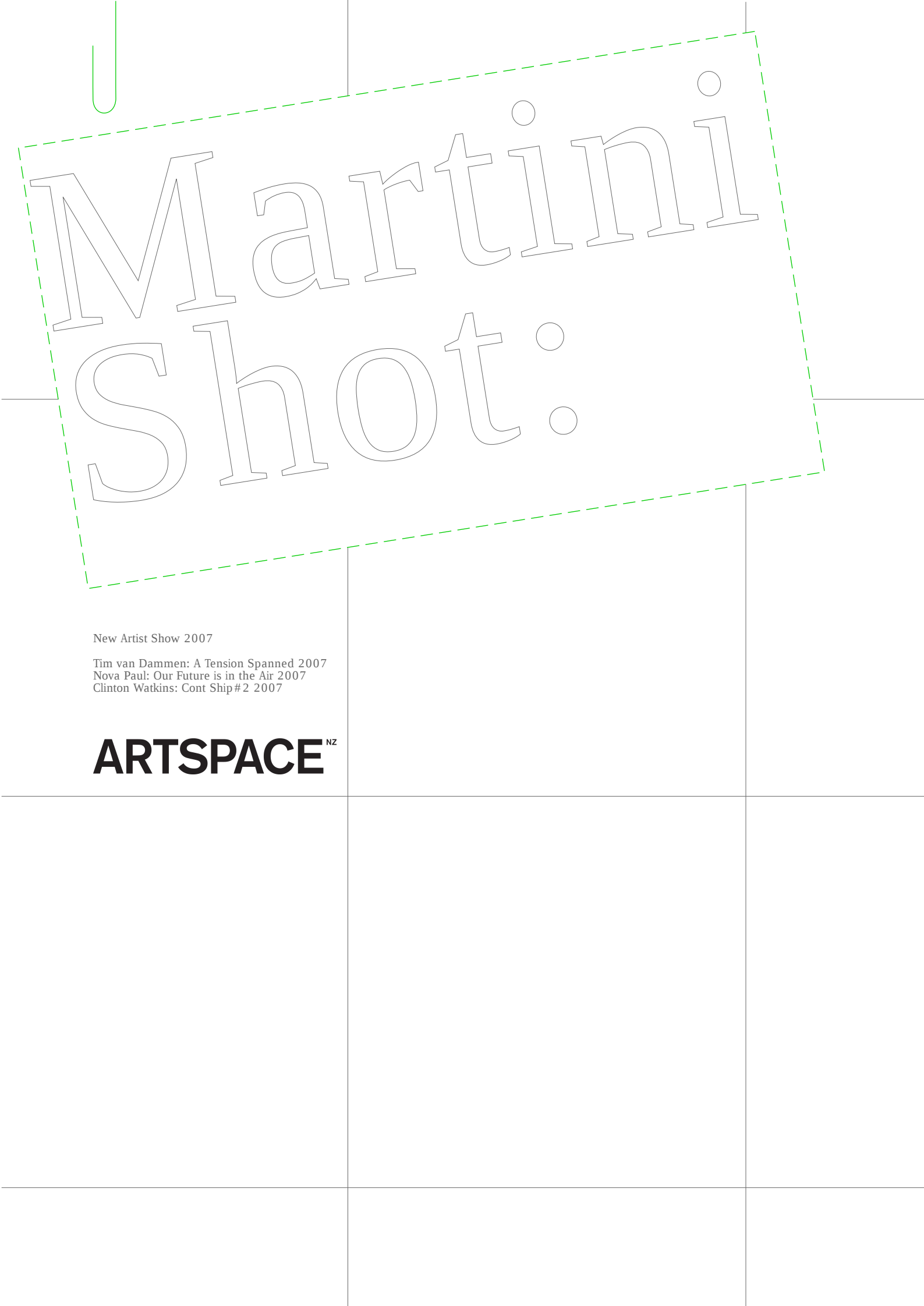




Martini Shot:

New Artist Show 2007

Tim van Dammen: A Tension Spanned 2007
Nova Paul: Our Future is in the Air 2007
Clinton Watkins: Cont Ship #2 2007

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Introduction

Martini Shot: New Artist Show 2007

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Each year ARTSPACE's New Artist show provides an opportunity for a meeting to happen, between the practices of the selected emerging artists, a professional gallery environment, and an audience of engaged and critical viewers.

