8 February - 23 March 2019

THE MODEL CITIZEN
About RMIT Gallery, curating, and communication - 3

Media release: RMIT Gallery exhibition challenges us to define The Model Citizen - 4

The Model Citizen themes - 5

Curating The Model Citizen: Q & A with Sean Redmond & Darrin Verhagen - 6

The Model Citizen artists & their works - 9

Glossary of term - 19

Curator’s Statement

This exhibition is orientated around two intersecting points: how modelling enables artists to reshape and remake the world; and how citizenship is itself crafted out of forms of selfhood and belonging that are represented to be ideal or exemplary. Of course, the question of who gets to model, and who is included in the pantheon of noble citizens, is related to access and power, to gender and race.

If I am not a citizen, then what am I? If I am an artist without form, then do I melt into air?

In modelling citizenship, each of the artists involved in this exhibition model their art and their understanding of citizenship through a conscious play with scale and size, stillness and movement, sound and silence, and by engaging in a dialogue with the engines of capital and the abstract power that governs our lives. We are modelling citizenship.

Are you a model citizen?

The artists involved in this exhibition share similar beliefs: that thinking through making establishes and nourishes the way public life is experienced and understood; that as creative and critical stakeholders, artists have a central role to play in shaping public life; and that through the very act of modelling, creative processes become social practices.

Let me be a citizen who lives without fear. Let me be an artist who knows the truth.

By Sean Redmond and Darrin Verhagen
About

RMIT Gallery

RMIT Gallery is the University’s premier exhibition space. It presents an engaging and thought provoking program of exhibitions and events; featuring emerging and established Australian and international artists working across visual art, new media, sonic art, design, fashion, technology and popular culture. RMIT Gallery is committed to showcasing RMIT research outcomes and cultural stories, and to presenting exhibitions and events that are relevant to the student population and experience.

Curating

Lighting

We use ERCO gallery track lighting which is a flexible lighting system that allows us to add and remove lights, manipulate their positions and strengths.


OH&S issues

RMIT Gallery encounters OH&S issues, but they vary depending on the exhibition and the environments. Our priority lies with the safety of the artworks and the visitors. We ensure that exhibition spaces are accessible for large groups, wheelchair users and prams; monitor low lighting levels for people with low vision, and ensure the floors are stable and dry. Some contemporary artworks have particular challenges involved, like strobe lighting, water or heat.

Conservation and Preservation

RMIT Gallery works to international museum standards of best practice. All our artworks are stored in specially designed artwork storage spaces and are handled by trained technicians. If an artwork needs repairs or conservation, we will send it to a conservation specialist.

https://commercial.unimelb.edu.au/gccmc-conservation-services

Temperature, humidity and pests control

RMIT Gallery maintains the gallery environment at a temperature between 18-22°C. A stable temperature is very important to maintaining the condition of artworks, particularly if the works are old or in a fragile condition. We also have IPMS (Integrated Pest Management Systems) that monitors pests and hygrothermographs monitoring the relative humidity of the gallery spaces.

Transportation of art works

We use specialist artwork transport companies to transport artworks, whether that be locally, nationally or internationally. By using specialist freight companies, we are ensured that our artworks will be cared for. These companies use humidity controlled trucks, have qualified art handlers as staff, and take extra special care of the cargo.


Storage of art works

Artworks are wrapped in specialist materials (tyvek, glassine, bubble wrap) and stored so that we can rest assured that their condition is stable. Our collections storage sites are temperature controlled; the 2D works are hung on storage racks and 3D works are usually stored in crates.

Communications

RMIT Gallery utilises owned, earned, bought and shared media across all platforms – print/ digital/ online

Owned – our own rmitgallery.com website; RMIT Gallery university website; RMIT Gallery, YouTube Channel, RMIT Gallery soundcloud; EDMs (Electronic Direct Mailouts); printed invitations and public program list on postcards distributed around tourism and cultural venues by DrawCard.

Earned – response from media via sending out media releases, approach to media and reviewers

Bought – paid advertising in art magazines, online listings, radio ads

Shared media – active in social media: Instagram/ Facebook/Twitter/LinkedIn/Weibo
RMIT Gallery Exhibition Challenges Us to Define The Model Citizen

The time has come to decide what sort of citizens we want to be. From harvesting the data of the dead to hybrid bio robot citizens, the high stakes are explored in RMIT Gallery’s compelling new exhibition The Model Citizen (8 February - 23 March).

Curators Sean Redmond and Darrin Verhagen say it is now more important than ever to ask what defines a ‘model citizen’, as the question of citizenship is newly and sometimes cruelly defined by governments.

“The exhibition investigates the way humans map and make sense of the world, and how they form imagined communities,” said Dr Verhagen, senior lecturer in Media and Communication, RMIT.

“Too often, the question of who is classified as a model citizen is related to access and power, to gender and race. What we propose is that art can operate as a public form of truth or dare, and in its ‘making’ or ‘modelling’ can shine a powerful light on what it means to belong.”

According to Prof Sean Redmond (Screen and Design, Deakin University), the two aspects of the exhibition title are equally important: artists desire that through modelling, their art becomes political life; and citizenship itself needs (re)modelling as it suffers in an age of withering truth and fake news.

“As creative and critical stakeholders, artists have a central role to play in shaping public life. This exhibition isn’t intended to just creatively comment on the politics and poetics of the model citizen, but to offer up ways of transforming the processes of citizenship itself.”

The Model Citizen features artists Asim Bhatti, David Cross, Larissa Hjorth, Leah Kardos, Jondi Keane, Bronlek Kozka, Lyn McCredden, John McCormick, Shaun McLeod, Rowan McNaught, Olivia Millard, Adam Nash, Patrick Pound, Sean Redmond, Sadia Sadia, Polly Stanton and (((20hz))).

Award-winning Canadian-born UK-based installation artist Sadia Sadia’s immersive, large scale video work ‘Ghosts of Noise’ is a reaction to, and comment on, the cyclical nature of 24-hour news. In creating the piece, she recorded a multitude of newscasters from a wide assortment of news channels then layered the images one over the other creating a work with ever-increasing layers of disturbance, streams of facts, figures, voices and faces to produce an omnipresent ‘noise’ of information.

