

PRESS RELEASE

AUGUST art presents "iremember"

**With artists Jonathan Harris, Sep Kamvar, Siri Johansen, Celia Pym,
Dallas Seitz, & Nina Wakeford**

The degree to which the internet impacts our sense of the past and memory inspires our next exhibition. Here are just a couple of comments that give us pause:

On no longer needing to remember: "... [The] power of Google and other search engines is to find almost everything we need at the click of a button. There is no longer a need to remember..." Peter Morville, 2005¹

On the displacement of our sense of the past: "The more memory we store on data banks, the more the past is sucked into the orbit of the present, ready to be called up on the screen. A sense of historical continuity or, for that matter, discontinuity, both of which depend on a before and an after, gives way to the simultaneity of all times and spaces readily accessible in the present" philosopher Andrea Huyssen²

We invite a discussion in our exhibition "iremember", of works that use the past as a material.

"We feel fine" is an internet work by Sep Kamvar and Jonathan Harris. The website harvests the words "i feel" from blogs around the world and tells us the number of people feeling happy, depressed,... in real time, last year, the year before, The work gives shape to the internet as a vast and endless stream of recordings, even of intangible things such as emotion, but which can also be gathered – if we know how to search.

The searching is explored in Jonathan Harris' solo piece, "The Whale Hunt". It is a photo-journal of 7 days' images, taken every 5 minutes unless action warranted greater or reduced frequency. It is a work about how the viewer takes in the journey, through the availability of 4 search applications. The first choice is chronological, with images streaming automatically and chronologically. The viewer can also choose to disrupt the story's beginning, middle and end, by jumping to different points using 1 of the other 3 applications, which represent time as a matrix, a circle, and the symbolic equivalent of heartbeats.

Nina Wakeford looks at the relationship between our awe of new technology and our nostalgia for the old. Huyssen also commented that a surprising cultural phenomena is our turning toward the past at this time of advancing technology³. Anecdotally, this seems reflected in the increase in consumer goods that look as if they are made in the 50's albeit packaged shiny and new, and the resurgence of interest in celluloid film by artists. Wakeford's "Untitled (inside Intel with Bolex H16)" is filmed in the offices of Intel, a business which is about developing the next technology. But shot on 16mm film, the idiosyncrasies of that medium are just as much a part of the content.

From the virtual, we turn back to the physical world. Celia Pym's work is typically made of knits, invisible thread, string, masking tape. She uses them to make corporeal what is ephemeral. She mends old jumpers, the holes standing in for the body that is missing. There is something of the Inca khipu in Celia Pym's work. The Inca did not have written language, but used knotted strings, the khipu, as encoding devices. These are believed to be more

¹ Peter Morville, "Ambient findability: what we find changes who we become", 2005, O'Reilly Media

² Andreas Huyssen, "Twilight memories: marking time in a culture of amnesia", 1995, Routledge

³ Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia", Public Culture - Volume 12, Number 1, Winter 2000

than mnemonic, with the strings manipulated and knotted to carry meaning⁴. Pym's work, like a khipu, is about memory embodied outside of language, in the knit, the smell, the touch.

Pym and Siri Johansen will also collaborate on another project for the exhibition, one created through an exchange between the two.

Dallas Seitz works with objects, some personal, some found. In arranging them, he conceptualises the relationship between them. His interest is in museology: in the intended and unintended narrative of display, that seems to reflect in the physical world our activities in the virtual one. The internet offers us unstructured exposure to more ideas than we could possibly come across on our own. As sociologist Manuel Castells notes: information used to come mainly from national institutions (such as national news services), and as such, was culturally-singular, top-down and integrated; now we can source our own "Net" of data, irrespective of geography and time. As these Net ideas are fragmented, disparate, and contradictory, we cannot swallow them whole, but must adopt, assimilate and discard⁵. That is, as with Seitz's objects, we must arrange, re-arrange, and curate our own understanding of these sought and unsought ideas alongside our experience.

These artworks remind us that we want to remember not just hard facts, but also intangibles. These get stored in different forms. Whilst the form of the past as a story with a beginning, middle and end may have been disrupted by the internet, perhaps it is now told in the search, and the archive? We are also reminded that memory may get triggered by smell, objects, that is, they may reside outside of language, and the search and storing of those remain as ephemeral as ever.

An afternoon of talks is being planned. For more information, please contact the gallery.

"iremember" is one of a planned series of exhibitions on the internet / information age and memory, for more information, please contact the gallery.

"iremember"

4 Mar to 21 Mar, 2010
Th to Su, 1 to 6 pm, or by appointment
Opening drinks: We, 3 Mar, 6-9 pm

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⁴ Gary Urton & Carrie Brezine, "Khipu Accounting in Ancient Peru", Science page 309, August 2005

⁵ Manuel Castells, "The rise of the network society", volume 1 of The Information age: Economy, Society and Culture, 1996, 2000, Blackwell Publishing