Martini Shot brings together three artists using film and video media, whose work stands out as activating that point of intersection. Exploring the space between the concepts of the 'black box' of cinematic viewing and the 'white cube' of the art gallery, the works in Martini Shot return awareness to the experience of viewing, to the nuances of combining time, space, sound and image. Creating new works for the exhibition, each artist brings a different take to the challenge of presenting moving image in a gallery context, individually mining the different languages and structures in film and video.

Nova Paul's 16mm film *Our Future is in the Air* utilises the three-colour separation of early technicolour film techniques. Filmed over the course of a day, the layering of colour becomes a means of collapsing time, an effect enhanced by the oral history of the filmed landscape recounted in the sound track.

In *Cont Ship #2* Clinton Watkins manipulates the play between image and soundtrack, exploring the effects of sound on the viewing experience. As the bulk of the ship slips past the frame on a continuous loop, the shifting frequencies activate the space of the viewer.

Surrounding the viewer, Tim van Dammen's media installation *A Tension Spanned* recreates the effect of panning a space. Spinning across 16 screens, viewing the re-created room becomes a dizzying experience, the details always just out of visual reach.

Martini Shot is a Hollywood term that describes the final take of a scene. According to Dave Knox, author of *"Strike the Baby and Kill the Blond"* the Martini Shot was so named because "the next shot is out of a glass", referring to a post-wrap drink. (Source: Wikipedia.org)

Biographies

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Tim van Dammen

Tim van Dammen graduated with an MFA from Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland, in 2007. He is interested in producing a static narrative using time based mediums. He is currently producing new video work and is in early stages of preproduction on his third feature film. In 2006 Tim wrote and directed New Zealand's first Dogme certified feature film Despair. His second feature film Anguish is due for release mid 2007.

Nova Paul

Nova Paul is a film maker and senior lecturer at the School of Art and Design, Auckland University of Technology. Her films and video installations deal with the production of space and its representation on the screen. Her recent film Pink and White Terraces, a 16mm film that uses the early cinematic technique of three colour separation (technicolour) to explore spaces of reflection in her local cityscape, has been exhibited in Telecom 2006 New Zealand International Film Festival, Telecom Prospect 2007: New Art New Zealand, City Gallery Wellington and screened at The Physics Room, Christchurch.

Clinton Watkins

Clinton Watkins holds a Masters of Fine Art (First Class Honours) from Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland and is working towards a DocFA. He is practicing as an international recording artist in the arena of minimalist music and sound scores/design for film and documentary. Working with live sound performance and installations, his film based projects are completed by the soundtrack. Recent installations include: Cont Ship #1, video/sound installation, 5 4 3 2 1: Auckland Artist Projects, Auckland Art Gallery, 2006, Things I found in my friends father's basement, sound installation & recording, rm103 Gallery, Auckland, 2005.