“Model citizenship exists in the tension between compliance and subversion, in the friction between individual integrity and the needs of the state,” she said.

Larissa Hjorth, Distinguished Professor and director of the Design & Creative Practice ECP platform at RMIT University, is one of the artists featured in The Model Citizen.

A digital ethnographer and artist, Hjorth is committed to cross-cultural, intergenerational and interdisciplinary approaches to the social dimensions of mobile technology.

Her work #dearfuturecitizen asks audience members to sit on a fake island and contemplate the future of data in their life. Through postcard prompts, audience participants are asked to write on a postcard their hopes and fears for the future of data. It seeks to ask: how should living with data of the dead look and feel like?

These postcards will then be documented through social media #dearfuturecitizen to curate a space for sharing these stories and hopes online.

“In a few years, Facebook will have more dead than living users,” Hjorth said.

“What does it mean to live with data of the dead haunting us every day? Do you have a digital legacy provision about who will steward your data when you are dead?”
The Model Citizen Themes

Are you a Model Citizen?

The very definition of what a citizen is, and what citizenship entails, is highly vexatious, particularly in the age of wanton consumption, feverish globalisation and the flow of migration.

On the one hand, new and vibrant multi-culture societies have emerged, so that citizenship is laced with the hopeful stories and inclusive rituals of people from all corners of the world.

On the other hand, people are denied citizenship rights on the basis of their religion, race and ethnicity, although this is cleverly framed in terms of border security, national sovereignty, and the scarcity of resources.

In Australia, we turn back boats on those who seek refuge, a new place to call home. These refugees are without passports, or citizenship. They are powerless. And what of the indigenous people who first called this Australia, ‘home’? They are marginalised and held up to be, so very often, less-than model citizens.

Citizenship involves both rights bestowed and rights denied, such as on those defined as Other; is never fixed but subject to transformations in national and international law; and involves not just legal and political jurisdiction but notions of ethical behaviour and active agency.

Nation States ‘make’ model citizens and in turn citizenship shapes the moral and cultural compass of the national imaginary. Citizenship is called upon both as a form of ‘national glue’ and as a mechanism to create unequal and sometimes violent binaries between citizens and non-citizens.

The rules of citizenship are of course closely monitored, nurtured and maintained. The history and culture one is taught at school anchors and reproduces an often sanitised version of citizenry that one is meant to align with; the school fetes, community events, and elections one votes in becomes part of the materiality of citizenship; the mortgage, the Flybuys and AMEX cards, the frenzied trips to ikea and the yearly holiday to Sorrento, becomes the ingredients through which regulatory citizenship shapes behaviour, dreamscapes and ideologies.

The overcrowded prisons, ubiquitous CCTV cameras, shop bar codes, state driving licences and electronic passports are the legal processes through which we are ticked and docketed, and then fined and imprisoned if we fail to be model citizens after all.

The Model Citizen exhibition is caught between these two vexing poles of exploring rights and freedoms verses restrictions and oppressions, and it is the intention of the artists to test, question, and undermine how, why and when we become – or not – proto-typical model citizens.

The aim of this exhibition, then, is to also engage with, and unsettle, the very notion of what should constitute as a Model Citizen.

More boldly, the exhibition suggests that the time has come to decide what kind of citizens we want to be: do we work alone and for the neo-liberal conception of the individual, or do we come together as and through communities of renewal and rejuvenation?

This exhibition isn’t intended, then, to just creatively comment on the politics and poetics of the model citizen, but to suggest ways of transforming the processes of citizenship itself.

Given the collapse in truth, and the complexities of living in a war-torn age, under the sun of environmental collapse, and the yoke of audit culture, the exhibition speaks to a mode of survival, urgently deploying the power of the impossible to stand against the once unthinkable acts taking place in the world.

The models on show are not simply theoretical or performative: they are activist in formation. In an attempt to propose that art can operate as a public form of truth or dare, and in its ‘making’ or modelling can shine a powerful light on what it means to belong and to be excluded, the exhibition will act as a life jacket, assisting the model citizen with a place to find refuge.

Art Modelling Citizenship

The relationship between art and citizenship is clearly a contentious one.

This exhibition takes on the challenge of questioning and determining the role that artists play in modelling model citizenship. How does art reproduce citizenship? When, how and why do artists
challenge dominant ways of thinking and making the model citizen? Should the purpose of citizenry be activist, and liberating? How might one use models to interrogate the forms and embodiments of citizenship?

Models and modelling are powerful ways to express arts’ relationship to, and critical engagement with citizenship.

Statistical models, digital models, simulations, mathematical models, process models, clay models, scale models, and detailed models are all ways of making distinctions that define and refine the relationship of art and abstraction to the world-in-the-making.

Once the model breaks away from its point of origin or creation, from its seclusion and isolation in the lab, and enters the world it becomes a way to think through making, challenging other citizens to see the model as more than scale, size and materiality. The model, on entering the world, enters into a relationship with the social and newly comes into dynamic contact with the socio-cultural environment, reshaping it as does so.

Attendees to the exhibition will be engaged with the very acts (models) of becoming model citizens. The exhibition is a creative-political act. The exhibition is also playful and at times interactive: a number of the models invite engagement, interaction, offering attendees the chance to think and shape the world differently as they encounter the installation.

By Sean Redmond and Darrin Verhagen

Curating The Model Citizen

Q&A with Sean Redmond & Darrin Verhagen

What is the inspiration for The Model Citizen?

The inspiration for the model citizen is the malaise of the modern world, the rise of hate speech and the collapse of facts to be replaced by innumerable fictions. We are also interested in the rise of active, messy and hopeful participatory activist culture – where citizens take it upon themselves to shout back and flood the streets with chants of transformation. We felt that these two poles provided us with a dynamism to make something quite wonderful in an exhibition.

The idea for the exhibition came through a series of artists workshops with poets, photographers, painters, dancers, those working with and in robotics and AI, video art, sound art, and playful public art. It was an amazing coming together of different traditions, pulling in the same direction. The actual spark that led to the full exhibition came from Jondi Keane, whose brilliant work is included in the exhibition.

The concept of modelling was central. We felt it was through the poetics of modelling – the actual reshaping of the world through modelling artistic practice - that we could engage with the politics of citizenship.

