

LOTHAR BAUMGARTEN

STANLEY BROWN

JAMES LEE BYARS

PHIL DADSON

WIM DELVOYE

JAN DIBBETS

JOHAN GRIMONPREZ

SUCHAN KINOSHITA

COLIN McCAHON

MATT MULLICAN

NAM JUNE PAIK

MICHAEL PAREKOWHAI

ROB SCHOLTE

GERRY SCHUM

JEFFREY SHAW

GARY SIMMONS

ROBERT SMITHSON

IMANTS TILLERS

CLIFFORD POSSUM TJAPALTJARRI

DAVID TREMLETT

GER VAN ELK

GERALD VAN DER KAAP

BILL VIOLA

RUTH WATSON

#### INTERNET ARTISTS

Laurie Anderson

Paul Garrin

John Hurrell

Giovanni Intra

Richard Killeen

Jouke Klerenbezem

Merel Mirage

Netband

Nam June Paik

Rob Scholte

Han Schuil

Janet Shanks

Peter Struycken

Gerald van der Kaap

# THE WORLD OVER

## DE WERELD BOLLEN

### ART IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION

#### UNDER CAPRICORN II

City Gallery, Wellington  
8 June – 11 August 1996

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam  
28 June – 18 August 1996



# THE | DE WORLD | WERELD OVER | BOLLEN

## ART IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION

### UNDER CAPRICORN II

*Thus we must return to the question of the actual form of recent and contemporary moves in the direction of global interdependence and global consciousness. In posing the basic question in this way we immediately confront the critical issue of the period during which the move towards the world as a singular system became more or less inexorable.*

Roland Robertson, *Globalisation:*

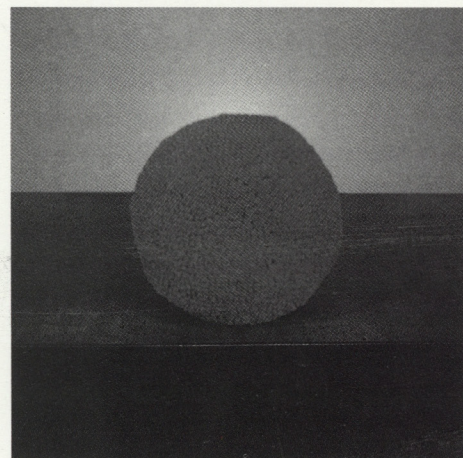
*Social Theory and Global Culture*, (New York, 1992), 55.

To our forebears, both Maori and Pakeha, the ends of the earth were worlds away. Only acts of imagination could leap the barriers of geography, time and ignorance, which separated them. In the late twentieth century, however, we find ourselves connecting with the ends of the earth on a daily basis — in our living room, in the street and at work. Ours has become the age of globalisation. Space exploration, developments in satellite and computer technology, global environmental problems, accelerated migration, the fall of communism and the triumph of international capitalism, have all brought the global home as never before. Regional and national identities are giving way to a global multiculturalism and altering irrevocably our sense of relation to the world as a whole.

**The World Over** is an exhibition aimed at showing how contemporary art sheds light on the experience of living on a shrinking planet. Recently, exhibitions and conferences around the world have dealt with issues of cultural difference, multiplicity, 'otherness', and with borders, frontiers and margins. They are prompted in good part by the accelerating processes of globalisation, and high-light differences in a world becoming more of the same. **The World Over** approaches these issues from another direction. What the world as a singular system is, or might be, is posed in terms of how we picture the planet to ourselves.

Featuring the work of almost 40 artists from many different parts of the world, **The World Over**, is the first international art exhibition to literally span the Northern and Southern hemispheres. Jointly curated by Dorine Mignot of the Stedelijk Museum of Modern Art in Amsterdam and independent New Zealand curator Wystan Curnow, the exhibition is split between Amsterdam and the City Gallery, Wellington. The two parts are linked to one another and to the world via the internet.

Many of the artists have works in both venues, and viewers can compare them by visiting the other exhibition via interactive documentaries available at each. The contributions by Gary Simmons, Ruth Watson, James Lee Byars, are among those chosen or conceived with the exhibition's double location in mind.



James Lee Byars, *The Table of Perfect*, 1989

Art in **The World Over** relates to three main forms in which the world can be seen as a whole — the panorama or extended horizon, the globe or sphere, and the nexus or internet of global information. Here these forms bring to mind images to do with ideals of wholeness and perfection, with traditions of landscape art, with tourism and trade, cartography, colonialism and cultural difference, and electronic information exchange and distribution. Such images appear both in the works themselves or play in and around them.

