SHAUN GLADWELL

Skateboarders v’s Minimalism
To create is to play with one’s idols
Paul Ardenne

With *Skateboarders v’s Minimalism*, Shaun Gladwell, a great sporting artist for eternity, once again confirms his idea that the only worthwhile art is art that involves the body, and on an intense level. Beyond its spectacular dimension, sport is an exercise that aims both for health and self-transcendence. We need to get our body machine working at full capacity, to exploit its full potential, to make it comfortable with its own nature. And that is precisely is what is done, in this new video, by Rodney Mullen, Hillary Thompson and Jesus Esteban, three skateboarders that Gladwell invited to come and try their talent in front of his lens. This time, though, the context is singular, unexpected and unconventional. For this time the skating is not in front of the roaring ocean, on the Pacific seashore, nor in the street or on the undulating slopes of an ordinary skate park, but in a museum.

**Acrobats and gravity**

Skateboards in the museum. The title of the work, *Skateboarders v’s Minimalism*, could hardly be more explicit. In 2015 Shaun Gladwell carefully filmed three high-flying skaters at work in the spacious galleries of the Torrance Art Museum in Los Angeles. Two men and a woman who, in front of him, went about doing what they do best, sliding and jumping on their skates. Their bounding progress invariably focused on a few obstacles that had to be avoided or jumped with a rapid movement. These were minimalist-style sculptures barring their way on the floor or in the form of a podium. These sculptures, by artists as renowned as Donald Judd and Carl Andre, who spearheaded Minimal Art in the 1960s and 70s (or rather, exact replicas of those sculptures, the originals being considered too venerable to risk damage), became components in a twofold game in this strange gymnastic partition: a physical game, in that they impeded the free movement of the skaters, and an aesthetic one, insofar as their immobile presence competed for attention with the twirling figures of the skaters.

Having done his filming, Gladwell edited it in two, not contradictory ways: as a single projection consecutively showing the three skaters in action; and in the form of a triptych, in a more resonant register that brings to mind the sacred, and particularly Christianity (the Trinity). The images, shown in slow motion, make for a hypnotically choreographic effect. This is underscored by the sound track of this singular proposition, which is both penetrating and deep, borrowing from Phillip Glass and Kasumichi Grime.

**Against passivity**

Acrobatic games are not alien to art, surprising as they might seem in such a context. Like Gladwell, other artists have invited other individuals to use movement to creative and aesthetic ends. In the 1960s GRAV (Groupe de Recherche d’Art Visuel) organised its “day in the street” (Journée dans la rue) in Paris, asking passers-by in the French capital to try various gymnastic exercises out on the street, such as striding over beams placed on the ground or walking through chromoluminescent tunnels. Then there was Fluxus, and also the Festivals of Free Expression, again in the 1960s. This principle of participation implies that the viewer is not a passive individual but, on the contrary, an actor, the intermediary
through whom the work is made actual. In the 1990s Matthew Barney became known for the rock-climbing circuits he created in exhibition spaces, especially in the famous Post-Human show curated by Jeffrey Deitch, 1992. Barney encouraged viewers to take on a very sporty sequence, to cross the exhibitions spaces as a monkey might do, going from one apparatus to another.

Behind this participative-sporting tendency there is a desire to break down barriers, a belief in the value of play. But not just that. Above all, the purpose is to shatter the sacrosanct principle of contemplation that, ever since the beginnings of art, and especially since the Renaissance, has governed the viewer’s relation to the artistic spectacle. To contemplate is to submit to the spectacle, whereas to participate is to be the spectacle. Times change, and today’s artists are reader to act as what Lygia Clark calls “propositors.” Clark herself was one of the foremost proponents of participative art: she proposed (to make work) and the viewer chose (to use the power to make, to complete the work, or not). Yoko Ono and George Brecht both went further in this relation of exchange with the viewer, even going so far as to give the latter instructions, which Ono codified. In such instances, the artist sets up an action programme whose accomplishment he does not control, any more than he can anticipate its outcome.

Shaun Gladwell
Skateboarders v’s Minimalism, 2016
Three channels HD video, 27:10 min
16:9, colour, sound
Ed. 2/3 + 2 AP’s
Commissioned by Catriona & Simon Mordant

Performers: Rodney Mullen, Hillary Thompson & Jesus Esteban
Director of Photography: Judd Overton
Editing: Greg Ferris
Shot at the Torrance Art Museum, LA

Without a doubt, and with real historical coherence, Skateboarders v’s Minimalism belongs in this participative vein: there is no art without solicitation, without physical action on the part of the viewer now invited to be the artist. The difference being that, before Gladwell, no artist had ever asked other persons to exercise their gymnastic talent in order to make the work, in relation and competition with artworks. In his Futurist Manifesto (1909), it is true, Filippo Tomaso Marinetti, who wearied of the old museums on the Italian peninsula, enjoined the viewer to smash the works they contained, or to use the paintings bequeathed by the past as ironing boards. But that has little in common with the offer shown in Skateboarders v’s Minimalism. Marinetti was looking for a new kind of viewer, trying to turn the latter into his potential ally in the revolutionary project of shaking the dust off the art system. Gladwell simply exalts action, an action made possible in all places, even the space of a museum. With Gladwell, the gesture is more important than with Marinetti. The latter provoked, the former is already engaged in a concrete action, concretely refiguring the world rather than just dreaming of something different.
Behind the innocent exterior – the beauty of the gesture – Shaun Gladwell is in fact inverting our system of references. What is important? The body, the body, the body – said three times to drive the point home; on a single screen or on three.

Those minimalist works, hitherto revered in our modern art museums, like sacred objects, shut away in their white cube like the statue of god at the heart of the temple, in his inaccessible naos, have here become the latest objects in an obstacle course where it the skill of the skaters that is important first and most of all. There is not even any competition between what, on one side, would represent the essential – art – and, on the other, the secondary – the human body. Here, the body sweeps all before it. Its movement but also its grace, its bearing but also its elegance, its dynamism but also its ability to produce the finest aesthetic poses, effortlessly assert the primacy of the living over the inert object, the value of incarnation over that of the image. And the minimalist artwork exhibited to the viewer in *Skateboarders v's Minimalism*? The truth is that it doesn’t take long to forget it, once Gladwell’s video has magnetically compelled our gaze. It doesn’t even exist as a foil to the body but has simply become part of the set. The perspective is reversed.

What is important and what is less so. In *Skateboarders v's Minimalism* Gladwell challenges our idolatrous tendencies. What is a minimalist artwork by Donald Judd or Carl Andre? Just a bit of dead and unimportant matter ready for recycling. One hardly dares imagine the artists’ reaction to this daring affront, these artists who, with their works reduced to the most basic forms and materials, had led a crowd of hypnotised admirers bleating like sheep. Poor fanatics of “objecthood,” all and all equally, obstinate partisans, as the essayist Michael Fried said, of the artwork as self-sufficient and self-referential. Unsparingly, to the slow-motion rhythm of his light and airy skaters, Gladwell shatters the tablets of the Law, destroys the Golden Calf and sends packing the modernist deification of the work as object, never mind what the herd of worshippers might say.

This inversion of the situation does us good, because it breaks the consensus. It is also a shot in the arm. It signals that the art which combines and plays with well ordered categories, genres and tastes pre-empt any risk of petrifaction, any risk of blankly and uncritically accepting the order of things or, even worse, neutrality. So move, alert bodies, skateboarders transforming our silent museums, those places of death, into noisy gymnasiuims, into skate parks. Minimal art? A relic to be thrown on the dump, an offer that has lost its value. The human body caught up in its acrobatics and its quest for absolute equilibrium and physical expression? A power, by comparison. The tabernacle of that energy with which all things human begin, including art.

*The following images are production stills of *Skateboarders v’s Minimalism*. Dimensions are variable.
SELECTION OF OTHER WORKS
Riding with Death (Redux), 1999-2011
Video still
Double Linework, 2000
Digital video, colour, sound
1:09min
Storm Sequence, 2000
Digital video
8:08 min
Breakless, Canberra #1 9/4/05 7:47am, 2005
Lambda durst print
70 x 100 cm
Photo: Josh Raymond
Pataphysical Man, 2005
Video production still
Performer: Daniel Esteve Pomares
Double Voyage, 2006
2-channel digital video, 16:9, stereo
24:05 minutes
Videography: Gotaro Uematsu
Approach to Mundi Mundi, 2007
Production still: Two-channel video, 16:9, colour, silent
Photo: Josh Raymond
Apologies 1 - 6, 2009
HD video, 16:9, stereo sound
27:10 minutes
Cinematography: Gotaro Uematsu
Double balancing act, 2009-2010
Dual-channel HD video, 16:9, colour, silent
Channel 1: 07:32 min; channel 2: 04:04 min
Colour Test: Mundi Mundi Plains (Blue), 2009
Pigment print on archival paper
162.6 x 210 cm
BMX Channel, 2013
Installation, Large-scale video projection
Utterance 2: Maximus Swept Out To Sea (Wattamolla), 2013
Digital print on archival paper, framed
154.6 x 154.6 cm
Self Portrait Spinning and Falling in Paris, 2016
Single-channel HD video, colour, silent
16:9 (installed as 4:3)
Gladwell VS Baldessari

*Supreme skateboards*

_Gladwell VS Baldessari supreme skateboards, 2016_
(Grey, Blue, Yellow)
Paint on skateboard
Unique piece
Gladwell VS Baldessari supreme skateboards, 2016
(Black, Yellow, White)
Paint on skateboard
Unique piece
Gladwell VS Baldessari supreme skateboards, 2016
(Black and Green)
Paint on skateboard
Unique piece
MACBA & SKATEBOARD
BIOGRAPHY

