

Art

MONTHLY

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Guerrilla Girls

Interviewed by Jennifer Thatcher

Death Ltd

David Lillington

Self Help Inc

Bob Dickinson

Suzanne Lacy

Virginia Whiles



punk rock. Loren has carried the torch of the band's output since its original line-up disbanded in 1976 and he makes for a wonderful interlocutor of the collective's intentions, highlighting the influence of poet and anti-racist White Panther activist John Sinclair and the turbulent cultural milieu of Detroit in a discussion on the show's opening night with artist Edwin Pouncey. This influence has been elaborated previously in an exhibition curated by Loren for the same venue, which focused on the Detroit Artist's Workshop, a collective and gallery co-op founded in the mid 1960s at Wayne State University, which produced books, journals, workshops and ephemera that would set the pace of production for Loren, Kelley and Shaw. This goes some way to explain why the work at the Horse Hospital was literally spilling from the walls in a series of suitably haphazard displays while Loren's films, a kind of budget home-video approximation of the heady theatre of Kenneth Anger and Jack Smith, played on monitors around the room. If the 'ignorance' of the show's title implied a celebratory juvenile lack of awareness of the supposed decorum of fine art and its modes of display, this ramshackle arrangement seemed equally suggestive of the dark, psychic niches of the rampant adolescent imagination: accumulative, obsessive and steeped in the generative mire of trash culture.

Running simultaneously at Hauser and Wirth was a monumental display of Kelley's *Framed and Frame (Miniature Reproduction "Chinatown Wishing Well" Built by Mike Kelley after "Miniature Reproduction "Seven Star Cavern" Built by Prof. H.K. Lu")*, 1999. I have been poring over photographs of this huge,

bimorphic faux-concrete folly for years and to see it displayed so simply in a show devoted to its themes and peculiar backstory really foregrounded the work's physical and conceptual gravity. The premise is simple enough: Kelley rebuilt a public monument, the provenance of which was debatable but the location of which (Chinatown, LA) continues to raise questions about multicultural integration, the manner in which expressions of diasporic community are permissible within US society, and how such locations become points of refraction where cultures 'clash and intermix'. While common prejudice might have recently shifted its focus from the migration of the Chinese to a localised border-anxiety focused on Mexico, Kelley's simple act of removing the wishing well from its gated enclosure and exhibiting both components separately raises issues around the frame, both as a technique of value-attribution and as an isolating, protective barrier. A crawl-space cut into the base of the monument contained a mattress, lubricant and condoms, an elaboration of the artist's continued interest in the spatialisation of the unconscious in which the recesses of subconscious desire find physical form as overflows in the architectural fabric of his sculptural installations. Of particular interest in this show is an archival display focusing on Kelley's working method, loose sketches reminiscent of the formless *Garbage Drawings*, 1988, in which some of his playful research techniques are elaborated. 'Dumpling method', one annotation reads, 'wet concrete dropped into a tub of boiling water.'

Kelley frequently emulated the figure of the janitor, a role his father had performed. It provided a means by which he could demonstrate 'the matter out of place' disjunction a working-class subject might feel as they passed through the 'validating' institutional apparatuses of art school and exhibition. As his work moves into a period of retrospective consideration and market exclusivity, shows such as these increasingly constellate both the psychological and political tensions that were always inherent in his work. The Horse Hospital is a threatened community space, Hauser and Wirth is a blue-chip gallery. Taking Kelley's lead, we would do well to read such venues as subdivisions of a cultural psyche in which dormant energies might bubble up, joyfully dirtying and necessarily complicating his legacy. ■

JAMIE SUTCLIFFE is a writer and publisher based in London.

