

Anthony Johnson

A fly in a plane

February 27 – March 27 2010

Anthony Johnson is interested in sculpture as a perpetually antagonistic problem – a thwarted object lesson that seeks no objective. The ubiquitous artists' conundrum of 'What to do?' is interpreted by Johnson as a symptom of a wider existential void.

Essentially, his practice embodies a spatial and temporal questioning: that of our capacity to reconcile spatial experience with the actual, and that of an object or action's ability to embody the measurement of time.

The automated exhaustion of a spray-can continuously releasing in a confined space, a pinball-machine propped level, the dragging of a pair of shoes 1115 kilometres, the releasing of a captured fly into the passenger cabin of an airplane...

A fly in a plane expands on Johnson's previous exhibition at Conical, *The relations which a lie is not in*, 2008 (see conical.org.au/archive/2008). Continuing to probe the question of sculpture – both historically and conceptually – Johnson's new body of work suggests the (im)potency of objects, and the profundity and mundanity of action.

A few days ago when riding the subway, I watched a marble-like ball roll around the hard linoleum floor of the train carriage. As the train took off from the station and picked up speed, the ball would slowly meander towards the back of the carriage – although never quite the full length of the carriage – before slowing to almost a pause as the train retained its top speed. Then, as the train began to brake, the ball would slowly roll forward, faster than the train. Picking up momentum it would bump off the side of people's shoes, meandering down the centre of the aisle, yet never quite getting all the way to the front of the carriage before the next stop. The noise it made as it rolled drew everyone's attention to its blind odyssey. Commuters would watch as it passed them and then wait with anticipation as it found that point of equilibrium between stops. That night after dinner at the pizzeria, I bought a white Gobstopper from the coin-slot bubblegum machine. The next day I let the Gobstopper ball roll down the slanted floor from the top to the bottom of the spiral rotunda in the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

Anthony Johnson, 02.19.09 NYC

List of Works

Big Idea, 2010
Neon

Putting a ball in a car, 2010
Mini-DV transferred to DVD
7.5 minutes

Eons, 2010
Construction adhesive, acrylic paint

Drag (Figure / Ground), 2009-2010
Action: A pair of shoes dragged behind a truck from Hobart to Sydney.
Shoes, steel cable & shackle

A fly in a plane, 2010
Inkjet photographic print

30 - day tilt, 2010
Pinball machine, drink can

Selected exhibition history

- 2009 *(Untitled), Expand/Contract, CAST*, curated by Paula Silva, Hobart
Smart Casual/Dumb Formal, Six_a ARI, Hobart
- 2008 *The relations which a lie is not in*, Conical, Melbourne
I Used To Draw A Lot, Criterion Gallery, Hobart
- 2007 *Primavera*, A survey of young Australian contemporary art. MCA, Sydney & Samstag Museum, Adelaide
Your call is important to us, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery
- 2006 *Not all cocktails make good punches*, Kings ARI, Melbourne
- 2005 *Workrestplay*, Firstdraft, Sydney
- 2003 *Object Lessons*, Westspace, Melbourne

In 2004 Johnson received a New Work grant from the Australia Council, in 2007 and was the recipient of an Australia Council funded studio residency in Los Angeles, 2009. He holds a Diploma of Fine Arts (National Art School, Sydney, 1995), a Bachelor of Fine Art at the (College of Fine Arts, UNSW, 1998), Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours (Tasmanian School of Art, UTAS, 2001) and will begin an MFA early this year at UTAS.

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