Shaun Gladwell is known and renowned as an artist of the body and of movement, an artist of the sovereign gesture, as analysed by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, and an artist of body memory, too, according to Simon Rees. Gladwell treats the body as an absolute, pushing it to the extreme border of life and death, as indicated by the title of one of his earliest videos, Riding with Death (Redux) (1999–2011), or in what, to date, is his most famous work, Apologies 1-6 (2007–2009), in which his journey along the roads of Australia often seems tantamount, both in the artist's eyes and in our own, to a crossing of the Styx. Shaun Gladwell is the “corpopoetic” artist par excellence: here is the body hanging between life and death, arms spread out crosswise; the body-machine, the biker body, the virtuoso body, the body as combat. All these bodies constitute an ongoing, performative creation that is driven to the point of loss of consciousness. But that loss is also acted, calculated and, consequently, under control. For, beyond movement, Gladwell is also and, above all, an artist of mastery. Of mastery of the body? Yes, but not only that. For that is the means whereby he seeks to achieve mastery of time. That is why slow motion is such a key element in his work, making him one of the great romantic artists of our day. Gladwell indeed uses filmic devices such as slow-motion and long pans to capture both tightly choreographed and improvised performances by break dancers, skateboarders, and BMX bike riders in a combination of rural and city settings in Australia, Japan, Brazil, France and Afghanistan. The resulting works, which he describes as “performative landscapes” are both rhythmic and poetic - distorting speed, gravity, space and time; exploring visual and spatial paradoxes.

In 2009, Shaun Gladwell represented Australia at the Venice Biennial and was sent to Afghanistan as the Australian Official War Artist.

Gladwell has exhibited Internationally in venues such as the Royal Academy of Arts (London), the Orange County Museum of Art (CA), KUAD Gallery (Istanbul), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), and the Museum of Lyon (France).

Gladwell’s work is included in the public collections of the Art Gallery of New South Wales (Sydney), Museum of Contemporary Art (Sydney), Museum of Contemporary Art (Tokyo), Museum of Fine Arts Houston (TX), Orange County Museum of Art (CA), Progressive Art Collection (PA), SCHUNCK (Heerlen), VideoBrasil (Brazil), Wadsworth Atheneum (CT), among many others.
After stealing the show at the Sydney Festival, *Skateboarders vs Minimalism* moved on to Europe to occupy *SOLO presentation* status at the 2016 edition of the high profile Art Brussels (22-24 April). *Skateboarders vs Minimalism* is the latest creation from internationally renowned London-based artist and UNSW Art & Design graduate, Shaun Gladwell.

What does a solo exhibition as part of Art Brussels mean in terms of status on the international art scene? Briefly — a lot. In the past few years, Brussels has increasingly established itself as a centre in Europe for practicing artists to live, galleries to operate and art sales to be made.

In fact since 2006 more than 50 new galleries have opened in Brussels, including major players from New York (Gladstone), Paris (Almine Rech and Nathalie Obadia) and Antwerp (Office Baroque). Support for local and international artists includes extensive residency programs offered by Brussels’ leading contemporary art space, WEILS (which opened in 2007) and Workspacebrussels, an organisation devoted entirely to the provision of workspaces for young and emerging artists. Further, there’s a government stipend, formulated through the taxation system, which offsets the irregular incomes of artists and encourages an influx of new creative residents, including Kendell Geers, Pierre Bismuth, Lucy McKenzie and Simon Thompson.

The relationship between creation and commerce within the city of Brussels is critical to the success of Art Brussels; being essentially a grand celebration of art and a commercial fair that attracts collectors and institutions from around the world and achieves significant sales. In 2015, in its 33rd edition, more than 190 galleries participated in the event. The first to sell were works by leading art world figures like Oliver Mosset’s *Painture* featuring a single black hoop on a white canvas and Bill Viola’s video work *Fire Martyr*, one edition of which sold for 190,000 Euros. However, the sales
of younger artists were quick and consistent, including Brent Wadden’s monochromatic mixed media pieces, Matthew Cerletty’s hyper-realistic paintings of banal subject matter, and Dlango Hernandez’s entire solo installation of sliced watermelon and pineapple. Gladwell’s *Skateboarding vs Minimalism* was exhibited among leading artists from around the world. This included seminal artists Pier Paolo Calzolari (represented by Ronchini Gallery of London), David Medalla (represented by Baró Galeria of São Paulo), Darren Almond (represented by New Art Centre of Salisbury), Sammy Baloji (represented by Galerie Imane Farès of Paris), Dinh Q. Lê (represented by Shoshana Wayne Gallery of Santa Monica), and Georges Tony Stoll (represented by Jérôme Poggi of Paris).

To have been selected for a solo show at Art Brussels 2016 each of these artists has to have been nominated by a leading gallery to showcase “an individual ambitious project”. Gladwell’s elegant *Skateboarders vs Minimalism* was presented by the Geneva based Galerie Analix Forever.

Originally created for the Torrance Art Museum in Los Angeles, California in 2015, *Skateboarders vs Minimalism* is a testament to the body, minimalist artwork and the music of Philip Glass. In it, Gladwell filmed three of his favourite skateboarders in action; American skateboard legend, Rodney Mullen – often referred to as ‘the lord of the board’; the first openly transsexual skateboarder, Hilary Thompson; and joy-to-watch 24-year-old Puerto Rican born, Jesus Esteban.

*Skateboarding vs Minimalism* is a single sequence projection over three panels showcasing Mullen, Thompson and Esteban riding around, over and on (replica) minimalist artworks by Donald Judd, Carl Andre and Dan Flavin.

In an interview with the *Australian* newspaper journalist, Ashleigh Wilson, conducted at the time the work was first presented in Los Angeles, Gladwell says “the video is a kind of fantasy I heard about a very famous skateboarder walking into a museum, looking at all those forms and going, “Wow, I’m going to skate on those. No one’s around”.”

Having traversed the globe, *Skateboarders vs Minimalism* is now up for auction in Brussels. For those not in the bidding but still wishing to catch a glimpse of three skateboarders set to a Philip Glass score in a majestic foyer of a museum, other options exist. At least one edition of the work will remain available for viewing in major art festivals and public galleries.
Shaun Gladwell talks Mad Max, skateboarding and art

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Ashleigh Wilson
Arts Editor
Sydney

Shaun Gladwell shows his skateboarding skills at Sydney’s Carriageworks. Picture: Renee Nowytarger

Of all the different kinds of skating styles — soaring above ramps or sliding down rails are some of the flashier varieties — Gladwell loves freestyle the most. It’s old-fashioned and traditional, though that doesn’t mean it’s simple. “For me, freestyle skateboarding is interesting because you don’t need anything. You don’t need a ramp, you don’t need urban objects. You just have the bare minimum of requirements: a skateboard and flat concrete.”

This is the kernel of the idea that Gladwell is bringing to the Sydney Festival. Skateboarders vs Minimalism is a video about skating and art, set to the music of Philip Glass. Gladwell considers its star to be the greatest living skateboarder: Rodney Mullen, a freestyle American skater and ballet dancer on wheels. In the video, Mullen is doing what he does best — though instead of flat concrete, he’s riding sculptures by Donald Judd, Carl Andre and Dan Flavin. Hence the title, the minimalist skater on minimalist art.

The filming took place this month inside the Torrance Art Museum in Los Angeles, where Mullen was invited to “creatively reinterpret” the sculptures with his board. And yes, the sculptures were replicas. Gladwell conceded it would be “reckless” to skate on the real things. “In a way,” he says, “the video is a kind of fantasy I heard about a very famous skateboarder walking into a museum, looking at these forms and going, ‘Wow I’m going to skate on these, no one’s around.’ ”

Gladwell has admired Mullen for years. He describes him an intellectual, a freestyle innovator and a wonderful spokesman for the sport. It made sense to Gladwell to combine the “founding father of minimal skateboarding” with these artworks. “I’m just putting these two elements together that I love and seeing what happens,” Gladwell says.
ACROSS THE BOARD

His artistic talents have taken him to Venice, London, Paris and Afghanistan, but Shaun Gladwell will never part with his skateboard, writes Ashleigh Wilson.

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I agree to take part. Once on board, he was also given a specific brief by the designer. "Don't tell anything to Rodger Mulvaney. You just look back and grin in disbelief. He's his own athlete." The video was shot and edited in Australia. On the newly opened space inside Sydney's Harbour waterfront Barangaroo development, throughout the Sydney Festival. The following month, Gladwell and his skateboard will be in Perth as part of that city's city fringe festival. Spanning and Falling in Paris will be exhibited alongside works by Carsten Höller and Jos Tassy and other artists. The event will appear in conversation with Ben Howell, another American skateboarding legend, Howell's Festival, being held in Perth, the first professional skateboarder, is in town for the 40th anniversary of the Ablesee skate park in Brookvale, New South Wales. "I'm trying, and then all of a sudden he looked around and it's a multi-dimensional thing."

When Gladwell was a young man — he grew up in the Sydney suburb of North Rocks — skateboarding was a way of life for him. It was a way for him to express himself. "I've been skateboarding since I was about 13, and I love it. It's just a way of life for me."

From cultural theorists to pop art, Duchamp to Degas, Rimbaud to Nolan, Gladwell started with skateboarding, it was his own way of life and art. He has been skateboarding for as long as he can remember. "It's a way of life for me. It's just a way of life for me."

