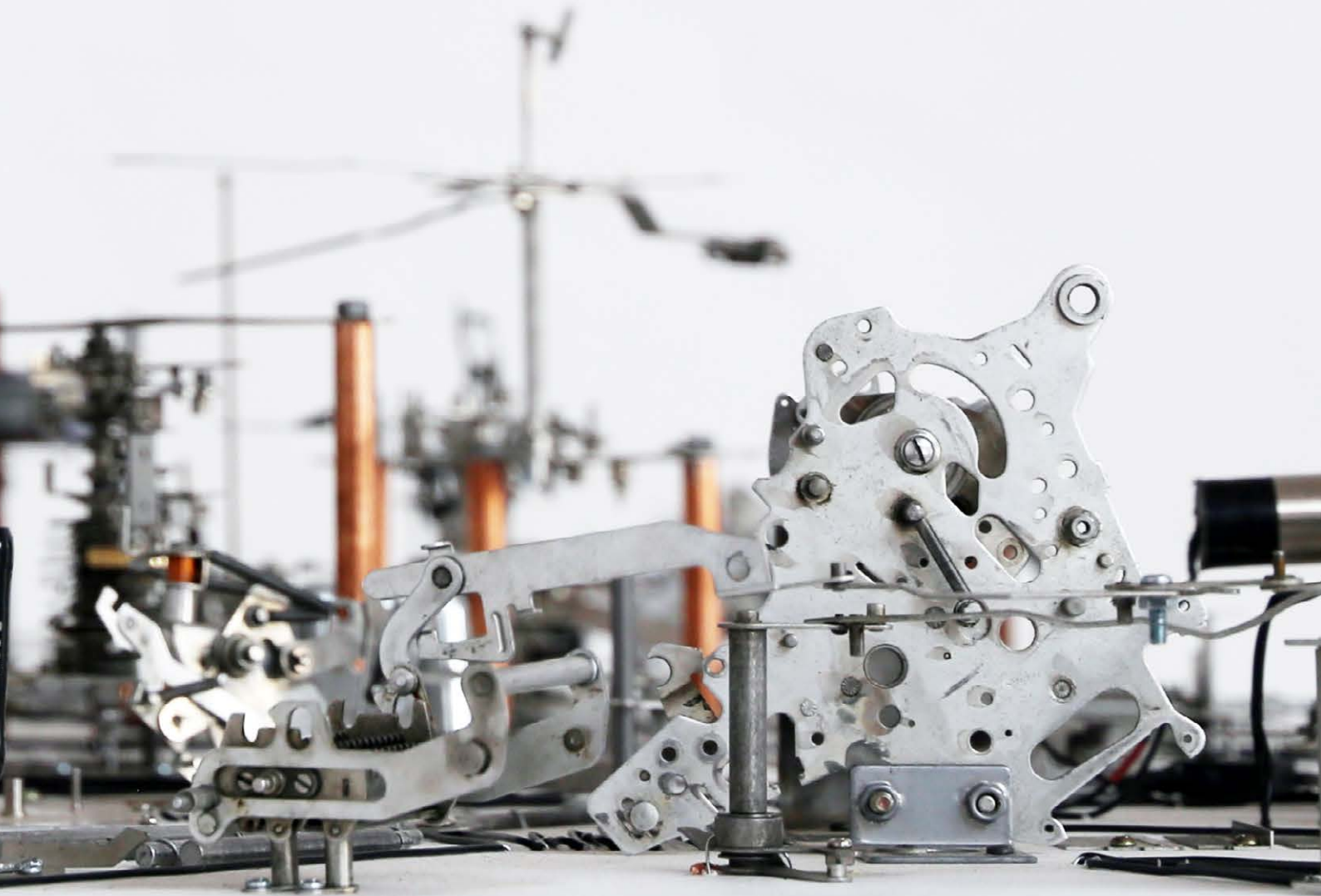


HERE&NOW18

Besides, it is always the others who die



LAWRENCE WILSON ART GALLERY

1 September – 8 December 2018





SO DUCHAMP

HERE&NOW18: Besides, it is always the others who die is about Marcel Duchamp, the grandmaster of art¹, and his relevance to the practice of Dr Perdita Phillips, Dr Alex Spremberg, Carly Lynch, Peter & Molly, Julie Dowling, and Bjoern Rainer-Adamson. Presented at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery at The University of Western Australia, the exhibition showcases a private collection of archival catalogues, prints and ephemera from Marcel Duchamp and items from the State Records Office of Western Australia in tandem with newly commissioned works from these Western Australian artists. It is also about my relationship to these artists and my interrogation of Duchamp, the artist, the provocateur, the disruptor, the player of games.

