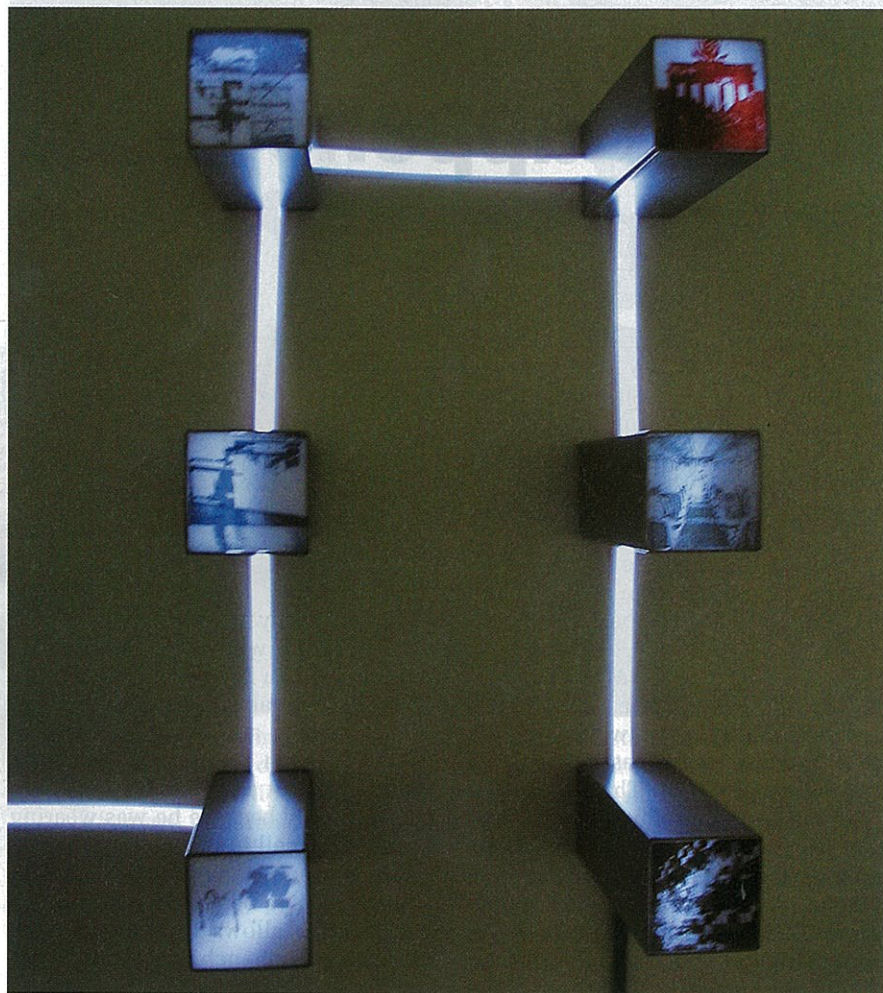


Sideways

BY BRIDIE LONIE

I'm writing this in Australia, looking out at the Hawkesbury River, considering three exhibitions that look at beginnings, endpoints and what's in between. Just as an aside, the light here is definitely different; there are no glittering leaves and the greens are infused with gentle red ochre. Place makes a difference. One of the ways artists deal with these differences is through the use of anamorphism: those bizarrely angled images that cannot be read coherently from the usual viewing point at centre front of the image. Holbein's "The Ambassadors" is a key example; the distorted skull that can be seen from the side of the image suggests that the political activities celebrated by the image become meaningless from another point of view.

Ina Johann's work has as its starting point encounters between German and New Zealand culture. Taking the look of German formalism that is often geometric and uses perspex and light, she has placed delicate slivers of translucent images into constructed boxes that suggest that the way we see each image is mediated by another. She juxtaposes graphic marks which suggest the quick flick of images seen through, for example, a train window, or the digital experiences that some imagine will replace "real" experience. I first saw Johann's work in Christchurch's Kiosk, a tiny "gallery" space 1.5 metres tall on the pavement by a pedestrian crossing. Perspex slices of colour were visible only from the side; looking into those slivers it was quite evident that something specific was to be seen, but it was impossible to read the image from that angle.



Ina Johann's "Stuttering Structures":
mimicry of the mind's pathways.

A set of projecting cubes connected by light-emitting tape plays with position and construction in a mimicry of the mind's synaptic pathways. All we can tell is that these images were seen, not *what* was seen.

Terminal Eden, an installation by Ana Terry, is a nightmarish construction. A quilt of ceramic tiles overlies a full-size bed. It faces a dead tree with a toy bird in a cage. More tiles drip insidiously from the ceiling, threatening to cover the entire environment. This dystopic vision asks whether this particular viewpoint can be changed.

Terminus at the Hocken Gallery initiates a symposium that will be held later this year, connecting two points in the South Island. This collection of works looks at Port Otago in Dunedin. The three works create junctions between transport, packaging, cargo and the political landscape. Iain Cheesman's ambiguously celebratory construction has digital images of himself and his partner as the Pearly King and Queen welcoming us onto a bizarrely foreshortened *Star Wars*-like ramp and podium with gnomonic texts that undo any sense of security. Do we want these smiling figures to rule us? Laurie Anderson's comment about the action of waving – does this mean hello or

goodbye? – lies under here somewhere.

Australian artist Neil Berecny-Brown's installation divides the room's cubic space laterally into hemispheres, southern and northern, western and eastern, air and water, divided against each other. Each has a wooden pallet and a child's trike, one airborne, the other in what feels like water, a pallet half-submerged, like a raft. I couldn't help thinking of the sea and desert, refugees and children.

Between the two installations, Ali Bramwell's cardboard constructions are cut-offs of boogie points and signals, trains and oddly mobile boxes. They also, but lightly, reference the vernacular use of cardboard cartons for dwellings by people in temporary or more permanent transit. But they have a whacky cheeriness about them as they trundle around, looking for their other halves. Switches rotate, on-off, come-go, vehicles mediating the works around them.

TRANS, Ina Johann, Blue Oyster Gallery, Dunedin.

TERMINAL EDEN, Ana Terry, Blue Oyster Gallery, Dunedin.

TERMINUS, Hocken Gallery, Dunedin (until November 5).



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