The skateboard has a recurring subject ever since. He has been able to take his skateboardboarding all day. It's a dedication that will take shape again next year when he hosts a new video project in Sydney called "The Australian Skateboarder". Its "true Australian love letter to skateboarding".

It should be pointed out, should anyone doubt his skills that he really enjoys being on the spot in various locations across Paris and then falling to the ground. He was fighting against the wind, against the top, and every stack was different to the last.

Talk to Gladwell about this work and various associations emerge in his mind: movement, the mechanics of falling, the use of public space. Paul Virilio's observation about the seeds of destruction, how the invention of the ship was simultaneously the invention of the shipwreck. On a more immediate level, the activity in the video also looks, well, painful. Gladwell says he has more "experie..."(as 'had first come to prominence 15 years ago). storm sequence showed the artistry of the artist in the rain fell around him. The mesmerising slow-motion work was sold at auction in 2007 for $44,000, the first video to be sold on the secondary market in Australia.

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through remote Australia, that familiar imagery revealing sources such as Mad Max, Nolan and Joseph Boys. He transformed the position into his own, in the black 94 trim. The sequence was incredible, yet it was not possible to continue. The sequence was shot in a city, but without roads, while the motorcycle from Mad Max was taken into a well of the building.

The scene was set and set up. Other works among them a video called Approach to Monti, Mandal on the Royal Academy in Sydney. It was one of the signature images of the show. The exhibition itself, though, was stretched unnecessarily thin. Gladwell agrees with those who felt the idea of a specific period was instead taken on the full historical arc of Australian art. However, the Royal Academy was more or less an interpretation of another space around London, the Institute of Contemporary Art, the Whitechapel and so on.

"For a single show to try to take on that extreme, that range, it's kind of suicidal. So in a way it's kooky and it's kind of fun, but it's hard because you have to get over that history," he says. "You have an in-depth conversation about one of those periods."}

In October 2009, a few months after MAD MAX was opened, Gladwell found himself in Afghanistan on an entirely new assignment. The Australian War Memorial had commissioned him as its official war artist, making him the first Australian artist to receive the honour. The invitation was meant to encourage Gladwell to think about the "rarefied" space of the war and how it relates to the "normal" space of the artist.

The works he created included a suite of photographic works called MAD MAX (Second Point of View: Middle East Area of Operations), featuring soldiers and civilians posing with their backs to the camera, and POV:terrestrial sequence (Teris Kowd), a video where Gladwell films a soldier who films him in return.

Six years later, Gladwell is still reflecting on his thoughts as an artist about the Afghan experience. "It's the first time that I've been in an environment where I couldn't control anything," he says. "You can try to set things up, but there were so many conflicting factors. I think that was pretty intense. The fact that you're working in an environment that you just can't control. I think it's had an impact on me. Somehow you want that again but you don't want it through geopolitical crisis. You don't want it through war. You don't want to see the suffering, but you want to be challenged in that environment. So it's changed the way that I've worked in some ways for sure."

Official war artist Australia's representative in Venice A prominent spot at the Royal Academy. A distinct theme has been emerging in recent times with Gladwell's career. But if this skateboarder turned artist has come to be something of an establishment figure, he's managed to do it without the assistance of Australian art critics. This newspaper's Christopher Allen has described him as overrated, while his counterpart at The Sydney Morning Herald, John McDonald, wrote a piece in which he questioned his appeal. "Watching the increasing rise of Sharon Gladwell during the past decade makes me feel like the only testetaller at a drunken party."

Invited to respond, Gladwell is dismissive. He says he doesn't need reviews, especially by Australian critics. "It's terrible to say that," he says. "I'm just not saying it. I'm disregarding those. But what's that? I feel like I'm being a testetaller at a drunken party?"

For all his achievements, one piece that continues to stand out is his portrait of Margaret Olley in 2011. Gladwell decided to rework, even though he says the Archibald isn't really his thing. He has always been a portraitist, and sometimes considers the prospect of an exhibition devoted to portraits alone to be a challenge. He submitted a portrait of Mark Donaldson, VC, the subject of a 2011 video portrait he made for the Australian War Memorial.

His portrait was hung as one of the finalists, though the Archibald went to Nigel Milson for a painting of Sydney lawyer Charles Waterstreet. It was a popular decision. Milson had been jailed for armed robbery, and the painting was a personal tribute to the man in whom he had placed so much hope.

Another fine line is the Archibald has been loved and hated and debated in Australian art circles for nine decades. It's a "historical" portrait, Gladwell. One of the appeals for him is the way the competition at the Art Gallery of NSW highlights art and the public interest in the "people beyond the picture," the "architectural presence." It's a competition that has helped a "nug of magic or aura." to the winning work.

In his show at the Anna Schwartz Gallery, which ends today, Gladwell has collaborated with other Australian artists, including Fiona Lowery, David Boyd and Mathis Buecher. He says the occasion to collaborate, in a somewhat consensual mode, with the Australian artist Michael Deregowski, "is the right time to do that," he says. "You can have these conversations with the dead." Which quickly brings him back to the real, Nolan's Ned Kelly series, and the other artists, past and present, who fire his imagination and his conversation.

"I love that history," he says. "I think some artists have got a kind of visual relationship with art history. They don't want to divorce themselves from it, they want to execute it or whatever. But I'm definitely anti-Oedipal. I'm engaged in it. It's where I come from. I resist it."

"I pause, then continues at a slower pace: "I love it. I find it the most meaningful artists who really try to kick against it. But it's a force. No one lives on the outside of that history."
Lyn DiCiero talks to expat Shaun Gladwell, who was in Paris at the time of the Charlie Hebdo murders.

Shaun Gladwell.
Picture: Alan Pomit

Australian video artist Shaun Gladwell says it's a no-brainer to ask Northern Hemisphere artists to come to summer "paradise" for the Perth Festival next month.

"The Festival could ask any artist to consider projects away from the northern winter," says Gladwell, who splits his time between Sydney and London. "Of course they'd say yes."

Gladwell has jumped at the chance himself and is set to exhibit with Belgium's Carsten Holler, and Perth artist Jon Tarry in Face to Face at John Curtin Gallery.

Gladwell's Self Portrait Spinning and Falling in Paris, for example, literally filmed a month before the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris, now takes on new connotations. Gladwell has chosen to show the film "face to face" with I Also Live at One Infinite Loop (2011), in which he takes a white-knuckle back-seat flight with a military acrobatic pilot in a jet fighter.

"The idea of having this military jet experience shown opposite someone falling down in slow motion at major landmarks in Paris evokes a particular interpretation," he says.

His typically soundless and wordless performance films on this occasion will be linked by sound sculpture projected through empty Jerry cans in the space. The effect is a very low hum, with the sound acting as a connection between the two independent works.

For the Paris film, Gladwell initially was looking at the process of ageing, and in particular, the loss of the centre of gravity, he says.

"I was also interested in Charlie Chaplin films, where he was simulating drunkenness but then came out of those situations with the love with it for all the obvious reasons but then 9/11 happened while I was there, and the world changed. I was also in Paris when the Charlie Hebdo executions occurred, so my romanticism about the city has been shattered."

Before filming his jet-fighter experience, Gladwell specifically asked the pilot to "knock him out."

"The function of a jet fighter to kill is terrifying but I was more interested in its technology," he says. "The first time I went up in a jet fighter, I felt the pilot was being polite. I went up without a G-suit - which automatically compensates for the loss of blood in the extremities of your body. It means you do have the potential to get knocked out. Your brain doesn't get enough blood and you start to experience a dream-like state, so it was an amazing experience. It's not a new thing artistically. I was thinking of Salvador Dali wanting to paint during sleep deprivation."

Gladwell will also be in WA in another capacity: an avid skateboarder, and on/off competitor in the sport, he's thrilled and honoured to be involved in Skate, marking the 40th anniversary of the...
Snake Run in Albany. "It's a world-renowned skateboarding mecca," says Gladwell. "And the fact legendary American skater Russ Howell, who first opened the run, will be there is amazing."

Born in Sydney, Gladwell completed his studies at Sydney College of the Arts, the University of NSW and associate research at Goldsmiths College at the University of London. He represented Australia in the 2009 Venice Biennale, and travelled to Afghanistan as an official Australian war artist in the same year.

His works are held in collections such as the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Wadsworth Atheneum, US; the National Gallery of Australia and the University of WA.

He was chosen to create a filmic interpretation of one of 17 stories for The Turning by Tim Winton, broadcast on ABC in 2014.

His Approach to Mundi Mundi was the first work seen on entering the much-heralded Australia exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London in 2013. The film showed Gladwell riding a motorbike across a wide expanse near Broken Hill — close to where Mad Max was filmed.

"To get to the exhibition you walked past Piccadilly Circus to the Royal Academy," he says. "And, after coming from that chaos, someone said the work was almost like a warm fireplace of colour. Unfortunately, the overall show didn't do well critically, but I had some great feedback."

With increasingly colder days in London, Gladwell craves the warmth of Australia to salvage homesickness. He wonders at the very different upbringing his four-year-old son is experiencing.

"I want to keep throwing him in the Australian surf so he doesn't get too far away from his roots. I love London for many things — the history, the art scene, the culture, museums, and access to Europe — but I try to always have something on in Australia I can look forward to. It makes it bearable living in the cold of London, especially this time of year. So it's nice to know I'm heading back to Perth in February."

