

For the attention of Press
11/11/2009

Amanda Beech - *Sanity Assassin*
Preview: Friday 22 January 2010, 6-9pm.
Joint opening with Picture This/Rachael Reupke.
After party in Spike Island Café: 9pm-late
Sanity Assassin runs from 23 Jan to 11 April 2010.

Spike Island presents the first major solo show in a public gallery by London based artist Amanda Beech (1972). Beech was awarded the main production residency for UK artists at Spike Island in 2009 which contributed to the making of her new body of work *Sanity Assassin*.

Sanity Assassin is a three-channel video installation with a sculptural element; a spotlit mirrored plinth, which displays a series of polished chainsaws. Situated in a custom designed waiting area, this glamorous structure with subliminal horror movie overtones is homage to the corporate lobby of a real Los Angeles showroom. Beyond this is a three screen video installation which embodies another violence. Hard edged, uniform edits guide us through a private and nocturnal LA landscape and are set to a pulsating noise score. A flashing text interrupts the sequence, channelling psychological transmissions from two central characters whose divergent philosophies ultimately merge into one nihilistic polemic. The first is the estranged European émigré adrift in LA, railing against the culture machine's habituation of nature and espousing a form of ideal space that can only be achieved through self-enforced seclusion. The second is the voice of the new world order, purporting to embody nature as self-empowerment. Both characters ultimately descend into a form of psychosis where their radical individualism leads either to dark suicidal horror or pure physical violence.

In its speed, and combination of graphic, textual and documentary style footage, stylistically the work references both MTV-style montage and the film title sequences of Saul Bass. There is, however, no coming feature - there is only the 'now' time of *Sanity Assassin*.

Sanity Assassin was shot on location in Los Angeles and is part of Beech's on-going investigations into the forceful rhetoric played out within neo-liberal narratives of freedom in philosophy, politics, literature and popular culture. The artist examines the legacies of the 'exile modernism' represented by European émigrés such as Bertolt Brecht, Thomas Mann and Theodor Adorno. The work understands their philosophy of resistance and withdrawal from the culture of Los Angeles as commensurate with a politics of security and protection seen in the culture of subjectivity in LA now. This radical withdrawal is exemplified by the California modernism which the late, infamous LA photographer Julius Shulman made so universally desirable. Celebrating hard lines divorced from socialism, the aesthetics of withdrawal have led to the phenomenon of 'Fortress LA' with its concurrent erosion of the public realm. A face to face interview with Shulman, along with a reworking of Adorno's "Dream Notes", has been absorbed into the two characters that represent the different versions of modernism which ultimately lead to the same conclusion.

Forced entanglements between architecture and nature, subjectivity and ethics, theory and practice are all pulled together in a claustrophobic journey through LA's city space. This depopulated landscape includes the extensive library of Jewish writer Leon Feutwanger; Becheresque exterior shots of LA post war housing tracts and computer generated special effects of virtual spaces. These include the recurring motif of Film Noir style hard rain and 3D fly-throughs of buildings amalgamated from Shulman's work and Getty Institute architecture; both a power base founded on the private ownership of public representations.

Alongside the exhibition, the book, *Sanity Assassin* will be available as a limited edition publication from Urbanomic, Press. The full colour publication features an introduction by Marie-Anne McQuay, an interview with the artist by Jasper Joseph-Lester, and essays by Suhail Mailk, Ray Brassier, and Robin Mackay. Press copies available on request January 2010.

For further information please contact: admin@spikeisland.org.uk or call +44 (0) 1117 929 2266 and speak with Nemia Maclachlan, Marketing Manager, Spike Island.

