

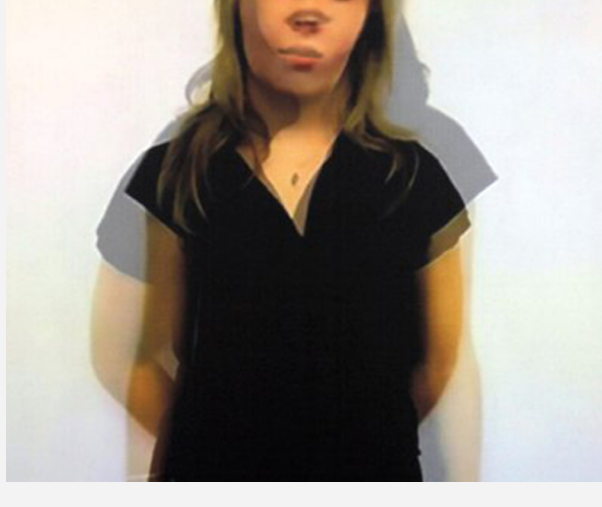
# immediacy

**Immediacy is a response to the social and artistic state of emergency that is Queensland. Since the Newman government came to power earlier this year, Queenslanders have been on a joyless roller coaster where job security, social services and arts infrastructure have been decimated. Art is now again a dirty word. What was a boost to cultural tourism and a sign of cosmopolitan sophistication yesterday—is today considered wasteful and unproductive. While it is devastating that state government support for the arts will be almost non-existent, this is not cause for absolute despair.**

Artists are no strangers to such a climate and those who have chosen to pursue their interests critically are more than likely encouraged by this disdain. Fortunately, artists aren't in it for approval. These times may see artists adopting strategies akin to pre-Fitzgerald Queensland when artists created a DIY culture dedicated to local artistic expression in the face of a repressive and corrupt government.

The artists engaged in *Immediacy* utilise video as an inexpensive medium that lends itself to critical practices in that it is easily disseminated, accessible, transportable, projectable, and transient. Rather than investing in fine art materiality and the formal compositions of object or installation, these artists use

video as anti-matter—as a process for grabbing attention, bringing the viewer in close often to a point of discomfort. These works pop the bubble of subjectivity, making private moments public, offering close-ups of the body, or irreverently messing with official media. They seem to erupt from that schizoid crevasse between social media and surveillance where we all feel more than a little second hand. But beautifully these works all have a recuperative twist, a positive energy and a sensuous play. They tap that avant-garde impulse which is the merger of art and life, revealing a lived and real political moment. The immediate expressions of these nine local artists explore a politics of social and aesthetic disruption.



Clark Beaumont, still from *Camouflage* 2011, video 1' 07"

## ★ Clark Beaumont

**Camouflage is Clark Beaumont's collaborative self-portrait. Intimate and personal details, spoken in a confessional style in an empty white space, are melded and morphed, blended and blurred into an audio-visual confusion.** Utilising their own artistic partnership to creatively explore the nature of interpersonal relations, the technique of superposition says less about domination than it does about that more insidious tendency of hiding behind another's ego. When we stand in another's shadow are we in fact taking

a perverse form of shelter? Or, on a more objective level, is society's relentless and compulsive effort to couple everyone a type of collusive personal erasure? There is a disquieting acceptance in this work, a lack of struggle and resistance, that makes the visual and aural effort to retrieve each person sensitively insistent. The medium of video is used not only to collide and coalesce each artist's performative presence but to psychologically place the viewer in-between—an impossible place of dilemma and collapse.



Chris Bennie, still from *Finger Painting* 2011 HD QuickTime file with sound 3' 08"

## ★ Chris Bennie

**Finger Painting is an irreverent and humorous self-portrait. Bennie videos himself giving the finger to his own body of paintings.** While on the surface this may seem to be a juvenile celebration of stupidity, *Finger Painting* actually goes straight to heart of an artist's creative drive. An artist is ultimately his/her own harshest critic and Bennie makes plain that inner conversation which carries a practice beyond the fashionable trends of the art market, and the general lack of social validation so acutely reflected in the political climate of contemporary Queensland. While Bennie

gives the finger to his paintings and possibly to the practice of painting generally with its inbuilt establishment status, he nevertheless liberates himself through the videoed performance with its own type of authorial, bodily gesture. The ultimate satisfaction in the work is therefore not only in its anti-authoritarian spirit, but in its demonstration of having it both ways. Bennie is a better artist for declaring that his paintings are failed or that they were a waste of time or that no one bought them or that they take up so much room... because he has recycled them into a new, more provocative composition.