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**Face to Face** is on show at John Curtin Gallery from February 14-May 1.

**Skate: The Snake Run Project** is in Albany on February 13.
CV
SHAUN GLADWELL

1972 Born Sydney, Australia

EDUCATION

2002 Associate Research, Goldsmiths College, University of London, UK
2001 Master of Fine Art (Research), College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
1996 Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours First Class), Sydney College of the Arts, Australia

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015 The Inspector of Tides, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Sydney
The Lacrima Chair, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney
Collection+: Shaun Gladwell (SCAF Project 25), UNSW Galleries,
2014 Field Recordings, Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide, Australia.
2013 Morning of the Earth, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
Cosmos unfolding in the foot locker/hurt locker, Season Projects, London, UK
Fliegende Holländer (The Flying Dutchman), performed by the Rotterdam
Philharmonic, conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin, with video art by Shaun
Gladwell
Cycles of Radical Will, De La Warr Pavilion, UK
Shaun Gladwell: Afghanistan, Australian Embassy, Washington, USA
2012–13 Shaun Gladwell: Afghanistan, Australian War Memorial touring exhibition:
Cairns Regional Gallery; Artspace Mackay; Lismore Regional Gallery;
Queensland University of Technology Art Museum; Casula Powerhouse,
Australia; Launceston Academy Gallery, University of Tasmania, Australia
2012 Broken Dance (Beatboxed), Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
2011 Riding with Death: Redux, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Sydney, Australia
Perpetual 360° Sessions, SCHUNCK*, Heerlen, The Netherlands
Shaun Gladwell: Matrix 162, Matrix Exhibition series, Wadsworth Atheneum,
Connecticut, USA
Stereo Sequences, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne, Australia
2010 Portrait of a man: alive and spinning/Dead as a skeleton dressed as a Mountie,
Georgia Sherman Projects, Toronto, Canada
Art Feature, Art 41 Basel, Switzerland
MADDESTMAXIMVS: Planet & Stars Sequence, Institute of Modern Art,
Brisbane, Australia
Interior Linework/Interceptor Intersection, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney,
Australia
2009 Recent Photographs, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
Seven Year Linework, Spacex, Exeter, UK
MADDESTMAXIMVS: Planet & Stars Sequence, Australian Pavilion, 53rd
Venice Biennale, Italy
2008 Shaun Gladwell, University Art Gallery, University of California, San Diego
Double Voyage, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
2007 MADDESTMAXIMVS, Sherman Galleries, Sydney, Australia
In a Station of the Metro, Artspace, Sydney, Australia
2006 Shaun Gladwell, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Centre, Buffalo, NY, USA
2005 Shaun Gladwell: Various Roles, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia
MMVBREAKLESS SESSIONS, Sherman Galleries, Sydney, Australia
2004 New Balance, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA), Perth, Australia
Silent, Ambient and Harder Remixes, Sherman Galleries, Sydney, Australia
2001 Recent Projects, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France
Cycles of Radical Will, Imperial Slacks Gallery, Sydney, Australia
2000 Kickfipping Flâneur, Artspace, Sydney, Australia

FILMS

2013 Director, Family, a chapter of the feature film, The Turning, ArenaMedia,
Australia.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2016 Precarious Balance, Contemporary Art Toi Moroki, Christchurch, New Zealand
MONYET GILA: EPISODE ONE, 4A: Centre for Contemporary Asian Art,
Sydney, Australia
Face to Face, John Curtin Gallery, Perth, Australia
Skateboarders VS Minimalism, Sydney Festival, Australia
2015 You've got mail, The Vivian, Big Omaha, New Zealand
Broken Dance (Beutboxed), solo exhibition, Art Gallery of Western Australia
Face to Face, Gaite lyrique, Paris, France, 3 December 20
Archibald Prize exhibition, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Cosmic Love Wonder Lust: An Imperial Slacks Project, Sydney College of the
Arts and Campbelltown Arts Centre
Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize, Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria,
Interior and the Collectors, La Biennale de Lyon, France
Pen Pals - Unsanctioned Communications, contribution to Good Times &
Nocturnal News #3 by Shaun Gladwell, David Price and Wouter Van der Hallen,
published on the occasion of TRUST: Copenhagen Art Festival
Our Eyes, Double Square Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan
Hybride-Fragmentations, Biennale d’Arte Contemporain, Douai, France
Pre-launch of the 1st art nOmad Biennale in a Van, Palais de Tokyo Museum,
Paris,
Freies Museum in Bülowstrasse 90, Berlin-Schöneberg, Germany.
Videonale.15: Festival for Contemporary Video Art, Bonn, Germany
do it [adelaide], Samstag Museum, Adelaide,

2014
L'Oiseau Volé, Galerie Vanessa Quang, Paris, France.
Busan Biennale, South Korea.
Air Traces: Austruweel. AIR ANTWERPEN. Antwerp, Belgium.
Electricity, night time exhibition of art and light. Detroit, USA
BMX Channel. Pulse Artists Films, Glasgow (for the Commonwealth Games),
U.K.
A Moment Forever, Galerie Analix Forever, Geneve Switzerland.
The List, Campbelltown Arts Center. Campbelltown, Australia.
Great Undoing, 54th Annale curated by Branka Bencic. Annale, Porec, Croatia,
Light Moves: Contemporary Australian Video. National Gallery of Australia,
Canberra.
In the midst of the Breakers. The Collection Museum, Lincolnshire. U.K.
Conflict: Contemporary Responses to War. UQ Art Museum, Australia.
RE:VISION, Trish Clark Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand.
The Wandering: Moving Images from the MCA Collection, Rockhampton Art
Gallery. Australia
BMX Channel, Mark Moore Gallery, California, USA
Motopoétique, Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art, France
Slide (Surf and Skate), Museu de Arte do Rio, Brazil
Surf-Shaping Taranaki, Puke Ariki, New Plymouth, New Zealand
On Dry Land, Negev Museum of Art, Israel
Building: Misbehaving the City, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, USA

New to Video, Newcastle Art Gallery, Australia.

2013
Quand l'art prend la Ville (When Art Takes the City), Defacto, La Defense,
France
SCAPE 7, Public Art Christchurch Biennial, New Zealand
Australia, Royal Academy, London, UK

*Pagyeong: Performances of Video Art,* presented by EXiS (Experimental Film and Video Festival in Seoul) and Alternative Space LOOP, Korean Film Archive and Media Theater i-Gong, Seoul, Korea

*California-Pacific Triennial,* curated by Dan Cameron, Orange County Museum, California, USA

*Camouflage Cultures: Surveillance, Communities, Aesthetics & Animals,* Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney, Australia

Group show, KUAD Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey

*Easy Living,* Kunstvereniging Diepenheim, The Netherlands

*Insportsration,* Project Fulfill Art Space, Taipei, Taiwan

*The Last Wave,* curated by Richard Leydier, La Friche la Belle de Mai, Marseille, France

*Video Forever,* curated by Barbara Polla, touring exhibition, Gallery Magda Danysz, Paris; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Museum of Lyon, Lyon; France

*Poetic Ironic,* curated by Ferhat Özgür, CDA Projects and Moiz Zilberman Gallery, Istanbul

*The Mind,* curated by Ihor Holubizky, McMaster University Art Gallery, Hamilton, Canada

*Walking Sideways,* Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, UK

2012–2013  *Passing Time,* touring exhibition, Cecile and Ezra Zilkha Gallery, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut; Robert E. Peeler Art Center, De Pauw University, Greencastle, Indiana; Salina Art Center, Salina, Kansas; Bakalar and Paine Galleries, MassArt, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

2012  *The Floating Eye,* City Pavilions Project (Sydney), 9th Shanghai Biennale, China

*C.O.R.W.,* screening, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia

*Between Form and Movements,* Galleria Enrico Astuni, Bologna, Italy

*Video/Choreo,* University of Hawaii Art Gallery, Honolulu, USA

*Beyond Likeness: Contemporary Portraits,* Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, University of Western Australia

*On Apology,* Wattis Institute, San Francisco, USA

*PARALLEL COLLISIONS: 2012 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art,* Art Gallery of South Australia

*Curator's Egg Altera Pars,* Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London, UK

*SHOW TIME: Choreography in Contemporary Art,* glHoltegaard, Copenhagen, Denmark

*Drawn to the Line – Peter Fay Collection,* Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, Australia

*The Power of Doubt,* curated by Hou Hanru, Guangdong Times Museum, China

2011  *Meditation, Trance,* Mendes Wood, Sao Paulo, Brazil

*Southern Panoramas,* 17th International Contemporary Art Festival SESC_Videobrasil, Sao Paulo, Brazil
CITIES: visionary places, Torrance Art Museum, Los Angeles, USA
Art Platform, Los Angeles, USA
The Power of Doubt, curated by Hou Hanru, Museo Colecciones ICO, Madrid, Spain
Höhenrausch 2, Luftsprüinge & Wasserspiele / Leaping in the Air & Making a Big Splash, OK Centre, Linz, Austria.
Paradise Lost, Istanbul Museum of Art, Turkey
The Armory Show, Anna Schwartz Gallery, New York, USA
Unleashed: The Rise of Australian Street Art, Redcliffe Gallery, Queensland, Australia
South by Southeast: Australasian Video Art, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Japan
Hors Pistes, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
The 'scape' in Escape, Netwerk/centrum voor hedendaagse kunst, Aalst, Belgium