What is the curators’ role in this exhibition?

There are numerous roles we take on with the aim of curating an exhibition that not only showcases the artists’ work in the best possible light, but draws a thread between the works, a set of coincidences and collisions in terms of where the works are placed and negotiated with one another.

We see the exhibition as an entity in itself; it is a lifeforce and is meant to be part of the theatre, and the overall design and atmosphere are an active ‘stakeholder’ in the aesthetics of the works.

Our role as curators is to lead and listen; to work with the gallery technicians and directors; our lighting team and our designer to produce a memorable ‘show’ that transforms the way attendees think about the model citizen.

We think that curation is fine detail planning but also happenchance. The magic emerges during the installation, while we are walking the floor, and spending time in empty rooms. Most of all, it is about daring to imagine. This is about the bravery of discovery, and of things that might not work but need to be tested. It is shout in the dark and a cartography of fieldnotes!

How long did it take to plan the exhibition?

It took about 18 months, from first workshop to opening night. We are quite methodical in the way we work and plan, but we take our time, looking to
build ideas and themes as the dialogue continues between us and the artists.

What were the practical considerations you had to consider in putting the exhibition together?

These included resources available, space considerations, technical issues such as sound and light bleed between works, health and safety worries. We also had to consider overreach, where what one might be planning may or cannot work in the way the artist wants or intends.

Can you talk about the process of working with artists?

Most of the artists in the exhibition we know personally or professionally, since they are drawn from our colleagues at RMIT and Deakin Universities. Because it was workshop driven, at least in the early stages of planning, exhibition planning was a very organic and intimate process. We had shared and collective conversations, in a warm and collegial way. It was like being part of an extended family!

When it comes to installation, that process becomes very much one to one. We work with each artist to ensure that their work is presented in the way they want. There are also some tough decisions made at this stage, as compromises are looked for and reached.

What were the factors in selecting artworks for The Model Citizen?

We ensured that there were different forms of artistic modelling carried through the exhibition, and that there were numerous artforms and approaches being represented.

We wanted the core carriers of citizenship to be embedded in the various works; from data surveillance to celebrity culture, from the Anthropocene to the monotony of routine.

What is the most challenging aspect of curating this exhibition?

Sean: for me, it is trying to hold on to the daring that one has – to try to shape and fold an exhibition into view that ‘matters’, that talks differently, that opens attendees up to new ways of imagining and thinking.

There is a pull at times to race towards the beige middle, and it is not always easy to carry through the bravery that one knows exists in the conceit of the exhibition, in the works presented. One thing that we do as curators is to push back against mediocrity.

Darrin: For me it was not having a clear sense as to exactly how all the elements would come together. There is a significant gap between the logic of how something reads as a conceptual conceit on the drawing board at the outset and how it might be experienced once it is in play with both the other works as well as the broader exhibition.

That challenge is a combination of holding trust and then actively shaping the elements once all the pieces are in place. I’ve worked with Bluebottle Lighting (Design) and Richard Grant (video artist and catalog designer) for about 25 years, as well as with RMIT Gallery on a number of installations, so having that track record with the broader team, faith that everything will come together is easier to hold.

How do you both work together during the curating process?

Sean: we are chalk and cheese personality wise, and yet we are both very quiet and quite unassuming people. We constantly chat, accept each other’s ideas, and both want the best idea to be the one that is carried forward.

We divvy up different tasks but always cover each other. However, we do fall out occasionally, often in very, very funny circumstances. But it blows over in seconds and we are back on track.

Darrin: The active part of the curatorial process is tracking how artworks are ‘feeling against each other’. So much of how an exhibition comes together – particularly if we’re involving lighting designers as well - happens during the bump in when we have all the works together in one space and can see how they work with each other.

When inevitable technical issues occur or different ideas are discussed, I think a good sense of humor is critical! Being able to be completely serious about a passionate perspective on something whilst not taking the process itself seriously is one of the things I love about the Australian character.

What advice would you give to academics about transforming research into an art exhibition?

Sean: I have always seen the poetry in academic writing, and when I write academic papers or books, I am always alive to the creative possibility...
that sits like a warm ghost around the discourse.

I would encourage academics to always see their academic work as creative, and to hear and feel the pulse of creative ideas that can emerge from their scholarship. Listen to your words again, see them as movies, plays, poems, paintings. From then on, it is about planning and execution, working with good people who share your vision, and who can help you bring the work into living, breathing existence.

Darrin: The first piece of advice I would give is “Don’t feel obliged to.” Depending on the focus of the research, the aesthetic and technical capacity of the academic and available resources it may be an utterly terrible idea!

I don’t always want to hear what an artist has to say and I don’t always want to look at what an academic has made. The challenge is often for academics to consider what the feeling of experiencing their work will be (particularly if people don’t understand how clever they are being). I love works which might be exploring a concept but are playful (or beautiful, or terrifying) enough on their own merits to float free of the one sheet on the wall…

That said, the links between creating in different media do interest me. I realized a while back when comparing a delicate sound art album I had written with one of my Noise CDs as to how similar the process of construction was for each, and how aligned the feeling was when working on two such oppositional genres (in regards to emotion and energy).

I had also just finished a book chapter at the time and I then realized that the writing process was no different. The materials across each of the three activities are quite distinct, but the act of shaping the elements into formal structures in order to execute particular agendas – and the joys associated with that obsessive crafting - are very much aligned.

Sean Redmond and Darrin Verhagen spoke to RMIT Gallery intern WAN Xinyue (Juno)
The Model Citizen

Artists

Asim BHATTI, John McCormick & Adam NASH

Asim Bhatti is an Associate Professor at Institute for Intelligent Systems Research and Innovation (IISRI), Deakin University. A/Prof Bhatti leads the areas of research including Neuroengineering, and Cognition and performance assessment. His research involves designing the technologies and techniques to interact with the brain at cell level to understand how brain works and why does it stop working.

John McCormick has a long artistic history in new media, dance, motion capture, artistic robotics, mixed reality and telematic performance. He was the recipient of an Australia Council Fellowship in 2007-2008. John has collaborated on works worldwide and was a founding member of Company In Space, Dancehouse, Squaretangle and WildSystem. John is a researcher and lecturer at Swinburne University of Technology.