Notes for Editors:

- Amanda Beech was awarded the 2009 Arts Council England: South West Residency at Spike Island. This significant residency and exhibiting opportunity for UK artists has previously been awarded to Elizabeth Price (2008), Ruth Claxton (2007) and Ged Quinn (2005). The residency contributed to the making of her new body of work *Sanity Assassin*.
- *Sanity Assassin* is Beech's first major solo show in a public gallery. The three channel video installation with sculptural element will be presented at Spike Island January 2010. The exhibition opens on Friday 22 January joint with Picture This' new Rachael Reupke's new commission. *Sanity Assassin* runs until Sunday 11 April 2010.
- A programme of talks, screenings and events will be announced on-line December 2009.
- Images attached – stills from *Sanity Assassin* (copyright Amanda Beech). High resolution files are available for reproduction now. Show-reel and press copies of publication available on request January 2010.
- **Biography:** Amanda Beech makes artworks, writes and collaborates on curatorial projects. Her work explores the relationship between democracy and violence in neo-liberalism by scrutinising the forceful rhetoric within narratives of freedom, which play out in philosophy, politics, literature and popular culture. Constructing narratives that take in particular biographies, sites, social mythologies and mixing them with the bounds of philosophical inquiry, her work operates as a space of seductive power, will and force – a world that emphasizes decisiveness as its guiding principle and that deals with our share in it. She is a member of the steering committee of *The Political Currency of Art* research group, and Co Director of the research group Curating Video.
www.curatingvideo.com <http://old.gold.ac.uk/visual-arts/poca/archive.html>
- **Recent solo exhibitions include:** *Image-Force*, Urbanomic Studio, Falmouth, UK, 2009; *Statecraft*, The Temple of Utopias, Harlow, Essex 2008, *Falk*, MOT International, London, 2006 (with cat). **Recent Group exhibitions include:** *One Way Street*, Sheppard Gallery, University of Nevada, Reno and KX Gallery Hamburg, Germany 2007; *Ubiquitous Media*, Tokyo University, Japan July 2007; *The Mortar of Distribution*, Artprojx, London 2008, *The Institute of Psychoplasms*, Pump House Gallery (with cat) 2008, *Let us Pray For Those Now Residing in the Designated Area*, DNA Gallery, Berlin 2009, and, *Greetings comrades, the image has now changed its status*, Ocular Lab, Melbourne, Australia 2009.

Reviews and links to projects:

- http://www.metamute.org/en/content/any_other_but_our_selves
- http://www.timeout.com/london/art/events/310595/amanda_beech.html
- *Time Out* Gabriel Coxhead, Fri Jan 5 2007
- <http://www.absolutearts.com/artsnews/2003/06/27/31166.html>
- <http://www.absolutearts.com/artsnews/2005/12/12/33530.html>
- http://www.ocularlabinc.com/09bc_ex.html
- Work featured on Serpentine Gallery website to advertise the summer programme of events
- http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2007/04/local_operations23_may_1_july.html
- Art Video Exchange Bergen Kunsthall Bergen, 2007
- <http://www.artvideoexchange.com/2007Pages/England/beecech.html>
- Conference – Tate Britain
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/eventseducation/coursesworkshops/6273.htm>

- **Books/texts**
- <http://www.cornerhouse.org/keyword.aspx?id=10536&f=Books>

- **Journal of Visual Arts Practice, 2006**
- http://www.atyponlink.com/INT/doi/abs/10.1386/jvap.6.1.61_1?cookieSet=1&journalCode=jvap

- **PILOT artists and curators forum archive**
- <http://www.pilotlondon.org/artists/details.php?id=125&year=2004>

- **Foreign Body(ies) White Box Gallery, New York, USA, 2008**
- http://www.whiteboxny.org/prog_list/prog_list86.html

- **The Dream of Putrefaction, 2006, Group exhibition, Metropole Gallery, Folkestone**
- http://www.metropole.org.uk/archive_view.php?show_id=28

- **Gewalt, group exhibition, Tel Aviv, Israel, 2003**
- <http://www.loushy.com/innerEXHB.aspx?code=35>

- **Don't Fight It!! Group exhibition, 2003**
- <http://www.gasworks.org.uk/exhibitions/detail.php?id=99>

- **Solo Exhibition, The Economist, 2003**
- <http://www.contemporaryartsociety.org/exhibition/2003/the-patriot>

Amanda Beech

Education

- 2003 PhD. Fine Art, Goldsmiths College, University of London.
Thesis: *Heroic Realism: Rhetoric and Violence in Narratives of Justice and Discourse on Decision.*
- 1998 M.A. Fine Art, Goldsmiths College, University of London.
- 1996 B.A. (Hons) Fine Art, Class 1, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne.

