

PARALLAX

Paul Carter - John Clayman - Shona Davies - Philip Hausmeier
Sharon Kivland - Rosie Leventon - Charles Mason - Ian Monroe
Callum Morton - Margaret O'Brien - Lucy Reynolds - Kate Terry
John Wynne - Zoë Walker & Neil Bromwich - Catherine Yass

curated by Richard Ducker

It is a matter of distance and it is a matter of position.

Parallax involves positions and relations and the movement that aligns or displaces an object or objects. Something is set against a background; one might say it occupies a place. It is seen by a viewer, who changes position and in so doing, it is as though what is seen has shifted; there is a new line of sight and something, hitherto unseen, appears (as though it has been revealed), changing what one has seen before. Parallax is geometrical, mathematical, and useful in astronomy if not always in the viewing of works of art. It is epistemological and ontological. It is a lovely metaphor, and may be observed as a literary style, as when a story is told through more than one narrator's voice, giving rise to different accounts of the same event, as much as it may be taken as a figure for an exhibition that undertakes a collection of works, to which are invited a number of viewers, who will clearly have more than one point of view. Yet it is perhaps a matter of the shift that occurs in viewing – on the part of the viewer, that is - rather than merely a matter of the multiplicity of places from which viewing may take place, against various backgrounds (including the site of the unconscious, about which one may know very little, simply positing its existence from time to time or suspecting it when falling into a gap in knowledge). If it were only a matter of a shifting occupancy, then meaning would flow endlessly, and sometimes, it does not.

However, what is seen, from whatever position, can be determined. It can be tracked down, of course, triangulated – but only indirectly for the observations are incommensurable. The object (and I do not use the term lightly) remains somewhat uncertain, even blurry, for in the act of triangulation (a topological space, which suggests connection, contiguity, and continuity), it does tend to be mutable or unclear. This may be no more than an effect of optics, as Jacques Lacan demonstrates in his reflection on the experiment of the inverted bouquet, where one may see an imaginary phenomenon: a real bouquet of flowers in a real vase brought together in a spherical mirror through a fusion of real and imaginary space by a viewer in an illusion that risks falling apart at any moment if the viewer is in the wrong place. The setup is simple enough – a bouquet of flowers is suspended under a hollow box, placed on a stand, more or less lined up with the centre of a half-sphere, nicely polished, at a distance. Without the reflective sphere, the viewer cannot see the flowers, but can see the vase placed on top of the stand. In the reflective sphere, the viewer can see both flowers and vase; indeed, the flowers are in the vase in the mirror but the image is strange, despite the appearance of reality, unless the viewer is quite far away, and distance allows parallax to do its work in producing a complete and satisfying illusion. Lacan turns this experiment into a metaphor for the human subject, who has to be in the field of the sphere.

It is a matter of position and it is a matter of distance. And it is where position and distance have an associated error, which - happily or sadly - includes the viewer.

-- Sharon Kivland 2007

PARALLAX runs from 29 March - 20 April 2008

Private view: Friday, 28 March 2008, 6- 9 pm

Opening hours: Friday - Sunday, 1-6 pm

FIELDGATE GALLERY

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Paul Carter



John Clayman



Shona Davies



Philip Hausmeier



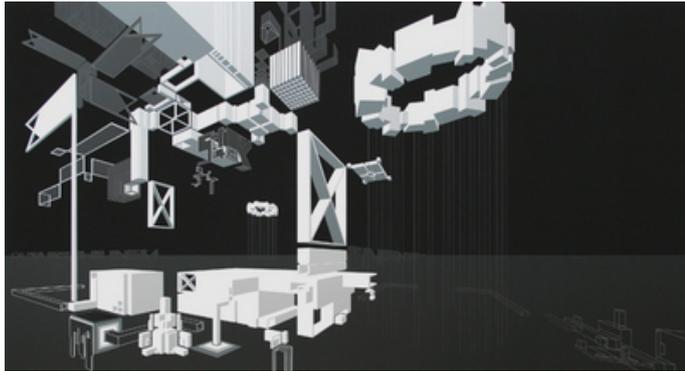
Sharon Kivland



Rosie Leventon



Charles Mason



Ian Monroe



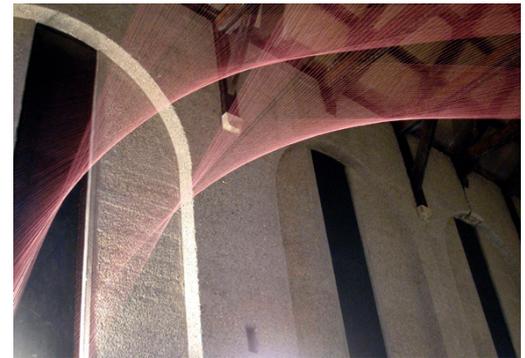
Callum Morton



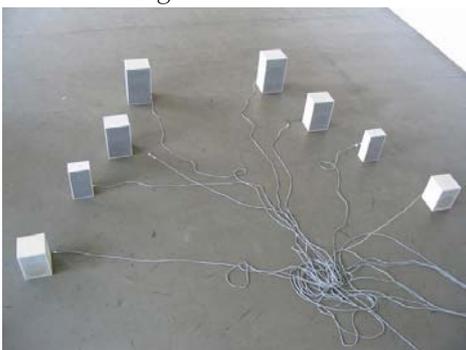
Margaret O'Brien



Lucy Reynolds



Kate Terry



John Wynne



Zoë Walker & Neil Bromwich



Catherine Yass

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