Adam Nash Melbourne-based artist, composer, programmer, performer and writer Adam Nash is internationally recognised as one of the most innovative and influential artists working in virtual environments and mixed-reality technology. His work uses audiovisual performance spaces, artificial intelligence, data/motion capture and generative platforms. His work has been presented in galleries, festivals and online in Australia, Europe, Asia and The Americas, including the Venice Biennale, SIGGRAPH, ISEA, ZERO1SJ, NGV, QGOMA, Singapore ArtScience Museum and the National Portrait Gallery of Australia. He is Associate Dean of Digital Design at the School of Design, RMIT University, Melbourne.

What does the model citizen mean to you?

“There are only boundaries and analogies. To accept an analogy is to respect boundaries, but a boundary is itself an analogy. Look closely enough, and neither boundaries nor analogies exist. Even so, boundaries define citizenship, and models. In other words, boundaries model citizenship. A model is an analogy, a bounded simulation, a representation of an ideal, and representation is another word for analogy. To model is to modulate from within one set of boundaries to within another set of boundaries. The map is not the territory, the person is not the citizen, a robot is not a person. A robot is simply a set of bounded models, but if it is modelled as a person, a nation might accord it citizenship, but only as an analogy. Viruses transcend boundaries intrinsically and are immune to analogy. By attempting to prevent the movement of viruses across borders, we accord them citizenship. Digital data, which is operationalised analogy, modulates across boundaries, but these viral tendencies are subjugated to citizenship in global capital.”

Neuron Conductor, 2019
3D printed robot, virtual environment, generative spatial soundscape, hemispherical mirror projection
installation dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artists

Neuron Conductor is a hybrid biological-machine. In this artwork, a biological brain controls a robot arm to produce a musical score. Viruses such as dengue and ZIKA are the source material for striking compositions. The robot interacts with the biological neural network of mosquito neurons to generate its creative musical procedures.

The introduction of stimuli to ZIKA virus infected mosquito neurons causes signature variations in the patterns. They are filtered through the robot to create the robot's movement, which generates the music.

Asim Bhatti, John McCormick and Adam Nash, Neuron Conductor (Confocal microscopic image of mosquito primary neurons post Zika Virus infection), 2019, 3D printed robot, virtual environment, generative spatial soundscape, hemispherical mirror projection, installation dimensions variable, courtesy of the artists
David CROSS

David Cross is an artist, curator and writer who works across performance, installation and public art. His practice brings together performance art and object-based environments, focusing on relationships between pleasure, the grotesque, phobia and the possibility of intimacy. Cross has exhibited widely across New Zealand, Australia, France, Eastern Europe, Canada and the United Kingdom. He is Professor of Visual Arts at Deakin University. See: www.davidcrossartist.com

What does the model citizen mean to you?

“The model citizen is someone who is prepared to risk their own wellbeing to defend the complexity, safety and agency of any person at any time. The model citizen does not wait for someone else to intervene but uses everything at their disposal (guile, charm, chutzpah, physical capacity or theatricality) to defend the complexity of the polis. The model citizen prioritises this over the infinitely safer strategy of pretending it will all blow over and someone else will sort it out.”

Larissa HJORTH

Larissa Hjorth is a digital ethnographer, artist, Distinguished Professor and director of the Design & Creative Practice ECP platform at RMIT University. Hjorth is committed to cross-cultural, intergenerational and interdisciplinary approaches to the social dimensions of mobile technology.

Double Negative, 2019
inflatable structure, canvas, video documentation of performance
installation dimensions variable
duration: 0:03:51
Courtesy of the artist
Performers: Cameron Bishop, Henry Bishop, Adam Douglas, Ceri Hann, Ryan James, Jondi Keane, Luci Pangrazio, Lynda Roberts, Dyrn Thomas, Dario Vacirca
Camera and Editing: Shane McGrath
Sculptural Components: Ellie Boekman, Edie Cross

Double Negative is a game that does not work very well; despite players’ fitness or coordination, this sport consistently fails to reward. It has absurdly elevated constraints that limit the capacity of the individual player and the team. Only one of the four players are able to clearly see the action taking place around them; the other players are blindfolded by the inflated structure. ‘The Seer’ is both the leader and the commentator – they instruct their team mates to move in specific directions and speeds in the hope that they might catch a ball in their net. Double Negative points to the hilarity, complexity and inequity of collective engagement.

#dearfuturecitizen, 2019
installation: artificial lawn, plants, cushions, postcard prompts, vinyl lettering
installation dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Facebook will soon have more deceased than living users. #dearfuturecitizen questions what it means to live with data of the dead haunting us.
Do you have a digital legacy provision about who will steward your data when you are dead?
What should living with the data of the dead look and feel like?
Please contemplate the future of your data by responding to the postcard prompts. Share your stories and hopes for your online data by tagging #dearfuturecitizen
What does the model citizen mean to you?

“My text about the work was written in light of what I think is the model citizen. That is, the conundrum of agency in and around datafication and mobile technologies. Much of the focus has been on the model citizen “life”. I want to give emphasis to the importance of model citizen “death” in the age of datafication.”

Leah KARDOS & Sean REDMOND

Leah Kardos is a London-based Gold Coast-born composer and producer making eclectic instrumental music that explores on the communicative power of timbre, memory and pattern recognition, the beauty of spaces, and the creative affordances of specific technical limitations. A signed recording artist with boutique new classical label Bigo & Twigetti, she also writes music for film & TV, and is a senior lecturer in music at Kingston University London. Personal website: www.leahkardos.com

Sean Redmond is Professor of Screen and Design at Deakin University. His art practice resides in re-making and re-thinking identity, whether it be the refugee seeking asylum, or the wannbe celebrity drunk on the likes of instafame. With Darrin Verhagen, he curated the very successful Morbis Artis: Diseases of The Arts in 2017 at RMIT Gallery.