Solo Exhibitions

- 2009 **Image-Force** Urbanomic Studio, Falmouth, UK
- 2008 **Statecraft** The Temple of Utopias, temporary gallery, Harlow, Essex
- 2006 **Falk** MOT Gallery London part of "An Exhibition in Three Parts" curated by Chris Hammond. (With publication)
- 2003 **The Patriot**, The Economist Plaza, London
- 2000 **Misdemeanours** Stuff Gallery, London.
- 1999 **G O !!!** at Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education.
Runners, site-specific installation at Stroud BR station.
Act Intervention art works in Cheltenham.
- 1998 **Public Information** intervention art works in London.
'Sandwich'- Making Space. Site specific artwork, Brick Lane, London.
- 1997 **Square**, XYZ Gallery, University of Western Sydney, Australia.

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2009 **Greetings Comrades, The Image Has Now Changed its Status** Ocular Lab, Brunswick Arts Centre, Melbourne, Australia, curated by Bridget Crone
Commonwealth MGK 127, Toronto, Canada, curated by Denise Hawriyso
- 2008 **Let us Pray For Those Now Residing in the Designated Area**, DNA Gallery, Berlin, trio exhibition with Roman Vasseur and Diann Bauer
The Mortar of Distribution, with Roman Vasseur, Artprojx, London, curated by Boyle and Shaw
In A Manner of Speaking, Transmission, Glasgow, video screening curated by Lois Rowe.
The Institute of Psychoplasmics, Pump House Gallery and touring to Spike Island Bristol. Group exhibition curated by Pil and Galia Kollektiv with publication.
- 2007 **Foreign Body(ies)** White Box gallery, New York, USA, Curated by Gerard Hemsworth.
One Way Street, Sheppard Gallery Reno, USA and KX Gallery Hamburg, Germany. Co-curated exhibition with Jaspar Joseph-Lester and Matthew Poole. Including artists Pierre Bismuth, Amanda Beech, Jaspar Joseph-Lester, Roman Vasseur.
Art Video Exchange, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway. Curated by Madeline Djerejian. Video screening of Little Private Governments video work.
Local Operations, Serpentine Gallery, London, project space. Video Screening of *State Line*.
The Dream of Putrefaction, Metropole Gallery, Folkestone, Kent and Fieldgate Gallery, London. Curated by Dereck Harris.
- 2006 **Little Private Governments**, University Gallery, University of Essex. Co-curated with Matthew Poole. Including Jenny Holzer, Pil and Galia Kollektiv, Martin Kippenberger, Roman Vasseur, Amanda Beech. Catalogue available.
S1 Salon, S1 Gallery, Sheffield.
- 2005-6 **Episode**, Co-curated project with J.J. Lester and M Poole. Temporarycontemporary Gallery, London, Leeds Met Gallery, Leeds and South Florida Arts Centre, Miami, USA. Including Julie Henry, Mike Marshall, Giles Perry.
- 2005 **LOT**, Broadmead, Bristol, Poster exhibition with Jeremy Deller, Liam Gillick, Adam Dade.
- 2004 **Showdown: Boys vs Girls** Bristol. Including Gabriella Schutz, Mike Stubbs, Richard Kirwan.
Pilot: 1, Limehouse Town Hall, London, including Kerry Stewart, Liz McAlpine, Shez Dawood.
Zoo Art Fair, with Jeffrey Charles Gallery, London.
Willkommen The Metropole, Folkestone, Kent, with Bob and Roberta Smith, Michael Landy, Jeremy Deller. Curated by Luke Oxley.

