

TALKING MELENTIE PANDILOVSKI

The past six months have been a busy time at the Experimental Art Foundation.

Besides dealing with our usual activities, The Council and staff have worked very closely together in order to deliver the 05-07 Business Plan as required by the Australia Council and Arts SA, as part of the new funding coming from the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.

EAF has gone through several versions of the Business Plan, until we have come with the one that was suitable for us, as well as for the funding bodies.

I have to say that we are all very happy that the Plan has been accepted by Australia Council and Arts SA, as the completion of this process was a pre-requisite for the signing of the tripartite agreement between the EAF, OzCO and Arts SA, which means secure funding for the EAF for the following three years.

Another issue, which was a hot topic in the past period, was the OzCo restructuring, and the axing of the New Media Arts Board and the Community Cultural Development Board. This move, which seemed quite sudden, has resulted in a lot of criticism and many responses (most of them not favorable to the move), especially by the 'new media artists, critics, and curators', as they are the ones affected, but also as they are the ones with the access to the media, so that their voice was widely heard.

However, despite the negative reflections that this move has had, as well as the somewhat confusing transition to the new model, there is some room for optimism, as consultations followed this move, where Australia Council has reassured the critics that the funding levels to 'new media arts', under the new model, will not be reduced. The forming of the new peak organisations (New Media Arts Australia & National Arts and Culture Alliance), as well as the following reviews of new media arts and community cultural development are further signs that things could improve.

What I find as most re-assuring is that the new media artists and curators have not stayed passive, but have voiced our their opinions very strongly, and have undertaken actions in regard to this matter. This signifies a very strong 'new media arts' scene in Australia, which will perhaps be able to get the New Media Arts Board (or a similar body) back, should it decide that it is the way to go.

Interesting points on this issue have been raised by Keith Gallasch, Editor, RealTime Magazine, in his article "New Media Arts Sacrifice" and a letter to the Editor by Jennifer Bott, CEO of the Australia Council in response to Keith Gallasch's editorial "Australia Council Unplugged" in the Feb-March issue. (See *Realtime* #66, April-May 2005, "Australia Council Restructure" page 4.)

Ken Bolton was on leave, in the period January-March, as he was preparing his new manuscript for publication, so we had asked Teri Hoskin to jump in as a replacement. I am very thankful to Teri for accepting, and for all of her hard work in the bookshop during this period. Teri has continued assisting us a bit longer in order to update EAF's website. However we have found out that this requires additional work and are hoping to be able to resource continuation for a fully updated and expanded website, including incorporation and design of the Bookshop Online site.

EXHIBITIONS

Russia's most famous performance artist **Oleg Kulik**, whose work in the field of performance, installation, photography and video is viewed by many as 'radical', exhibited at the EAF in the 7-31 October 2004. The screen based works that propose a radical rethinking of our culture, consisted of his selected past performances 1994-1999, where he has shown a body of works called 'Zoophrenia', in which he, mainly through actions, performances and photographs, explores the subject of 'the animal as human being' alter-ego, or, 'the animal as a non-anthropomorphic Other'.

Oleg Kulik also exhibited his new work "System of Coordinates", which deals with issues of separation of art and reality. The work has been realized in



Oleg Kulik: from Actions and Performances 1994-1999 (video still; installation detail)

Oleg Kulik's studio in the fashion of a total 'art reality show', where he has recorded models in a specially built 'aquarium', but also includes a photographic session, an interview with Kulik, a discussion about the project with models, etc.

The exhibition was accepted very well by the audience and media (the most recent *Broadsheet* includes an article about Kulik's work, by the German art critic Nicole Fritz). Oleg was unfortunately not able to come to Australia for the opening, so we were not able to present the usual gallery talk after the exhibition. The show will tour, and it will be presented at Artspace, Sydney, next month.

The Slovenian based art collective IRWIN presented the hugely successful **Like to Like** project in the period 11 November-11 December. Founded in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in the early 1980s, the five members of the IRWIN group are Dusan Mandi, Miran Mohar, Andrej Savski, Roman Uranjek, and Borut Vogeltnik.

