

Welcome to PsycheDADA, where *intensity* is the stuff of play regardless of any would-be historical relativism. Rather than thinking of the artists gathered in this exhibition as an extension of a prescribed historical narrative, like a chapter of art history, Tod and I decided to embrace the broader implications of PsycheDADA, relative to a project that never stale-dates: forever the challenge of the new. Here we find an open-faced exploration that *problematizes* imposed perimeters, stylistic constraints, and/or political boundaries. What was DADA if not a methodology that enabled serious contemplation of what otherwise might be shunted as marginal, absurd, dangerous, subversive, volatile and irrational? DADA and the Psychedelic share an investigative *modus operandi*. In this sense the work on view is best thought of variously as thought experiments, exploring *freedom* in the most terrifying sense of the word (as in- permission granted). These charged artistic gestures are not offered as features of “progress”, or “rungs” up the teleological ladder-- reaching, groping *ad nauseam* for an imagined apex of historical “truth” and knowledge. We know from the first time around there is no apex to be had, only the moveable feast of becoming. With DADA this “upwardly mobile” vertical plane is exploded by an opening up of the horizontal plane of Simulacra, where everything is potential. Literally everything, the entire matter of life: nuanced, complex, dynamic, detailed... every grain and every fibre becomes resonant with potential. Overturned are the Platonic hierarchies that privilege an “absolute” aesthetic, the colonial “truth” that always displaces or subordinates by way of habit. What DADA leaves in its wake is the broadening out of potential such that art becomes intrinsic to the creative movement of life, and thereafter there is nothing that can not be contemplated as art.

“In order to plumb the intensive depths or the *spatium* of an egg, the directions and distances, the dynamisms and dramas, the potentials and potentialities must be multiplied. The world is an egg.” (Difference & Repetition, page 251)

The intensive environment that Deleuze describes above is one of a multiplication that is not a recapitulation of other forms (an early theory in embryology, now discredited), nor is it a symmetrical progression that simply reiterates. Rather, the intensive environment embodies difference in itself, the dynamism and dramas of a sheer potentiality. We have decided to study the artists in this exhibition with both DADA and the psychedelic in mind, insofar as both are concerned with an intensive exploration that multiplies potential by privileging the production of questions and problematics over and above answers and resolution.

At first glance the *DMT* video installation project by Jeremy Shaw might seem too research-oriented to reflect upon the thesis articulated above. His chosen environs are quite typical of a kind of clinical system, in part setting out to mimic the scientific idea of research, and as such outwardly bridled by a dispassionate constraint that would simply “acquire knowledge”. What plays out, however, is a content that surpasses and overflows any such containment. This is not surprising from the standpoint that any natural phenomena contains elements that surpass what can be known of it, unfixed dimensions that lend themselves to wildly different positions and potentialities in relation to any given thing. For example, think of the ornithologist who studies migratory patterns of certain species of birds, or perhaps a physicist in search of the Higgs Boson particle. In either case there is the data, the coordinates, the taxonomies, and more generally speaking the base of acquired knowledge; none of which, however, fully constitutes the object at play. There has to be a margin of excess, an area of exploration that is determined by the virtual, one that renders the subject bottomless as it develops *dynamically* in time. This is because in reality the system is never closed, it is always an open system that we must contend with, a system that is itself dynamic, unfixed,

and therefore never entirely “knowable”. Now turning our attention towards Shaw's “experimentation” with *DMT* and we are confronted with an unknowable region par excellence. The video as it is structured is stoic: a series of “subjects” are administered a potent dose of the psychedelic, all within the clinical trappings of sterile bed sheets in what could almost be a hospital setting. In spite of whatever the artist/scientist determinations may be, what can register on the human visage quickly overtakes said scientific posturing and posits itself as the actual matter that is staked in the work. In this there is no “field unification theory” that draws the experiences together and puts them into a tidy package, rather what we have is an unfettered difference that plays out, and between each of the people involved there is a wild range of expression. Now comes the time to confront what capitalism has done to the psychedelic. In its inhuman will to commodify, always commodify, capitalism propagates the idea of a “tourist”, and somehow this notion is to separate and barricade the person from what they are experiencing. This untenable proposition would have us perceive ourselves as being somehow apart from the sensible, as if the sensible were like an object in front of us rather than the total environment of our existence. Shaw's piece is a deft rebuttal to the denial system of capitalism (and the arrogance of pharmaceuticals). Put forward within these terms is the immanent fact that we are beings *of* the sensible, not beings *and* the sensible or *with* the sensible, but *OF* the sensible! Completely constructed out of the sensible. Tod Emel and I have discussed what the commercial machination does to render the psychedelic a “frivolity” that nevertheless can trigger “madness”, and it seems to us that it achieves such stupefying effects through a process of flattening, by denying the dimensions of the psychedelic that exist as intensive states in reality in order to privilege a reproduction of it, and hence becoming nothing more than a fashion statement. We do willingly take on these roles, this flattening process is something that we participate in, and in some sense we do become “tourists”. But then again this state of affairs is insufficient to be any kind of account, and the *undeniable* must eventually emerge, a kind of reckoning with the incommensurable element in being *of* the sensible.

