

Sequelism
Part 3:
Possible
Probable
or
Preferable
Futures

EXHIBITION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Sequelism Part 3: Possible, Probable or Preferable Futures is a project that looks into the future and at that which is yet to happen. It considers how art and the inexact arena of futurology might be utilised as a means to better comprehend, rethink, obscure, or even colonise the present.

Knowledge of current and historical events often plays a role in collective foresight or prognoses of change that is yet to take place. In a similar fashion, futurology could be said to deal with memory in reverse. The project seeks to investigate how prospective visions might be generated for vastly differing reasons, offering great idealism on the one hand, or harnessing political and societal anxieties on the other.

The future is commonly manifested in popular cultural forms, including science fiction, yet how might we look beyond the present without recourse to established genres? To what extent does strategic foresight affect our understanding of the 'now' or the 'when'? Is the future a culturally specific phenomenon that is inherently 'Western' in its own gaze and orientation? And just how accurate can we even be when imagining the future? The *Sequelism* project addresses issues and questions such as these.

The title of the exhibition, *Sequelism*, is an invented word, or 'neologism', based on renowned 20th-Century architect and futurologist R. Buckminster Fuller's technique of synthesizing existing words to generate names for new concepts and designs. In this instance, the meaning of the word is left as yet undefined, awaiting its new meaning. Rather than illustrating a 'theme', the exhibition invites doubt, speculation and to-be-determined outcomes.

Curated by Arnolfini and Latitudes

1. Jordan Wolfson <i>Untitled</i>	
2. Victor Man <i>Towards an Absent Friend</i>	
3. Victor Man <i>Untitled</i>	
4. Victor Man <i>Untitled (we die)</i>	
5. Haegue Yang <i>Holiday for Tomorrow</i>	
6. Graham Gussin <i>In The Not Too Distant Future</i>	
7. Graham Gussin <i>Hypnotic, Dystopic, Optic</i>	
8. Mariana Castillo Deball <i>Nobody Was Tomorrow</i>	

8. Mariana Castillo Deball
Nobody Was Tomorrow

Foyer:
Heman Chong
Index (Down)

Stair barriers:
Francesc Ruiz
Untitled (Bristol)

Heman Chong b. 1977, Muar, Malaysia. Based in Berlin, Germany and Singapore
Index (Down) (2009)

Stickers on designated area of foyer wall. Courtesy of the artist

Heman Chong's practice investigates the philosophies and methods used by individuals or communities for imagining the future. His work, which is conceptually driven, uses this research and adapts it into different forms such as installations, publications, objects or situations. *Index (Down)* is part of his ongoing series of installations entitled 'Surfacing', which require the action of putting up 3000 stickers on a wall within a given time frame and physical parameter. The red triangular stickers here are intended to resemble the downward pointing arrows used to denote a fall in value of stock exchanges. Considering the paranoia around the scenario of economic freefall, *Index (Down)* uses this motif to create an abstract pattern evoking a waterfall. It elicits a collective sense of unknowing around how unfathomable such economic systems and their affects are.

Francesc Ruiz b. 1971, Barcelona, Spain. Lives in Barcelona, and Berlin

Untitled (Bristol) (2009)

Self-adhesive digital prints. Courtesy of the artist, Maribel López Gallery, Berlin and Galeria Estrany-De la Mota, Barcelona

Francesc Ruiz often works on projects based on his experiences of the social and urban contexts in which he finds himself. His work is inspired by the grammar and narrative possibilities of cartoon or comic-book illustration, which he sees as a democratic medium. The scenes, which are mainly of crowds and streets, tell of multiple situations that take place in the city. Ruiz spent a period in residence in Bristol researching his project, which is presented around the barriers of the stairwell. The work envisions a walk through two shopping high streets in the south of the city – East Street and North Street. Taking the shop windows as sequential units akin to comic-book vignettes, Ruiz has created a narrative around a dystopian future in which destruction, revolt and anger have invaded the city after an economic downturn. The use of red and blue relates to the Union Jack flag as used in the iconography of the punk era, in which the destruction of this national symbol as well as the “No Future” slogan were used to represent anger and disillusionment with authority.

Jordan Wolfson b. 1980, New York, USA. Lives in New York and Berlin

Untitled (2007)

16mm film transferred to DVD, monitor on media stand, 2:22 min

Courtesy of the artist

Jordan Wolfson’s recent films are concerned with the formal structure of film language and key moments of cultural history. *Untitled* is composed as an equation of image and sound. The visual component centres on a 1984 Macintosh 128k, the first affordable home computer to use a mouse-driven graphical user interface, famously promoted by Ridley Scott’s ‘1984’ TV advertisement. The iconic beige computer is seen stranded by the side of an autumnal road – the Merritt Parkway in Connecticut, built in the late 1930s following the Great Depression. The soundtrack comprises a triumphalist monologue by the art critic Philip Leider concerning the emergence of American abstract painting in the 1950s. Wolfson is interested in obsolescence, and in these elements as generational touchstones. This film considers the future as seen in the past – the invention of aspirational myths and breakthroughs.

