IRRATIONAL EXHIBITS

2001 - 2019
IRRATIONAL EXHIBITS
A CATALOGUE OF VISUAL & PERFORMANCE ART . LOS ANGELES
2001 - 2019

FOUNDER AND CURATOR
Deborah Oliver
©2020 Irrational Exhibits
All rights reserved. This book may not be reproduced in whole, or in part, in any form, without written permission from the author and/or publisher.

PUBLISHED by Irrational Exhibits and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE)

LEAD SPONSORS

MANY GENEROUS DONORS

SPACES
Track 16 Gallery
LACE
Monte Vista Projects
Tiger Strikes Asteroid

COVER ART

IMPRINT

CATALOGUE LAYOUT & DESIGN by Amanda Maciel Antunes IIE11

FOR MORE INFORMATION www.irationalexhibits.com I @irationalexhibits

IRRATIONAL EXHIBITS
Essay by Jacki Apple

By the turn of the 21st century most performance art works were presented in a theatrical context before seated audiences. At the same time the accelerating growth of digital technologies, gave rise to a younger generation of viewers who were primarily consuming mediated culture through the ubiquitous screen.

In response to this cultural shift curator and producer Deborah Oliver set out to return performance art to its process-based visual art roots by restituating it in the immersive environment of the art gallery. Hence the conception of Irrational Exhibits as a situation in which the audience would become participating viewers free to interact in real time with a broad range of live actions and for how long. However, audiences could navigate the spaces, to circulate, browse and return, or spend immersive time with one piece at a time. Either way creating a degree of engagement, with one major difference - the works they were watching were changing in front of them. In sharp contrast to seeing individual works that embrace unpredictability, the messiness of biological and organic processes and materials, and the chaotic state of our times. It embraces the riskiness of this kind of performance art-making, and accepts the potential for failure in the act.

Many of the pieces presented in Irrational Exhibits have been shaped by to the history and precedents set by performance artists of the 1970's in both Los Angeles and New York, but with their own contemporary interpretations. In Irrational Exhibits both men and women have tested the limits of the body and physical endurance, and interacted with organic materials such as water, mud, clay, dough, honey, eggs, jam, ice, stones, flower petals, and processes of binding, wrapping, bandaging, shaving, mock surgeries, painting, drawing, and hand writing. Content has been wide-ranging.

The first Irrational Exhibits was manifested in 2001 in the five rooms of Track 16 Gallery's 30,000 square foot space in Santa Monica to be followed by seven more in 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011 at Track 16, and the last two in 2016 and 2017 at LACE in Hollywood. Central to all these one-night events was the group show concept in which the artists each constructed installations that functioned as the settings for their evolving actions. All the performances were happening simultaneously, but were not necessarily of the same length, nor were they representative of a shared esthetic. What they had in common was a physical engagement with the body and materials, and the risk-taking process of making the work in front of the audience in real time.

Much like going to a museum, the viewer becomes the curator of his/her experience, selecting what to look at and for how long. However, audiences could navigate the spaces at their own pace choosing their degree of engagement, with one major difference - the works they were watching were changing in front of them. In sharp contrast to seeing individual works in a theater, they are not passive receivers but active ones. They have the option as to how to move through the spaces, to circulate, browse and return, or spend immersive time with one piece at a time. Either way creating a degree of shared experience between viewer and maker in process.

Oliver's commitment to this structure was a response to her observation of how detached we have become from a sense of community and shared face-to-face experience in this age so dominated by media culture, and its concurrent sense of loss. Embedded in her curatorial philosophy and choices is a critique of how digital technology has distanced us from our connection to the materiality of our environment and the physicality of our own bodies and labor in the creative act of producing something out of nothing. It represents works that embrace unpredictability, the messiness of biological and organic processes and materials, and the chaotic state of our times. It embraces the riskiness of this kind of performance art-making, and accepts the potential for failure in the act.
With anywhere from eighteen to thirty artists participating in each event, many in multiple years, there is a raucous circus-like atmosphere that invites participation. Thus audiences attending Irrational Exhibits have willingly and often enthusiastically consented to taking part in an exploratory event in which all their senses are activated. They have been asked to climb ladders, offer commentary, engage in conversation, lick a performer’s body, touch, smell, and taste known and unknown substances. They are free to accept or to simply observe. Artists, curator and viewers put themselves out on a limb together, knowing as in real life some things turn out to be transformative and illuminating, while others do not always succeed as anticipated.