2010
Cairo Biennial, Egypt
Creative Time Summit, Cooper Union, New York, USA
Street and Studio. From Basquiat to Séripop, Kunsthalle Wien, Austria
Adaptation, Power Plant, Toronto, Canada
Cars & Bikes, Galerie Analix Forever, Geneva, Switzerland
ABBARACADABARA, The First Mardin Biennial, Turkey
TWMA Contemporary 2010, TarraWarra Museum of Art, Victoria, Australia
Manimal, Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, Israel
The Rise of Rad – The Influence of the Urethane Revolution, Torrance Art Museum, California, USA
Fully Booked, Arts Project Australia, Melbourne, Australia
Reflection, DNA Galerie, Berlin, Germany
Remote Viewing, Arts Santa Monica, Barcelona, Spain
The Armory Show, Anna Schwartz Gallery, New York, USA

2009
ERROR #14: Into the Light, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp, Belgium
The Best of Loop: Remote Viewing. Taking the Pulse of the Next Generation of Video and Film Art, curated by Paul Young, Paci&c Design Centre, Los Angeles, USA
What I think about when I think about dancing, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney
Modern Physics, Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts, New Zealand
INTO THE LIGHT 2009, KMS', Leopold De Waelplaats, Antwerpen, MuH', Leuvenstraat 32, Antwerpen
FLUX-S, Strijp-S, Eindhoven, "e Netherlands
Video Swell, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
The Thrill of the Heights, OK Centre, Linz, Austria
Nam Bang!, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney
RISING TIDE: Film and Video Works from the MCA Collection, Sydney, curated by Dr Stephanie Hanor and Rachel Kent, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, USA.

CODE SHARE: 5 continents, 10 biennales, 20 artists, curated by Simon Rees, Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius (CAC), Lithuania

Illegitimate, curated by Fernando Oliva, Museum of Image and Sound, Sao Paulo, Brazil

Artissima, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Turin, Italy

Figuring Landscapes, touring, ArtSway, New Forest; Tate Modern, London; Showroom, Sheffield; Chapter Arts, Cardiff; Brighton Cinematheque; Bureau, Salford; Dundee Contemporary Arts; Vivid, Birmingham; Hull Short Film Festival; FACT Liverpool; Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane.

Taipei Biennial, curated by Man Ray Hsu & Vasif Kortun, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan

Wandering, curated by Sean Hu, Taipei, Taiwan

Beck's Fusions, Caul&eld Park, Manchester, UK

Revolutions – forms that turn, 2008 Biennale of Sydney, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Australia

URB08, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art Tenth-Anniversary program, Helsinki, Finland

Summer Exhibition, Gallery 8, curated by Tracey Emin, Royal Academy of Art, London

Zombie Surfers, curated by Richard Priestly, cell project space, London, UK

Australian!, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney, Australia

Screenings, Artist as Performer: Part II, Haunch of Venison, London

Biennale Cuvée, OK Center, Linz, Austria

Space for Your Future, curated by Yuko Hasegawa, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo

2007

Living the City, curator Jan Schuijiren, Platform 21, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

SHIFT: festival for electronic arts, Shaulager, Basel, Switzerland

Southern Panoramas, 16th International Electronic Art Festival, VIDEOB)SIL, Sao Paulo, Brazil

Bicycle Club, curator Magda Kardasz, Kordegarda Gallery, Zacheta National Gallery, Warsaw, Poland

The Hague Sculpture 2007: DE OVER'NT / DOWN UNDER, Den Haag, The Netherlands

Flâneur, Raid Projects, Los Angeles

Think with the senses, feel with the mind – art in the present tense, 52nd International Art Exhibition, curator Robert Storr, La Biennale di Venezia, Italy

Como Vivir Juntos, Selección 27a, Bienal de São Paulo, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago, Chile

MUTE: Storm Sequence, curators Lina Selander and Marianne Zamecznik, Bastard, Oslo, Norway
Les Rencontres Internationales, Babylon Movie "eatre, Berlin, Germany
Collezione #2, curator Stephen Hepworth, Brancolini Grimaldi Arte
Contemporanea, Rome, Italy
Streetworks: Inside Outside Yokohama, curator David Broker, Asialink Touring
Project, Chulalongkorn Art Centre, Bangkok, Thailand; Valentine Willies,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Substation, Singapore
2006–07 Wave Front: Australian Contemporary Art Scene, Tokyo Wonder Site, Shibuya,
Tokyo, Japan
2006 Les Rencontres Internationales, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
Experimenta Vanishing Point, touring to Contemporary Art Services TAS;
Devonport Regional Gallery, TAS;
Newcastle Region Art Gallery, NSW; "e Bakery, Perth, WA; Art Gallery of South
Australia, Adelaide;
Ipswich Art Gallery, QLD
27th Bienal de São Paulo: How to Live Together, São Paulo, Brazil
Busan Biennale 2006: Everywhere, Busan Museum of Modern Art, Busan, South
Korea
Experimenta: Under the Radar, touring exhibition, Institute of Contemporary
Art, London, UK, and Foundation for Art and Creative Technology, Liverpool,
United Kingdom
Where Angels Tread, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia (CACSA),
Adelaide
Play: Portraiture + Performance in Video Art &om Australia + New Zealand,
Adam Art Gallery Te Pataka Toi, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington,
New Zealand
Plus Factors, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Melbourne
Tunnel Vision, Greed and Stupidity: Artists, Cartoonists and Planners Review
Concrete Politics in Sydney, The Cross Art Projects, Sydney
High Tide: New Currents in Art &om Australia and New Zealand, Zacheta
National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland; Contemporary Art Centre (CAC),
Vilnius, Lithuania
Family First, The Physics Room, Christchurch, New Zealand
Devonport Regional Gallery, Tasmania
2005 Shaun Gladwell: Storm Sequence, Milton Keynes Gallery, UK
Yokohama 2005 International Triennial of Contemporary Art: Art Circus
(Jumping &om the Ordinary), Yokohama, Japan
MCA Collection: New Acquisitions in Context, Museum of Contemporary Art,
Sydney
C-town Bling, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney
Art Connexions, Goethe Institut exhibition, touring to Kuala Lumpur, Manila,
Sydney, Jakarta, Hanoi and Melbourne
Space Invaders, Museum Kunsthaus Baselland, Basel, Switzerland
New Acquisitions, Gove$-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, NZ
Breathing Space, The Physics Room, Contemporary Art Project Space, Christchurch, NZ
Third International Film and Video Festival, Museum of New Art, Detroit, US
Not Worried: New Australian Art, LA Raid Projects Gallery, Los Angeles, US
Vacation: Projection Series 7, Gove$-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, NZ
Anne Landa Art Award, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
2004-05
Various Rolls, PARK4DTV, Amsterdam (television broadcast)
RESFEST 2004, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Dendy Opera Quays, Sydney
One Of: Festivus 04, Sherman Galleries, Sydney
Shaun Gladwell: Hikaru Sequence, Michael Le$ Gallery, Auckland, NZ
Terra Alterius: The Land of Another, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney
Gridlock: Cities, structures, spaces, Gove$-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, NZ
re: source, Gallery 6, Art in General, New York, NY
Flicker, Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City, New York, NY
Surrealestate, YYY Artists’ outlet, Toronto, Canada
I thought I knew but I was wrong: New Video Art &om Australia, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts Gallery, Singapore; Jamjuree Gallery, Chulalongkom University, Bangkok, Thailand; Beijing Millennium Monument, Beijing, China; Ssamzie Space, Seoul, South Korea
2004: Australian Culture Now, Australian Centre for the Moving Image and "e Ian Po$er Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne
City Views, Museum of Brisbane, Brisbane
Interlace, Performance Space, Sydney, and Contemporary Art Services, Hobart, TAS
Shaun Gladwell: Storm Sequence, Newcastle Region Art Gallery; 24Hr Art, Darwin
MIX-ED: Diverse Practice and Geography, Sherman Galleries, Sydney
Muppet Talent Time, Espace SD, Beirut, Lebanon
JJ Allin breaks the window, InSight Gallery, Hobart
Beam Me Up, ANU School of Art Gallery, Canberra
Concrete 000 – Shaun Gladwell and TV Moore, Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide
Suburban Edge, Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney
Disappearance, X-ray Contemporary Art Museum, Beijing, China
outTakeout, The Physics Room, Christchurch, NZ
Work Rest Play (Escape), Imperial Slacks Collaborative Project, Artspace, Sydney
Do Not Tumble Dry, BIN5 Gallery, Sydney
2003  
2003: The Year in Art, S.H. Ervin Gallery, National Trust Centre, Sydney
Exhibit 001, Ols&Co Gallery, London, UK
Home Sweet Home: Works from the Peter Fay Collection, National Gallery of
Australia, Canberra
Sport, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney
Primavera: Exhibition of Young Australian Artists, Museum of Contemporary
Art, Sydney
Balance of Power, LA Raid Projects, Los Angeles, US
Chewing the Fat, Phatspace, Sydney
Project Video Art catalogue #4, TBC Gallery, Melbourne
Picturing Paradise, Mori Gallery, Sydney

2002  
Portobello Film Festival, Westbourne Studios, London, UK
Festivus, Sherman Galleries, Sydney
RCA Secret, Royal College of Art, London, UK
Thee Mind is a Horse, Bloomberg Space, London, UK
Still Time, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne
Randomize Video Festival, Sovi Art Centre, London, touring exhibition
Video Program, Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Octopus 3, Gertrude Contemporary Art Space, Melbourne
Positive Overkill, Imperial Slacks Gallery, Sydney
Serial Sevens, Imperial Slacks Gallery, Sydney
Godzilla vs Skateboarders, Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina, Canada; Art Gallery of
Southwestern Manitoba, Canada