- Plaza Suite: Larden Fuer Nichts**, Union Projects, London. Curated by Brian Reed, Uwe K Guenther, Mike Dawson.
- Death of Romance** Carnaby Street, London. Co-curated exhibition. Including Annie Whiles, Aya Ben Ron, Gabriella Schutz, David Burrows, Wayne Lloyd, Nigel Cooke.
- Tape 291**, 291 Gallery, London. With Runa Islam, Mark Wallinger David Cotterell, etc.
- Gewalt** Loushy Fine Art and Editions, Tel Aviv, Israel Curated by Suhail Malik. including Jake and Dinos Chapman, Aya Ben Ron, David Falconer, Candice Breitz and Nigel Cooke.
- 2003 **Family Business** Pitzhanger Manor Gallery, London. Co-curated with Danielle Arnaud and Matthew Poole, inc. Kate Smith, Lynn Marsh, David Blandy, Jasone Miranda Bilbao.
- 18%** Jeffrey Charles Gallery, London, Curated by Kevin Rice and David Smith.
- Don't Fight It !!!** Gasworks Gallery, London and Bergen Kunstsenter, Norway. 2004. Co-curated exhibition with Matthew Poole. Video works, with David Mollin, Francesca Gore, Renaud Bezy, Francis Lamb, Ole Hagen.
- 2002 **Chockerfuckingblocked**, Jeffrey Charles Gallery, London. Curated, K. Rice and D Smith
- Kinetika** Montpelier Arms. London.
- Blow Up Your TV** York City Art Gallery. Curated by David Mabb. Video works, with Paul Rooney, Mark Wallinger and Andy Warhol.
- No Sleep 'til Hammersmith** Central Space, London. Group Video works.
- 2001 **Moving** The Greyhound, Balls Pond Road, London, Co curated project, including Jeremy Deadman, David Mollin, David Mabb.
- Trick Peaser** at Mandarin Duck, London. Curated by Luke Oxley.
- 2000 **Break** at Gallery Clark, Montreal, Canada. **Residency and exhibition**. Duo exhibition.
- Polstar** video screenings: Leicester Square, London. Curated by Alexander de Cadenet.
- Make Believe** at Kingsgate Gallery, London. Co-curated project.
- 1999 **Big Warm Open** Cambridge Darkroom Gallery.
- Not Enough** Site Specific art work, Locations project, Gloucester.
- Flashpoint** Globe Gallery, Newcastle.
- 1998 **Packed Lunch** St. Monica's Old School, Hoxton Square, London. Co-curated project with Barnaby Drabble, Matthew Poole.
- Curated and exhibited, **Flashpoint** at The Globe Gallery, Tyne and Wear.
- 1997 **Underworld** Australia Council Studios, London.
- On The Buses** Installation, representing the Globe Gallery, showing at Dean Clough Gallery, Halifax, Hull Time Based Arts, 3 Month Gallery, Liverpool, Connected Northern Gallery of Contemporary Art, Sunderland.

Essays - Publications

- 2008 **Episode: The Pleasure and Persuasion of Lens Based Media**, contributing editor to a volume of new writing on media culture, with Jaspar Joseph-Lester and Matthew Poole. Published by Artwords press, London.
- 2007 **'Don't fight it: the embodiment of critique'**, Journal of Visual Art Practice 6: 1, pp. xx-xx, doi: 10.1386/jvap.6.1.xx/x
- 'Freedom from power; The Problem of Talking Them Down', *As If Something Once Mentioned Now Plain to See*, book published by Colony Gallery, Birmingham, 2007. ISBN 978-0-9557411-0-4
- 2006 **Transmissions, Speaking and Listening**, Sheffield Hallam University, Essay and discussion: "Culture and the Real World, The Folly of Critique"
- 2005 "On Violent Ground, Heidegger, Jünger and Malick" Journal Article, 2005, *Inventory*, Vol. 5, No's 2 &3, October 2005, pp.14-30 180 pages. Cornerhouse, ISSN 1359 7671
- 2004 **Out For Justice**, text published in exhibition catalogue, *Strategies Against Marketecture*, Temporary Contemporary Gallery, London. Oct 2004

Catalogues

- 2008 **Institute of Psychoplasmics**, with essay "Matters of Freedom" Pump House Gallery, London. Eds., Pil and Galia Kollektiv
- 2006 **Little Private Governments**, exh. Cat. With essay "The Economies of Freedom" in collaboration with M Poole. Ed. Amanda Beech and Matthew Poole. Contributing essays by Suhail Malik and Roman Vasseur
- Falk**, artist's book Amanda Beech; a collaboration with Roman Vasseur published by MOT International ISBN 10: 0-9554061-3-7 ISBN 13: 978-0-9554061-3-3
- 2004 **Gewalt**, Catalogue, Loushy Fine Art and Editions, Tel Aviv, Israel - including essay 'Out for Justice', by Amanda Beech
- Tape 291**, Catalogue. 291 Gallery, London, 2004

