AUSTRALIAN ARTIST-RUN ORGANISATIONS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN THE PRESENTATION AND PROMOTION OF AUSTRALIAN CONTEMPORARY ART PRACTICE AND CULTURE. ASIALINK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE HAS DEVELOPED THE RUN ARTIST RUN PROJECT BOTH TO CELEBRATE OUR CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS AND TO FOSTER NEW AUDIENCES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS AND CULTURAL NETWORKS.

The University of Melbourne’s Cultural Policy Statement outlines our commitment to cultural engagement with the community, and we are pleased to be able to offer opportunities for cultural engagement within and outside Australia. A majority of our students are young, keen to learn and to engage with an international network, and run artist run, dovetails these strengths, with Australian artists working in collaboration with peers in Vietnam and Singapore.

Through the provision of our rich cultural resources and a supportive environment, the University aims to produce internationally alert graduates, including those who will make their mark in a global community through their uniquely Australian perspective. Driven by this vision and strengthened by dedicated supporters, the University and the participating project artist-run initiatives (ARIs) - Conical, West Space and 12 dozen - each present a contemporary Australian culture engaged within this global community.

I look forward to following the success of run artist run and congratulate Asialink for establishing another successful avenue for cultural exchange and dialogue between Australia and Asia.

I would like especially to acknowledge the support by the Australia Council, the Australian Government’s arts funding and advisory body, as well as by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through the Images of Australia Branch, and the Myer Foundation.

PROFESSOR HARREN BEBINGTON
Dean,
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
In recent years there has been a trend towards exhibition and collaboration between Australian AIFs on a local, national, and increasingly, an international level. Events such as Ublyb: Asia-Pacific Artists Initiative Project (2003), a series of international exhibitions and events focused on the Asia-Pacific region, initiated by Centre for Contemporary Photography (Melbourne) / Gertrude Contemporary Art Space (Melbourne), with a follow-up project Ublyb (2005) in Thailand; Space traffic: artist-run spaces beyond a local context, a symposium held in Hong Kong (2001); initiated by West Space (Melbourne) and ParaSite (Hong Kong) fuelled an international dialogue between Australian and Asian AIF networks that continues. The Garg Festival with ongoing collaborations between artists from Indonesia AIFs and artists from the Chippendale arts precinct (Sydney); and more recently, Making Space (2007); a series of exhibitions documenting Victoria’s AIF history.

In acknowledging the successes and strengths of such initiatives, Asalink invited three Australian-based AIFs, Conical (Melbourne), 1/20th (Sydney) and West Space (Melbourne) to develop a project in association with a complementary Asian-based AIF. Interaction is a project developed by Conical committee member and artist Kate Lee in collaboration with sound artist Dear Lingyu Undertaken in June, the sound based project residency is an association with Rygge, Mano, and a little bit blak. His Ch-Nh Mck City: An Index of Kindness, curated by Drugeal Philippe for 1012cr is a partnership with p-10, Singapore. The project involves participating artists Ruili Low and Jonathan Jones travelling to Singapore to produce (staged) site-specific installations and performances throughout September and October. West Space East is a project developed by West Space in partnership with Plastique Kinetic Worms (PKW) in Singapore. Curator Mark Feary and participating artists Demarco Bertol, Sue Doid and

Bianca Hester undertakes workshops and discussions in conjunction with mounting the exhibition West Space East at PKW in October. The run artist run highlights the transferable nature now inherent in much contemporary art practice. Artists travel more readily between cities and countries both physically and visually through access to international art magazines and the internet. In Vietnam, Singapore and Australia, these artists immense themselves in new cultures, communities and professions at play, with what we hope will be lasting effects.

A special thanks to all artists, curators and AIFs involved in making run artist run a reality and for all AIFs that continue to push the boundaries of contemporary art practice. Thanks also for the support and expertise in the development of the project from the selection panel, Max Delany, Director, Monash University Museum of Art, and Rhynie Chike, Visual Arts Board, Australia Council.
Katie Lee first visited Vietnam in 2003, where she lived and worked for 12 months. During this time, Lee met and worked with a number of Vietnamese contemporary artists, culminating in a show at the artist-run space Nha San with the artist Nguyen Ngoc Lam. Lee’s work explored how visual symbols of Vietnamese culture can be applied as signifiers for greater cultural dialogues relating to social conditions. Nguyen’s work similarly explores the visual everyday, as a way of trying to uncover social values, particularly the way people interact with nature.

Lee’s practice continues this exploration into spatial and architectural contexts, particularly questioning how materiality and specific spatial conditions reveal the psychological experience of urban space. The constant juxtaposition of order and structure, against the physical, emotional and psychological, provides the framework for Lee’s spatial installations.

Lee has been a Conical committee member since 2000. Recently Conical has developed a more targeted response to working with emerging artists or curators in the form of individual mentorship. The director or committee member invites an artist to conceive, develop and present new work with their direct involvement. Typically involving studio visits and on-site gallery discussions, the outcome is new work made specifically for the gallery. Lee has been particularly active in this role of developing projects with emerging artists by maintaining a presence throughout the early stages through to the installation phase of the work.

