

# Introduction

This is a collection of artworks and essays that either dwell in the territory of boredom or attempt to comment upon it. Pleasure is not excluded from this exhibition, nor is there within the works a sense only of exhaustion or depletion – terms or states perhaps normally associated with boredom. What is contemplated here is a space that absorbs, to varying degrees; the sensual, the (over)decorative, and aspects of the melancholic. It has qualities about its form that imitate (consciously or not) the actions performed within the hold of a compulsive obsessive disorder.

David Bate links boredom with the baroque which, in its contemporary form, has all the elements of clutter which is 'not merely ornamental, but a constitutive component of ... a world represented in signs without guaranteed meaning'. This is a world within which the 'anxiety of cosmic space is obsessively covered over and simultaneously revealed'. in an activity not unlike that of the fetishist, who uses an object which by its presence speaks of (a denial of) absence, and which is usually made out of materials that embody sensuality or luxuriousness.

Working to produce an intensely beautiful and meditative work **Mariele**

**Neudecker** 'morphs' and loops together four images of sunrise, dawn, dusk and sunset taken from a commercially available stock file of 'default environments'. Soundless and non-interactive, *Default Twilight* runs endlessly through the confines of its source material.

*Long-term Boredom* by Robert Mabb is made by breaking a pattern down into a series of constituent rings. These are presented in all the combinations that fulfil a chosen numerical criteria, which build up until all are used at once, before unwinding in reverse and starting again.

*Text* by Susan Morris presents a set of references on boredom – titles of books, quotes etc. which scroll up the screen like credits at the end of the cinema. In various font styles and sizes, and often bleeding off the side of the screen to be unreadable, *Text* becomes less and less informative and more like a casual or chaotic doodle.

Boredom is the empty space that is occupied, it is the presence of an absence. This combination of contradictory forces produces a subject which is stuck between what Andrew Benjamin describes as 'the at hand and the ungraspable.'

Mathew Hale seeks sanctuary from the chaos of simultaneity and translation and returns to writing for pleasure. In

*There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour*, words are slowly written out on the computer, using a specially developed alphabet of circles and ellipses. You will be asked to wait at the computer as successive letters emerge, and copy down the word-result on the form that is provided.

Jeremy Akerman's work; *Road: (I was thinking about a time once)* is a three minute non-interactive film, with sound, consisting of a sequence of stills. The images appear to trigger a narrative, dwelling on memory and loss, which is 'spoken' by the computer voice 'Kathy'; thus perhaps distancing us from the experience of any real emotion.

There is an association in road movies, and in even travel itself, with the desire to drop out, to move away. In *Tunnel*, Anna Mossman presents a piece of film which silently loops so that, time and time again, we see the same vehicles pass through an underpass. No significance is attached to the place, and nothing particular happens. We are exposed to the experience of boredom and frustration with the time it takes to do this thing, and desire to move on and be somewhere else. However, the experience of watching the same footage repeatedly starts to load the scene with a latency and beauty so that every moment or any moment is held on to as that which is lost, but that which also may have had meaning – outside of the bind within which we are trapped.

Alan Ball and Edward Dorrian work with loops of (found) video footage. In contrast to all the other work, however, both these pieces are interactive. Interactivity offers the viewer the possibility of a limited variation within the scene, transforming him or her into participant. Vision; issues around being seen or seeing, is integral to these works.

Dorrian's work, *hPrick*, uses footage from a soft porn video obtained from his local newsagent. The work, which can be manipulated, acts also as a lure, wrapping the viewer in idle fascination. We observe a woman switch from a person who speaks to camera, to an object of the detached gaze as she somewhat awkwardly slips into the appropriate poses, coaxed by two cameramen. By our reaction (clicking with the mouse on whichever part of the image we chose) we become complicit in encouraging this transformation, roped in by the demands of the job to be done.

In *Recidivist* Ball reworks footage from television news, which demonstrates how an electronic tagging device can be fitted round the ankle of a person. As viewer or participant you are able to replay the moment of fastening or unfastening this device. Ball uses a quote from Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*, to accompany this work; 'he who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power ... he becomes the principle of his own subjection ... the external power may throw off it's physical weight.'