As a faculty member at University of California, Irvine teaching performance art, Oliver developed and evolved Irrational Exhibits in conjunction with her own pedagogical practice, emphasizing process and materiality over theory, and encouraged experimentation in ideation as well as content.

As a collaborative event Irrational Exhibits is as much about being present and open to possibilities, and different ways to perceive and question the nature of our reality, as anything else. Most of all it re-establishes the position of performance art as a live interactive visual art form.

IE1:

**ARTISTS**
- Liz Young
- Tony Mendoza
- Claudia Bucher
- Jeff Cain
- Asher Hartman
- Mary Cecile Gee
- Juan Capistran
- Lida Abdul
- Peter Schroff
- Anne Bray
- Steve Irvin
- Ann Perich
- Barry Morse
- Josie Roth
- Peter Frank & Fluxfix
- Seth Cooper

**CURATED BY DEBORAH OLIVER AND LIDA ABDUL**

**AT TRACK 16 / BERGAMOT STATION**

**JUNE 29TH, 2001**

**“DANCING ON THE RAINBOW”**
by
- Peter Schroff
- Tiffany Trenda

**“THE PILLOW WEB OF YVONNE ZEEB”**
by
- Claudia Bucher

**“BOSS SOUND”**
by
- Juan Capistran

**“E”**
by
- Asher Hartman

**PERFORMED BY**
- Michael Morrissey, Franc Baliton, Ann Perich

**“LIBYTTH”**
by
- Barry Morse
ARTISTS

DRESSING FOR THE REVOLUTION (LA MACHINE) BY NOELLE MASON

ZEN FOR MOUTH BY DAVID KHANG

TEXT OUT OF CONTEXT BY KENT ANDERSON BUTLER

MANAGEMENT STUDY # 030418 - PATROLING THE FLATLANDS BY GEORGE DOMANTAY
Much like going to a museum, the viewer becomes the curator of his / her experience, selecting what to look at and for how long. At Irrational Exhibits audiences could navigate the space at their own pace choosing their degree of engagement, with one major difference: the works they were watching were changing in front of them.
IE3:


“GRANDMA JUDY/SACRED CHORE #1 (GJ/SC #1)” BY MARCUS KUILAND-NAZARIO

“THINGS WE SAW ON OUR RETURN” BY LIDA ABDUL

“DRESS ME NOT” BY MARIEL CARRANZA

“I STILL HAVE NEEDS” BY ASHER HARTMAN AND CURT LEMIEUX

“WHITE ON WHITE EVEN” BY HABIB KHERADYAR

“UNTITLED” BY PETER SCHROFF

“LYING LODGE” BY LIZ YOUNG

CURATED BY DEBORAH OLIVER
AT TRACK 16 / BERGAMOT STATION
OCTOBER 23RD, 2004
"SPEAKING OF BUTTERFLIES" BY DAVID KHANG

"NO/BODY COUNTS" BY CHUSIEN CHANG
"MODERN NOMAD" BY TONY BANUELOS

"PHENOM-EEE-NOLOGICAL SCIENCE FAIR: TAKE CREATION INTO YOUR OWN HANDS" BY THE ELIZABETHS: ELIZABETH TREMANTE, MICOLE ELISABETH HEBRON AND KRISTIN ELIZABETH CALABRESE

"THE ADVENTURES OF CLAUDZILLA AND THE C-MEN: DIVE ATTACK PLAN RRR!" BY CLAUDIA BUCHER AND JULIE LEQUIN

"A SNAIL FROM RIPLEY'S GARDEN" BY DOUGLAS GREEN

"WHEEL THROWN TABLE TENNIS" BY ZACK DAVIS


"GIRL IS INVISIBLE" BY GUL CAGIN

"FEAST OF GOD" BY TIFFANY TRENDA

"WHEEL THROWN TABLE TENNIS" BY ZACK DAVIS

"GIRL IS INVISIBLE" BY GUL CAGIN

"FEAST OF GOD" BY TIFFANY TRENDA
“BABYMACHINE” BY DAVID BURNS

“SPORT OR ACTIVITY?” BY DAVE GHILARUCCI

“THINGS I NEVER GOT TO TELL YOU” BY MARISOL RENDÓN

“The Red Century” By Ingram Ober

“Civil War Reenactment” By Matt Wardell

1972 By HK Zamani and Amitis Motevalli

A group of artists explore and confront the dangerous and disturbing landscape of the 21st century: an environment in which one treads the shifting terrain of catastrophe with delusions of safety, and where human relationships are subject to technological intervention and desensitizing media overload.
LOOKING GLASS #13

BY STEVE SHOFFNER

NEST(1:28)

