

dx/dt

Void Gallery, Derry.

Review by Damien Duffy. Circa 118, Winter Issue 2006, pp. 78 – 79.



Images of *dx/dt*, courtesy Void. Photo top row centre courtesy Douglas Dickel

dx/dt: [Transitional] Change in a subject or event X over time T.

The reductive mathematical notation of the exhibition title distils all the experiential pleasure of this show to a formula, a hint of the ‘process’ basis of its beginnings.

Mc Nulty's first gallery show attempts to shift the use of documentation of a previous project into the realm of installation, allowing the video, photographs and audio recordings to function as aesthetic components on their own rather than simple formal records of the piece *Anti-tour no.1 – magic hour*. Recordings of improvised audio works, performed in apartments in São Paulo, Brasilia, Porto Alegre and Rio de Janeiro, play on a home stereo in Gallery One. The performances took place during the hours of sunset (magic hour), sound-tracking the transition of day to night. The domestic set up is replicated in the gallery: sofa, two chairs, a small TV showing footage of the events. (Just like home. TV on with sound off, t'yoons on the stereo and the sun going down.) Performance locations, specifically apartments near the top of tall buildings, were found through the mailing list of São Paulo-based Bizarre Records (the artist/ musician has previously played in the electronic music duo Decal in the '90s, releasing three albums).

McNulty used pre-recorded sounds, guitar notes and field recordings, played forward, backward and slowed down to create a sonic landscape focused on the relationships between the sounds and their transition from background to foreground and back again. Noise from the streets below, traffic, children's voices and bird song are also audible in these sound-performance recordings, adding further layers, other variables to the equation. Far from the formulaic, this audio is more attuned to the evocative and reflective works of Brian Eno, or the Canadian outfit Godspeed You! Black Emperor.

One also contains a long, curving mobile. Hung from the ceiling on an array of interconnecting red cords are a hundred or so photographs, each cord rising up to a custom-made 'hanger' and shifting direction to drop again to another photograph. Each of these 'hangers' forms a junction for eight/sixteen images. This mobile chronicles the audience's engagement with the *Magic hour* performances, incidental details and the locations along with images of the artist performing.

On the reverse of each photo is a drawing, made on index cards the same size as the prints. These are more personalised documents. Details, people, stereos, interiors, are sketched in a casual but graphically linear photorealism, annotated with cartoon thought-bubbles or quasi-scientific diagrams; the content of the photographs re-characterised through recollection.

The piece is a sculptural flowchart of *Anti-tour no. 1 – magic hour*, an informal model reminiscent of Cornelia Parker's suspended exploded *Shed*. The array is subtly lit, the cords and hanging photos casting shadows onto the surrounding walls like musical notation. The glow of club culture still apparent in the photographs, snapshots taken by members of the audience, casual and unstaged; the chill-out set in that Bacardi ad who rush from floor to floor in chilled/ hot pursuit of the sun's last few rays – both are undercurrents within this piece.

Gallery Two is entered through a black curtain. The space is in total darkness, except for a half-closed laptop in one far corner. The white light of its blank screen slowly undulates, synchronised to the audio transferred into the space from an open mic in Gallery One.

In the sensory deprivation of the disorienting blackness, the amplified audio becomes acoustically unsettling. This feeling slowly eases as the eyes adjust to the spatial uncertainty.

Three books sit on the laptop keyboard: *Teach yourself Portuguese*, *When Brazil was modern* and *Modern music*, the discarded material of the artist after the event, language, architecture and music defining the artist's interests in social, physical and theoretical structures. In this space, the events of *Magic hour* filter further into memory, as if that hour has elapsed, the show now over and the artist and audience long gone.

On a pillar in the darkness a small flickering screen is visible; footage of the photo/ index-card piece in Gallery One plays for a minute and stops, repeating after a pause of a few seconds. With the appearance of a tiny magic lantern, this display device emulates the raster scan of a TV set using a rotating ring and a white LED, its flicker effect again registering the slowing down of time, extending the temporal space from the original event further. This piece documents Gallery One, diluting the social and physical records into a third tier of representation and recollection, but nonetheless magical in its articulation of events.

The title *dx/dt* and the work's origin in process belies the over all character of this show, its installation sculpting the transition in various subjects, natural, social, physical, theoretical, and charting their flow. Much more than documenting *Anti-tour no. 1 – magic hour*, *dx/dt* engages with its imprint in memory and the articulation of its flow.

Damien Duffy is Artist in Residence at Void.