Victor Man b. 1974, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Lives in Cluj-Napoca

Untitled (we die,) (2008)

Neon, vinyl. Courtesy of the artist and Johnen Galerie, Berlin

Untitled (Towards an Absent Friend) (2008)

Funerary ceramic with rubber mat. Courtesy the artist and Zero..., Milan

Untitled (2009)

Steel and taxidermy fox head. Courtesy of the artist and Zero..., Milan

Victor Man draws on memory and mourning, 'folk' traditions and the history of art to create oblique arrangements of sombre paintings, texts and minimally altered objects. Often melancholic and sparse, his works seem to refuse unambiguous meaning. In the context of *Sequelism* the artist's seemingly disparate gathering of elements could be read in terms of premonition and symbolic rites which relate to the uncertainty of the future in a similar way that memory relates to the past. A taxidermy fox head is wedged within a metal structure as if a votive or magical offering. Vinyl text on a wall is negated by a neon 'X'. A ceramic funerary plate bears the image of stars, whose arrangement has often been interpreted by man in terms of fate and fortune.

Haegue Yang b. 1971, Seoul, Korea. Lives in Berlin, and Seoul, Korea

Holiday For Tomorrow (2007)

Wooden screens (*Yes-I-Know-Screen*); PVC, shells (*Shell Sculpture*); 10 multi-coloured Venetian blinds, steel cable (*Blind Department*); wooden platform with monitor showing 13 min DVD (*Holiday Story*). Courtesy of the artist and Barbara Wien, Berlin

Haegue Yang's art resists a defining medium, yet in several recent sculptural installations she has employed Venetian blinds and screens to create intimate environments. In her work she attempts to reconcile personal experiences with abstract ones through a form of what she terms poetic activism. *Holiday for Tomorrow* considers our perception of time, and the emotional anticipation of holidays, those socially-agreed days in which labour is suspended and we attempt to rest our bodies and minds. At its centre is a video essay showing Seoul during the Korean harvest holiday Chuseok over which a female voice reflects on the postponement of desire and the dysfunctional hopes triggered by enforced leisure. Positioned alongside patterned wooden and aluminium blinds – which elicit a partitioned space of seclusion – *Shell Sculpture* might remind us of both lazy seaside holidays and Scholar's Rocks which invite contemplation.

Graham Gussin b. London, UK, 1960. Lives in London

Hypnotic/Dystopic/Optic (2009)

Record covers (left-right: Rollerball, Clockwork Orange, The Andromeda Strain (gatefold), Beneath the Planet of the Apes, Blade Runner). Courtesy of the artist

In The Not Too Distant Future (Self Portrait with Sleeping Masks) (2009)

Black and white photograph

Courtesy of the artist

Graham Gussin investigates human comprehension and the parameters of our understanding of reality through suggestions of the unknown. Particularly influenced by science fiction, he engages in various ways with human experience, synthesizing ideas of landscape, vision and time. For the two new works he is presenting in *Sequelism*, Gussin looks again at the unknown and the impossibility of clear vision. *Hypnotic/Dystopic/Optic* presents a 'horizon line' of rotating record covers for soundtracks to renowned dystopian science fiction films. The covers are set to rotate at the speed at which their images 'vaporise' at the limit of visual comprehension, creating a more hypnotic, coercive experience. *In The Not Too Distant Future* is a self-portrait of the artist inspired by a scene from the film *La Jetée* (1962) concerning an experiment in time travel following a nuclear war. The work depicts the artist wearing simple sleeping masks rather than the eye-visors and experimental technology used on the film's protagonist. Gussin hints at an ironic relationship between the ambitions of human comprehension and our simultaneous ability to obscure it.

Mariana Castillo Deball b. 1975, Mexico City, Mexico. Lives in Berlin, and Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Nobody Was Tomorrow (2007)

DVD, 15:42 min. Serbian with English subtitles

Courtesy of the artist

Mariana Castillo Deball is interested in the mechanisms of classification and the way facts and history are written, archived, ordered and distributed. Taking the style of a magical realist tale or childrens' story, *Nobody Was Tomorrow* consists of three interconnected stories based on the fictional connections between three real 'characters' – a machine, a sprawling fig tree and the remains of a Roman bath in Čačak, Serbia – each with echoes of the former Yugoslavia. The film, which is told in still images following in the tradition of ciné-roman ('cinema-novel') and the film *La Jetée* (1962), begins introducing the first of these characters, who also serves as the narrator. Known as 'Nobody' this now defunct accelerating aging machine owned by Belgrade's National Library was used by restorers to simulate time's effects on the durability of books and artifacts. "The present", the artist has suggested, "is a mixture of different temporalities: events, objects and spaces from multiple times co-exist in what we call actuality". Castillo Deball makes us mindful of culture's fortunes through a swirling fable about the sedimentation of time, encapsulated by an image of a damaged book.



Sequelism is the third in the Futurology series of exhibitions at Arnolfini, which is a cultural investigation into how representations of the future affect the present. Please visit the website for more information:

www.futurologyprogramme.org

EVENTS AND SCREENINGS

Museum Futures: Distributed (2008)

Screening / Discussion, Sat 18 July, 2.00pm, free

The Futurological Congress

Sequelism artists' screening programme

Screening, Fri 21 Aug 7.30pm, £3.00/£2.00 concs

David Maljkovic

Scene for a New Heritage Trilogy (2004-6)

Screening, Thurs 17 Sept, 6.30pm, free

Roy Ascott

Art and the Technoetic Revolution:

When the Mind Outgrows the Body

Artists' talk, Saturday 19 Sept, 2pm, free

Will Holder

Neologisms Workshop

Workshop, Sept, date tbc, Free

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