Reviews

- 2008 'The Institute of Psychoplasmics' *Mute Magazine*, 25 Sept, 08. "Any Other But Ourselves" http://www.metamute.org/en/content/any_other_but_our_selves
'The Institute of Psychoplasmics' *Art Review*, Issue 23 June 2008, reviewed by Alisdair Hopwood
'Future Greats' Art Review, March, 2008, Text by Suhail Malik
- 2007 *Time Out*, Review of 'Falk', Gabriel Coxhead, Fri 5th Jan 2007.
http://www.timeout.com/london/art/events/310595/amanda_beech.html
- 2004 'Death of Romance' Jonathan Jones, *The Guardian*, June 7th '04, 20.
- 2003 Review: *Creative Week*, 'Family Business' Emily Pacey, Oct 13th 2003.
Review: *Time Out*, 'Don't Fight It' Sally O'Reilly, July 23, 2003 No. 1718.
- 1999 Review: *Artists Newsletter*, "Runners", July 1999.

Conferences/Public Speaking

- 2008 *The Pleasure and Persuasion of Lens Based Media*, conference at Tate Britain.
Conference co-organiser and chair of session "On Force"
On Arts Writing, Chelsea College of Art, Panel discussion with JJ Charlesworth and Mark Wilsher.
The Institute of Psychoplasmics, panel discussion, Pump House gallery, Battersea, London
- 2007 Symposium: *Curating Video*, Chelsea College of Art, London.
Consequences of Capital, Panel discussion, from The Political Currency of Art, at PILOT:3 Artists' and Curators' Forum, Chelsea College of Art, London. (As part of Frieze-week London)
Ubiquitous Media, Tokyo University, Japan. Panel Convener and panel session: *Episode: the Pleasure and Persuasion of Lens Based Media*, Paper: "We Never Close: democracy and the technology of justice".
Political Currency of Art, panel at Venice Biennale in association with PILOT Artists and Curators Forum and Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa.
Serpentine Gallery, London, *Resistance and Invention*, panel discussion as part of PoCA (downloadable as podcast through PoCA and Serpentine Gallery website).
Speaker *The Dream Of Putrefaction*, Metropole Gallery, Folkestone.
Chair, *Lapdogs of the Bourgeoisie* Symposium, Gasworks Gallery, London, representing The Political Currency of Art research group.
- 2006 Tate Britain *On Art and Liberty*, co-organiser and chair. Paper: "Liberty: Metaphors of Contingency".
AAH Conference, Leeds. Panel: "The Institution of Critique" Paper: "Don't Fight It! The Embodiment of Critique".
Symposium: *Little Private Governments*, The University of Essex.
- 2005 AAH Conference, University of Bristol: *Dialogues Discourses Difference*: Paper; "Out For Justice Consent and Disagreement in Fish and Seagal."
- 2004 Speaker, *Gewalt* Symposium, Loushy Fine Art, Tel Aviv, Israel
- 2002 Speaker, *Blow Up Your TV*, York City Art Gallery.
- 2001 Speaker, *The Facts Of Life* exhibition, at the Hayward Gallery, London. Paper: "Fact as Fiction."
- 2000 Research Conference, *Tracing Art*, University of Portsmouth - Paper: "The Great Escape". Publication available from Resources Portsmouth University.
- 1999 Guest Speaker on *Interventionist Art*. ALIAS Southwest Arts Board seminar.
CGCHE Research Seminar - Paper: "How to Act".
Research Fellow Lecture, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education.
- 1997 Guest speaker for 1997 Gallery Week, Buddle Arts Centre, Wallsend.
Artists talk at The University of Western Sydney, Australia.

Residencies

- 2008 SWACR Spike Island, Bristol
- 2005 Artist In Residence: Rogaland Kunstsenter, Stavanger, Norway.
- 2000 Artist in Residence, Gallerie Clarke, Montreal, Canada.
- 1998 Research Fellow in Sculpture, Cheltenham and Gloucester College, UK.
- 1999 Visiting Artist, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, Australia.