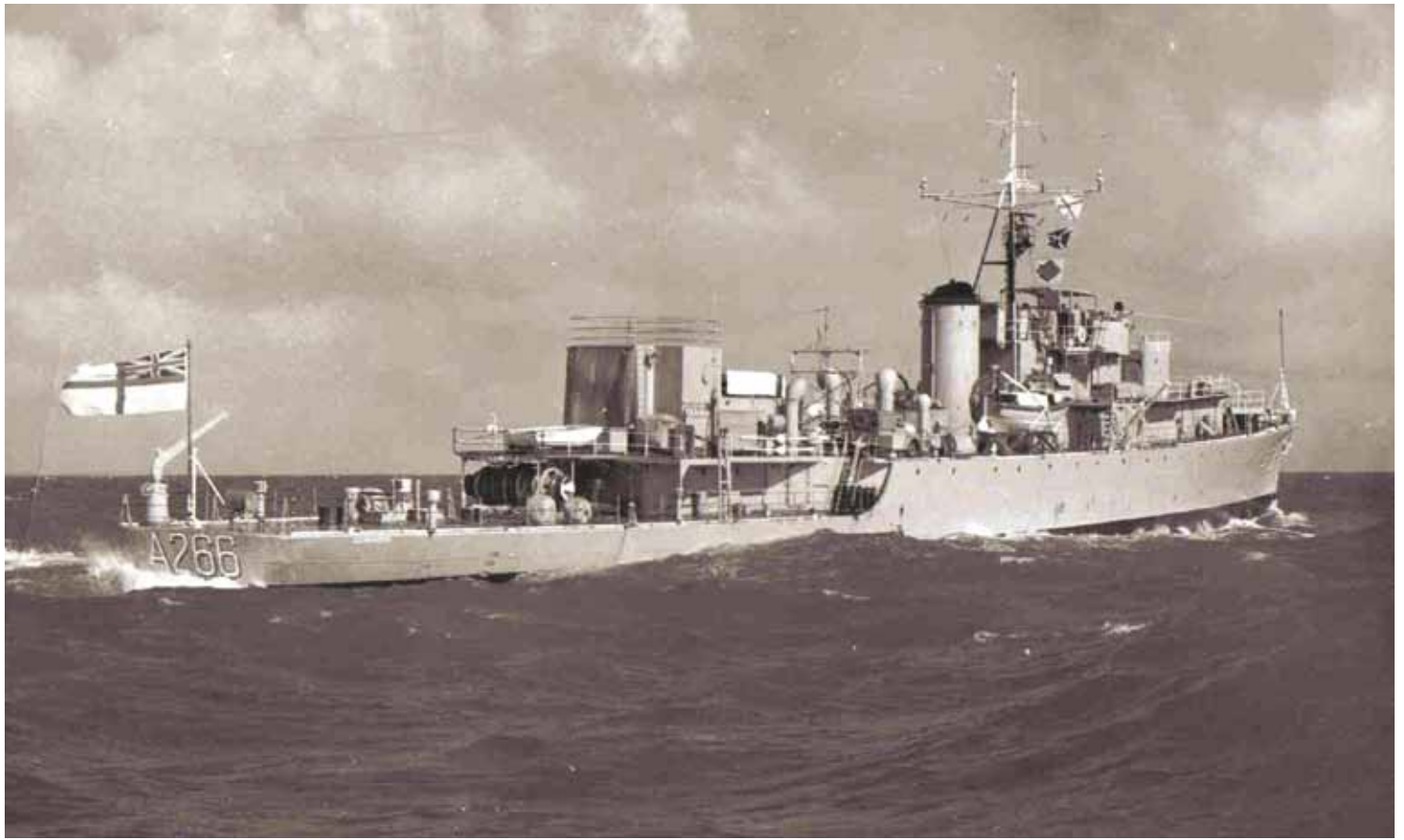
Siege Mentality

How does the very identity of the human mind rely on external mechanical supplements?
How does it incorporate machines?
—Slavoj Žižek

The HMAS *Diamantina* is many things. As a war machine, she defended Australia in the Pacific theatre during the Second World War. As a sovereignty machine, a free-floating particle of Australian state power, she was the stage on which the Japanese surrender of Nauru was formally consummated. As a mapping machine, she surveyed the deepest trenches of the Indian Ocean. Now, she is a history machine, part of the Queensland Maritime Museum, a specimen permanently stored in a custom-built stone cocoon off an inner-city bend of the Brisbane River.

