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Sriwhana Spong
The Purple Blotter

Michael Lett
1 – 31 March 2012
Tuesday-Friday 11am-6pm
Saturday 11am-3pm

Michael Lett is pleased to present *The Purple Blotter*, an exhibition of new work by Sriwhana Spong. A 'choreography' of film, sculpture and collage that explores notions of public and private space, the intuitive and the cerebral, and the body that is the borderland in movement between these different states.

The purple blotter referred to in Spong's title is that of pivotal consequence in Colette's 1934 novella *Duo*, in which the simple observation of a patch of light reflected on a cheek by a purple leather blotter becomes the catalyst for a crisis that changes the lives of both her characters.

Duo is a portrait not just of two people, but of two figures inseparable from the space they inhabit – the shifting light and the objects that surround them: orchids in a vase, a blanket with cigarette burns, and love letters hidden inside a purple blotter. This is a story of fleeting moments as inspiration for change, the interwoven and inseparable relationship between bodies and their environments. Mostly however, it is about two people watching something disappear.

Spong's major new film titled *Beach Study* is her first made using 16mm. In addition to the idiosyncrasies of the film stock, the use of coloured filters bring intense flashes of magenta, violet and amber that flicker and morph with the landscape they celebrate. A body responds in the form of dance, with gestures both classical and familiar, intentionally designed to escape any particular philosophy of movement.

In this work Spong makes a personal observation of disappearance – that of a once loved childhood beach to which access is now made difficult by private land ownership. Fleeting moments and corporeal recollections here form an exploration of the precarious relationship between memory and experience.

In a series of sculptures and collages Spong explores her ongoing interest in Balinese offerings. An interest spurred by the physicality of such objects - their amorphous formal quality, fragility, and use of everyday objects. In these works Spong employs a diversity of materials such as magazines, recycled packaging, silver, and thread dyed in wine.

Sriwhana Spong was born in 1979 in Auckland, New Zealand. Recent exhibitions include *Raiding the Archives*, Bangkok Experimental Film Festival, Thai Film Archive, Bangkok, 2012; *Collecting Contemporary*, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, 2011; *Fanta Silver and Song*, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, 2011; *Scene Shifts*, Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, 2010; *Lethe-wards*, Art Statements, Basel, 2010. Forthcoming exhibitions include the second Auckland Art Gallery roof terrace commission, opening March 2012.

Sriwhana Spong

Since graduating from Elam School of Fine Art in 2001, Sriwhana Spong's work has been exhibited throughout Australasia and more recently in the USA and Europe. As well maintaining a schedule of solo shows, Sriwhana has participated in exhibitions such as: For Keeps, Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland; New World Records, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne (2009); Turbulence: 3rd Auckland Triennial, Artspace, Auckland (2007); A Tale of Two Cities, Busan Biennale, Busan (2006); Cultural Futures, St. Paul Street Gallery, Auckland (2005); and Break Shift, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth (2004). In 2005 Spong was the winner of the Trust Waikato National Contemporary Art Award, in 2007 she completed a residency at Artspace Sydney, and in 2008 she participated in the ISCP Studio Residency Program in New York City.

Born 1979 in Auckland, New Zealand

1998-2001

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2012

The Purple Blotter, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)

Raiding the Archives, Bangkok Experimental Film Festival 6, Thai Film Archive, Bangkok (film screening)

2011

Rencontres Internationales, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (film screening)

Prospect, New Zealand Art Now, City Gallery, Wellington (group)

Christian Jankowski, Richard Maloy, Sriwhana Spong, Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland (group)

Collecting Contemporary, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington (group)

Fanta Silver and Song, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, Australia (solo)

2010

Dancing Celestial, Physics Room, Christchurch (solo)

Scene Shifts, Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden (group)

Exhibitions, Project Arts Centre, Dublin, Ireland (group)

Discreet Objects, Utopian Slumps, Melbourne, Australia (group)

Lethe-wards, Arts Statements, Art Basel (solo)

Channeling Mr B, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)

2009

New World Records, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne, Australia (group)

For Keeps, Sampling Recent Acquisitions 2006-2009, Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland (group)