#### Panorama

We think of art as giving us a 'window onto the world'; the most commanding of these has been the panorama, a continuous canvas surrounding us with an all-encompassing life-size vista and transporting us to distant and exotic times and places. The panorama was the virtual reality of the nineteenth century.

**The World Over** contains many spectacular works in a variety of media. Often impressive for what they encompass,

they shun the grandiose pretensions of their predecessors while emulating their sublimities. Imants Tillers' mural-size paintings, Gary Simmons' chalk wall drawings, Ger van Elk's row of riverbank images, Jan Dibbets' shoreline photographs, and Robert Smithson's film of the making of his **Spiral Jetty** in the Great Salt Lake, are all descendants of the panorama, requiring the viewer to scan their expanse and give up on the single focused gaze. **Walk** is 12 metres long and with it McCahon most completely realised his aim of making paintings to 'walk by'. The gaze it offers is melancholy and questioning, an elegy for the poet James K. Baxter. Nam June Paik has created an environment to walk around. In **TV Garden** the viewer is not only surrounded by a physical landscape but by the flickering and darting sights and sounds of Paik's innumerable video collages. In Sushan Kinoshita's **Passing**, sound alone forms the vehicle, as her tape of a subway train thundering by momentarily invades the space of the Gallery.

#### Globe

At both venues these panoramic sight and soundscapes orbit around a sphere by James Lee Byars — one of blood red roses in a red room in Amsterdam, and one of gilded marble on an immense black lacquer platform in Wellington. In the form of the sphere the themes of the exhibition are united. Although we have long known that our planet is spherical, it was not until the launching of satellites and the development of space travel that we could look at it from a distance, locate it physically in space and picture it whole. In his golden globe, **Is**, Byars combines two elements long associated with perfection and eternal order — the sphere and gold. The world over is stilled, caught in a moment of perfection. In Ruth Watson's **Lingua Geographica** it is caught in the language of cartography and in Matt Mullican's banners and sculptures in his adaption and extension of international sign language. With **From North to South**, Lothar Baumgarten has added a list of names of New Zealand rivers and streams, to a series of works, begun in the 1970s, dealing with the rivers of Europe and South America.

#### Nexus

*... the advantage of electronic art is to give us a more advanced picture and model of the world than other artistic media.*

Peter Weibel, "Ars Electronica: An Interview with Johan Pijnappel", *Art & Design 39: Art and Technology*, (London, 1994), 28.

Around the globe a complex web of cables, and a host of satellites, serve the rapidly growing networks of international communications, creating a world-wide nexus of information, or 'global groove' as Paik has titled one of the video collages that pulsate through his **TV Garden**. Television sets, telephones, fax machines, personal computers, modems — all bring the world into our daily lives

as never before, enabling a 'community of strangers' to exchange ideas, texts, images and sound.

It is the web, navigated via the latest of windows on the world, the computer screen, that links the two venues to a third, the internet, where more than a dozen computer-based works commissioned for the exhibition may be found by viewers and web-users everywhere. The internet, like other forms of electronic media, has provided an alternative and accessible arena in which artists can share their work with audiences far beyond gallery walls. Artists long identified with the electronic media like Laurie Anderson, Paik, and Hooykaas/Stanfield, have made new work. They join artists who have been invited to test the new medium for the first time: painters like Hans Schuil, or Richard Killeen with his encyclopaedic works, and John Hurrell with his map-based works — two New Zealand examples.

#### Hybrid

*... here in Southern California I can drive past a Spanish-style house with authentic ceramic roof tiles, or houses of traditional New England wood frame, English Tudor and Japanese styles all standing next to each other on the same street ... I can go into the sterile and bizarre setting of a shopping mall to purchase a genuine Tuscan leather bag while a group of Mexicans with motors strapped to their backs are blowing away fallen leaves from indoor Australian native trees while Mozart plays from concealed loudspeakers at a nearby Sushi bar.*

Jorg Zutter, 'Interview with Bill Viola', *Art and Design 31: World Wide Video*, (London, 1993), 39.

The ease and speed of electronic communication and of air travel, the removal of barriers to the flow of capital, goods, and people, is changing the nature of national and cultural identity, and accelerating processes of cultural hybridisation. As contemporary art — still very much dominated by Europe and North America — becomes a singular global system, artists become increasingly mobile. They immigrate, they live in two places and cultures at the same time. They travel extensively, and their work is more widely known.