The *Diamantina* echoes with elsewheres and elsewhens. Simultaneously capacious and claustrophobic, familiar yet uncanny, she militates against the anchoring of any one explanation, opening up possibilities for new ways of sensing the world. What does it mean to be a dry-docked, floating signifier? OtherFilm invited a raft of artists to stage works on board the *Diamantina*—responding to the array of spaces she harbours—to help us find out.

Siege Mentality will feature work by Sally Golding (London), Jade Boyd (Oslo), Danny Wild, Audrey Lam and Caitlin Franzmann, Sarah Byrne, Jason Fitzgerald, Bonnie Hart, Kiah Reading, Ben Hayes, Horse Macgyver, Vijay Thillaimuthu, Botborg, Leif Gifford, Patrick King, and Alrey Batol. Thursday 29 November 2012 Queensland Maritime Museum.

Somewhere in the murky recesses of childhood memories—of Sunday-morning television, mounds of improbably coloured junk food, and inane addictive jingles—lurks Peter Burr, a tech-gnostic agent. His mission: to subjugate the innerspace, chock open the escape hatch, and enable the immoderate two-way flow of synthesised realities. Burr's green-screen dream is yours too. A television is broadcasting from within you as you watch it; a boiling, aberrant, hysterical fusion of mind and matter, technology and cultural form. Confronting the malaise of too much television, Burr's diagnosis is also his prescription: more of the same!

Peter Burr/Cartune Xprez

Originally from Portland, video and performance artist Peter Burr is now based in New York. He belongs to a network of DIY underground cartoonists and musicians. In his performance *Special Effect*, he becomes the live presenter of a television show featuring new works commissioned from leading animators. All these works were inspired by 'the zone' in Andrei Tarkovsky's 1979 sci-fi film *Stalker*. The site of an unnamed cataclysm, the zone is an off-limit space, pregnant with magic, mystery, and hope, where, it is said, dreams come true. With the aid of a hacked Kinect camera, hand-knitted costumes, and laser beams, Burr integrates these contributions into an imagined television show from the future. With Burr performing simultaneously in person and on screen, *Special Effect* recalls the way children project themselves into the fictive space of television cartoons, over-identifying with their characters. It's hard to tell whether Burr has infiltrated television (and is now pulling the strings), whether it has absorbed him, or somehow both. The implication is that he has collaged himself at once into television and into our heads, channeling our subconscious, co-opting our illusions.

The 'I' of the one who writes is not the same as the 'I' which is read by 'thou'.
—Roland Barthes

Armed with a forensic scalpel, Takahiko Iimura dissects video, removing organs one by one, systematically probing until he locates the vital twitching organ. There, he's got it now, held between gloved fingers, unlatched from the secure lining of the onto-sphere, decoupled and placed on the tray for our inspection. The signifier-signified dyad. Coldly, methodically, he begins to rearrange the units. This way, that way. This and this, this but not that. A genetic recomposition of codes; accumulating permutations in search of the différance between word and image; space and movement; you, I, and me. Video language is semiological . . . semi-illogical.

Takahiko Iimura

Takahiko Iimura is a pioneering film and video artist based in Tokyo and New York. In the 1960s, he was a crucial conduit between the Japanese and American avant-gardes. His work ranges from poetic fluxus-influenced pieces to rigorous formal and conceptual investigations. In the 1970s and 1980s, Iimura's videos exposed and analysed screen spectatorship. He pared down video to its essential structural elements and revelled in the absurd feedback loops and infinite regresses—optical and semantic—that resulted. Foregrounding construction alongside content, and pressuring language, Iimura's video semiology paralleled the semiologies of Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida.