BY HELIA RABIE
“PANOPTIC MOUTHS, HEGEMONIC COGNITION, AND LOST BODIES” BY GUL CAGIN

“EGO #2” BY JAMIE MCMURRY

“BLANK SPACE” BY MARIEL CARRANZA

WITH Svetlana Darsalia, Asher Hartman, Adam Overton, Lindsey Walker, Nicole Hayashida, Joe Hernandez, Emille McMahon, Alejandra Herrera, Steve Irvin, Marcus Kuiland-Nazario, Leigh Ann Hahn, Dana Maiden, Elizabeth Eva Rossof, Jamie McMurry, Paul Oshima, Jason Keller, Tony Benuelos, Seth Pringle, Shane Quentin, Natalie Jean Klibanow, Helia Rabie, Jules Rochielle Sievert, Steve Shoffner, HK Zamani

“MAKING THE MOST OF OUR TIME TOGETHER #1” BY SHANE QUENTIN AND NATALIE JEAN KLIBANOW

“SHELL” BY NICOLE HAYASHIDA

“LOOKING GLASS #15” BY STEVE SHOFFNER

“LIFE IS ART” BY ALEJANDRA HERRERA
The audience BECOMES part of an ever-evolving world spending as much time as they wish with each of the works shown, or by moving freely through the gallery.
**IE8:**

**ARTISTS**

**CURATED BY DEBORAH OLIVER**
**AT TRACK 16 / BERGAMOT STATION**
**APRIL 16TH, 2011**

"CLOUD" BY LIZ NURENBERG
"TWELVE FROM THE UNDERGROUND" BY KRISTINA FARAGHER , CURT LEMIEUX WITH ROCHELLE FABB AND ALEC FRAISER
"UNTITLED" BY BRENNAN GERARD AND RYAN KELLY
"UNTITLED" BY NANCY PPOP
"UNTITLED" BY BRENNA GERARD AND RYAN KELLY
"KISS AND TELL" BY JARRED CAIRNS
"CLOSING NIGHT @ CLUB LA LUCHA" BY DEL ZAMORA AND JUAN GARZA
"WINDOW OF TIME" BY CAROL CETRONE/PERPETUA & COMPANY
‘ROCHESTER KNOCKING’ AND ‘LÉGERDEMAIN’
BY MONICA DUNCAN, A CO-COLLABORATION WITH ROSS KARRE

XXXV

‘BUBBLE-BOY PING-PONG’ BY BRIAN BLACK AND RYAN BULIS

XXXVI

‘CHRISTY ROBERT, DEFORESTED, DEFROSTED’
BY CHRISTY ROBERTS

L R V E

A R T

"WHEELBARROW VALET" BY BRIAN BLACK AND RYAN BULIS

"THE ISLAND FLOOR STAIN" BY MONICA DUNCAN AND SAMANTHA MOHR

"DES CARTES" BY KRISTINA FARAGHER

"PANOPTIMONIUM" BY CLAUDIA BUCHER

"SOUNDS FROM STOLEN STARS" BY LIZ NUREMBERG

"THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF REPRESENTATION (LACE)" BY NANCY POPP
How do we, as artists, negotiate these shifts as they arise?

How do we stay connected within a confused cultural fabric?

How do we function in an increasingly dense physical environment?
"SCHEHERAZADE" BY HK ZAMANI

"TOTHELIMIT, 2005: A REVISITING. THINGS ARE NEVER THE SAME AND THEY NEVER CHANGE" BY JANICE GOMEZ

"EVERLAND 2" BY REANNE ESTRADA AND C. REE

"USTED NO ES SOLA Y I WILL NOT JUST BE..." BY EDUARDO SANCHEZ

"SINCERELY, AMERICA" BY LARA SALMON

"TAKE IT LYING DOWN" (LEFT) BY ZEINA BALTAGI

"PREPARATION FOR A PERFORMANCE THAT WILL NEVER TAKE PLACE" (RIGHT) BY CURT LEMIEUX

ARTISTS
Mapping The Divide

Works that embrace unpredictability, the messiness of biological and organic processes and materials, and the chaos of our times.
Place-Making And Social Memory

The act of remembering is a form of resistance, a way of identifying and defining our changing personal and social needs.
I came to curating out of a desire to find commonality within my peer group, to create an unmediated critical dialogue and social connection. My philosophy is best articulated by Nicolas Bourriaud’s theory of *Relational Aesthetics*, which he defines as “a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space.” The artist can be more accurately viewed as the “catalyst” in relational art, rather than being at the center. This particular concept and, most importantly the artist as “catalyst” is the core of who I am professionally. I create actions and environments of actions, which in turn create community. It is my passion and way of life. Though I can express these ideas theoretically, and lecture on the precedents and context for these art forms, the goal of the work itself, as well as my work as teacher, curator, and artist, is profoundly experiential. I’m looking forward to beginning the next iteration Irrational Exhibits.