In collaboration with sound artist Dean Linguy, Lee will develop new work within the haptic and chaotic urban environment of Ho Chi Minh City. Dean Linguy’s interest in body and space stems from his background as a performer, particularly studying the training methods of Butch and the work of the Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki. Within Butch, images are mapped onto, and occasionally, into the body to be performed. Attention to the body’s position in space and the negative space formed between the moving body is emphasised. Sound as an important component in this equation, becoming a movable feast where the body is moved by the sound or the sound seems to have its origins from within the body.

The relationship between the internal and external, body and space, sound and object/spaces are continuing concrete in Linguy’s practice. Specific to the Vietnam project is an exploration of how the body becomes a culturally loaded site in itself. The incorporation of sound attempts to short-circuit culturally specific signs and forms of communication. The production of sounds and the responses to them may highlight a different approach to how one communicates in a community and how one engages with a particular environment.

Lee and Linguy travel to Ho Chi Minh City to work within the community associated with a ‘little high blah’ (blab). The project is seen as part of a laboratory style, collaborative process, where Lee and Linguy facilitate, invite, curate and present works that evolve throughout the residency period of four weeks.
1/2002

1/2002's artist-run initiative was founded in 2004 in Darlinghurst, Sydney, as an annual program comprising six exhibitions over six weeks, bringing together artists working in a wide range of visual art forms, including an 'all-in-T-shirt' exhibition. This small festival format generated a great deal of energy in the Sydney emerging arts community during the usually sleepy January period. In 2005, the six-week festival was repeated at a space in Surry Hills, with an accompanying full-colour catalogue. This show included, for the first time, video work as well as installation, painting and design.

In 2006, the program expanded to a 12-month cycle, involving exhibitions curated by the four 1/2002 directors and in collaboration with guest curators. Based in an office and studio space in Chippendale, Sydney, 1/2002 worked as a mobile event which set up temporary focus points for visual artists.

Sydney venues in 2006 included the Museum of Sydney, the Palm House at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Gallery 4a and Hoyts Cinemas Complex. International venues include the About Cafe in Bangkok and the Art Centre for Arts in Beijing. Along with the 1/2002 directors, guest curators for the 2006 program included remix artists Jack and academic Thomas Berghs. A 66-page full-colour catalogue of the yearly program was published at the end of 2006 and is stockisted in museums and bookstores around Australia.

In February 2007, 1/2002 opened Chalk Horse, a gallery space in Surry Hills. Sydney. This gallery space runs parallel to 1/2002 projects, and serves as a base for exhibitions in inner Sydney. Consisting of a man gallery space and a project space, Chalk Horse programs around 26 exhibitions a year, along with performances, screenings and community art projects.

1/2002 is directed by Sydney-based curator, writer, and lecturer Douglas Phillips, Sydney-based artist and curator Jasper Knight, Sydney-based artist, curator and lecturer Oliver Watts and Banglork-based curator, writer and academic David Tah.

p-10

p-10 is a curatorial initiative with a project space at 10 Punggol Road, Singapore. It is an independent team consisting of five Singaporean art practitioners with international art experiences. Founded in February 2004, p-10 is primarily a response to the contemporary art situation in Singapore.

p-10 objectives and interests include creating opportunities for dialogue and interaction between artists, other art professionals and audience; nurturing and supporting artistic practices; developing artwork and the areas surrounding the practice of art, building local and international networks, and finding ways to connect art with the general public.

p-10 has made significant achievements in the three years it has been established. Having worked with a large number of important artists, curators and art spaces, both local and international, p-10 is known for its exciting and important work.

The p-10 team consists of artist Cheang Kuk Kiong, artist and Public Service Commission scholar Lee Soo-Chin, artist and Public Service Commission scholar Lim Kim Boon, curator Jennifer Teo and artist Woon Tian Wei.
RUARK LEWIS AND JONATHAN JONES ARE PRODUCING SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATIONS AND PERFORMANCES FOR P-10 IN SINGAPORE. THE PROJECT, CALLED AN INDEX OF KINDNESS, WILL BE A SERIES OF MODULAR INSTALLATIONS AND PERFORMANCES WHICH RE-IMAGINE LINGUISTIC SYSTEMS AND TAXONOMIC ORDERS IN RELATION TO THE INTERACTIVE SPACES OF LANGUAGE, PERFORMANCE AND EXCHANGE BOTH SPECIFIC TO SINGAPORE AND TO THE SPACE OF ART EXHIBITION ITSELF.