Sarah Byrne, still from *GHOSTHOUSE* 2011, single-channel video excerpt taken from eight channel installation, VHS 13' 04"

## ★ Sarah Byrne

The spectres that populate Sarah Byrne's *GHOSTHOUSE* are echoes of what was once popular entertainment or broadcast worthy opinion. Now floating randomly in a sea of coloured static and estrangement, their once benign appearance takes on monstrous and even malevolent overtones. Akin to picking through the remains of a partially digested meal, watching Byrne's work requires a strong stomach. It's not just the visual noise and glitches that nauseate but one can't help but gag on the Americana content with its force-feeding, propagandist and evangelical mentality. If the original televisual material was

mind-numbing and cringe-worthy, Sarah Byrne's recycling interventions are an exorcising wake-up call. In exposing both predatory and parasitical aspects of televisual media, Byrne exacts an artistic revenge and extracts a true pleasure. In *Date/Less* the individual participants are subsumed by the tv show, turning real people into stereotypes before our eyes. Byrne's exposes the voyeurism involved in this form of entertainment and points to a darker side of this social compact. Her remastering of popular material can be appreciated as a real act of taking control and carving out one's own path in the world.

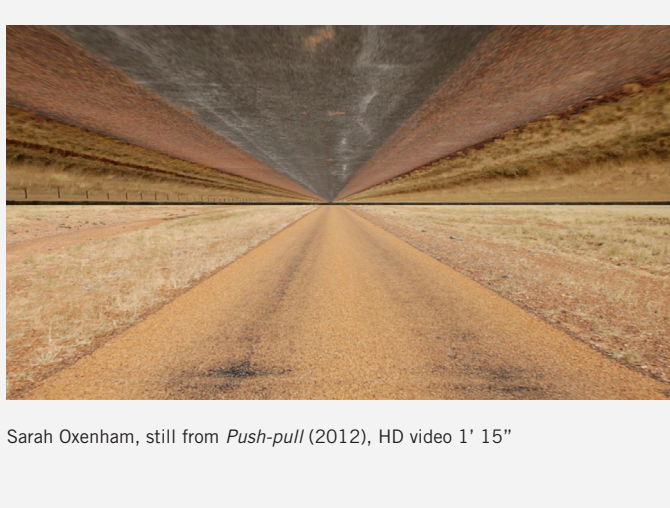


Matt Dabrowski and the Many Hands of Glamour, still from *Dirty Dancing Crystal Grinder Remix* 2011, video 21'

## ★ Matt Dabrowski

**Dirty Dancing Crystal Grinder Remix is a surreal, trance-like and hypnotic work. Sensuous dancing scenes from the popular film "Dirty Dancing" (1987) are cut together, looped and inverted to evoke an other-worldly feeling.** The rhythmic soundtrack of an ocean swell with occasional excerpts of fifties beat poetry, further enhance a sensuous and almost cosmic sense of connectedness. Matt Dabrowski's work swirls and pulses with life and libidinal energy, beyond or perhaps before any defined

order. Rather, the work gives itself to another logic almost unconsciously and we, the viewers, are invited to do the same. On some level there may be irony and humour in this work, certainly a self-awareness, but ultimately the intent is not to expose the sinister or the stereotypical, but to genuinely see things differently, to turn the world upside-down and move to another rhythm. Dabrowski's work attests to the power of art to denature our sensibilities and lead us into a deeper perceptive experience.