IRWIN have been working together exclusively for over 20 years and are recognised internationally for their activities, works, performances, and installations, which occupy a significant standpoint within contemporary European culture. Developed



IRWIN: Corpse of Art (installation detail)

initially from a loose association of other radical groups, centered in and around Ljubljana, generally known as Neue Slovenian Kunst, NSK, (New Slovenian Art), their collective identity employs a rich variety of visual forms specifically geared to identify the possibilities of social change. Under the adoption of an attitude known as the 'retro-principle', IRWIN have continuously aimed to establish a direct relationship with the historical legacies of noted avant-garde's within Eastern Europe in order to re-present these as important cultural tools, employing motifs from Socialist Realism and the art of the "Third Reich", from the various politically-engaged European avant-garde movements including German Dadaism (in particular the artist John Heartfield), Italian Futurism and Soviet-Russian Constructivism, as well as from religious art and Slovenian art of the 19th century.

Like to Like (2003-2004) consists of six large-scale color photographs presenting actions and projects in landscape. For anyone familiar with Slovene art after 1945, the images are easily recognizable as projects of the group OHO. The exhibition included the installations "Corpse of Art", "East Art Map", and a display of past IRWIN projects.

In organization terms, this project represented a very successful collaboration between the EAF and Artspace. The huge international freight costs were divided by the organizations. As the IRWIN collective consist of 5 artists, 2 of them (Miran Mohar and Borut Vogeltnik) came to the opening in Adelaide, while 3 of them were present for the opening in Sydney (3 flights had been secured by the Slovenian Ministry of Culture, and 2 flights by Artspace). The design of the catalogue and liaison with IRWIN was sponsored by Brent Spencer, and invitation/catalogue printing was provided in-kind by Finsbury, Adelaide. Additionally, the Slovenian Community in Adelaide covered the stay of the 2 IRWIN artists (who each came with their teenage daughters), and a number of other donors have supported the project, such as the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brent Spencer and the Independent Arts Foundation (SA) Inc.

The project was a genuine success, proven by the fact that RMIT presented the work March-April, 2005. IRWIN's talk at the EAF on 12 November was very well attended, including The Hon Michael Atkinson M.P., Attorney-General and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

The **Antirrealismos - Spanish Photomedia Now** exhibition – curated by Paco Baragan, and toured by Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney – was on display at the EAF in the period 27 January-19 February. **Antirrealismos** is an exhibition of fifteen Spanish artists engaging with photography and video.



Antirrealismos : Spanish Photomedia Now (installation detail)

The show revolves around four big themes and the mounting of it responds to this division: 1) consumer society 2) urban landscape 3) socio-political visions 4) construction of identity.

The featured artists were: Olga Adelantado, Lara Almaraz, César Álvarez, Sergio Belinchón, Mira Bernabeu, Chus García-Fraile, Miguel Ángel Gañeca, Adrià Julià, Cristina Lucas, Enrique Marty, Joan Morey, Aitor Ortiz, El Perro, Ixone Sádaba, Fernando Sánchez-Castillo, Jesús Segura

These artists presented in their work a confusion of reality and fiction, re-reading of traditional genres like still life, (self) portraiture, and landscape, exploration of staged photography and its performative nature, its relationship to painting and sculpture, the celebration of fashion and

subculture, and the rise of narrative and the shift from 'objectivity' to the self-referential like consumerism, society of spectacle, urban landscape, construction of identity. Critical issues related to past and present of Spanish society are also tackled such as immigration, revision of political past, the brutal colonization of the Spanish coastline, violence and abuse within the family, and strategies of authority and power in a highly phallogocentric society.

Antirrealismos - Spanish Photomedia Now was accepted well by the audience and the media. There were positive reviews in the *The Advertiser*, *The Adelaide Review*, as well as radio interviews with Radio Adelaide, 3D Radio, and SBS Radio (with the Curator).