Tim van Dammen

Martini Shot: New Artist Show 2007

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LAY-Z-BOY

If contemporary video art can be said to solicit, by turns, a deconstructive rhetoric of gaps, discontinuities and ellipses, and a politicised rhetoric of attacking, confronting or upbraiding the viewer, what distinguishes Timothy van Dammen's *A Tension Spanned* is its sense of calm, homely invitation. Take a seat, make yourself at home, it proposes, as its circular gathering of monitors offers up the spectacle of a serene domestic living space – sofas, chairs, tables – revolving seamlessly around us. The inviting domesticity of its content finds its complement in the compliant transparency of its form: *A Tension Spanned*, in fact, appears to aspire to a kind of representational plenitude in which nothing is ever lost, misplaced or ambiguous. Eschewing both the conventional narrative cunning of information withheld, and video art's calculated ambiguity, the 'narrative', of which the film constitutes a kind of embryo, is laid out before us with all of the lavish indulgence of a three-piece lounge suite. Temporal development transmuted into full, room-wide panorama, *A Tension Spanned* enables a single, languid glance to take in quite as much as a careful concentration. The anonymous figure moving about in the background personifies just this opulent excess of information, redundantly describing aloud their entirely visible activities: "now I am making a drink of coffee, now I am sitting on the couch..." Aligning, then, the interpretational ease of its form and the domesticity of its content in a kind of paroxysm of surround-sound domesticated bliss, a fantasy of total cinematic immersion, *A Tension Spanned* appears to promise some serious R & R – both physical and interpretational – in the otherwise austere gallery environs.

The manifest irony of the work – and one referent of the "tension" alluded to in the title – is that in an institutional space that is most at home when it is most 'on edge'; most exposed to the perils of the interpretational gap and the hazards of artistic attack, 'rest and relaxation' is never as restful or relaxing as it seems. To those schooled in this kind of dedication to their own discomfort, the immediate effect of such visual and spectacular plenitude is less blissed-out satisfaction than anxious semiotic vacuum. Rewarding the passing glance, the channel surfer, the lay-z-boy, where conventional video work valorises the dividends of vigilant attention, *A Tension Spanned*'s narrative abundance paradoxically leaves the gallery-goer a little short of cultural change. Crucially, however, Van Dammen's uniquely furnished gallery space functions less to foreclose engagement than to foreground the question of what kind of engagement might occur when there is no engagement required. Mocking the identification of meaning with a kind of painful labour, van Dammen invokes the spectacle of the culture-savvy couch potato, putting cultural engagement back on the couch where it all began. What emerges is a subtle re-upholstering of the time-honoured feminist invocation of the gendered tension between gallery space and domestic space, as van Dammen invites us to collapse the difference between the frameworks of engagement attendant on these spaces, and in the process to interrogate assumed oppositions between entertainment and art, between work and play, between consumption and its critique. Redecorating the gallery as living room, *A Tension Spanned* is a work that, if it interrogates the spectator's interpretative norms, always does so in the nicest possible way, inviting us to sit back, relax, and enjoy the critique; if it addresses us directly, it is only to offer us a cup of tea.

- Pansy Duncan

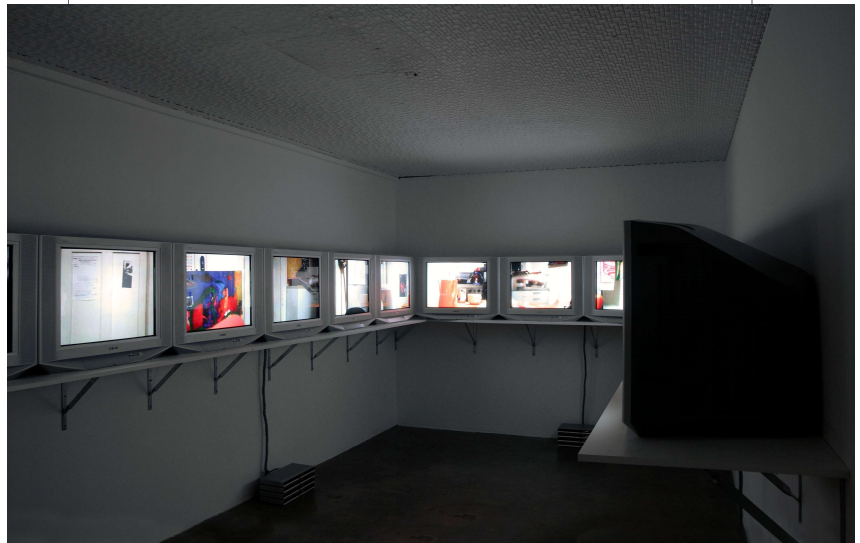


A Tension Spanned film still 2007

Tim van Dammen

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A Tension Spanned, installation view at ARTSPACE 2007



A Tension Spanned, installation view at ARTSPACE 2007

Nova Paul

Martini Shot: New Artist Show 2007

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'Tuna mau seeps'

My eyelids flicker, your frame echoes the sun, our sun that we look at with closed eyes, the moment of opening colours divide, distorting my view.