Duchamp is process, he is non-retinal, he is frustrating, he is willfully confusing, he is disruptive. He was in all probability, rampantly sexist. There are many reasons to dislike Duchamp, the man and/or the myth. Yet, he is duality. He holds our attention, he is clever, he anticipates your dislike but doesn't care. He quits art to play chess for 20 years. He is everywhere.

Duchamp is Rose Sélavy, Rose Sélavy is Duchamp.

Peter & Molly are masters of the abject, submerged in glossy high production film and photography. Often featuring in their work, collaborators in life and art, Peter Cheng and Molly

Biddle create intimate spectacles of animal, mineral and vegetable melded with the human body. They work with the taboo, the distasteful and the processes of bodily function. They are two yet operate as one being within their work. Their work eats, poops and confesses its sins.

Duchamp doesn't care about the ideal.

Neither does Julie Dowling. Julie is a master of portraiture. Her work is an illustrated, decorative, deeply personal, and intensely powerful depiction of her history and the history of her people. By necessity she operates in parallel worlds and languages, across time and cultures. Julie is a twin. She shares my passion for glitter. Julie holds hands with Julie, Duchamp with Rose Sélavy.

Duchamp repurposed, rectified and recycled.

Bjoern Rainer-Adamson is a master of the machine. His work, once readymade, is destroyed with new alliances and relationships formed between the constituent parts, generating something new, mesmerising, without task. Bjoern thinks Duchamp's *Underwood* (1916) is excellent. What being lives beneath crunching hammers and numbers, what manifesto is produced?



Duchamp has endless patience, yet never finishes anything.

Completion only arrives when something breaks, or he dies. Carly Lynch works with archives, purposefully excavating dusty remnants. She is a master of teasing information, records and discarded history apart. If something is deconstructed enough, a new narrative can emerge, dysfunctional, but infinitely more poetic. Duchamp's *The Large Glass* (1915-1923) is poetic, but broken – literally and morally. Carly's work wants to smash the glass properly.

Duchamp doesn't care for pretty things. He prefers thought, word games and puns.

Perdita Phillips is a master of termites, of uncovering, of research, of information systems, of destruction. Yet, she also embodies risk, intuition, and the strange. She collects, forages and walks. Her work is a record of her footprint in the environment, constantly seeking answers and eroding the system.

Duchamp is verbi-fied. So Duchamp.

Alex Spremberg is a master of optical rule breaking. Everyday objects, boxes, shopping trolleys and vinyl records emerge from baths of painted, oozing and repetitive layers. He works

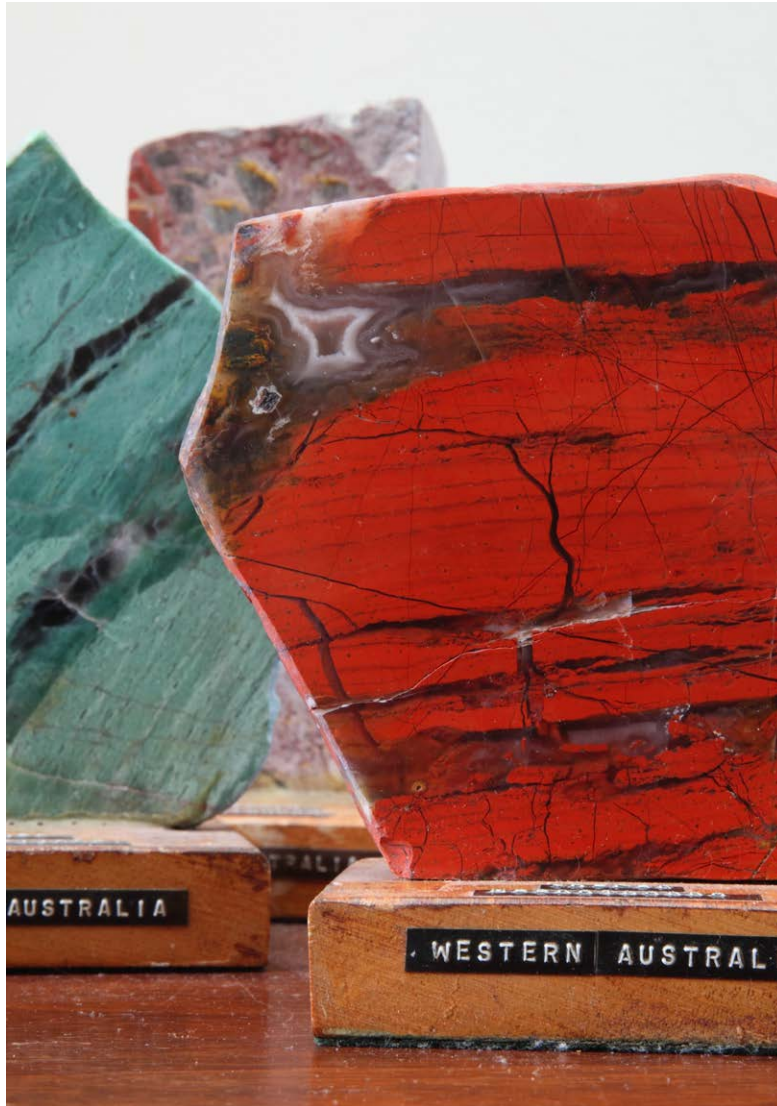
with geometry, process and repetition. The science of two dimensionality becoming three, the theory of optical illusion. Non-retinal expressed as mesmerising optical brilliance.