The exhibition **Wang Jianwei : Giant Steps** by the Chinese artist Wang Jianwei took place in the period 24 February-2 April. It was organized in collaboration with the Australia-Asia Art Center-4A Gallery, Sydney, and curated by its Director Binghui Huangfu. The exhibition was presented in association with the 2005 Adelaide Film Festival, which assisted with the flight and accommodation for Binghui Huangfu (big thanks to Katrina Sedgwick and Adele Hann), as well as boosted our attendances (800 people attended the exhibition in just one week of the Festival).

I had decided to show the work of Wang Jianwei, one of the most celebrated new media artists from China, as his work is very intriguing. He illustrates a highly conceptualized and innovative production that constantly questions accepted



Wang Jianwei : Spider 2004 (video still, installation detail)

histories and systems of knowledge by interrogating the dynamic inter-relationship between science, philosophy, art, society and human experience. And he does this through a language that is itself experimental.

Wang Jianwei also creates complex video works including labyrinths of offices, corridors and boardrooms in one of China's largest computer surveillance companies, exploring the complexity of relationships, power and history within the context of contemporary corporate lifestyle.

The curator, Binghui Huangfu, presented a talk in the gallery on 25 February in which she showed the past and present work of Wang Jianwei, as well as spoke about contemporary Chinese art in general.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Our current exhibition, on which I will report in more detail in the next newsletter, is Ian Haig's **The Dirt Factory** (14 April-14 May). The show incorporates a large and new body of work produced on the theme of body cleansing, de-toxing and cornflakes, including an installation based on a mutant colonic irrigation machine, three smaller sculptural installations, one video work, and two animations, also lots of drawings, some other wall pieces and painting/text on gallery walls.

PUBLICATIONS

Biotech Art & Culture

We have continued to work on the significant publication **Biotech Art & Culture** (working title). We went through the process of project managing the book (preparing, proofreading, and editing the book), where the Adelaide-based new media artist, Francesca da Rimini, was absolutely essential. We are now entering the design stage and hope to publish it in August.

NEXT PROJECT

Our immediate next project has to do with our pursuing of the theme of 'art and biotechnology'. Namely, we are about to launch the **Art & Biotechnology Workshop** that will be led by the renown Brazilian and US-based artist, Eduardo Kac. Many of you will indubitably remember Eduardo's installation **Genesis**, which we were able to exhibit in the EAF for the **Art of the Biotech Era** project during the 2004 Adelaide Festival of Arts.


The **Art & Biotechnology Workshop** will take part in the period 18-21 May at the Experimental Art Foundation. This workshop will discuss the complex and fascinating relationship between biology and art in the larger context of related social, political, and ethical issues. Its main themes will be: A Brief History of Art and DNA, Art and Ecology, Art and Genetics, and Consciousness in Non-human Animals and Plants.

As is customary with our workshops, it will be free of charge. The workshop will be open to a limited number of participants. We are only able to do the workshop as EAF received a grant from Arts SA for Eduardo Kac through its Artist in Residence Program. Part of these funds was used for the installation of Kac's **Genesis** exhibition.

SOMETHING ELSE

Finally, I would like to conclude on a private note, and say that the Pandilovski household has enlarged in March. I have become a father of a beautiful baby girl, which is bringing me and my wife Natalija a lot of joy, as well as sleepless hours in the night. One must also applaud my elder daughter Isidora, who is very helpful in the new situation, despite the fact that she isn't the centre of attention anymore.

If you choose to drink...



- Start with a soft drink.
- Have non-alcohol spacers.
- Eat before and while you are drinking (but avoid salty foods).
- Keep active - dance, play pool.
- Keep an eye on your drink.
- Plan safe transport.

For information on how to 'go easy with alcohol call the Alcohol and Drug Information Service on 1300 131 340 or log on to www.dasc.sa.gov.au

alcohol go easy

Government of South Australia

DRUG & ALCOHOL SERVICES EDUCATION

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DIRECTOR: Melentie Pandilovski

31 YEARS IN 2005!



The EAF is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, by the South Australian Government through Arts SA, and through the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments. The EAF is a member organisation of Contemporary Arts Organisations of Australia <www.caos.org.au>