Sarah Oxenham, still from *Push-pull* (2012), HD video 1' 15"

## ★ Sarah Oxenham

**Sarah Oxenham's recent video works are a meditation on the notion of 'slow time'. Oxenham's aim is to question society's obsessive relationship with time—with as many tasks as possible being squeezed into less time with every adrenalin filled moment rendered 'productive'.** In response to this behavioural urgency she has created video works that are an immersive interplay between still and moving imagery. The intention of these works is to create a space to slow down and to contemplate without time limits and anxiety. The subjects of Oxenham's studies are simple everyday objects or experiences such as balloons and occasionally she uses

no-tech abstraction devices to provide a curious and different way of seeing. The out of focus slow filling of breath into an expanding balloon in *Time Study No.3*—even in seeking a calm mediation on breath—has the faintest side effect of anxiety. The subject matter of *Push-pull* is an inner Queensland roadtrip—an escape of the urban in pursuit of infinity. The effect created by the moving road stretching below and above us is strangely nauseating and maybe a little *Mad Max*. The still emotion captured in these works is a fitting metaphor for a state that is bracing itself for another cultural annihilation.

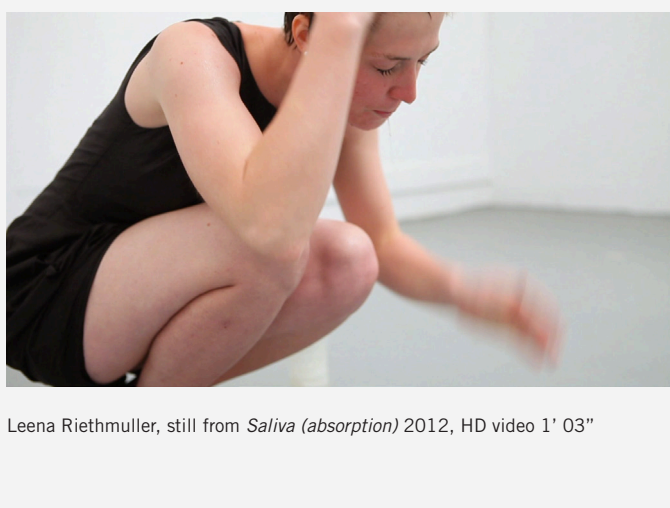


Liam O'Brien, still from *Untitled (Clean Skin)* 2012, HD video 2' 03"

## ★ Liam O'Brien

**Liam O'Brien's videos take form as performative or behavioural studies. Some works are interventions into public space, and others are repetitive bodily assaults. The central focus of O'Brien's practice questions on work and control and is anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian in its stance.** O'Brien's own body is at the core of his studies—sometimes nearly ripped in two by the extremities of his actions or pushed to vomiting a shot after shot of alcohol. *Clean Skin* is part of a series of works that utilise potentially harmful repetitions inflicted on O'Brien's body to isolate and emphasise everyday occurrences. In his work O'Brien stands with his feet together and one after another, beer bottle after beer bottle is dropped onto his bare feet. While this action is not as revolting or violent as others

in O'Brien's repertoire—it does cause apprehension. The study in *Clean Skin* is a repeated accident. The nature of an accident is that it is unintentional where control is lost for an instant often with unfortunate consequences. A dropped and smashed beer is not consumed but 'wasted', as is the opportunity to 'get smashed'. By making a ritual of accident—as an engagement with chance—O'Brien questions the underlying purpose of controlled behaviour. The intentional repetition or practise of a 'mistake' dissolves the concept of controlled perfection, opening up unpredictable and unexperienced discoveries. The resulting wounds are less of a problem than expecting that controlled behaviour will protect us from this supposedly undesirable uncertainty.



Leena Riethmuller, still from *Saliva (absorption)* 2012, HD video 1' 03"

## ★ Leena Riethmuller

**In Saliva (absorption) the artist grooms herself from a large puddle of her own saliva. Hovering between the redemptive and the disgusting, this private performance calls to mind the adage 'licking one's wounds'.** We are given a carefully edited glimpse into an event which must have taken much longer—how long does it take to make a puddle that large of one's own saliva; what are the ritualistic dimensions behind the act of grooming; when is a point of satisfaction reached? The artwork poses

rather than answers or illustrates these questions and to that extent it builds a sense of impenetrable frustration and isolation in the viewer equal to that on show in the artist. Often the purpose of private rituals is to protect the self from things (ideas, memories, relationships, alternate meanings) that it would rather not know. While *Saliva (absorption)* may, on some level, be a self-portrait, it is less about the expression of identity (the ego) than it is about the internal forces that keep identity at bay (the id).