2001  
Compressions/Covers, Boutwell Draper Gallery, Sydney
New Releases, Gallery 4A, Asia-Australia Arts Centre, Sydney
Imperial Alliance, Imperial Slacks Gallery, Sydney
Period, Blau Grau, Sydney
Serial Sevens, Imperial Slacks Gallery, Sydney

2000  
Desire, Sir Hermann Black Gallery, University of Sydney, Sydney
Australian Painters at the Millennium, Imperial Slacks Gallery, Sydney
Not Quite Right, Grey MaSer, Glebe, Sydney
SKULLS R US, with David Griggs, Lisa Salmon and Emma Price, 370 Bourke
Street, Surry Hills, Sydney
An Appointment with Reality, Sir Hermann Black Gallery, University of Sydney,
Sydney

1999  
Works on Paper, Exchange exhibition, "e Academy of Fine Arts, Ljubljana,
Slovenia
Helen Lempreiere Travelling Art Scholarship exhibition, Artspace, Sydney

1998  
Indahause, Herringbone Gallery, Sydney
Helen Lempreiere Travelling Art Scholarship exhibition, Artspace, Sydney
Loud, National Media Festival of Youth Culture and "e Arts

1997  
Hatched, Healthway National Graduate Show, Institute of Contemporary Art,
Perth
Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship Exhibition, Artspace, Sydney
Resisting Blackmail, Kinesis, Leichhardt, Sydney
NSW Travelling Art Scholarship, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney

FILM FESTIVALS

2014  Future Projections program, Toronto International Film Festival.
      Berlinale, Berlin Film Festival, The Turning (ArenaMedia, 2013)
2013  Melbourne International Film Festival, The Turning (ArenaMedia, 2013)

AWARDS, RESIDENCIES, COMMISSIONS

2014  Shirley Hannan National portrait Award, Australia.
      Commission for the inaugural Keir Choreographic Award.
      Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Photography Award, Gold Coast City Gallery, Australia
2012  New Work Grant, Australia Council for the Arts
2010  AIR Antwerpen, residency
      New Work Grant, Australia Council for the Arts
2007  Australian Film Commission, travel grant to a$end VideoBrasil
2006  Tokyo Wonder Site, residency, Shibuya, Tokyo
      Fellowship, Australia Council for the Arts
2005  Experimenta 'New Visions' Commission for emerging artists
      Woolloomooloo Night, commissioned for the Anne Landa Art Award, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
2002  Australia Council for the Arts, New Work Grant
      National Association for the Visual Arts, Pat Corrigan Artists' Grant
      National Association for the Visual Arts, Marketing Grant Scheme for NSW Artists
      Liverpool City Art Prize, First Prize for work under $1000
2001–02  Anne & Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship
2000  Australia Council Development Grant and Residency, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris
      Awarded University of New South Wales Union Art Competition (First place, two-dimensional category)
1997  Awarded Willoughby City Art Prize (First place, student category)
      Studio Residency, Artspace, Sydney
Australian Postgraduate Award, University of New South Wales
1996 Awarded Sydney University Art Competition (First place), Sir Hermann Black Gallery, University of Sydney

COLLECTIONS

National Gallery of Australia
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia
Artbank, Australia
Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, Australia
The City of Sydney, Australia
Macquarie Bank
University of Technology, Sydney, Australia
The University of Sydney, Australia
University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
Art Gallery of South Australia
Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand
Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan
SCHUNCK, Heerlen, The Netherlands
The Progressive Art Collection, USA
VideoBrasil, Brazil
JUT Foundation For Arts and Architecture, Taiwan
Wadsworth Atheneum, USA
Orange County Museum of Art, USA
San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art.
Corporate and private collections in Australia, Asia, the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States
Houston Museum of Fine Arts.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2014
Going Back To Campbelltown, Sammy Preston. Broadsheet, August:
design/shaun-gladwell-skates-into-campbelltown-arts-centre-with-new-video-20140805-zyj2q.html

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The Lacrima Chair
La Chaise Lacrima

Collection+
Shaun Gladwell

Sherman
Contemporary
Art
Foundation
Doppelgänger

Barbara Polla
Professor of Critical and Creative Writing
Haute École d’Art et de Design Genève

Originally written in French, this essay is an edited version of the English translation.

Shaun Gladwell is an artist who deals with the body and with movement; an artist whose work embodies the supreme gesture, as Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev stresses in her analysis of his œuvre.1 In addition, according to Simon Rees, he sensitively deals with the body’s memory.2 Gladwell’s is an ‘absolute’ body that he likes to push to and make manifest at the extreme limit between life and death. In the title of one of his very first videos, Riding with Death (Redux). 1999–2011, and in his celebrated video Apologies 1–6, 2007–09, the body on the brink makes its appearance. Crossing Australia by road suddenly becomes, in the eyes of both the artist and his audience, the equivalent of crossing the River Styx.

Gladwell, the archetypal body poet, uses leitmotifs such as a body hanging, sometimes with arms crossed, a body suspended between life and death. The body appears in multifaceted incarnations: a machine body; a body-bike; a virtuoso body; a combat body. Each of these variations, identified by Paul Ardenne in his essay on the poetics of the body, form an endless performative creation, which Gladwell sometimes takes to the point of losing consciousness. Gladwell, however, is never out of control. Loss of consciousness is merely enacted, always carefully assessed, calibrated, controlled and mastered.

Even beyond movement, Gladwell, as an artist, is above all concerned with mastery. Through mastery of the body, he seeks to achieve mastery of time. To that end, slow motion is an essential element in Gladwell’s work.

Oui, Shaun Gladwell est un artiste du corps et du mouvement. Shaun Gladwell, artiste du geste souverain, sur lequel se concentre l’analyse de Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev1 ; artiste de la mémoire du corps, aussi, selon Simon Rees2. Un corps « absolu » que Gladwell aime à pousser et à nous exposer à la limite extrême de la vie et de la mort, comme en témoignait déjà le titre de l’une de ses toutes premières vidéos, Riding with Death (Redux) (1999-2011), ou celle qui fut, à ce jour, la plus célèbrée, Apologies 1-6 (2007-09), dans laquelle la traversée des routes australiennes équivaut soudain, aux yeux de l’artiste et aux nôtres, à la traversée du Styx.

Shaun Gladwell, artiste corporel par excellence : le corps suspendu entre vie et mort, les bras en croix ; le corps machine, le corps mécanique, le corps virtuoso ; le corps combat ; tous ces corps possibles que Paul Ardenne unit dans la poétique du corps, création constante et performative qui se veut aller jusqu’à la perte de conscience, intensément vécue, désirée, recherchée. Une perte jouée, calculée et donc, maîtrisée.

Car, au-delà même du mouvement, Shaun Gladwell est aussi et surtout un artiste de la maîtrise. De la maîtrise du corps ? Certes, mais pas seulement : par son intermédiaire, Shaun Gladwell cherche avant tout à constituer une maîtrise du temps. Et pour ce faire, le ralentissement apparaît dans le travail de Shaun Gladwell comme un élément essentiel, qui place d’emblée l’artiste parmi les grands romantiques d’aujourd’hui.
The artist stands today among the great romantics of the era.

And so, endlessly driven towards new shores,
Swept away into eternal darkness, forever,
Will we never be able to cast anchor
Over the ocean of ages,
For even a single day?

The rising tide heard, and the voice I hold dearest
Dropped these words:

’O time! Stop flying, and you, happy hours!
Stop flowing by:
Allow us to savour the swift delights
Of these, the best days of our lives!

Alphonse de Lamartine³

Movement, doubling and immobility

Controlling time, stopping and stilling the flow — not completely, but almost — is undoubtedly one of Gladwell’s great obsessions. A fundamental duality occurs whether Gladwell is mobile or fixed. As an occupant of two indissociable states, he becomes a doppelgänger, a being who remains split in two, going about his business yet observing his actions simultaneously. Study in Balance and Stillness, 2014, demonstrates how mastering movement creates a momentary lull, producing a lapse beyond time. The body moves, yet time is suspended.

Gladwell has the ability to see himself as an object even when he is clearly the subject, and a narcissistic, self-regarding subject at that, of his performed gestures. Narcissus observed himself closely, as all performers do: in Gladwell’s case, the subject-object performs on skateboard, on motorbike and, in his current work, in planes. While Gladwell the object is in motion, Gladwell the subject looks at himself, from afar, from above, slowing down the movement of the frenzied object so as to observe ever more closely and enjoy the sight. Gladwell mirrors, studies, analyses, monitors and recovers himself. He
is an iconophile doppelgänger since, by definition, the

doppelgänger sees himself as a mirrored image.

The doppelgänger, the soul's shadow, captures the

essence of romanticism and has led the artist to revisit, via

his personal visual idiom, Caspar David Friedrich's famous

painting, *The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*, c. 1818. In

the course of his performances (as Lazarus or as FA18),

Gladwell pursues a desired loss of consciousness in order

to make place for the Other, the mirrored self. While the

world visibly goes on turning, stillness, as in *I Also Live at

One Infinite Loop*, 2011, loss of consciousness and recourse
to the Other, serve as a foretaste of death. As Gladwell

says, 'I am me and myself and me and the other; me in my

body and me in the world. It's about duality, complexity,

schizophrenia and (dis)integration.'