Humour plays an important role with these proceedings, namely that of overturning any sense of morality that would dictate a specific “meaning” and “fix” it in time, once and for all. In this regard the esoteric hi-jinx of Noxious Sector hold court around the border-lands science with all the zeal of DADA in its prime. Once again the unknowable terrain of what a body may be capable of forms the territory of this collaborative project, and once again there is a quasi-scientific approach to such things as telepathy, magnetism, and “god helmets”. But whereas Jeremy Shaw's critique of science is tacit and underlying, with these three it is an overt mischief that is foregrounded. Having said this, there is no joke worth telling that does not have an affirmation at its core, and in fact it is this positivity which constitutes the aforementioned zeal. In taking on these subjects Jackson 2bears, Doug Jarvis and Ted Hiebert ridicule the over-arching and deterministic trappings of such “explorations”, the kind of new aged marketing that perversely operates as a narcissistic pop-psychology. The undercurrent of force that moves through their work positions such “knowledge” of the arcane or esoteric as patently absurd, and completely beside the point. Meanwhile the three actually do manage a certain affection and sympathy for their subjects, in particular for the manner in which “explanations” can often be exposed as an absurd over-reach in light of what is actually put into play. The political will of “authority” is the just cause for all the giggling, but this regime is not simply negated in the Noxious Sector, it is, rather, once again, surpassed. Their street-side performances or stagings, for example, in their absurdity, and through their critique of all its trappings, simultaneously constitutes genuinely aberrant behaviour-- what with all their foreheads magnetically attached to this and that in the public sphere. At root there is the

DADA desire for a kind of freedom that must be reckoned with in terms that are frightening to the core of our being. Here is the realm of Simulacra, all hierarchies are exposed as wretched Platonic conceits that only grapple and grope for controlling share, and with this measure of control an abatement of the actual *fear* of freedom. In this way the Noxious Sector is at the same time funny and serious, replete with all of the serious critique undertaken by the humour of DADA, remembering that these terms are, after all, not contradictory. In closing I will resist speaking in more particular or detailed terms with regards to the work of Noxious Sector because, in curating them into this exhibition, I wanted to be as surprised as the next person about their contribution, perhaps in order to act as an anarchistic, permissive conduit to their trouble-making enterprises.

Likewise we involved Mr & Mrs Keith Murray with an open hand. If Jeremy Shaw provided the most powerful hallucinogens known to exist, then Murray has given us the set and setting of our generation; the tweaked-out, Buddha-inflected environment of a rave scene. Once again, humour sets much of the tone of this work, in this case as an ironic reworking of the sacred conflated with the profane, unauthentic, artificial; all provocations celebrated to a radiant degree. We might first ask, what is so *unreal* about dayglo? And secondly, how have these representational modes of the psychedelic, so co-opted into the perversely antithetical commercialization of “generation ecstasy”, been given licence by the artist to form the basis of his installation experiments? Mr & Mrs Murray adopt these very codes, these enigmatic glow in the dark intensities, as a means to implicate the “kitsch” nature of the work by pushing the modern/spiritual idea to the 'nth' degree. On further inspection, something not so dismissible or predictable emerges. As when we contrast the digital to the analogue or the pixel to the dot, the natural/artificial distinction begins to dissolve as the constituent element is brought out into the light of day, into its own space and time, expressed as a reality on its own terms. Hence the “artificial” is exploded in favour of the revolutionary powers that are inherent to properties of such simulacra, and the dayglo Buddha shines as it is developed anew, a repetition to be sure, but most resolutely a *repetition of difference*. Once again it turns out that simulacra possesses all of the dimensions of the real, including that which we might want to superstitiously call “fake”. Dayglo is spread before us in *The Neon God We Made*, and it is as real as the gallery around it. So too *The Dolly Shot* explores the active reality of a dream, that aspect of “fantasy” that speaks to the reality of one's unbridled desire. Desire is the catalyst for the artist to carry out his synthesis with the radiating form of an angelic Dolly Parton. Here the dual Murray holds court by multiplying his/her sexuality without reducing sexuality in any way, on the contrary complexifying it. At the center of her/his project are the titles Mr and Mrs, already Keith Murray is a crowd of people, but then along comes Dolly Parton and the collision is choreographed and smooth, full of new folds and different angles of sexuality. *The Dolly Shot* is how I will lead out of this discussion, with perhaps one thought about the high stakes of its supposedly kitsch gambit. The intensity of this psychedelic sexuality lies with its powers of invention, the unhinging of self or even “identity” to a less constrained form of creativity, one in which we find the revolutionary power to reinvent ourselves.