

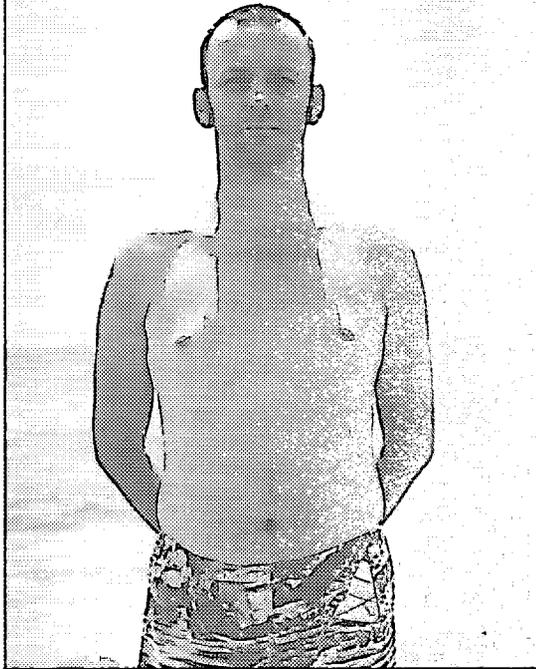
Martin Kippenberger

Ce Calor 2

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Sevilla

15.09. - 29.10.89

Palacio de la Gila del Cabildo, San Fernando 3



P.o.TH.A.A.VFB (Portrait of the Artist as Vogelfutterbüste), 1968, a chocolate bust of the artist planted with birdseed so that it had been half-pecked away, and a can of Piero Manzoni's *Artist's Shit*, 1961. Altogether more gruesome was a selection of neo-expressionist wood and linoleum cuts by Georg Baselitz, Per Kirkeby and others. Their gestural heaviness and occasional bombast seemed leaden-footed next to all the Fluxus-inflected conceits, or even Martin Kippenberger's portfolio of funny, sharp poster designs entitled, bathetically, 'Courage to Print', 1990. The best, a promotional poster for a show in Seville entitled *Ce Calor 2*, simply featured Kippenberger himself standing in front of the sea, love handles jutting out above Hawaiian-patterned trunks. There was a passing resemblance to Roth's bird-pecked head.

The exhibition's greatest disappointment was the section dedicated to recent British practice. Strangely, the curators chose to ignore the recent proliferation of artists' publications, as exemplified by the vibrant annual *Publish and Be Damned* fair which has taken place in London since 2004 (See *Artists' Books* p34). Instead, many of the artists featured were 90s marquee names – the Chapman brothers, Sarah Lucas, Damien Hirst – augmented by the etchings of stalwarts like Lucian Freud and David Hockney. Minor pleasures, like some vintage Gilbert & George mailers, were mostly drowned out by the incongruity of seeing David Shrigley books or a Julian Opie-designed

Blur CD under glass. The curators' focus on the yBas was buttressed by the slightly worrying assertion that 'the frenzy surrounding [the yBas] is comparable to the atmosphere of swinging London'. The whiff of stale zeitgeist caught in the throat. Perhaps the best riposte was in the show itself, in the title of one of Richard Hamilton's screenprints of Mick Jagger and the art dealer Robert Fraser after their drug bust: *Swinging London III*. □

MIKE SPERLINGER is currently a Helena Rubenstein Curatorial Fellow at the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York.

Martin Kippenberger
Ce Calor 2 1990
poster

□ Audio Arts

Plymouth Arts Centre November 18 to January 7

Compared with the mountains of archives that the ambitious artist is now expected to amass, a small audio cassette tape or CD feels like a neat documentary medium. William Furlong, who founded *Audio Arts* magazine in 1973, understood that even a few minutes of recorded conversation can transport the listener into an artist's presence in a way that reading stacks of carefully edited reviews and press releases cannot. Even the television interview, which often fetishises the artist's idiosyncratic studio and eccentric appearance, or jump-cuts between kooky soundbites, can distract from the purity of hearing artists express themselves, at their pace and with all their mannerisms and uncertainties, rather than as the deified or oddball artist who attracts broadcast ratings.