The Unknown Celebrity, 2019

installation: custom merchandise, audio soundscapes
Mirror – duration: 0:09:20
Memory – duration: 0:08:17
Shrine – duration: 0:21:08
Sleep – duration: 0:10:32
installation dimensions variable

Courtesey of the artists
Image production: Russell Kennedy, Sean Redmond

The Unknown Celebrity is a model of an obsessed fan’s bedroom. The celebrity figure is a composite whose image has been software-generated with examples of celebrities in currency. This bedroom worships the unknown celebrity, who is an example of a model citizen. In a twist of circumstance, the individual whose room it is, is the unknown celebrity who is being worshipped; their bedroom is a haunting mirror of their own invisibility and desire to be noticed.

The four separate components of the soundscape are haunted by the timbres of one’s embedded musical memory; they are designed to be experienced in various locations within the constructed environment.

What does the model citizen mean to you?

Leah Kardos

“My model citizen is a person who represents the shared human experience in contemporary media cultures. A person whose development is influenced and shaped by outside stimulus - preferences, ideologies and philosophies growing in the hothouse of contemporary fandom.”
Sean Redmond

“We decide to build a city. As we furrow bricks onto the carpet we must decide what our great modern, model city will be. It will need a school, says one child, learning is really important, and so we build a school with computers, laboratories, art rooms and an assembly hall for all to gather and chatter in. It will need a hospital, another child says, so the poorly can be made well. We build a gleaming hospital with operating rooms, brightly painted wards, stocked with cabinets of red, blue and yellow medicines. A boy on the edge of the carpet suggests it will need a grocery store stocked with lovely foods so that no one goes hungry, not ever. A green fronted store appears as if by magic. It will need a prison, another child shouts out, rushing forward, to put the bad people in. We build a prison made of black bricks and without any windows and with cells only one brick wide. In the middle of the prison we construct a tall tower with a searchlight that sees into every cell. The citizens will be safe now, one child whispers to another. A court room appears, a shopping mall, play areas and lush green parks, suburban homes with picket fences and sparkling swimming pools. Train, trams and buses run freely over wide, open roads and the city begins to hum like a songbird. But something is missing, one child calls out. What could it be? In the centre of our model, modern metropolis a glittering building begins to emerge: fairy lights fall of its huge, decadenent windows, giant red theatre doors pull the walls inwards and a red carpet floats before it. Fancy dressed people are placed on this carpet. Flumes of feathers dance in the air, one child suggests. A reporter with a flash gun takes photos. A child holds up a whirring helicopter in their hands, flying it over the city, over this opulent gathering of film stars. The children all agree that a modern, model city needs famous people, like they will be, like they all want to be....”

Jondi KEANE

Jondi Keane is an arts practitioner, critical thinker and Associate Professor of Art and Performance at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. For more than three decades he has exhibited, performed and collaborated on projects in the USA, UK, Europe and Australia, and publishes widely on art’s relationship to perception, embodied cognition, experimental architecture and practice-led research.

PRE-VALENCE: MODELLING THE CONDITIONS FOR LIFE, 2018-2019
digital video – performance documentation, live performance
duration: 0:32:23 looped, 0:36:28 looped
Courtesy of the artist

This performance-installation enacts a series of exercises beneficial for the aspiring model citizen. The aim of the exercises is to figure out “of what a body is capable.” (Spinoza)

The work has two tiers; the top tier consists of videos that depict the Sisyphean administrative and bureaucratic tasks of living, from which self-reinvention can find a foothold. The lower tier consists of video in which drawing a circle and a square simultaneously becomes a way to explore how attention, perception, decision, memory and judgment are interconnected but have a degree of freedom. The extent of this freedom is to be determined collectively.

The performative tasks of PRE-VALENCE examine the conditions in which value is assigned what is at stake declaring ourselves as citizens of the world.

What does the model citizen mean to you?

“Don’t just stand there, go head over heels even without moving, mobilize the fissures and cracks in each micro-fascism as it bubbles up and appears on the inner horizon of thought-feeling and action. Re-invent the way the body, the person and the environment share events but not extents... practice, practice, practice. Share results, make notes, take note, take care. Go fishing and pro-finding in the profound and undo the rigidity of past understandings. Stand and deliver to the earth some uber-eats that nourish the human-non-human. Take part, exercise your discretion to discern the pre-valence, ambi-valence, omni-valence of your dispositions. Gather your books get some chalk, put a wall up on wheels.”
Bronek KOZKA

Bronek Kozka lives and works in Melbourne Australia. Kozka has completed a BA (photography), MA (Arts) and is currently a PhD candidate: “Perfect: Synthetic: hyper-reality, the re-staging of memory and the tableau” which looks at cultural theme parks, outdoor museums and historical re-enactment groups. Kozka work is held in private and public collections in Australia and internationally. He is represented by Bett Gallery Hobart, Australia and Clelia Belgrado Gallery in Genova, Italy.

Surveillance, 2019
surveillance cameras, readymade sculpture, thermal imaging
installation dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist, Bett Gallery, Hobart and Clelia Belgrado Gallery, Genova, Italy

Using thermal imaging technology, video surveillance and readymade sculptural elements, Surveillance explores the idea of watching and being watched. Watching changes our behaviour. In the same moment we can feel safe, secure and reassured yet uneasy about being observed.

The images have been made using a thermal capture device. Most thermal cameras, trackers and rifle scopes do not have sufficient resolution to discern subtle detail. The person in view is reduced to a heat signature, an object or a target; their individuality, personality and humanity are gone.

Rather than capturing light and shadow, thermal cameras or scopes capture contours in heat. Thermal detection allows these devices to photograph through smog and smoke, foliage and other barriers. This technology is used for military surveillance or, if attached to a weapons system, for identifying and tracking targets. It has recently become available to the public for applications such as home security and hunting.

What does the model citizen mean to you?

“Compliant, subordinate and controlled, these were the first words that came to me when thinking about the idea of the ‘Model Citizen’ - rather sad in many ways but kind of expected I think in a Brexit/Trump/Facebook world. The idea of the citizen, the ‘legally recognized subject or national of a state or commonwealth’, and the associated the high ideals of belonging and responsibility and then the idea of the ‘model’ - a thing used as an example to follow... I find it disappointing that I’m taken to such negative places. I am interested and concerned that through media, news and even down the TV/Netflix/iTunes programming, the increased presence of security and of course surveillance our behaviour is being modified - we are being ‘processed’ a manufactured programme perversion of the model citizen.”