Duchamp doesn't provide any clues.

Aside from his parting gift, or horror, depending on your perspective – *Étant donnés* (1946-1966) – he leaves us with the statement *Besides, it is always the others who die*². An epitaph devised by Duchamp himself; a statement that is absolutely true.

Duchamp is not dead, and will never die.

Over 100 years ago Duchamp signed a urinal with a pseudonym, declared it a work of art and created a controversy that altered the course of art. Ironically, the original artwork was never displayed and was lost soon after. There is speculation *Fountain* (1917) was made by a woman.³ Most of Duchamp's works today are replicas produced in the 1960s. It doesn't seem to matter.



Marcel Duchamp. 1968. Perth.

Three things intertwined in his legacy. In September an exhibition of his work *Marcel Duchamp: The Mary Sisler collection* arrived at The Western Australian Art Gallery; 7644 people visited.⁴

1968 also saw the Meckering Earthquake, *The Field* exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria, the first images of Earth from space (courtesy of Apollo 8), the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King Jr, the sale of London Bridge for one million pounds and later re-erection in Arizona, a musical chess match between Marcel Duchamp and John Cage, a leap year, 20 years of communist rule by Mao Tse-tun, the original *Planet of the Apes*, The Nigerian Civil War and the Tet offensive in Vietnam, The Beatles record *Hey Jude*, the Prague Spring, Andy Warhol shot and injured, Boeing 747's maiden flight, The Mexico City Olympics, The Troubles began in Ireland, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and on 2 October the death of Marcel Duchamp.⁵

In recognition of 50 years since his death, *HERE&NOW18: Besides, it is always the others who die* elicits new interpretations, affinities and oppositions between Duchamp's work and those of contemporary Western Australian artists in 2018.

*en passant*⁶ Duchamp –

All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualification and thus adds his contribution to the creative act. This becomes even more obvious when posterity gives a final verdict and sometimes rehabilitates forgotten artists.

Marcel Duchamp⁷

Anna Louise Richardson
Curator, *HERE&NOW18: Besides, it is always the others who die*



1. The highest title a chess player can attain.
2. Linde, Ulf, 2016, 'Duchamp Out of Time'; *Étant donné Marcel Duchamp*, no. 11, 324.
3. Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven.
4. Visitor numbers for *The Marcel Duchamp: The Mary Sisler collection* exhibition at the Western Australian Art Gallery taken from the file in the State Records Office of Western Australia.
5. From Wikipedia, where all facts come from.
6. A French term, literally, in passing – commonly used to describe a rule in chess relating to the advancement of pawns. The rule allows a pawn that has just advanced two squares to be captured by an enemy pawn that is on the same rank and adjacent file. The pawn can be taken as if it had advanced only one square. Capturing en passant is possible only on the next move.
7. A posthumous quote from Marcel Duchamp himself, taken from *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp, (Marchand du Sel)* e.d. Michel Sanouille and Elmer Peterson, New York 1973, 139-140.