Unplanned hesitation, doubt and ambiguity are what reveal us to be human. Furlong suggests in *Uhms and Aghs*, 1986, one of his own sound pieces that, in addition to examples from the more well-known *Audio Arts* archive, form the basis of his retrospective at Plymouth Arts Centre. Indeed, we are reminded of Andy Warhol's self-consciousness, even shyness, when we hear him bombarded with banal questions during a press conference at the now defunct Anthony d'Offay gallery (*Audio Arts*, Vol 8, Nos 2 & 3); he appears sweetly sentimental when he replies that *Mona Lisa* and *A Room with a View* are his favourite English films. On the other hand, Marcel Duchamp, speaking in 1959 but released on *Audio Arts* (Vol 2, No 4) in 1975, sounds as precise and abrupt as his art when he discusses the impossibility of defining art: after all, 'you don't define electricity' he argues, in a tone that suggests that he didn't suffer fools gladly.

In an era of shrinking personal space, we take pleasure in the reassuring intimacy of the mobile phone or putting on a set of earphones in order to isolate ourselves from the unwanted din of contemporary urban life. Bad sound art, more than any other public art, often fails because it tries to compete with the existing cacophony of ambient noise, requiring of the listener prior knowledge of its

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whereabouts to appreciate it. A characteristic technique of Furlong's sound art, however, is the inversion of private and public space, in which he transports the white noise of crowded spaces into the supposed sanctuary of the white cube. Gallery visitors are forced to listen to all that they habitually block out; sidling up to wall-mounted speakers they are invited to eavesdrop on a suddenly not-so-familiar-sounding outside world.

Passage of Time, 2004, an installation Furlong originally conceived for the Oratorio of San Ludovico in Venice and reconfigured for Plymouth Arts Centre, juxtaposes the visual silence of eight white monochrome speaker panels with a dense collage of sounds recorded in Venice, which both flatters the city's identity as a glamorous, international art centre and also reminds us of its local character: its theatricality and the magic of its distinctive history, geography and architecture. Urban café sounds of coffee cups chinking and cheerful small talk become the noises of crockery smashing and the vulgar cry of 'Oi, Ted!'. The untamed, even exotic, sounds of dogs, birds and splashing water share audio space with solemn Christian church music. What sounds like a marching band infects the whole soundscape with a carnivalesque tone. For a sound artist, Furlong has a paradoxical talent in creating the filmic.

In an *Audio Arts* vox pop of the Venice Biennale, 2003, we encounter a lady who describes herself as wearing 'glasses you can't see out of but [enable you] to be seen' – an ironic statement, presumably, on the metaphorical blindness of a crowd more interested in social networking than art. *Passage of Time* responds to criticisms about the growing corporatisation of Venice and other art biennials and their ability to numb the senses: it challenges visitors to listen to the uniqueness of their surroundings and to locate themselves in an ever-evolving history of place in

which their presence makes them a participant.

The eight blank speaker panels of Furlong's installation *Simple Folk*, 2005, more literally represent the absence of a visual artwork, in this case the eponymous painting by Sean Keating, held at Limerick City Gallery of Art. In this stark room, visitors are caught in a crossfire of competing commentaries on an invisible painting that most will have no knowledge of. With no reference point or pre-existing opinion of the work, the initially frustrated visitor must use the various and often contradictory descriptions and viewpoints of the interviewees slowly to build up a mental picture of the painting and an idea of its nationalistic significance for these Irish museum-goers.

On a basic level, we gather that the 'simple' folk of the title designates a group of people who might be husband, wife and child; that the now un-politically-correct-sounding 'simple' refers to the simplicity of their way of life; that there appears to be a storm brewing; that the scene is set in a bygone age in the West of Ireland; and that the colours include grey, white, pink, red and blue. Gradually, one begins to focus on the differing interpretations of the family's expressions: 'They're happy, I think,' speculates one young child, while another ominously suggests that the painter 'looked at their faces and painted the clouds'. If one cynical adult claims that 'that time was something that we all wanted to put behind us', another prefers to imagine them living in 'easy-going times'. Using the surround-sound of the eight speakers and the range of voices as musical instruments, Furlong cuts, splices, repeats and loops these commentaries with the dexterity of a conductor. The effect is of a symphony that captures the haunting nostalgia of the painting, and the ambiguity of mythologising a morally simpler but materialistically poorer epoch.