Bronek Kozka, Model Behaviour, 2018, thermal image, courtesy of the artist and Bett Gallery, Hobart
Lyn McCREDDEN, Shaun McLEOD, Olivia MILLARD & Victor RENOLDS

Lyn McCredden is a poet and literary scholar. She is Professor of Literary Studies at Deakin University. Her 2018 collection of poetry, from which the exhibition poems are excerpted, is entitled Wanting Only (Ginninderra Press, Adelaide, 2018).

Shaun McLeod is a dancer, choreographer and academic at Deakin University. His work often involves practices of improvisation and placing dance outside of the theatre space. He is a member the performance group About Now who have performed in a number of site-specific situations. www.aboutnow.net

Olivia Millard: For the past 20 years, Olivia Millard has worked as a performer, maker and lecturer of dance. She has created over 20 dance works, both funded and commissioned, including for the Asian Young Choreographers Project in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, and was the recipient of a Creative Development Fellowship from Arts WA in 2003. Olivia works at Deakin University as a Lecturer in Art and Performance.

Victor Renolds: With a background in the 80’s Perth alternative music scene, Victor Renolds has contributed to the works of contemporary choreographers, theatre practitioners and other multi-disciplinary art-forms since 1989. These collaborations have seen his music, soundscape and interactive multimedia creations (dis)played in Amsterdam, Darwin, Kaohsiung, London, Melbourne, New York, Paris and Perth. Victor works as the Mobile Learning Designer at La Trobe University.

What does the model citizen mean to you?

Lyn McCredden

“Model citizens’ immerse themselves in both the material and the immaterial, to engage with the noisy, fragmentary, multiple and often violent world, but also to seek - or make - a place of equilibrium and calm. The exuberant materiality of art – its colours, bodiliness, genres, constant change and search for new forms – is replenished through access to a world of non-material, even sacred, release. The German term, ‘gelassenheit’ speaks to this place of holding, balance and non-forced stillness; of composure, yielding, submission, self-surrender, acceptance. It is the act of non-willing, of letting go of our will, of our insistence on interpretation, meaning-making, aware of the paradox that we cannot will ourselves to be in a state of non-willing.”

Shaun McLeod

“Embodiment is a principle of citizenship. Participation in the social or political realm starts from the specific embodiment of an individual who, as much as he/she might be mobilizing their resources, might also be caught up in a swirling dynamic of cultural interactions. The forceful qualities of these interactions reverberate, leaving their echoes in and around our bodies. The currents of personal and social affects through which we move on a daily basis often seem beyond our control, registering in our bodies in ways which we are not always consciously aware of. We seek to look after ourselves in small ways as much as we seek to survive in extreme situations. If self-care, as a personal response to the toll that affects might inflict, is even possible, then it is a response to embodiment. The release from pain, or the opening to joy, may be fleeting and require constant recalibrations - an im-

Still Point, 2019 two-channel digital video and audio

Courtesy of the artists

Video capture and Technical Support: Doug Donaldson

Still Point highlights the often-contradictory boundaries of art, such as randomness and the will to make-meaning and interpretation through spoken poetry and dance. It seeks to question what happens when individuals and collectives negotiate the noise, violence, and movement of the world, through seeking a still point of rest or replenishment. Still Point considers how citizens can be immersed in both the business of the material (social, political, bodily, aesthetic) world, and, potentially, in choosing acts of balancing peace and equilibrium. What role can art play in moving between the material and the immaterial?

Still Point, 2019, video installation (still) with audio sequence, courtesy of the artists
provisation of sorts. Hitting the right tone in our lives – that moment of clarity or the point of ease - is an equilibrium. An embodied citizen is also an individual consistently falling between positions of balance. As a dancing citizen, I am seeking a poetic dialogue with the affective forces which incite my body-mind. When I improvise in movement, I also seek points of balance in a field of competing uncertainties. “

Olivia Millard

“Dancing supports the desire to experience the body, as itself, in the present. My dancing body waits, surges, seeks and waits again. What is this body I have and how does dancing uncover it? The thickness of a surge of energy, the inevitability of gravity, the revelation of a fall. What truth do others witness in my dancing body, my aging body, my body that holds and encounters the material and the imagined? What is shared between two bodies? Sometimes I don’t know what I know and other times I hold off from knowing because in that state lies the place of pauses, of waiting. I am person, a citizen, when I am dancing, a human who knows how to search and how to forget. “

Victor Renolds

“I have always been interested in trying to materialise what is out of the range of our perception and senses. Seeking what is unnoticed now, I turn to the ground in the gestalt, to the noumenal world and ask, what shape of motion in image and sound will figure to the fore - or what might be revealed? How do I create this, genuinely and ethically, as a model citizen?”

Rowan McNAUGHT and Patrick POUND

Rowan McNaught is an artist and designer. He designs and co-edits the West Space Journal, our quarterly online publication, and assists with West Space’s digital presence. This position is funded by a 2013 University of Melbourne Professional Pathways scholarship supported by Arts Victoria and the Faculty of VCA and MCM.

Outside of West Space, he maintains a collaborative and online-centric practice, runs the online artist community TLSC, co-manages the Brothersister artist-run record label and design freelances as Sskiing. Recent projects include the Azeotrope Ar-dhasker speculative whisky startup, Juniorsummit (Swatch Hours) 1997-2013, and Spam Hut

Patrick Pound is an artist and academic. His 2017 survey exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria was visited by over 200,000 people. A major monograph was published to accompany Patrick Pound: The Great Exhibition. He has worked with many Public Gallery and Museum collections, alongside his ever-growing collections-based artworks, re-thinking how things might be found and made to hold ideas. He has held over 50 solo exhibitions and been in over 80 curated exhibitions in New Zealand, Australia, France, England, Korea, Italy, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, etc. His work is held in many public galleries including the National Gallery, Canberra, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Gallery of Victoria, Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, NZ, Auckland Art Gallery, NZ, Christchurch Art Gallery, NZ.
What does the model citizen mean to you?