Absurdly analytical, Iimura's videos are also funny. In *AIUEONN* (1994), we see and hear him speak each Japanese vowel in turn. Then image and sound part company, as we see him pronounce one vowel but hear another, working through every possible permutation. The images of his face are also distorted, echoing the disjunction of sound and image. For *OtherFilm Festival 2012*, Iimura will present *AIUEONN* with a live soundtrack. He will also reprise his 1963 expanded-cinema performance *Screen Play*, projecting his film *Colours* —a study of chemical reactions resulting from dropping paint into oil—onto a friend's back.
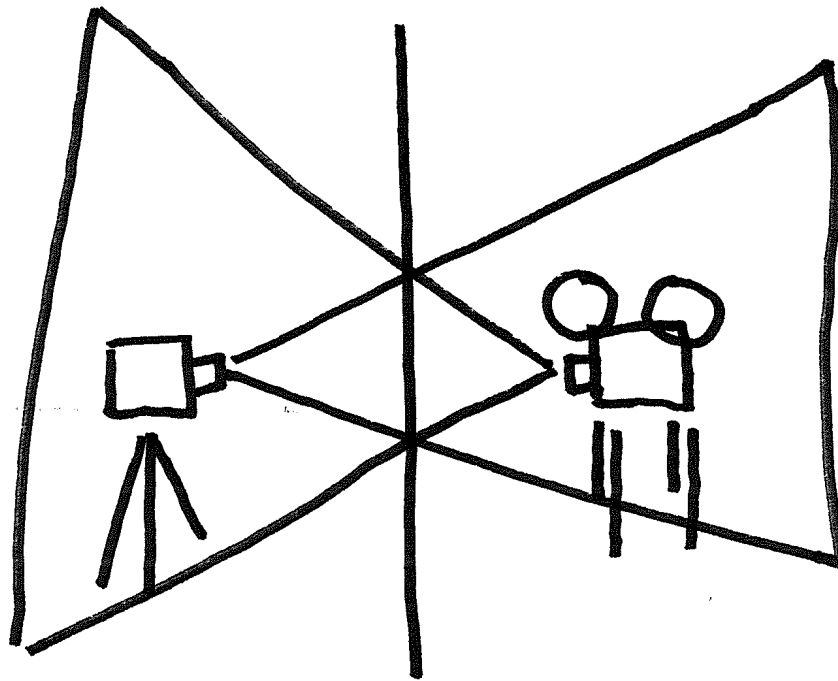
TAKE   GIVE

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The film projector is a weapon. Its ammunition is raw light. Darkness is both its adversary and its matrix. Radiant blasts inflame the theatre of perception. The void retaliates. Bruce McClure is a black-and-white-ops specialist. Through distillation and magnification, he arms the projector and returns the screen to its partisan position as bearer and maker of meaning. In between the voluptuous spasms that threaten to exceed our capacity to perceive them, we see the truth of hue and the non-sense of space. We feel frantic luminosity and frankly ludic. This is a cinema of thunder and light-en-ing.