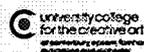
Furlong is undisputedly the world's most prolific and important collector of artists' voices; lured by the

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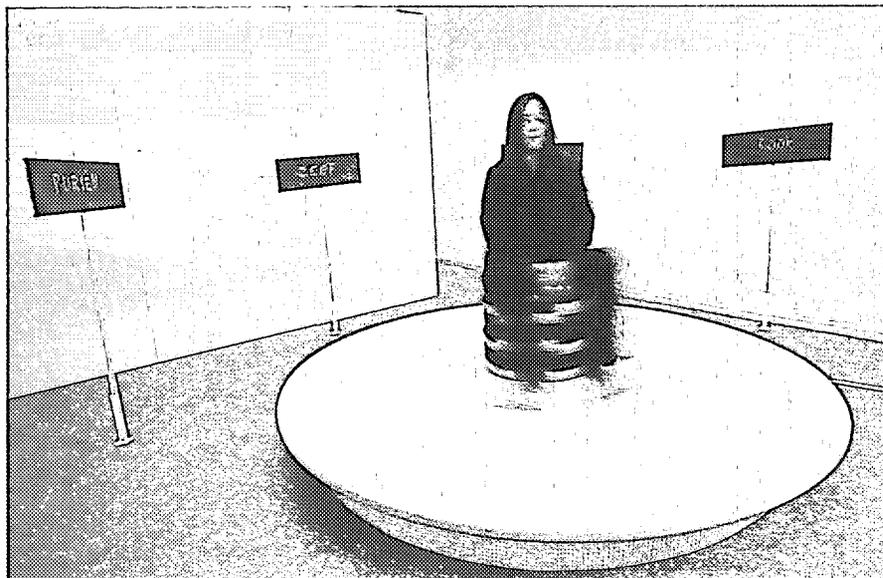
23rd February -
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Pavel Büchler Moyra Derby Mick Finch Jane Harris Gerard Hemsworth Louise Hopkins Richard Kirwan
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Nearest Tube: Bow Rd or Bow Church DLR | Tel: 020 8709 5294 | www.bowarts.org
Gallery open: Thursday to Sunday 12 - 5pm
Texts by JJ Charlesworth & Sean Ashton will be published to accompany the exhibition
For further information: www.myihomania.co.uk



Suchan Kinoshita
inbetweening 2004



persuasive charm of Furlong and his frequent collaborator Jean Wainwright, or reassured by the benign innocence and nerdy appeal of an audio magazine, it is rare that a significant artist slips through the *Audio Arts* net. Nevertheless, it must come as a relief that Tate has acquired the full *Audio Arts* archive, an occasion to be celebrated by a retrospective display at Tate Modern. For Furlong's fascination with the sculptural qualities of sound extends to the materials of the recording process, and he has been slow to part with the reassuring clunkiness of his tape recorder; it will take a dedicated digital archivist to maintain the collection against natural decay and rapid technological advances. Yet, as Furlong shrewdly predicts with his simple, looped recording of a boy's nosy question, *What Are You Doing Taping?*, 1986, *Audio Arts* might further be threatened by an increasingly litigious culture less willing to take part in such apparently casual field recordings. It is clear, however, that Furlong deserves to be known not only as a dedicated and generous facilitator of his peers' voices, but first and foremost as a talented artist who uses sound to refresh and inspire our visual imagination. ■

Tate Britain will be showing the *Audio Arts* archive from March 5 to September.

JENNIFER THATCHER is director of talks at the ICA.

■ Suchan Kinoshita

Ikon Gallery Birmingham November 29 to January 21

'The most important participation you can get takes place in the mind of each member of the audience', asserts Suchan Kinoshita in a recent interview. 'I remember once instigating a situation within an exhibition which took place around a theatre hall. I was asked to use that space, and so invited two audiences at the same time. One was a group of 250 people sitting in the audience, looking at the stage. The other audience comprised a group of individuals being invited onto the stage to look at the "audience".'

In this example of Kinoshita's work there appears to be a pervasive, endemic pedanticism which, by anyone's standards, is an immediate cause for concern. Its ABC approach to illustrating basic theoretical concepts, in this case the notion of reflexivity, is overbearing in its literalism; unfortunately, so many years on, these traits still permeate most of the work in Kinoshita's Ikon show.

inbetweening, 2004, was the busiest of the Ikon installations in its attempts to illustrate – rather than articulate or play with – the holy grail of audience participation. Visitors were encouraged to sit one at a time on a stall in the centre of a revolving round platform, around which were placed several music stands carrying small blackboards and chalk. The visitor was encouraged to scrawl words or phrases on each of the blackboards to be read – or incorporated into the stream of consciousness-style blurtings – of the revolving viewer as they came into their field of vision, thus creating a disrupted interaction of sorts which quickly, for this viewer, turned to despondency at the very basic premise. Similar reactions were provoked by *minutes of monologues*, 2004, video recordings of people who had been roped in by the artist to play



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Group Show: *Wood for the Trees and Falling Leaves*
 17 January - 17 February 2007

Antoni Malinowski
 Jock Mooney
 22 February - 24 March 2007

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