Rowan

“A society or organisation and political government, not meaning or to influence policy interests and being, responsibility, relationship, perspective; a social whole working positive choice; work participation is creating itself, writing community and significant culture use. Student cultural education and its strategy-economic result gives understanding, while competition challenges teachers, both scientific and different development university needs. Practice planning decision situations, participants! Knowledge-approach-solution becomes a movement concept, while parents teaching project history develop unique importance, leading became building potential possibilities of nature, human, and child issues. Individual children group serious ideas of the current official today, which students towards base legal association through experiences of their role in the construction of contexts, impacting freedom instead—further to the fact that language states change.”

Patrick

“I have little idea of what a model citizen might look like, or even how they might behave (or what they should wear to their citizenship ceremony). A model citizen might just stand somewhere between the certainty of a small-town Atticus Finch and the poetical flaws of a search engine; someone like a photo booth camera, with an apparent clinical detachment and a collector’s belief that most things have little in common until they come into contact. They might be less likely to look like their fellow citizen so much as to look at them. They may well also be inclined to question the model itself.”

Sadia SADIA

Sadia Sadia is a Canadian-born UK-based installation artist working across a wide variety of media, including sound, still and moving images. She is also an award-winning record producer and writer. Sadia’s installation works include multiple elements of imagery and sound to create immersive environments, frequently incorporating the manipulation or distortion of time. Her work can be found in a number of internationally significant Australian permanent collections.

For more information please go to: http://artschimera.com/sadia2.html

Near Neighbours, 2019
photobooth portraits
installation dimensions variable

Probable Citizens, 2019
photocopies; 3,072 sheets
installation dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artists, STATION Gallery, Melbourne and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Near Neighbours is a collection of more than 130 photo booth portraits purchased online from various sources, however, these images all appear to have been photographed in the same photo booth. The individuals are most likely the citizens of a single town.

With this collection, the artists imagine a distant relation of Walker Evans’s 1936 photograph Penny Picture Display, Savannah which shows a portrait studio window, full of the random encounters of a town’s people, arranged in an indeterminate grid.

The images have been organised and displayed according to the guesses of an algorithm that finds similarity within a set of images. The photographs are arranged according to its decisions, drawn from an enormous lexicon of images (ImageNet) and its extensive subject classifications such as citizen, loved one, equal, and dupe.

Probable Citizens turns these classifications into a list of 3,072 profiles, imagining the characteristics of the photographed subjects. In a reversal of the initial collection process of the photo booth portraits, these papers can be taken and physically re-dispersed.

Sadia Sadia, Ghosts of Noise, 2009-2019, three-channel video installation (still), with eight-channel audio, duration: 20:00 loop, courtesy of the artist and Chimera Arts, UK
What does the model citizen mean to you?

“Model citizenship exists in the tension between compliance and subversion, in the friction between individual integrity and the needs of the state. Model citizenship lives in the unflinching resolution of the needs of the Other in the face of the needs of the Self. Model citizenship is the rigorous examination of conscience and the acceptance that the road of non-conformism may be the lonely, challenging but necessary path. Model citizenship is nonviolent resistance, civil disobedience, love, grace, the exercise of agency, infinite compassion, and respect. The Model Citizen is prepared to confront the aesthetics of the machine, and willing to deconstruct cultural paradigms to reshape them in the service of equality and freedom. As the philosopher Hannah Arendt once said “Courage is indispensable because in politics not life but the world is at stake.” Model citizenship is the exercise of that courage. The Model Citizen experiences the stillness inside the noise.”
Polly STANTON

Polly Stanton is a moving image artist and sound practitioner. Her work primarily investigates the relations between environment, human actions, and land use. Her films and installations focus on contested sites, presenting landscape as a politically charged field of negotiation, entangled with history, technology and capital. Sound and listening also play a critical role in Stanton’s work, in both the creation and reception of projects; with listening practices and field recordings engaged with as a means to expand vision and consider the unseen elements and materiality of place. Stanton’s mode of working is expansive and site based, with her practice intersecting across a number of disciplines from film production, sound design, field research, performance, writing and publication. She is currently a lecturer in the Master in Media program at RMIT.

http://pollystanton.com/

Indefinite Terrains, 2018-2019
HD video, stereo surround
duration: 0:17:10

Courtesy of the artist

Indefinite Terrains interprets the site of the forest plantation as a dynamic assemblage of colonialism, capitalism and country. Using the model of the plantation, the actions and effects of citizenship are considered through the mapping of the forest’s controlled and operationalised borders and terrains.

The work reimagines the planation as a polyphonic assemblage of events and complexities that engage both human and more-than-human bodies in lively economies of memory, activity and labour. Through the process of documentation and the fictitious voice of a Planation Officer, acts of listening and looking become speculative forms of knowledge production as the shifting geographies and histories of the forest are explored.

What does the model citizen mean to you?

“Citizenship is considered the right to belong, and yet belonging is a contested and shifting state that can often defy definition and conclusions. Through the process of modelling citizenship and reshaping our understanding and values in regards to it, we can more freely consider forms of belonging in an open and expansive way - reconfiguring a space that moves away from preconceived notions of rights and ownership, towards a more complex understanding of kinship, connection and exchange.”

(((20hz)))

(((20hz))) are a group of composers, musicians and sound designers exploring the psychophysiological mechanics of emotion and attention in multisensory experience. Previous works have been exhibited at the NGV, RMIT Gallery, White Night, Experimenta, Liquid Architecture, Geelong after Dark and Scienceworks.
Glossary of terms

activist art: is a term used to describe art that is grounded in the act of ‘doing’ and addresses political or social issues.

affect: (from Latin affectus or adfectus) is a concept, used in the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza and elaborated by Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, that places emphasis on bodily or embodied experience.

agenda-setting: describes the “ability (of the news media) to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda”. With agenda setting being a social science theory, it also attempts to make predictions.

anthropocene: defines Earth’s most recent geologic time period as being human-influenced, or anthropogenic, based on overwhelming global evidence that atmospheric, geologic, hydrologic, biospheric and other earth system processes are now altered by humans.

artificial intelligence: is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems. These processes include learning (the acquisition of information and rules for using the information), reasoning (using rules to reach approximate or definite conclusions) and self-correction.

audit culture: is the process by which the principles and techniques of accountancy and financial management are applied to the governance of people and organisations – and, more importantly, the social and cultural consequences of that translation.

celebrity worship syndrome: is an obsessive addictive disorder in which a person becomes overly involved with the details of a celebrity’s personal and professional life.

citizenship: is the status of a person recognized under the custom or law as being a legal member of a sovereign state or belonging to a nation.

cartography: or mapping is a process which involves both a “complex architecture of signs” : graphic elements with internal forms and logics capable of theoretical disconnection from any geographical reference, and a “visual architecture” through which the worlds they construct are selected, translated, organised and shaped.

data/motion capture: is the process of recording the movement of objects or people.