Bruce McClure

New Yorker Bruce McClure augments 16mm projectors, inserting metal filters, so they project basic shapes and textures. In durational expanded-cinema performances, he superimposes multiple projections, generating interference patterns. Using opaque-then-clear film loops, and adjusting projector focus and light intensity, he conjures up optical and physiological effects, his strobing light triggering an array of synaptic responses. The film loops double as a pulsing optical soundtrack, which he modulates using guitar delay and distortion pedals. McClure's overwhelming, disorienting works tap into a history of avant-garde enquiry into the phenomenology of flicker. He recently played support for Throbbing Gristle, also indicating his allegiance with industrial culture, with its love/hate relationship with the machine/body.
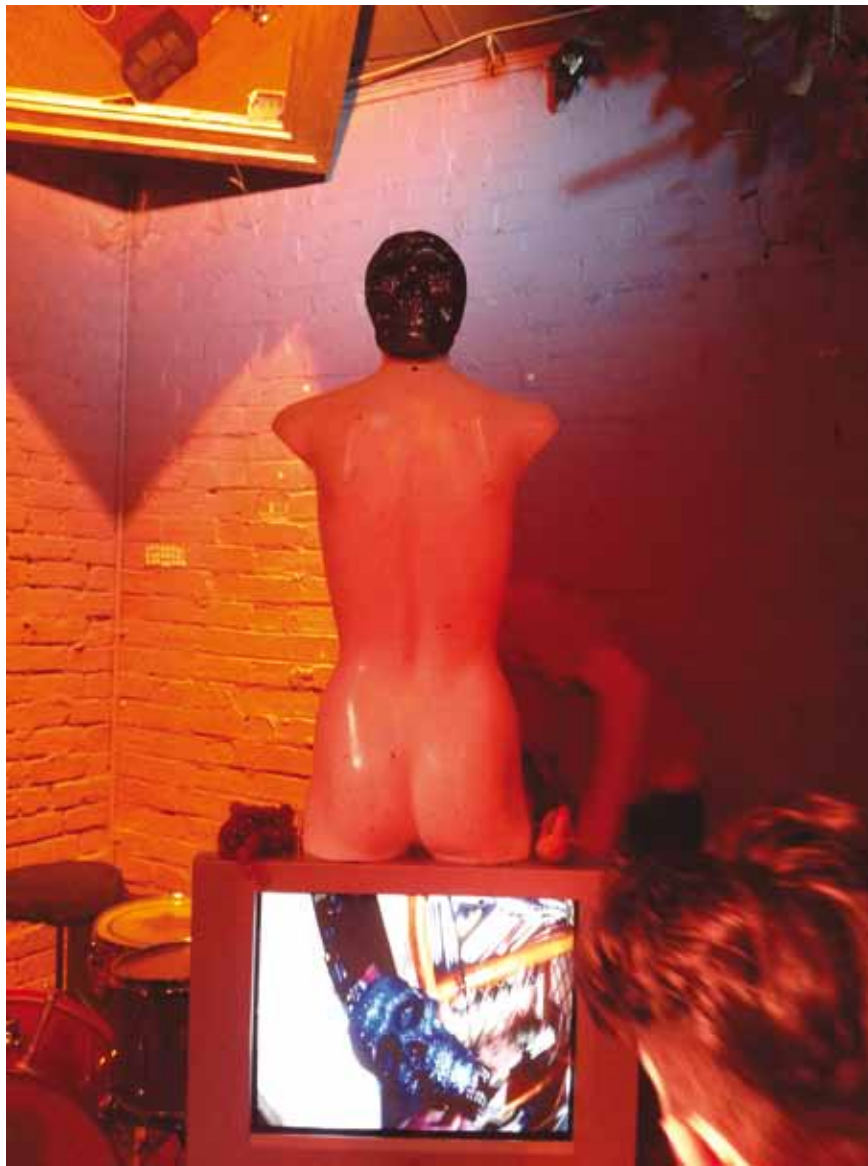
The term 'concert' means to be 'in agreement, accord, harmony'. So, a performance based on disagreement, discord, and noise could be understood as—what Basque artist Mattin terms—a 'non-concert'. At a recent Bum Creek non-concert, songs were aborted midstream, band members bickered, they taunted and glared at each other, and they stared unnervingly at the audience. Sounds happened: preset synthesiser tones, coughing, breaking glass. One thought, 'That isn't music, that is just a man's finger pressing a key.' Under-performed yet over-staged, Bum Creek play out their dance between the grand and pathetic.

Bum Creek

Sam Karmel, Tarquin Manek, and Trevelyan Clay are Bum Creek, a band from Melbourne. Their meta-performances address our expectations of performance. Bum Creek knowingly satirise 'free' improvisation, lampooning the conventions of an art form that sees itself as unconventional. They challenge the assumption that improvisers engage with one another in a hermetic bubble while a passive audience listens on. For their performance for *OtherFilm Festival 2012*, Bum Creek members will wear GoPro cameras—reputedly acquired from a post-Olympics London garage sale—on their heads. Some will initially assume that the accompanying projections are live head-cam footage. However, it becomes apparent that the liveness and the cameras—like everything about Bum Creek—are bogus.