Žilvinas Kempinas

Ikon Birmingham 23 September to 27 November

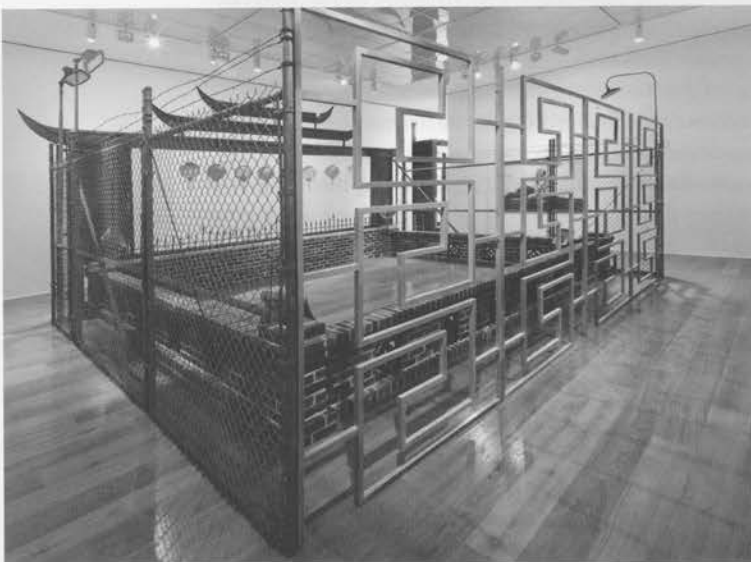
Muted drama is a mainstay of Žilvinas Kempinas's work. In the past his work's theatricality has been practised with an economy of colour, structure and means, and a good dose of kinesics. In his latest show, his hallmark video-tape installations are accompanied by ball bearings, steel rods, projections and bicycle drawings, which were made by riding through paint and across lengths of paper. But movement, and in particular rotation, is everywhere: in the turn of the bicycle wheel, the suggestion of orbiting moons, looping films and whirling silver balls.

Bearings, 2015, for example, is a lovely, unassuming, work. Formed of two separate low-lying plinths, a mass of ball bearings is set in a viscous layer of jet black oil in shallow circular pools (recalling revolving vinyl). The ball bearings resemble an unnatural swarm of whirligig beetles by turns attracted to each other and repelled. They are mesmerising, chugging around in circles, fretfully forming archipelago-like clusters, splitting off into lines or setting out alone. Though hard to make out, because of the roar of a

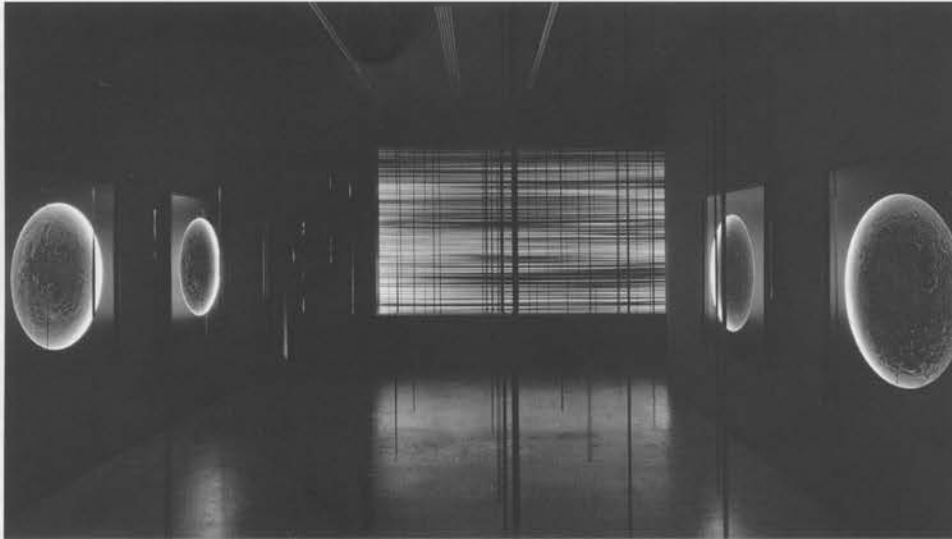
Mike Kelley

Framed and Frame (Miniature Reproduction "Chinatown Wishing Well" Built by Mike Kelley after "Miniature Reproduction "Seven Star Cavern" Built by Prof. H.K. Lu") 1999 detail

Destroy All Monsters at God's Oasis (DAM's basement practice space and Kelley's bedroom); l-r John Reed, Mike Kelley, Cary Loren and Jim Shaw, Ann Arbor, 1975



Žilvinas Kempinas
installation view



nearby fan, the ball bearings chirrup, clacking and popping as they tussle.