(((20hz)))
The Upload
Single participant/ 4 D experience featuring eyelid projection, sound and movement
Duration 7:00:00
Music by sound designer and composer Mitchell Waters

Audiences are transported into the dystopian world of The Model Citizen in this new piece by (((20hz))). The scenario which unfolds in the seven minute 4 D experience has an insidious contractual undertone...

If your information is eternal, through the easy assignment of some simple rights, the transition from the physical to the metaphysical can start immediately.

For only the minimal price of disembodiment, Model Citizens can now contemplate the wonderful benefits of immortality.

The Upload uses eyelid strobes, vibration and movement in order to immerse individual participants in a richer reality. It features the tense, yet beautiful electronic soundscapes of sound designer and composer Mitchell Waters (RMIT Audiokinetic Experiments Lab).
digital agora: in ancient Greece, agora was the assembly of freemen within a community - a physical district in an urban settlement in which political, religious, and economic interactions took place (Kolb, 2006). Within the context of our modern-day digital environment, we perceive agora as the multiple spaces in which the Internet users can relatively freely discuss various topics related to socio-political domains of society.

digital ethnography: describes the process and methodology of doing ethnographic research in a digital space. The digital field site is sometimes comprised of text, video or images, and may contain social relations and behavior patterns strewn across many nations, cities or intellectual geographies.

digital democracy: E-democracy (a combination of the words electronic and democracy), also known as digital democracy or Internet democracy, incorporates 21st-century information and communications technology to promote democracy. It is a form of government in which all adult citizens are presumed to be eligible to participate equally in the proposal, development, and creation of laws. E-democracy encompasses social, economic and cultural conditions that enable the free and equal practice of political self-determination. These communication spaces are a part of social media.

digital surveillance: is the monitoring of computer activity, data stored on a hard drive, or being transferred through computer networks. Digital surveillance is usually done superstitionally and can be done by anyone, government, corporations and even individuals.

echo chamber: in news media, echo chamber is a metaphorical description of a situation in which beliefs are amplified or reinforced by communication and repetition inside a closed system. By visiting an «echo chamber», people are able to seek out information which reinforces their existing views, potentially as an unconscious exercise of confirmation bias. This may increase political and social polarization and extremism.

embodiment: usually refers to how the body and its interactive processes, such as sensory perception, aid, enhance or interfere with the development of the way humans experience the world. This relationship is an interdependent one where meaning making is grounded in physical experience, through bodily form, gaze, gesture, body posture, facial expression, movement, which shapes the kind of interaction with the environment that one has.

erotomania: a delusion in which a person believes that another person is in love with them.

fandom: is a subculture composed of fans characterized by a feeling of empathy and camaraderie with others who share a common interest.

modelling: in art refers to the way artists employ various types of models to creatively re-make the world. These include: Conceptual model, a representation of a system using general rules and concepts; Physical model or plastic model, a physical representation in three dimensions of an object, such as a globe or model airplane; Scale model, a representation of an object which maintains general relationships between its constituent aspects; Architectural model, a scale model for studying aspects of an architectural design or to communicate design ideas; Scientific model, a simplified and idealized understanding of physical systems.

narcissism: is the pursuit of gratification from vanity or egotistic admiration of one’s idealised self-image and attributes. The term originated from Greek mythology, where the young Narcissus fell in love with his own image reflected in a pool of water.

noise: refers to random, unpredictable, and undesirable signals, or changes in signals, that mask desired information content.

non-representation theory: attempts to go beyond representation to look at the way experience is embodied and lived.
panopticon: as a work of architecture, the panopticon allows a watchman to observe occupants without the occupants knowing whether or not they are being watched. As a metaphor, the panopticon was commandeered in the latter half of the 20th century as a way to trace the surveillance tendencies of disciplinarian societies.

participatory culture: is an opposite concept to consumer culture — in other words a culture in which private individuals (the public) do not act as consumers only, but also as contributors or producers (prosumers). The term is most often applied to the production or creation of some type of published media.

performance art: is a performance presented to an audience within a fine art context, traditionally interdisciplinary. Performance may be either scripted or unscripted, random or carefully orchestrated, spontaneous or otherwise carefully planned with or without audience participation.

photographic portrait: is a photograph of a person or group of people that captures the personality of the subject by using effective lighting, backdrops, and poses.

post-human: is a speculative being that represents or seeks to re-conceive the human.

post-truth politics: (also called post-factual politics and post-reality politics) is a political culture in which debate is framed largely by appeals to emotion disconnected from the details of policy, and by the repeated assertion of talking points to which factual rebuttals are ignored.

public art: refers to art that is in the public realm, regardless of whether it is situated on public or private property or whether it has been purchased with public or private money.

public life: The aspects of social life which occur in public, in the open, as opposed to more private social interaction within families, private clubs, etc.

reminiscencia: in which cherished objects act as inducers of reminiscence.

the spiral of silence theory: is a political science and mass communication theory proposed by the German political scientist Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, which stipulates that individuals have a fear of isolation, which results from the idea that a social group or the society in general might isolate, neglect, or exclude members due to the members’ opinions.

video installation: is a contemporary art form that combines video technology with installation art, making use of all aspects of the surrounding environment to affect the audience.

selfhood: is the state of having a distinct identity.

sisyphus: a legendary king of Corinth condemned eternally to repeatedly roll a heavy rock up a hill in Hades only to have it roll down again as it nears the top.

sound art: is an artistic discipline in which sound is utilised as a primary medium. Like many genres of contemporary art, sound art may be interdisciplinary in nature, or be used in hybrid forms.

stakeholder: A person, group or organization that has interest or concern in an organization.