- DEBORAH OLIVER
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to all the people who have contributed to making this project possible.

Thank you to all the artists that have created extraordinary performative works in the eleven iterations of Irrational Exhibits over the past twenty years.

To Laurie Steelink, Gallery Director at Track 16 Gallery, for her years of commitment to and support for this project. Laurie worked with me as a co-producer from the first Irrational Exhibits in 2001 through 2011 for the eighth exhibition at the gallery's thirteen thousand square foot space at Bergamot Station, Santa Monica. It truly wouldn't have been what it became without her.

Tom Patchett, Track 16 gallery owner, who committed wholeheartedly to this project over a ten-year time span and donated resources and time to the artists and myself during the installation of the exhibitions. Gallery Preparator, Cesar Delgadillo and Cindy Ojeda, who patiently worked on all aspects of the press, the programs, reservations and the admissions process for each show. Gracious thanks to Lida Abdul my Performance Art Teaching Assistant at UCI in 2000 and 2001 for her critical input. It was through these conversations that I migrated from doing performative work in the theater to durational performance art and video in the gallery. To Steve Irvin, for connecting us with Laurie Steelink and the entire team at Track 16 gallery, my creative home for ten years. Special thanks to Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Executive Director Sarah Russin who co-produced the Irrational Exhibits: Reports from the Field and the Irrational Exhibits 10th Anniversary: Mapping the Divide exhibitions at LACE. A champion of the L.A. arts community, she committed many resources to the project.

Many thanks to the LACE team, Fiona Ball, Programs Manager, Andrew Freire, Operations Manager, and Laurel Gregory, Curatorial Assistant for Irrational Exhibits 9 for their enthusiastic professional support. My heartfelt appreciation and thanks to Jacki Apple for writing an insightful critical essay for the ten-year anniversary catalogue and countless feedback sessions throughout the evolution of this project. Gracious thanks to Rochelle Fabb and The Metabolic Studio, a direct charitable activity of the Annenberg Foundation, for their generous funding of the Irrational Exhibits 10: Mapping the Divide exhibition and the creation of the tenth anniversary catalogue. Much appreciation to all the participants in the Irrational Exhibits 11: Place-Making and Social Memory at the Bendix Building in LA. I would like to acknowledge the generous support of Sean Meredith, Track 16 Gallery Director, and Caesar Delgadillo, Track 16 Gallery Preparator. My gratitude, to the following galleries who provided their exhibition spaces; Tiger Strikes Asteroid Gallery, Carl Baratta and J. Louise Makary, Monte Vista Gallery, Emily Blythe Jones and Debra Broz, Mutable Studio, Christine Meinders, Gallery 515, HK Zamani.

My gratitude to Amanda Maciel Antunes for her brilliant design of this catalogue, postcard, and social media platforms. Thank you Steve Shoffner/Fefifolios for the website and postcard designs 2001 - 2018, Fatima Hoang for postcard design 2007 and to Ginger Holguin and her UCLA students for their production expertise on many of the IE shows. A warm thanks to the photographers and videographers - Bill Beccio, Ian Byers-Gamber, Dominic De Vera, Yuko Dong, Laurel Gregory, Annie Martens, Paul Oshima, and Ramy Raoof. To Thinh Nguyen, Curatorial Advisor for IEII, Jerod Thompson, Associate Producer for IEII, and my tireless team of production interns Bevery Siu, Diego Juarez, Dominic De Vera, Jose Tinoco, and Mini Luong. Also to my students and Teaching Assistants at the University of California Irvine who have either participated in the Irrational Exhibits project or have been wonderful audience members reflecting critically on the work. Lastly, my friends and family -- Jacki Apple, Anne Bray, Ginger Holguin, Megan Williams, Tucker, Casey, and Ellie for providing me with advise, feedback, inspiration and critical support for the past two decades.

In Gratitude,
Deborah Oliver - Curator/Educator/Interdisciplinary Artist

In Memory of Liz Young (1958 - 2020) and Doran George (1969 - 2018)

Two extraordinary Los Angeles based artists whose work was powerful, inspired, touching, and always unexpected.

Rest in Power.


Doran George [IE5: 2006]