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casting light on darkness

shane eastwood: dark mofo's beam in thine own eye



Ryoji Ikeda, Spectra (Buenos Aires), site-specific installation, 2012
© Ryoji Ikeda / Dark Mofo 2013 - Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), Hobart Tasmania

MUSHROOMING IN HOBART TASMANIA THIS WINTER IS DARK MOFO A NEW FESTIVAL AND TWIN TO HOBART'S SUMMERTIME MONA FOMA.

Among the visual art highlights of DARK MOFO are the opening of MONA's latest exhibition Red Queen; Sound to Light, a live collaboration between artists in Hobart and Melbourne; the aesthetico-engineering marvels of Ian Burns at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery; and, destined to reset your sense of selfhood, at Hobart's Mac1 wharf is the exhibition Beam in Thine Own Eye.

Beam in Thine Own Eye features 14 artists, including Kurt Hentschlager, Ryoji Ikeda, Matthieu Briand, Gregorio Zanon, Tim Bruniges and the legendary Michelangelo Pistoletto, a leader of the Italian Arte Povera movement. The title is borrowed from Matthew 7:3, purposefully tethering the recent with the ancient. David Walsh states in a program note that beyond its moral lesson "it beautifully conjures the notion of our reality shining from within." The question remains, will Beam in Thine Own Eye convert the uninitiated?

Since ancient times the limits of knowledge have been contemplated with metaphors of light, darkness, sound and silence; likewise, by employing cutting-edge art, Beam in Thine Own Eye's curators hope to enable an encounter with the unknowns of nature

by testing the limits of cognition, feeling, normative reality and selfhood in its audience. Unlike the cosmologies of many ancient thinkers, *Beam in Thine Own Eye* will doubtless leave the visitor to figure out any grand conclusions on their own. Yet by letting the visitor's "mind's eye shine" it can be said Walsh perhaps intends to relate the experience of art to that of mystical ecstasies.

A likely DARK MOFO highlight will be Ryoji Ikeda's *spectra [tasmania]* (2013), a grid of 49 xenon lights above the Queens Domain bordering Hobart CBD. Clearly aimed to be the ultimate tribute to numinosity within the festival, *spectra* will surely need the right kind of night-sky to strike awe.

Light is further revealed as the strange stuff of intelligence when transmuted through Ikeda's audio-visual installation *data.tron* [3 SXGA+ version]. The Greeks coined 'dianoetic' to conceptualise a certain cosmic intelligence and perhaps here Ikeda is expressing pixelated mathematical data as intelligence; a vast immersive field of 'data- noetics.'



Mathieu Briand, *Derriere le monde flottant*, Musee d'Art Contemporain de Lyon; *Beam In Thine Own Eye* - Dark Mofo 2013 - Museum of Old and New Art photo Bruno Amsellem, image courtesy the artist

Sydney based Tim Bruniges' *Continuum* (2012) employs a vacillating blue orb of light and quadraphonic sound perpetually emitting a "sonic barber's pole." The artist hopes to hypnotically envelop the visitor in its orbit. In another immersive interactive titled *SYS*05.REE*03/ SE*1\ MOE*2-7* (2000–13), Mathieu Briand will have you and six others wearing backpacks rigged up to video camera helmets in an experiment testing the conventions of personal cognition within an ethos of nomadism. Participants will experience how the real, the virtual, the mental and the physical coalesce. Like a passive form of Trātaka meditation. Anish Kapoor's *Imagined Monochrome* (2009) will have you lie on a massage table, your eyelids used as a screen for optical effects.



Ivana Franke, *Seeing with Eyes Closed*, (2013); *Beam In Thine Own Eye* - Dark Mofo 2013 - Museum of Old and New Art image courtesy the artist

Beam in Thine Own Eye raises questions about perceptual reality; just what is the mind's eye? Where do images exist, if anywhere? What can we learn by assaulting the retino-neural reception of light? Ivana Franke invokes these questions by sculpting experience with light, space and darkness. In *Seeing with Eyes Closed* [SWEC2] (2013) the visitor is subjected to repeated pulses of light forming spectral imprints on

the 'mind's eye.'

In Giuseppe Penone's *Rovesciare i propri occhi* (To Reverse One's Eyes, 1970), the artist took photos of himself wearing mirrored contact lenses, subverting what is taken for granted as the real. Is the outward appearance of the iris and cornea more real than the eye's function: to make contact with the radiance of external appearance?

Michelangelo Pistoletto's sculpture *Cubic Metre of Infinity* (1966) works with similar logic. Sold for one million US dollars at Christies last year *Cubic Metre of Infinity* is arguably an icon of icons in art theory, hence well placed to be Beam's altar. *Cubic Metre of Infinity* is best interpreted through Pistoletto's wonderfully elaborate texts: "Soul" (1983), "Art takes on Religion" (1978) and "Division and Multiplication of the Mirror" (1978). One of Pistoletto's preoccupations is with the production of sacredness; he wants to "reconstruct objectively the centre of spirituality of art," to evoke an infinite consummating of the sacred spaces of all doctrinal belief systems. Its as if the artist were trading in every debate about which way is the only way by mirroring all artistic and religious representations into a cubic metre of infinity.



Kurt Hentschlager, Zee, Beam In Thine Own Eye -
Dark Mofo 2013 - Museum of Old and New Art
courtesy the artist

If you need one last real reason to visit Hobart this winter it is the promise of Kurt Hentschlager's ZEE (2008), a work that redefines substance abuse where the substance to be abused is your cognitive processing capacity. At its maximal encounter Hentschlager promises wondrous fractal imagery that will form your mind's eye.

Museum of Old and New Art: *Beam In Thine Own Eye*, curated By Olivier Varenne, Nicole Durling; artists Mathieu Briand Tim Bruniges, Lara Favaretto, Ivana Franke Fabien Giraud + Raphaël Siboni, Kurt Hentschläger, Ryoji Ikeda, Alfredo Jaar, Anish Kapoor, Giuseppe Penone, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Lawrence Weiner, Gregorio Zanon; MAC 1, Hobart, June 14-July 28; DARK MOFO, Museum of Old and New Art, June 13-23; www.darkmofo.net.au

Shane Eastwood is an artist, art writer and busy parent living in Hobart. He is interested in how philosophical and theological thought can be applied to interpret art and everyday experience.

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