The double according to Guiomar

Quite a few other dualities or oxymorons appear in Shaun

Gladwell's work apart from those involving movement and

stillness, speed and fixity, flow and interruption. Beyond

the fundamental double, the mask (the helmet), water,

dead and even the music of Wagner appear as leitmotifs.

In 2013, Shaun Gladwell was commissioned by Yannick

Nézet-Séguin, Director of the Rotterdam Opera House,
to create a time-based artwork for a single performance

of *The Flying Dutchman*. As interpreted by Gladwell, this

production of *The Flying Dutchman* owes much to Bill

Viola's vision, particularly in terms of the omnipresence of

water. However, other signature features define Gladwell's

(neo)romanticism: images of nature act as cleverly

constructed echoes to the music; the device of the reversal

(such as the inversion of water and air); and use of the

helmet, which masks man's fragility and seeks to bind body

and mind together. For Gladwell, the helmet is essential,

protecting the heads of bike riders and warriors, and he

even extends the trope to birds and the Flying Dutchman.

The helmet protects the very seat of thought: the mind, the

mind that sees, thinks and controls the body's functions

and movement. Mind is another word for soul. The soul

deserves protection too ... Once these helmets have been

emptied of their 'essential substance', plants are put in

them and they flower (Vase, 2014).
Interestingly, Shaun Gladwell claims romanticism as more of a work tool than a way of being. Romanticism serves him theoretically; he wields its essence like a weapon – like a camera – rather than being submerged in its emotionality. He films the ocean he surfs on so as not to be swallowed and be made to disappear. And in his work he uses different dimensions of the double as creative approaches as defined by French philosopher, Michel Guéroult. Guéroult, in his study Prinçipe d’une esthétique de la mort, defined three different forms of the double: the physical, the psychological and the emotional. Guéroult was also interested in the relationship between the double and the romantic soul and trained his analytical skills on Wagner, whose work he loved.

The physical double: like a bird
According to Guéroult, the physical double is a ‘spitting image’: tangibly identical; nonetheless it has an inner life of its own, most often one inconsistent with the subject. ‘December Night’, Alfred de Musset’s poem of 1835, says it all:

When I was a schoolboy,
... A poor boy dressed in black
Would come and sit at my table,
So like me he was like a brother.

Wherever my feet fell,
A poor soul dressed in black
Would come and sit on my path,
So like me he was like a brother.

Being hallucinatory, the physical double reveals the subject’s tendency to dissociate.

For Gladwell, this physical, aesthetic and conceptual double is a bird, a bird so like him that the brother image is revealed. (His biological brother turns out to be an emotional double and appears in a number of works in the exhibition.) The intimate self-portrait, in which the young Shaun Gladwell has his eyes riveted on his interlocutor, a kalaop bird perched on his forearm (Untitled (Malaysia), 2007), reveals the hidden double in each one of us.
Le double psychique
Si, pour Gladwell, Poiseau est un double physique, il est aussi, par l’intermédiaire de Nancy Bird, un double psychique — ce double psychique qui n’apparaît pas comme un sosie mais comme un personnage familier, apparenté, de par son rôle et ses dispositions psychologiques. Nancy Bird, aviatrice de la première heure, qui ne s’appelle pas « Bird » par hasard, est le modèle même de la source d’inspiration que représente pour l’artiste son double psychique. De Nancy Bird, Gladwell dira : « Mrs. Bird is always flying. She is mother bird and nothing would happen without her. She is a curator and is very tough on my work. » C’est en mémoire et en l’honneur de Nancy Bird que Shaun Gladwell crée La Chaise Lacrima (2015) une installation complexe dans laquelle l’aviatrice apparaîtra sous les traits et dans le corps de la danseuse Kathryn Puhe — la Scéna du Vaissseau Fantôme de Gladwell.

D’autres doubles psychiques sont, pour Shaun Gladwell, le « Hollandsia Volant » du Vaissseau fantôme, créature double et extrême, entre terre et ciel, ou encore l’artiste Stelarc (alias Stelios Arcadiou, 1946), connu pour ses performances dans lesquelles il mêle le corps biologique à des composants électroniques ou robotiques, suivant le principe l’extension du corps humain, indissociable selon lui, comme selon Gladwell, à la réalisation de l’homme. Le second ne s’est-il pas photographié avec le bras du premier (bras sur lequel est greffé une oreille supplémentaire) sous le titre, encore, de « Portrait with Stelarc » (2014).

Mais les doubles psychiques, tels Stelarc, le « Hollandsia Volant », Nancy Bird, sont, chez Gladwell, avant tout des prétextes qui vont progressivement s’effacer de sa vie et c’est bien ainsi que Guiomar définit les doubles psychiques : une fois qu’ils ont accompli leur rôle (en l’occurrence, d’inspiration), qu’ils disparaissent !

Le double affectif
Personne de substitution, de transfert, de représentation de tout un pan plus ou moins occulté de soi-même, le double affectif, particulièrement présent dans la tragédie grecque ou d’inspiration grecque (Alcèste et Admete chez Euripide, Iphigénie et Éthipile chez Racine…) participe, quand à lui, de l’équilibre profond et durable de l’être.

Pour Shaun Gladwell, le double psychique, en premier lieu son frère aîné, aujourd’hui atteint de
drama inspired by it (Alcest and Admet in Euripides, and Iphigenia and Erphile in Racine). This echoing concept remains strongly bound up with the deep and abiding equilibrium of the individual.

For Gladwell, the emotional double, first and foremost his older brother, now suffering from fragmentation of the phrenos, is sometimes deliberately confused with the father. In the feature film The Turning (2013), Gladwell directed a commissioned segment, Family, where the lead is an athlete who withdraws from an event he has entered. Playing opposite him is a tuteur ‘figure’ representing either disapproval or consolation. A figure of Gladwell’s older brother or of his father? Doubt lingers, even after the older brother disappears, covered in blood. Gladwell’s genius resides in this capacity for detachment. Even when physically involved – as a motorcyclist at the war front, or as Narcissus actively claimed – his works tell us more about ourselves than about him. This capacity is fully revealed in the short film, The Archer, 2014, which is a simplified, refined version of Family.

Let’s now get back to the brother. Taking a childhood photograph that shows Gladwell and his brother sitting at a table, each with their glass, a plate for the brother and a toy reminiscent of Star Trek, the artist continues to reproduce the setting of the initial photograph but at different stages of his life. This work, called Parallel Warp Speed, is sometimes subtitled A Work in Progress (1977, 1995, 2010). Time follows its course; ‘warp speed’ refers to the speed with which time flies for the two boys who have grown up and become men. Gladwell has chosen once again to make art that suspends time. In the Collection: Shaun Gladwell exhibition, for the first time, he introduces a four-handed work made with his brother, his double.

The double in a terrible state
The titles of Gladwell’s works – Double Linework, 2000, Double Voyage, 2006, Double Field/Viewfinder (Tarin Kowz), 2009–10 and Double Balancing Act, 2010 – all underscore the omnipresence of the double. In Double Voyage, the double is split in two and the reversal device is maximised: the skater has no legs and performs on the ceiling; the dancer turns out to be a man. Double Field/Viewfinder specifically explores

schizophrénie, se confond parfois avec le père. Dans le film Family (2014), une fiction réalisée par Gladwell sur la base d’une commande, on retrouve, face au personnage principal, un sportif qui abandonne une compétition pourtant engagée, une figure tutélaire de remontrance ou de consolation : figure du frère aîné ou figure du père ? Le doule plane, y compris après la disparition sanguinante de cet aîné. L’un des aspects du génie de Shaun Gladwell, cette capacité de distanciation qui fait que même lorsqu’il est physiquement engagé, comme motard, sur le terrain de la guerre ou comme Narcisse revendiqué, ses œuvres nous parlent de nous plus que de lui-même, se révèle en plein dans The Archer (2014), version simplifiée et épurée de Family.


Le double dans tous ses états

On retrouve ainsi Shaun Gladwell « Doppelgänger », sur les champs des actions militaires en Afghanistan quand il décide ne pas pouvoir filmer les actions militaires mais remet ses caméras entre
ways of tracking the enemy, reproducing their movements as an essential part of military operations.

Once again we find Gladwell operating as a doppelgänger: on the ground and in Afghanistan’s field of fire. He decides he cannot continue to film the offensive and instead hands his cameras over to soldiers (Double Field/Viewfinder). He is a doppelgänger to his son, Zeno, initiating him into motorcycling while still a toddler in nappies. A photograph from the private collection of the artist shows Zeno caught between anxiety and wonderment. Gladwell also plays a doppelgänger when he uses performers who look like young versions of him without giving them precise directions apart from the implicit one of giving their ‘all’. The performer becomes co-creator: ‘I take my work to a certain point, but then it’s completed by the performer (as is the case, most notably, in BMX Channel).’

Shaun Gladwell’s double roots: Australia and France
While a number of writers – Kit Messham-Muir, Tony Sweeney, Adrian Martin and Lisa Havilah – have underscored Gladwell’s Australianness, and while I have readily described him as the ‘flying Australian’, he insists on the profound intellectual and cultural ties he has built with France and, more specifically, with writers such as Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Jean Baudrillard and Luci Irigaray. French cultural theory and the concepts of modernism and post-modernism have, by his own account, underpinned his intellectual development and practice.