Three of Kempinas's magnetic tape sculptures – *Oasis*, 2010, *White Noise*, 2007, and *Verticals*, 2015 – are in attendance. In the first of these, a large industrial-style fan hangs from the ceiling; below it, a thin steel circular border, about 10cm high, lies on the floor, interrupting the fan's airflow and pushing the air current back up towards the fan. Caught between these conflicting air currents, a large thin loop of tape nimbly twists, flaps and curls as if animated by the fan's breath. The ribbon rises and dips but never falls, forever trapped in dance. Next door, in *White Noise*, 10km of VHS tape is strung taut across a vast cinematic opening in the gallery wall, lit from behind, like a side-on barcode. Behind the scenes, as it were, fans whirr incessantly and cause the multi-layered lengths of tape to quiver; the insistent flapping combines with the roar of the fans to make for an overwhelmingly immersive visual and sonic experience. These tape sculptures are a joyful balancing of simplicity, grace and just plain fun.

At times, however, there is a sense in which the works would benefit from some breathing space. 'Verticals' and the 'Illuminator' series from 2015 hang in one room with *White Noise*. The bleed of air currents and light from *White Noise* prod pleasingly at 'Verticals' lines of weighted tape suspended from the ceiling to form an expanded grid through which we brush. But the optical illusion of the 'Illuminator' series, in which what look like moons glow before their black square frames (but which are in fact just carefully lit circles of artfully textured white wall), is broken frustratingly quickly as you move around the space. The moons work best when observed in stasis, or in photographs.

Kempinas's most recent work is *Untitled (Forest)*, 2016, a room filled with black-and-white filmed footage of a woodland canopy turned upside down and projected onto the walls and ceiling of the gallery through a thicket of white steel bars grouped at angles in teepee-like trios. A winding pathway through the thicket is cleared leading to the next bright white room. This arrangement was not wholly successful, though. Firstly, it opened out onto a much brighter room, with floor to ceiling access disrupting the shaded woodland feel intended by the projection. Secondly, the option to walk among the rods, as I was encouraged by an invigilator to do, did not suggest itself through the work's installation. But when I did step off the path, the experience was turned on its head, its disorientating effect far more affecting. As I struggled to pick a path through the seemingly precariously balanced multi-angled steel (it's quite a squeeze), I was riven with anxiety at the possibility of

causing the whole installation to topple around me. I was later told that the path was a necessary amend to the installation, due to understandable issues of safety and accessibility.

Even so, Kempinas's work satisfies most when he makes invisible forces manifest, either visibly, through drawn lines in the air, or haptically, through restless changes in air pressure. The way that he makes these invisible forces – like magnetism and light, or the collision of natural forces (gravity) and artificially generated air flow – perceptible reveals an enviable simplicity and intelligent playfulness. Surely it won't be long before he takes up residence in the Turbine Hall. ■

LIZZIE LLOYD is a writer and translator based in Bristol.

Matt Mullican: **The Sequence of Things**

Camden Arts Centre London

30 September to 8 January

'The key point is,' Matt Mullican has stated, 'energy is symbolic of information ... it really is.' On the evidence of his prodigious output alone, this artist's mind has energy in ample quantity. Running the length of Camden's first gallery like a databank is a super-sized hinged pair of pinboards loaded with categories of visual information relating to the history of witchcraft. Found images and handwritten text are pinned in rows and grids, importing into the museum setting an association with the social sharing of information through bulletin boards common in a school, factory or home. In these other locations, the pinboard becomes a metaphor for information in flux and exchange as notices come and go or change places relative to each other. That constant transfer of experience is characteristic of this artist's studio practice and seems to epitomise the singular form of post-conceptual meditation on the nature of reality that, for over 40 years, has distinguished Mullican from his contemporaries.

'Everything has meaning,' according to Mullican. In his pursuit of ideas about how the universe is organised, the artist has reconfigured institutional devices that are now implanted into daily life, such as sign systems, into a personal cosmology of forms, symbols and colours within which everything existing in the world can be classified. Accordingly, the representation of