

**JAMES & ELEANOR AVERY****SELINA OU****SAM SMITH*****Conversations from here/ Conversas a partir daqui*****11 NOV 2011 – 7 JAN 2012**

How do you capture here and now? when it was already *there* and has already *been*? The now and the present. This sentence is already 5 seconds old. In addition to this idea, is the notion of *Conversations from here*, which brings together four Australian artists James & Eleanor Avery, Selina Ou and Sam Smith; whose works predominately focus on moments within limited and time framed references. Whether it be a historical association, a shutter of a lens or a developed celluloid, they all guide us to a precise moment in time.

James & Eleanor Avery work collaboratively with sculpture and installation. Within their pieces are traces of familiar forms and references that have been reformulated and simplified, becoming contemporary updated versions of the original source. This is evident in works such as *Testa*, appearing as a playful Rorschach, which is based on the floorplans of a building with a politically convoluted and contested past. *Harfang Noir* resembles an owl and mirrors similar unsettling territory. Partially inspired by a character's pet from Jules Verne's novel '*Les Indes Noires*' the owl also brings forward ideas of mysterious and mythical circumstances from childhood. The Averys masterfully reinterpret the everyday, offering diverse entry points to their work.

How our environments condition us (and vice versa) is the main focus in the photographic works by Selina Ou. Whether the subject be results of their location, situation or environment, the figures appear to be born or a produced by their surroundings. As in previous series the figure and background form comfortable cohabitation and an evident dialogue ensues between them. Ou captures her willing subjects usually with a casual approach and in doing so she seems to be performing a type of social documentation while at the same time able to depict a relative calm and honest portrait.

These concerns are present in her photographs from the *Embrace* series, although they are more intimate as the viewers' focus is drawn to coupled figures without the ever encapsulating background-device which usually frames her figures within her compositions. In *Embrace* we are presented with the choreographed and stylized act of figures embracing, as though she has reduced both the surroundings and figures into one, perhaps suggesting the affection of an embrace that renders all other concerns and surroundings irrelevant, and being part of a couple forms a unique emotional environment.

Sam Smith deconstructs film to its bare components and meticulously reconstructs them by focusing on varying elements that make a moving image. His video practice is complimented by his sculptural practice where the careful attention to detail is also evident. The objects appear as compromised forms - as though they are no longer inanimate but a product of the worlds they document, and caught in a void between the two. In *Premutation Set* a video work, Smith breaks down the vehicles used in highlighting and capturing scenarios as well as the tools used in creating the moving image. By exploring the almost innumerable series of variations, he magnifies a filmic moment. In reshooting a scene from *La Nuit Americaine* (Day for Night) by François Truffaut we are invited to consider the possibilities of a scene reshot with 16,777,216 edits made by eight shots reshot eight times from disparate angles. At first glance there is an element of "déjà vu" yet only from the sound prompts rather than the image itself. This act of revisiting a moment suggests the variations of available interpretations.

At times, we are concerned with the present and the *now*, as individuals, there is not enough time to digest everything. Although there are moments grasped and experienced, the importance and attention we dedicate to them defines their longevity. A discourse follows and it is the conversations from here that give them new meaning and perspective.(JS2011)

Selina Ou is represented by Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne



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