Tactical Support: Curator's Choice, Tracy Williams Ltd, New York (group)

2008

Myth and Practice, The NZ Film Archive, Wellington (solo)

Solar Midnight, Anna Miles Gallery, Auckland (solo)

Backdrop, Newcall, Auckland (solo)

Moving Light, with Jonathan Jones, Fremantle Arts Centre, Perth (two-person)

Open Studios International Studio and Curatorial Programme, New York (group)

Limbo Land, Anna Miles Gallery, Auckland (group)

Ethnographies of the Future, BRIC Rotunda Gallery, New York (group)

Group Show, 1301PE, Los Angeles (group)

2007

Beetlejuice, Artspace, Sydney (solo)

Regarding Fear and Hope, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia (group)

Twone, in collaboration with Kate Newby, Physics Room, Christchurch (two-person)

Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf, Te Tuhi, Auckland (group)

Turbulence 3RD Auckland Triennale, Artspace, Auckland (solo presentation)

2006

Don't Misbehave, SCAPE Biennale, Christchurch (solo presentation)

Satellite, Shanghai, China (group)

Candlestick Park, Anna Miles Gallery, Auckland (solo)

A Tale of Two Cities, Busan Biennale, Korea (solo presentation)

Twin Oak Drive, 2x2 Contemporary Projects, City Gallery, Wellington (group)

Local Transit, Artspace, Auckland (group)

Single Currency, VCA, Melbourne, Australia (group)
Earthly Delight, Anna Miles Gallery, Auckland (group)
An Unlikely Return to the Legend of Origins, Sparwasser HQ, Berlin (group)

2005

Cultural Futures, St Paul St Gallery, Auckland (group)
Muttnik, Anna Miles Gallery, Auckland (solo)
Waikato Contemporary Art Award, Hamilton (group)
World Famous in New Zealand, CCAS, Canberra, Australia (group)

2004

C'est La Vie ma Cherie, Anna Miles Gallery, Auckland (solo)
Break Shift, Govett Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth (group)
Somersault, Anna Miles Gallery, Auckland (group)
ACP Video Show, Scott Donovan Gallery, Sydney (group)
The Greenhouse, Frankfurter Welle, Frankfurt (group)
Industrial Light and Magic, collaboration with Daniel Malone, Rm103, Auckland (two-person)

PROGRAMME SCREENINGS

2007

Lost and Found, City Gallery, Wellington

2006

Happy Believers, Werkleitz Biennale, Halle, Germany
Staring into Space, Trafo Space, Budapest
The Peninsula, Singapore History Museum, Singapore

2005

Viewfinder, The Film Archive, Auckland City Library
Squared, Wellington City Art Gallery, Wellington

RESIDENCY PROGRAMMES & AWARDS

2008 ISCP, New York
2007 Artspace, Sydney
2005 Winner, Trust Waikato National Contemporary Art Award

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2010

'Pale blue bars and gold chains', Gwyn Porter in Sriwhana Spong: Nijinsky, Clouds and Michael Lett Publishing, 2010
'Palms facing skyward', Sarah Hopkinson in Sriwhana Spong: Nijinsky, Clouds and Michael Lett Publishing, 2010

2008

'Filmic Vibrations: The Contemporary Legacy of Len Lye', Dylan Rainforth, Art & Australia Vol.46, No.3, 2009, pg 480
Sriwhana Spong: Interview with Natasha Conland, Artworld Issue 5, pg 146
'Moving Light', Consuelo Cavaniglia, Fremantle Arts Centre
'Video Calls the Shots', Sue Gardiner, Art News, Autumn 2008, pg96

2007

'Sriwhana Spong', Brian Butler, Speculation
'Twone', David Levinson/ Kah Bee Chow, Twone catalogue
'Cosmic Smiles', A. Cooper, Regarding Fear and Hope catalogue, pg 43
'Seven Days', Laura Preston, Turbulence Third Auckland Triennale catalogue, pg 102

2006

'Daytrip', Laura Preston, Don't Misbehave SCAPE Biennale catalogue, pg92
'Living in a World of Echoes', Emma Bugden, 2x2 Contemporary Projects catalogue