Waiatarau's park Te Rimutahi sits dressed by human with subtropical exotics, nestled in the over coat of innercity suburbs.

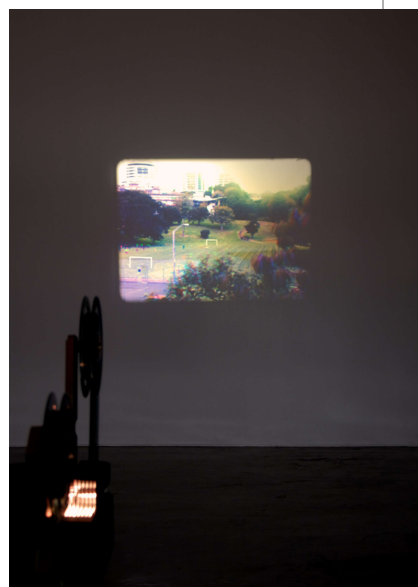
Waiatarau. Your songs rise up. Silent. From the ground as I walk, silent. I hear nothing. I feel everything. I feel your songs. Your songs are silent. I hear nothing. I hear everything. I feel your song. I walk with you singing, we have races down the slides, you always win. We laugh, we play the guitar with our tennis rackets. We laugh, you pretend to be the mum and call me a name that's not my own, I smile at you with tears and wonder what your grandmother would see in you. You laugh I smile. I feel the lines on my face now.

It's autumn and the waxeyes are travelling around the gardens in big busy groups feeding on what's left of the flowers from summer. The trees are bare and it surprises me how many birds live here. Kingfishers still come, even though the bays sparkling waters have been covered and the eel creek drained generations before you became my home. The sun lies low, and gold spreads over everything, sending our shadows far across the field behind us. Light shudders.

Tuna mau seeps.

Hands have covered you, hushed your gentle breath. Tuna mau, who was buried alive long ago. Tuna mau seeps. Choking quietly. Heaving rhythmically upwards your pulse pushes. Tuna mau seeps. Seeking air, yearning for light. When Tuna mau seeps tears, the ground becomes soft underfoot and my shoes get wet.

- Layla Rudneva-MacKay

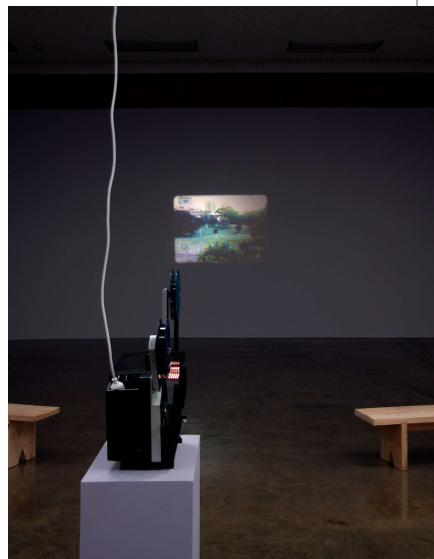


Our Future is in the Air, installation view at ARTSPACE 2007

Nova Paul

Martini Shot: New Artist Show 2007

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Our Future is in the Air, installation shot at
ARTSPACE 2007



