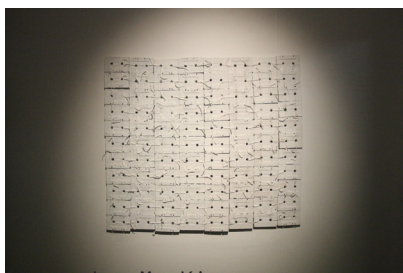


media povera

Brett Ian Balogh, Radio Cegeste, Ryan Cockburn, Edie Stevens, Alexander MacKinnon
c u r a t e d b y S a l l y A n n M c I n t y r e



Edie Stevens



Alexander MacKinnon



Brett Ian Balogh



Ryan Cockburn



Radio Cegeste

Providing its own eclectic take on the “media formerly known as new”, Media Povera groups together artists based in New Zealand, Greece, Australia and the USA. An exhibition that groups together artistic strategies emerging from hybrid investigations in the contemporary, audio, media and transmission arts, together these works foreground the materiality of the media object in the age of digital immateriality, while remaining mindful of its agency within systems of production and distribution - as Sarah Cook and Beryl Graham have identified in their book “Rethinking Curating: Art after New Media” media are best understood not as materials but as “behaviors” – participatory, performative or generative.

Media Povera presents a series of artistic investigations into synaesthetic sound-image translation, transmission as a museological space, the afterlife of obsolete formats, and technology as a craft medium. These artists run record labels, reconfigure sound objects as silent paintings, leave answering machine messages from radiophonic ghosts, and make anti-spectacular technologies which are simple, vulnerable, and transparent. Whether their focus is on technology from a “do-it-yourself” perspective, ways of making that are critical of current consumer technologies, or references to technological and art histories that look at the media object as something that’s not a series of points on a timeline, but a cloud of possibilities always available for interrogation, with their hybridizing of newer and older technologies, together these works cast a critical eye over the subject of the sonic object’s disappearance and its relation to systems of cultural exchange.

Media Povera is a response to the increasing artistic focus on the need for community and locality in our homogeneous globalised media-worlds. While having the installed appearance of being largely about small-scale transmission spaces, local forms of distribution, home built or modded technologies and the acuteness of subcultural activity and related social spaces, curatorially, this exhibition emerges from a variety of peer-to-peer global and local art networks, that collapse the notion of nationalistic boundaries in favour of a more distributed working model of micro-communities. It has become somewhat a reflection on such networks of exchange themselves, and quite literally in one instance systems of exchange have stepped in to change the nature of the work.

The heightened attention and suspicion attending “analogue” global postal networks in the post-9/11 age has unfortunately meant that one of the show’s artists, Helga Fasonaki, has, at the time of writing, had her work ‘*New Horizons, to you*’ indefinitely delayed at US customs. Helga says : “I really appreciate you thinking about my work and its inclusion in the show despite the circumstances. The box that is missing (still in customs) is the one I would have wanted displayed. The smaller one you have was intended to remain in the box, so I’m really not sure how I feel about having it displayed as the record player. I know you really want my work to be displayed in some shape and form, working with what is there...and I’d normally be all for that. But to be honest, I don’t feel comfortable displaying what is there without the other pieces, especially without the records. The reason being that the installation as a whole has a kind of narrative that alludes to political/religious left language, which makes the fact that its sitting in customs all the more ironic. I can’t imagine what the people in customs would think if they read the ‘spreading dwarf’ literature. I don’t have any sound files either that are the sound from the records... I’d actually want the only sound to be the sound of the records being hand turned by the viewers, rather than any recorded sound - this reflects the audible sensibilities the piece is intended to arouse.”

The absence of Helga’s work can be seen as a presence in its own way, perhaps casting light on the invisible forces that surround us, as much as Brett Ian Balogh’s crystal set radio channelling the etheric spectrum, Radio Cegeste’s archive of extinct endemic bird silences and audio work that nests, cuckoo-like, within the gallery’s answering machine, or Alex MacKinnon’s ear which listens in to the space and its audiences, hyper-attentively, for the show’s duration.