

Kate Mitchell
Future Fallout

Gallery Director: Channon Goodwin
 Design: Adam Cruickshank
 Photography: Marc Morel

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**CREATIVE
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'Future Fallout' continues Kate Mitchell's exploration of the comic and cartoon logic. In the single channel video artwork we see the artist ride up to a Psychic Shop in the middle of a field and as she opens the door, the set falls down.

After the initial jolt of humour a cascade of densely layered and often poetic meaning is revealed; in her attempt to access the future it collapses around her. Future Fallout has something for everyone. In only a few minutes we might laugh, contemplate the nature of time, the inaccessibility of the future, or the cruel and joyful ironies of human existence. The essence of this work lies in its simplicity, the resolved relation of action and idea, absurdity and philosophy.

Kate Mitchell was born in Sydney, Australia in 1982 and currently lives and works in Sydney. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours and her Master of Fine Arts from the College of Fine Arts, the University of New South Wales, Sydney. Kate's video works present the intensive living out of conceived scenarios, often drawn from the slapstick, cartoonish-end of popular culture. She revels in the spirit of endurance, existence, time, and effort, and commits to absurd and sometimes humorous actions, whilst facing up to her own capabilities and limitations of body and mind.

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 03.09.14–20.09.14

Kate has held solo exhibition at Artspace and Chalkhorse Gallery in Sydney. She has exhibited work nationally and internationally in group exhibitions including: The Anne Landa Award for Video and New Media, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2013); Cheerful and Heroic, Southwestern College Art Gallery, San Diego, (2013); Prima Vera, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2012); Magic Undone, Artspace, Sydney (2012), Contemporary Australia: Women, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane (2012), NEW12, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2012); Error and Judgment, Arts Project Australia, Melbourne (2012); Social Sculpture, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Sydney (2011); The Grip / La Mainmise, Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, (2010); The Horn of Plenty: excess and reversibility, Para-Site, Hong Kong (2009); and The Night of the Sunglasses, Manzara Perspectives, Istanbul, Turkey (2009).

Future Fallout

“Future Fallout” is the culmination of a body of work begun as part of “Temporary Democracies” curated by Paul Gazzola. “Temporary Democracies” is a site specific experience in Airds in South Western Sydney which involves ten artists. The video “Future Fallout” was commissioned by Campbelltown Arts Centre for that exhibition.

“Future Fallout” continues Mitchell’s exploration of the comic and cartoon logic. In “Future Fallout” Mitchell cycles (a characteristic mode of transport for Mitchell if she has ever passed you at speed in Sydney) up to a “Psychic Shop.” Already there is a slippage here. What is a “Psychic Shop”? It could be where a psychic is housed or more likely a late capitalist version of a Fortune Teller, where the shaman has now somehow been broken up into a store bought, easier, new age solution. The work “It’s In The Bag” seems to highlight how we shop around for the easiest take-away solutions without confronting the real ethical contradictions of our choices. As Mitchell opens the door in a Buster Keaton style, it reveals the artificiality of the video world as the set falls down.

As in other works, the comic actually becomes the existentialist absurd. In Camus’s essay “The Myth of Sisyphus”, he mentions in his final line that life is absurd but it is that meaninglessness that we all share and that ultimately is the joy of life. This particular use of the word absurd gave rise to the term absurdist theatre. In this show there are many ethical choices, decisions to be made, but on what basis do we choose? How can we know the future? On, who or what can we rely? For the existentialists the fact that God is dead, meant we were now confronted with the immensity of complete freedom. In the end you can’t rely on the psychic, the shaman or anyone external to your own ethical acts.

As the Psychic Shop falls over Mitchell shrugs and cycles off into the future regardless. There is no great failure here. It is almost like the unveiling of the Wizard in the Wizard of Oz. The shock that the Wizard is merely a little man quickly shifts to well there is some wisdom here anyway. We are all in this together, acting as ethically as we can. We may have beliefs and things that we hang our ideological hats on; deep down we know that they are choices and not facts but we live by those choices anyway.

One small but beautiful work sums this up, “Fell Into It”. While working on the video in Airds, Mitchell by chance met a past murderer who told her his life story. He gave her, as a fellow

traveller and one expects as a poetic soul, two rocks which he had found locally. He made Mitchell promise to carry them on her person for seven years. There is a certain ethics at stake in a promise like this (which is very similar to a marriage oath). No-one asks you, or forces you to accept a particular promise but once accepted you are bound ethically to maintain this promise. It is not based on broad social ethics but on an intimate agreement between two people. This is a very important and primal ethical bond. Mitchell has in turn framed this act as a form of “covert endurance performance.” The act is completely on the line between art and life, where life’s poetic gifts and vows meet with art’s conceptual history of these things; but art here seems somewhat of an interloper.

“A Light Sentence” on the other hand returns the viewer quickly to the long history of conceptual neons. It is not particularly personal but is a fun disavowal of conceptual art’s high seriousness. It is self referential in a way only contemporary art could play with. It shows in fact that conceptual art is already aestheticised (contrary to the modernist myths) and that art is light in regard to Mitchell’s oath in “Fell Into It”.

We are all bound to each other through our decisions and promises. This show highlights the ethical basis of how we must choose the way we live our lives. We are totally free to make whatever choices we want, there is no shaman figure, or indeed genius Romantic artist, to tell us how to live. If we do not choose though with the other in mind, selflessly and in a connected way, our choices will be unethical. Mitchell shows in this exhibition how we all share this dilemma, that we share our part in shaping the future.







Not only but also

Bus Projects is an independent arts organisation dedicated to supporting the critical, conceptual and interdisciplinary practices of Australian artists. Since its establishment in 2001, Bus Projects has acted as a space to produce, present, discuss and engage with contemporary art. In addition to its core gallery-based program of exhibitions, events and residencies, Bus Projects collaborates with a range of artists and like-minded organisations to produce projects off-site and within the public realm. Through this diverse programming, Bus Projects continues to be a crucial convergence point for art, artist and audiences.

This exhibition and publication series, *Not Only But Also*, invests in the creation of innovative works by 24 young and emerging Australian artists and writers, forming an integral part of Bus Projects' inaugural artistic program in its new galleries on Rokeby Street in Collingwood.

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Bus Projects,
25-31 Rokeby Street,
Collingwood,
VIC 3066 Australia.
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