Within the framework of this double exhibition, Collection+: Shaun Gladwell and The Lacrima Chair, Gladwell has also produced his first art book, another self-portrait, this time via text alone. In collaboration with Australian philosophers Paul Patton and Denise Thwaite, Gladwell has orchestrated a double of the widely known and read Semiotext(e) series, a series that fuelled his intellectual student life. As a self-portrait, Gladwell’s Semiotext(e) takes its inspiration from Baudrillard, Foucault, Deleuze and Derrida, and essentially addresses the concepts of function, meta-function and para-function, concepts to which Gladwell has added his very own, pata-function, with this fundamental a priori: ‘Not being in your place might be being most “in your place”.’ Gladwell goes as far as imitating, in English, the style les mains des soldats (Double Field / Viewfinder) ; « Doppelgänger » avec Zeno, son fils, lorsqu’il initie celui-ci à la moto quand bien même il le tout petit porte encore des couches — Zeno dont le visage témoigne alors d’un puissant mélange d’angoisse et d’émerveillement devant l’inéluctable futur de sa condition d’homme (photographies de la collection personnelle de l’artiste) — ; « Doppelgänger » encore quand il utilise, pour ses vidéos-performances, des performeurs plus jeunes que lui, à son image, auxquels il ne transmet aucune indication précise, si ce n’est celle, implicite, de l’exigence du meilleur de soi. Et le performer alors, de devenir co-creator et de donner, en effet, le meilleur de lui-même. C’est en conscience que Gladwell procède ainsi (encore cette capacité de prise de distance en parallèle à l’engagement) : « Je conduis mon œuvre jusqu’à un certain point, mais elle est ensuite accomplie par le performer (c’est le cas, notamment, dans BMX Channel). »

Les doubles racines de Shaun Gladwell, la France et l’Australie
Alors que de nombreux auteurs, comme Kit Messham-Muir, Tony Sweeney, Adrian Martin, ou encore Lisa Havilah, soulignent l’appartenance de Shaun Gladwell à l’Australie, et que nous lui aurions-nous-mêmes volontiers attribué l’épithète d’ « Australien volant », lui-même insiste sur les liens intellectuels et culturels profonds qu’il a établis avec la France, et plus particulièrement avec des auteurs comme Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Jean Baudrillard, Luci Irigaray... ainsi qu’avec les concepts de modernisme et de post-modernisme.

Dans le cadre de sa double exposition Collection+: Shaun Gladwell et « La Chaise Lacrima », Shaun Gladwell réalise d’ailleurs son premier livre d’artistes, un livre qui représente, pour lui, un autoportrait de plus. En collaboration avec les philosophes australiens Paul Patton et Denise Thwaite, Shaun Gladwell écrit un double des livres de la série Semiotext(e)s qui ont nourri son intellect d’étudiant, un “auto-portrait” donc, plus particulièrement inspiré par Baudrillard et consacré essentiellement aux concepts de fonction, de méta-fonction et de para-fonction, concepts auxquels Gladwell ajoute le sien propre, à savoir la para-fonction, avec ceci a priori fondamental : « Hors de sa place ce qu’il y a de plus “à sa place” ». Le patrimoine de Shaun Gladwell, donc, Gladwell qui, dans ce livre, ira jusqu’à simuler le style des auteurs français qui ont publié et ont
of the French writers published in *Semiotext(e)* in the 1980s in translations often done by Australian intellectuals Paul Taylor, Paul Foss and Paul Patton – the so-called ‘3 Pauls’, since renamed the ‘4 Pauls’ as a tribute to Paul Ardenne.

**Crying in the rain**
*I've seen things you people wouldn't believe.*
*Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion.*
*I watched C-Beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhauser gate.*
*All those moments will be lost in time...*
*like tears in rain...*
*Time to die.*

Batty in Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* (1982)

For Shaun Gladwell, rain represents a fundamental aspect of his personal neoromantic aesthetic. In the words of the artist: ‘A storm in the distance can be beautiful. But when you’re in the middle of the storm, then it becomes sublime. I want to be in the middle of the storm, of physical rain, of water, of a car wash, of the ocean, too. And I want to be in the middle of the cultural and media rain, every bit as much as I want to be in the middle of the rain in Bacon, referencing Velázquez. The romanticism that interests me is not the one that involves knowledge, the sensibility that interests me involves action, performance.’

Performance, for Gladwell, does not simply involve the body. The soul, too, is incorporated. And so, in *The Lacrima Chair*, the entire work cries. The world is in tears. Gladwell cries in planes, at that particular point during a trip by air when time is stolen from you. Others are there around you but remain somehow unattainable. They are and will remain strangers. They are fixed at the point where solitude reigns.

You called me by my name
When you called me your brother

*I am Solitude, Friend.*

Alfred de Musset, ‘December Night’

— [has been translated in the 1980s in *Semiotext(e)* – des traductions ayant émané essentiellement des intellectuels australiens Paul Taylor, Paul Foss et Paul Patton (les dits ‘3 Pauls’ désormais rebaptisés ‘4 Pauls’ par Shaun Gladwell, en hommage à Paul Ardenne).]

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*Time to die. »*

Batty in Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* (1982)


… *Tu m’as nommé par mon nom*
*Quand tu m’as appelé ton frère*

*Ami, je suis la Solitude*

Alfred de Musset (La Nuit de Décembre)

Pour son créateur, *La Chaise Lacrima* est un objet néoromantique complexe, une vidéo-installation qui certes évoque les larmes, mais aussi la pluie. Au
For its creator, The Lacrima Chair is a complex neoromantic object, a video installation that evokes both tears and rain. The spectator, having been given a mauve cape reminiscent of the one worn by Pope Innocent X in Velázquez’s painting, is invited to become submerged in the rain produced by The Lacrima Chair.

From Storm Sequence, 2000, a video self-portrait of the artist moving dance-like on his skateboard in the rain at Bondi Beach, to The Lacrima Chair, from Family, in which blood runs into water, to The Flying Dutchman’s squalls and raging sea, Shaun Gladwell draws us into his preferred water landscapes, whether real or imaginary.

Turner is an essential reference for Gladwell, even though Turner’s paintings were unfashionable during Gladwell’s student days.

Gladwell’s water-laden scenes feel drenched in Turneresque ambiguity. Gladwell explains: ‘Turner? A landscape where you can’t distinguish the beginning from the end – a metaphor for life.’ Where this Australian artist’s landscapes aren’t water-logged, they tend to be desert landscapes: Australian landscapes, Mad Max landscapes, or those of Iraq or Afghanistan. Mountains, on the other hand, the kind Caspar David Friedrich gazes upon, are almost completely absent from Gladwell’s work. They are not, however, absent from his thinking, operating as ‘time signatures’ for him. ‘In Afghanistan, I gazed at the mountains,’ says the artist, who was an Official Australian War Artist in 2009 and 2010, ‘and I said to myself that those mountains would still be there in ten thousand years, long after today’s raging battles are extinguished’. The mountains are clearly not in motion. They just are and they can only embrace the doppelgänger that is Shaun Gladwell through the eyes of others. In Afghanistan, as we see in his war-related work, the artist photographed the soldiers from behind, showing us what they were looking at. Again, the double vision, double persona.

From riding with death to dancing with life
Back to Blade Runner: ‘I’ve seen things you people wouldn’t believe...’. Shaun Gladwell’s romanticism remains primarily his œuvre’s mode of production, continually duty-bound, existentially and literally, to reassert itself. When barely
out of his teens, Shaun Gladwell embarked on his creative course with Riding with Death. Now in full possession of a whole raft of unique artistic means, he throws himself into choreography — Dancing with Life.

According to Gaston Bachelard, ‘Matter may be given value in two ways: deepening or elevating. Deepening creates the unfathomable, the mysterious. Elevation, like a miracle, appears as an inexhaustible force.’ The same can be said of creative matter: Shaun Gladwell, in mid-career, is deepening and elevating simultaneously. After dancing so long with death, he now dances with life.


Shaun Gladwell, encore presque adolescent, avait entamé son parcours créatif avec Riding with Death. Désormais en pleine possession de l’ensemble des moyens artistiques qui sont les siens, il plonge dans la chorégraphie, y compris avec La Chaise Lacrima : Dancing with Life!

4. These – and subsequent – thoughts attributed to Shaun Gladwell were shared in conversations and emails with the author between January 2013 and January 2014.
7. Nancy Bird Walton (1915–2009) was an outstanding woman and pilot, a pioneer of Australian aviation, the youngest woman ever to obtain a pilot’s licence in Australia, and founder of the Australian Association of Women Pilots. The first Qantas Airbus A380 bore the nickname her late husband used to call her by, Nancy Bird.
8. Founded in 1914, Silverton Airstrip started out as a journal that emerged from the work of a reading group headed by Sylvère Lotringer at Columbia University. In 1978, Lotringer and his collaborators published a special issue, Science-Culture, following the eponymous conference that took place two years previously, also at Columbia University. That issue brought together people like Gilles Deleuze, Kathy Acker, John Cage and Michel Foucault.
12. The title of one of the videos in The Lacrima Chair happens to be Danzas for Take-off and Falling.

8. Fondé en 1914, Silverton Airstrip a été un journal émergent d’un groupe de lecteurs mené par Sylvère Lotringer à Columbia University. En 1978, Lotringer et ses collaborateurs publièrent un numéro spécial, Science-Culture, à la suite d’une conférence eponyme organisée deux ans auparavant à l’université Columbia University, un numéro qui réunit, entre autres, Gilles Deleuze, Kathy Acker, John Cage, Michel Foucault…
12. Le titre d’un des videos utilisés dans La Chaise Lacrima est justement Danzas de l’envol et des chutes.