Images left to right

Peter & Molly, *Water Closet* (detail), 2018, recycled wardrobe, toilet, light & sound, 174.5 x 105 x 203.5cm. © the artists

Julie Dowling, *Self Portrait: Code Switch - Miraboya (Changing Skin)*, 2018, mica gold, acrylic, glitter with holographic plastic, 100 x 120cm. © the artist. Photo: Robert Frith, Acorn Photo

Perdita Phillips, *Between a shipwreck and an anthill* (detail), 2018, mixed media installation, variable dimensions. © the artist

Carly Lynch, *To Strip/To Dress*, 2018, installation of deconstructed french chair (c1900), horse hair, pleated velvet, trimming, interfacing, cotton thread, calico, chalk, wool stuffing, hessian fabric/dust, wire and upholstery tacks, variable dimensions. © the artist. Photo: Eva Fernandez



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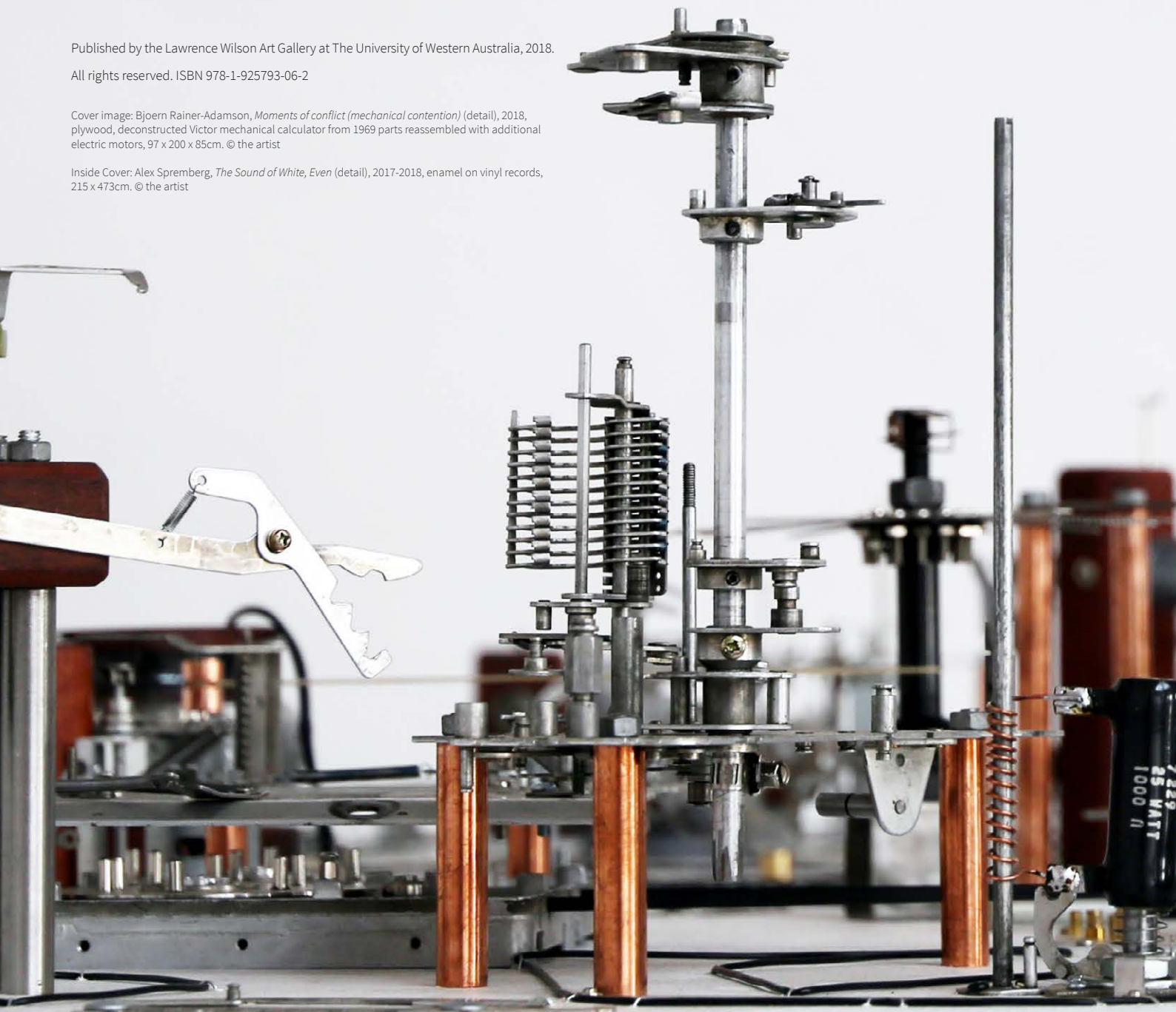
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Cover image: Bjoern Rainer-Adamson, *Moments of conflict (mechanical contention)* (detail), 2018, plywood, deconstructed Victor mechanical calculator from 1969 parts reassembled with additional electric motors, 97 x 200 x 85cm. © the artist

Inside Cover: Alex Spremberg, *The Sound of White, Even* (detail), 2017-2018, enamel on vinyl records, 215 x 473cm. © the artist



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