The hybrid is a nexus by definition. It is where sameness and difference are at issue and where power struggles and cross-fertilisations come vividly to life. The burgeoning variety and complexity of Imants Tillers' multi-panel paintings provide a keynote. The Australian artist's mammoth **Diaspora**, showing in Amsterdam, was painted in the wake of the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and draws on an extreme diversity of sources to dramatise the tragic history of his parents' Baltic homeland. In Wellington, **There is Still That Which Cleaves Within the Cleft** combines a nineteenth century German artist's view of a Tasmanian landscape with the images of the Japanese-American Conceptual artist Arakawa and Tillers' own initials rendered in the fashion of McCahon. Ironies of cultural collision are to





Wim Delvoye, *Concrete Mixer*, 1990. Courtesy of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

be found in Michael Parekowhai's Maori mannequins, made especially for **The World Over**, and in Wim Delvoye's elaborately carved wooden concrete mixer. This image of 'development' fashioned for the Belgian artist by Indonesian carvers from photographs, (as they had never seen one before), very nearly became a prototype for a local industry to supply an imagined export market for wooden mixers! Since the 1980s Australian Aboriginal artists from the Western Desert, on the other hand, have found a ready domestic and international market for their renderings on canvas of traditional ground paintings. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's **Warlugulong** is a map — with east at the top — and a Dreamtime story. The 'ancestor of all bushfires' started by the old Blue Tongue Lizard man, is at its centre.

David Tremlett is now almost a full-time itinerant. A notable part of the tribute he pays to the particulars of the places he visits is the respect he has for their anonymity; there is something all-encompassing in that which is common. He covers the walls of the video room in the East Gallery with images derived from the floor plans of abandoned buildings in Holland, India, New Zealand and Tanzania. A similar spirit is at work in the stone music of Philip Dadson's sound videos, one which may bring us gradually round again to the image of harmony and light represented by Byars' gilded stone, isolate and perfect on a sea of darkness.

Wystan Curnow  
Curator

Claire Regnault  
Curator of Education

As we approach the end of this millennium we are forced to come to terms with a complex of forces re-shaping the world around us. Increasingly we are compelled to see the local situation in terms of 'the big picture', the global overview. **The World Over/De Wereld Bollen: Art in the Age of Globalisation** is a substantial international exhibition of contemporary art that investigates a range of different takes on this condition. Artists as different as New Zealand painter Colin McCahon and Korean born video artist Nam June Paik present us with models for how we might imagine, understand and re-conceive this big picture.

The project began to take its present form when exhibition curators Wystan Curnow and Dorine Mignot, working on opposite sides of the world, discovered they were in fact working toward similar exhibitions and decided to join forces on a single project which would literally span the globe.

**The World Over/De Wereld Bollen: Art in the Age of Globalization** takes place in Amsterdam and Wellington simultaneously, half in the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, half in the City Gallery, Wellington. The absent half of the exhibition is linked by an interactive digital programme and various artists' internet projects on the World Wide Web.

The City Gallery, Wellington is proud to work in partnership with the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam on this project. We see this collaboration between one of the most prestigious modern art museums in the world and the City Gallery as, in some sense, indicative of the way the world is being redefined through new possibilities offered by technology and the continual remapping of established cultural and political alliances. Such shifts in the power bases of the art world can only be of mutual benefit to all concerned. In these terms the chance to read New Zealand art in relation to an international context is very valuable. Of particular significance is the installation of 15 of Colin McCahon's paintings in the special 'Room of Honour' normally reserved for acknowledged twentieth century masters at the Stedelijk Museum.

This has been a most exciting and stimulating project to work on for the City Gallery and we are deeply grateful to all the artists, lenders, sponsors and other interested individuals who have been so generous in supporting us in this venture.

Paula Savage

Director, City Gallery, Wellington

**The World Over/De Wereld Bollen** is a collaborative project between the City Gallery, Wellington and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

**Project partners** are Creative New Zealand and the Mondriaan Foundation.

**The World Over/De Wereld Bollen** is **UNDER CAPRICORN II**, the second in a series of bi-annual international art events initiated by the Centre for Projects in the Arts, University of Auckland and the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.



stedelijk museum

air new zealand  
the pride of the pacific

creative  
nz  
ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND TE AHU MATUA

KLM  
Royal Dutch Airlines

British Council • Goethe Institut

City Gallery, Civic Square, Wellington, New Zealand. Ph. 64-4-801 3952, Fax 64-4-801 3950  
Open everyday from 11.00am – 5.00pm, 11.00am – 8.00pm Thursdays.