



Other People's Projects: Studio Voltaire

Simon Bedwell, Spartacus Chetwynd, Dawn Mellor and Maria Pask

Friday 22 February – Sunday 30 March 2008

OFFSITE: White Columns, New York

320 West 13th Street (Enter on Horatio Street, between Hudson and 8th Avenue), New York, NY 10014

Other People's Projects is an occasional programming strand at White Columns, New York in which their project space is offered to idiosyncratic organizations, collectives, publishers, individuals, etc. to introduce their activities and/or enthusiasms to a wider audience. Studio Voltaire's presentation marks the second stage of collaboration between the two organisations following White Columns' exhibition at Studio Voltaire last autumn.

Studio Voltaire will present the work of four artists that the organisation has either had a close association with or is currently working with: Simon Bedwell, Spartacus Chetwynd, Dawn Mellor and Maria Pask. Although not a thematic exhibition as such, all the works in varying degrees refer to the performer, Michael Jackson. Functioning as a kind of prop, the somewhat random link attempts to bring together a diverse group of artists and introduce Studio Voltaire's programming to a wider audience.

Dawn Mellor will present an extensive series of drawings of Michael Jackson the artist made when she was a teenager in the eighties; as well a precursor to Mellor's concern with celebrities and fan culture, the drawings indicate the burgeoning sexuality and artistic ambition of the young artist. Both Spartacus Chetwynd and Maria Pask have made performances based on early music videos using groups of amateurs but with different motivations. Chetwynd's *Thriller* documents two performances based on Jackson's seminal video. The reenactment acts as a D.I.Y. homage to the first music video to be made by a major Hollywood director. In contrast, Pask's reworking of Beat it shows two gangs of Lithuanian and Dutch art students acting out the dance routine as an accessible metaphor for complex political issues surrounding the entrance of countries into Europe and the subsequent formation of a new superstate. Simon Bedwell's adapted posters of Black musicians and pop stars plays with the semiotics of the image and text, while subtly referring to Jackson's Black heritage.



About White Columns:

White Columns is New York's oldest alternative art space. It was founded in 1970 by Jeffrey Lew and Gordon Matta-Clark as an experimental platform for artists. The non for profit gallery presents an ongoing program of exhibitions, projects, talks, screenings and events. Over the past thirty-seven years hundreds of artists have benefited from early exposure and support at White Columns, including: William Wegman, Sonic Youth, Jack Goldstein, John Stezaker, David Wojnarowicz, Group Material, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Cady Noland, ACT-UP, John Currin, and Sean Landers, amongst many others. Since 2005, under the directorship of Matthew Higgs, the organisation has presented the work of more than 250 international artists - of all generations - in more than sixty individual exhibitions and projects.

whitecolumns.org

About the artists:

Simon Bedwell lives and works in London and exhibited at Studio Voltaire in 2004 as a part of the group exhibition *TONIGHT* curated by Paul O'Neill. Recent solo exhibitions include: *The Furnishers*, White Columns, New York (2007), *The Researchers*, Byam Shaw School of Art Gallery (2007) and *Gents: A Melodrama with 2 Acts*, Platform, London (2005). Bedwell was a founding member of the now defunct collective BANK, an important counterpoint to the YBA's of the London art scene in the 1990s.

Spartacus Chetwynd has a close relationship to Studio Voltaire. In addition to being a studio member, the organisation commissioned *The Walk to Dover*, an offsite project in 2005 and also collaborates with the artist on *Sparky Chatroom's Film Club* – an occasional informal screening programme. Recent solo exhibitions include: Massimo De Carlo, Milan (2008), Le Consortium, Dijon (2008) and Migros Museum, Zurich (2007). Previous performances include: *Six Actions for NYC*, Creative Time, New York (2007); *Money*, Art Perform/ Art Basel Miami Beach (2006) and *Delirious*, Serpentine Gallery (2006).

Dawn Mellor lives and works in London. In 2007, Studio Voltaire organised *Vile Affections*, a touring exhibition by the artist. Recent solo exhibitions include Migros Museum, Zurich (2008), Spacex, Exeter (2008), TEAM Gallery, (2008, 2006 and 2003) and Victoria Miro (2001 and 1999). Mellor holds a studio at Studio Voltaire.

Maria Pask lives and works in Amsterdam. The artist participated in last years *Skulptur Projekte* in Muenster. Previous solo exhibitions and performances include Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam (2006), Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes (2005) and BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht (2004). Studio Voltaire is currently working with the artist towards a major commission for Autumn 2008.