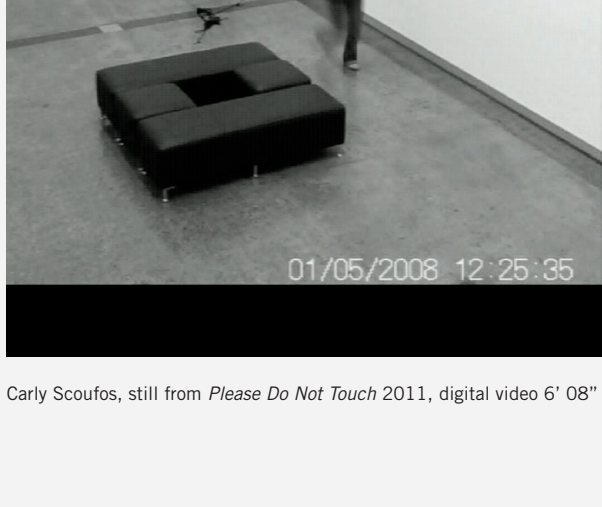


Angelica Roache-Wilson, still from *Data Mosh Portrait V* 2012, video, 4" loop

## ★ Angelica Roache-Wilson

**Angelica Roache-Wilson practises in both painting and video. Roache-Wilson's Data Mosh Portraits orchestrate the coupling of two individual consumer television bites.** Data moshing is a compression artefact often known as 'glitch art' where two different videos are interleaved so intermediate frames are interpolated producing a raw chunky pixelated effect. The talking heads, appropriated from their television contexts, are chosen to focus on the instant when the orator's gesture, movement, voice or expression is loaded with potential meaning. These seemingly random moshes, as part of remix culture, compose sharply insightful and resonant tropes. This repetition of the merging and splitting personalities reveals

the absurdity of consumer society. *Data Mosh Portrait V* merges a testosterone pumped black fighter and the soothing tones and sincere gestures of a middle-aged predictably blond tele-presenter. *Data Mosh Portrait II* again merges man and woman but this time they unite in a giddy swirl of phony seduction. *Data Mosh Portrait II* twists a hot gun-brandishing babe with a sweetly subdued Asian girl. *Data Mosh Portrait VI* fuses John Berger with another man using the same heartfelt gesture encapsulating an impassioned yearning for explanation. The smooth renditions of the hyperreal world of television are broken apart and abstracted by Roache-Wilson—creating a tension between meaning and information.



Carly Scoufos, still from *Please Do Not Touch* 2011, digital video 6' 08"

## ★ Carly Scoufos

**Carly Scoufos's artworks most often find form as woven wire sculptures as well as thread drawn wall works. References to needlework, lace making and knitting inform the single strand 'drawings' and interwoven form of her work.** *Please Do Not Touch* is a private performance work where the artist interacts with one of her thread drawn wall works. The video footage taken from the public gallery's CCTV camera. The artist in this CCTV undermines the sanctity and control of the art institution by cheekily and sneakily dismantling her own artwork. *Please Do Not Touch* questions the notion of security not only in the gallery but also in the

world. The fallacy of protection is literally unravelled—albeit by the artist herself. Scoufos shows us that while the camera watches us, there is no actual control, except that of self-censorship. Scoufos' anti-authoritarian act questions the control of the art institution and the artist's relationship with their own work once it enters the gallery mechanism. The artist's dance to and from the artwork detaching, bunching and throwing the thread ends in her turning to the surveillance camera and 'giving the finger'—the most understood gesture of disrespect. This simple act that even very simple actions in public space can be highly politically charged.

**FLEET LANE VIDEO ARTISTS PARTY**

8pm – midnight Saturday 8 December  
**8 Fleet Lane**



SPONSORED BY:

