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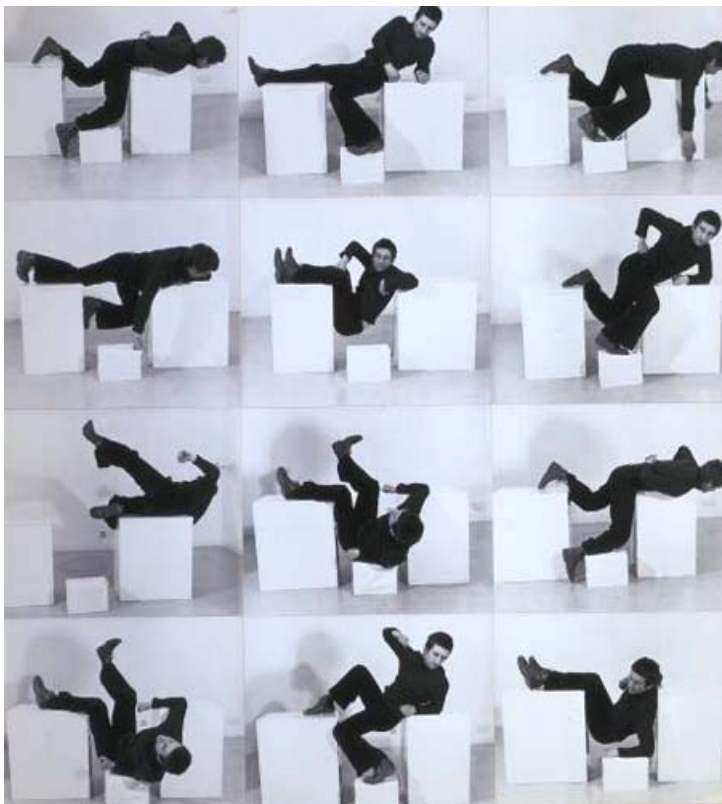
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Ideas**RODNEY LATOURELLE in Berlin 03/22/11**

Bruce McLean at Tanya Leighton | Protocol at LEAP | The Gong Show at Gallery Micky Schubert | The Bell Show at Luttgengmeijer | Science Fiction 15 at Or Gallery Berlin | Michael Stecky at Wilde Gallery | Ecotone at Kunstverein Tiergarten | The Curators Battle at The Grimmuseum  
posted by Rodney LaTourelle - March 22nd, 2011.

Spring has ushered in numerous worthwhile exhibitions and this means logging a lot of kilometres in such a dispersed city. My first stop is **Tanya Leighton Gallery** where, from the perspective of today's mass pluralism, in a time where poetry (or at least web video) is made by all, it is hard to imagine just how radical **Bruce McLean's** projects from the late 60s and early 70s were.



Bruce McLean, *Pose Work for Plinths I*, 1971

His performances and live actions engaging his body as a sculptural vehicle were a merciless reaction to the previous generation of modernist sculptors. Back then McLean and several colleagues formed Nice Style, "The World's First Pose Band", as a way to break with the fashion-oriented, social-climbing establishment. They even opened for the Kinks. What survives for me, however, is his ultrasensitive parody of everyday gestures that allows the viewer an unusual access to the quotidian through the recognition that results with laughter.



Shingo Yoshida, *SOS Morse code – Fernsehturm*, 2010, video

Part of the group exhibition *Protocol* at LEAP, **Shingo Yoshida's** video *SOS Morse code – Fernsehturm* engages the subject of communication codes with an absurd stunt at Berlin's iconic TV Tower, a "futuristic" reminder of East German optimism and an inescapable symbol of the unified city. Just before closing and from inside the dark, empty lounge located in the giant sphere suspended high above the city, Yoshida employed an existing table lamp to flash out a forlorn SOS. The video documentation of this performance attains a melancholic, even existential grandeur at once personal and universal by presenting both a dramatic intent and a negligible effect.



Zin Taylor, *Black Stools*, 2011

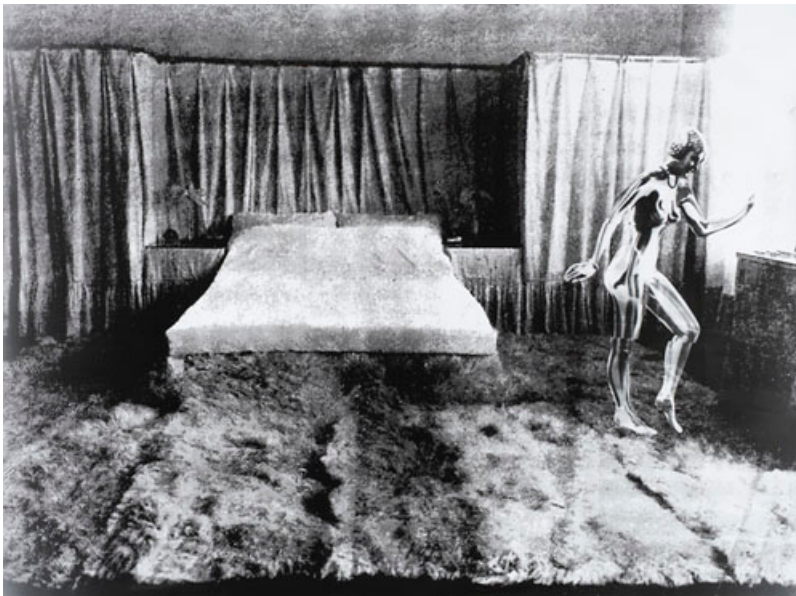
At **Gallery Mickey Schubert**, *The Gong Show's* seemingly casual approach reveals a thoughtful matrix of associations on closer inspection. Curator **Dieter Roelstraete's** "mildly jokey" title does not refer to an amateur talent contest but draws together a variety of contemporary positions in relation to the eponymous musical instrument. In fact, one quickly perceives the gong as a cipher for alternative explorations within western culture, not least among the percussive instruments influencing 20th Century avant-garde music from Debussy and Boulez to Stockhausen, LaMonte Young and Rhys Chatham. In the exhibition, the complex notation for Stockhausen's *Mikrophonie I* (a composition that incorporates the gong-like tam-tam) takes a central position, while **Mark Soo's** twelve-tone chimes hang nearby. **Pierre Bismuth's** four-channel video featuring the Rank Organization's trademark film intros - depicting an impossibly massive gong struck by a strongman - evokes English Orientalism and the figure of the gong as a shape-shifting cultural

projection. And who can't love **Zin Taylor's** *Back Stools*, word-forms appointing the exhibition for the meditative gongophile. They are a perfect resting place to bask near an early **Wolfgang Tillmanns'** piece: a solid gold gong.



Hadley + Maxwell, *The Step When I Forget What I Thought My Calling Was*, 2011

Next door at **Lüttgengmeijer**, Roelstraete has curated *The Bell Show*, a kind of Occidental complement to *The Gong Show*. While both exhibitions focus on elemental structures that characterize transcendental systems, they also employ presence and representation to construct an extended perceptual probe. In fact, the bell's traditional status as an otherworldly voice is explored in a variety of unconventional ways. *Bell in a Wall* by **Jason Dodge** is just that, placed at the gallery entrance and acting as a silent (and invisible) announcer for the visitor who will quickly encounter the violent clang of **Carsten Höller's** *Vertigo-Glocken* (*Vertigo Bells*): a spinning steel armature that brutally slams a silver bell into a metal post. Nearby, **Hadley + Maxwell's** *The Step When I Forget What I Thought My Calling Was* presents a coy stuffed toy alongside a bell removed from its front paw, neatly reversing the Dodge piece and summarizing the poignant potential produced by the symbolic circulation of the powerful forms of the bell and the gong.



Shannon Bool, *Weisse Tünche, weisse Vorhänge, weisse Angorafelle, silberne Frau*, 2010

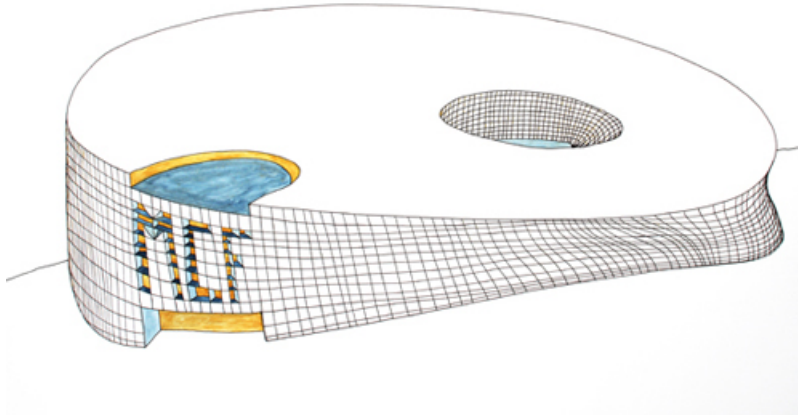
The **Or Gallery Berlin** satellite presents *Science Fiction 15*, part of a series of 88 exhibitions inaugurated by director **Jonathan Middleton** and planned over a 260 year period. The unlikely exhibition schedule is a wink to the emphasis on speculative and hallucinatory shifts in time, space, and state. A time-lapse-like video of an expanding pot plant by Mark Soo faces **Jeremy Shaw's** photographic enlargement of white acid: nods to both altered states as well as landscape and monochrome formats. Other works, including an octagonal film prop inscribed with esoteric numbers by **Andreas Bunte** and a pair of modest wood signs casually pointing to the "beginning" and "end" by **Steven Brekelmans**, construct a playful and down-to-earth sense of the visionary. **Shannon Bool's** *Weisse Tünche, weisse Vorhänge, weisse Angorafelle, silberne Frau* situates a molten female figure in the furry confines of Lina Loos' bedroom from 1903. The cyborg-like woman was digitally manipulated from a nude of the same vintage as the bedroom, yet both space and figure could easily be Barbarella contemporaries, producing a slippage of feminine projections, both ideal and nostalgic.



Michael Stecky, *Nauk*, video

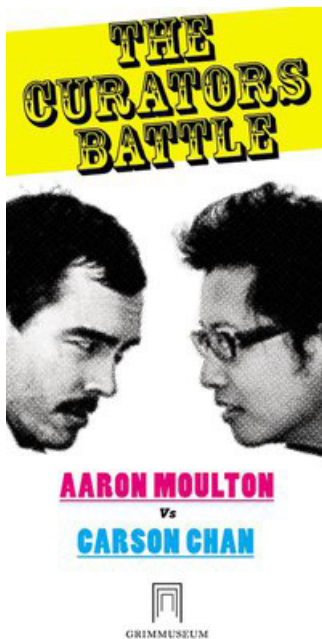
Obsolete North American pastimes are subject to a series of cultural slippages in **Michael Stecky's** recent exhibition *Trends in Proprietary Information Loss* at **Wilde Gallery**. Jigsaw puzzles are monochromed and re-orientated to produce delicate chiaroscuro abstracts. An episode of the long-running sit-com *Friends* is digitally processed so that any human appearance is replaced by a rectangular black void, relegating the laugh track to a farcical and haunted interzone. The video *Nauk*, created while Stecky was living in Arviat (an isolated community on the western coast of Hudson Bay), establishes an absurd cultural encounter. *Nauk* (pronounced "now") is the Inuktituk word for "where", and the video has the atmosphere of a 70s era National Film Board travelogue. After a series of establishing shots, we see a number of coloured wooden squares being hit by gunfire amidst the treeless, icy landscape. The wood pieces, cut from discarded packing crates salvaged from the annual sealift, were cut to scale after a 1951 Ellsworth Kelly painting. Painted with tones from a Martha Stewart sample package, the loaded range of references is deftly combined to produce – surprisingly – an almost routine occurrence.





Erik Göngrich

The tension between the institutional and the everyday animates a drawing series by **Erik Göngrich** included in the exhibition *Ecotone* at **Kunstverein Tiergarten**. Göngrich's subject is the museum and the attendant questions of contemporary content, form, and value. *The Museum of Pigs and Cheese* is a curvilinear affair with a large circular courtyard while *The Museum of Cows and Escargot* is made up of circular segments with an entrance under a pair of protruding masts. By visualizing cartoon-like complexes, ripe with figurative allusions and colliding iconic shapes, dedicated not to precious artifacts but to programs such as regional food and social exchange, Göngrich re-orientates the museum as a place to accommodate people instead of objects.

*The Curators Battle*

Lastly, I would like to mention the so-called *Curators Battle* at **The Grimmuseum**. By allowing two curators to each assemble an exhibition with the same eight artists, curatorial style is brought to the forefront. The exhibitions open at the same moment and the audience votes a winner. While the risky re-orientation of winner/loser populism from televisual to exhibition contexts provides a superficial adrenalin boost, the show successfully highlights the curator's craft and the attendant interpretive issues essential to art presentation.



**Rodney LaTourelle** lives and works in Berlin as an artist, designer, and writer. His writing on art and architecture has been published in numerous periodicals and artist catalogues. His installations have been exhibited internationally and his work is included in collections such as the National Gallery of Canada and Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg. LaTourelle's recent exhibitions include Neo-Plastic Vice (Shawinigan, Quebec) and Model for Inner Expansion (UQAM, Montreal, and National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa). He is Akimblog's Berlin correspondent.

**Tanya Leighton Gallery:** <http://www.tanyaleighon.com/main.php#exhibitions>

Bruce Mclean: Waiter Waiter Curator Curator continues until April 16.

**LEAP:** <http://www.leapknecht.de/>

See website for current exhibitions.

**Gallery Micky Schubert:** <http://www.mickyschubert.de/>

The Gong Show continues until April 16.

**Lüttgengmeijer:** <http://www.luetggenmeijer.com/>

The Bell Show continues until April 16.

**Or Gallery Berlin:** <http://www.orgallery.org/>

Science Fiction 15 continues until May 21.

**Wilde Gallery:** <http://www.wilde-gallery.com/>

See website for current exhibitions.

**Kunstverein Tiergarten:** <http://www.kunstverein-tiergarten.de/>

Ecotone continues until April 2.

**The Grimmuseum:** <http://www.grimmuseum.com/>

The Curators Battle continues until April 17.

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Posted by **Waypeeeladuh**, on 2011-11-08 03:59:11

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