Our Future is in the Air, film still 2007

Clinton Watkins

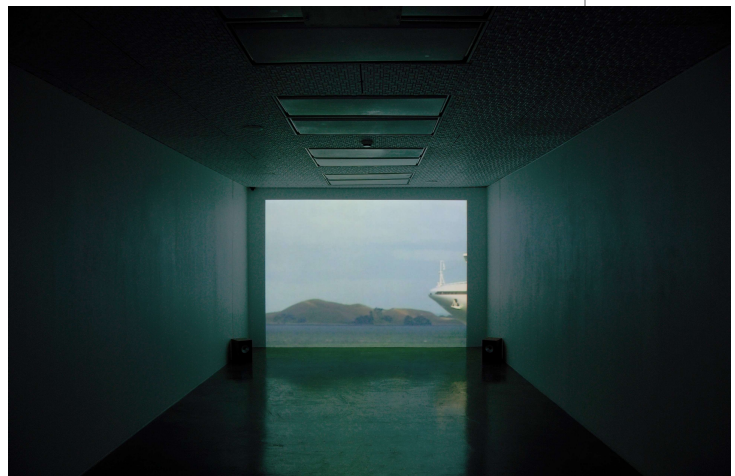
Martini Shot: New Artist Show 2007

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In Watkins's Cont Ship #2 you see a ship slide in and out of shot, right to left. It slides from wall to wall, corner to corner at each end of the space. The image is doubled, not mirrored; the mass continuously slips through the wall at both ends of the space. You, the viewer, stand in-between – in the empty hull of the gallery space – you and the accompanying soundtrack. The camera does not shift from its steady tripod-mounted gaze, however the soundtrack does. The soundtrack ebbs and flows. It comes and goes, much like you. Ships are nomadic wanderers through time, sliding from time zone to time zone as they cross the ocean. Our way of life is absolutely dependent on the sea and the ships it bears. Globalisation, in spite of all its clever know-how, still yields to the physical reality of the sea.

The ship that slips by in Cont Ship #2 is for leisure, the leisure class: 151,000 tons of floating real estate. It's a surface of colour too, paint actually, made flat by the digitisation of its 345-meter long bulk. Rather than fetishise the technical capacities of the moving image and explain away a love for the medium, the shot is direct, neat, ship-shape. It's hard to put into words - something to do with the irreducibility of shots to words. Watkins achieves a kind of cinematic hypnosis, but really it's more like a daydream; these images don't quite duplicate reality. The coming and going of the soundtrack disrupts the presence of the ship and drives it forward – delay, reverb and repetition propel it through the water now.

- Dane Mitchell

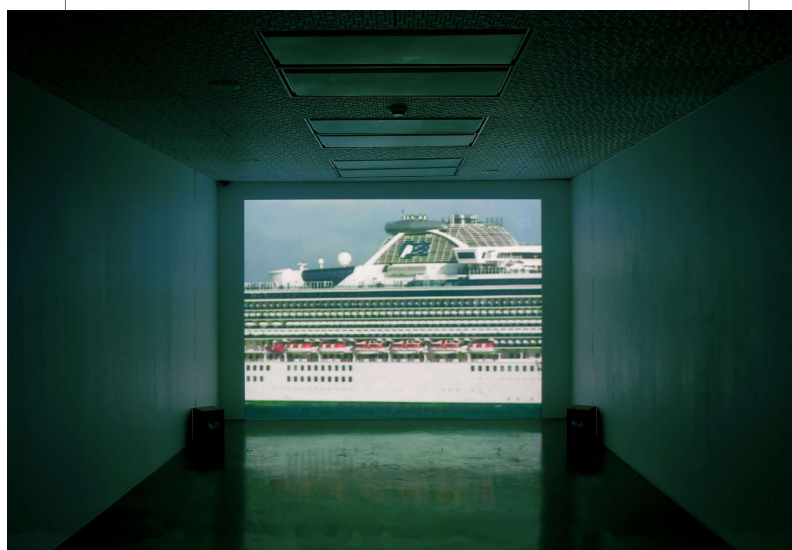


Cont Ship #2, installation view at ARTSPACE 2007

Clinton Watkins

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Cont Ship #2, installation view at ARTSPACE 2007



Cont Ship #2, installation view at ARTSPACE 2007

Credits

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ARTSPACE warmly thanks::

SONY



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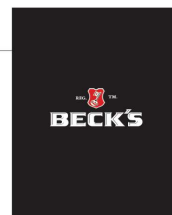
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