The following discussion between curator and 1/2/4/2: founding member, Dougal Philips and artist Ruark Lewis, is an initial opening up of the ideas which are driving this project, illuminating some of the complex concepts which will feed into the final manifestation of these ideas in the Singaporean context.
DP: You want to conceive a project that takes in site-specific elements. You say you’ll focus on the construction of a space within an urban cultural zone, a flexible space for exhibition and performance. You want to locate a set of rules that define ‘Kindness’, a taxonomic language for making sense of things.
How will you begin?
RL: We’ll start at the beginning and consider ‘What exists’. ‘What is?’, ‘What am I’, ‘What is describing this to me’ – the most basal problems of existence. We’re currently working with this ontological paradigm where objects and actions are presented as if in a single or plural index, and through this process we’re thinking about how it is we find the subject, then the relationship, a form that manifests into a designated or non-performative index.
DP: But to conceive a specific artwork – site, culture, city, nation – ahead of time and away from place. What sort of re-evaluation of the artist role and process does that situation require?
RL: We want to set the space in relation to spatial, aesthetic & social obligations. Things we value in our own lives. We want to work beyond our single-minded experiences. What this project offers is the opportunity to work in less conventional ways and construct from fields of interest normally outside the artistic comfort zone.
DP: How will you extend the Index? An even simpler question: How will it work?
RL: Jon has reconstructed a significant re-modeling utilising traditional New South Wales Aboriginal designs deploying those marks as monumental fluorescent forms. He understands this as being a culturally inscribed light. His constructions can be called a ‘counter claim’ or ‘promissory note’. The mercenary negotiations that bind us about these metaphorical solutions for territorial disputes imposed during the colonial period of the last two centuries. In this mode of play the artist erects a politics that no other science can do, but instead understand his informants what it represents in regional terms. By aligning our selections of situation and object mode the insulator of the ‘artifice’ we can categorise their meanings in respect to a particularly kind of line. We are keen to make these examinations with the local point of view in mind. We know from history that our idiomatic takes and makes of things and people have meaning in the impression too.
19th Century ethnographers examined, collected and categorised objects as examples of kinds of ‘things’. Their purpose was often ill-defined, accumulating as collectors often do for accumulation’s sake alone. Perhaps our contemporary collection (of kinds) can be of an ephemeral kind due to the digitisation available in sound and moving image archives. Will we still follow the antique structure of enquiry? Will it be a plastic index of personal references? A spontaneous record of visual form and narrative auto-biological emissions. Can our work be the choreographic writing of place, a unique trace of our own particular term narrative spatial history? A trace blundered with our social obligations or a kindled autobiographies?
Performance, movement, the movement of image and sound; recording the re-spatialisation (gesture) will be the true arbiters in our artistic exploration of an index of kinds.
DP: How does this project foster partnerships, exchange and economy within each of your practices?
RL: We enjoy blurring our artistic and aesthetic projects together. This involves a sort of brokery dash that extends our social and cultural obligations. Projects that trade value to a site or interpretation as an act of dual mapping. We want to avoid bringing cultural import substitutes linking up with local environments and generating a line of relevant poetic local resources in this way we hope to travel light.
DP: And the Index? How would you conceiving in your minds, ahead of the actual event of the itself?
RL: We want to acknowledge the difference of experience that is the usage and appearance of things. Our visit to the island-state is about the quality of the sound and the silences of the voice and that we will be counting on.
DP: Finally, the Index project seems to be, at its core, about living language and its flow and collisions within these intersecting spaces. What are the key themes you see here – control, freedom, space?
RL: We begin to play with a given ‘loveliness’ of official and unofficial languages. We understand superficiality that language is seen and felt in various ways. It operates as one but it maintains different cultural functions. These linguistic interchanges operate at great speed. We can try and apply our adit marks that cut the surface and transparencies as sections that come into play as an index of differences.
As artists, we hope to accommodate a version that condenses things. We want to say how to acknowledge the difference of experience that is the usage and appearance of things. Our visit to the island-state is about the quality of the sound and the silences of the voice and that we will be counting on.
Founded in 1993, West Space is one of Australia’s longest running artist-run organisations. West Space continues to build on its record of providing a supportive and flexible venue for the presentation of innovation, contemporary art and its ensuing dialogue. West Space has developed its reputation through a sustained belief in the importance of artist-run initiatives to practitioners, audiences and the art industry. As an organisation that is run by artists, it is able to reflect both the multiplicity of practices that artists embrace. The artists on the committee are active in a variety of professional fields, and in daily contact with current concerns and artistic developments.

Importantly, West Space acts as a working model that gives artists direct control over the means and conditions of presenting their work to the public. While many artists exhibiting at West Space are young or emerging, there is also a significant number of established artists that actively choose to exhibit at artist-run initiatives like West Space because of the dynamic communication and artistic freedom that they offer.

The West Space Projects Program is run alongside the application-based program and provides support to artist-initiated/developed exhibitions, publications, sound releases, performances, international exchanges and forums. These projects negotiate innovative approaches to cultural debate, production, presentation, collaboration and exchange extending across artforms and into non-art areas. The West Space Projects Program enables West Space to proactively generate, contribute to and support cultural development, alongside performing the more usual artist-run initiative role of presenting an application-based exhibition program.

West Space’s commitment to small-scale specialist arts publishing is also unique among artist-run initiatives in Australia. Published in tandem with major West Space Projects, these widely-distributed documents provide a permanent record of events.

International exchange and communication adds a vital dimension to local art making and to this and West Space has been committed to building international relationships with artist-run initiatives and artists. West Space has been involved with numerous international projects since 1998 including Space Tract at the ‘2001 Space Traffic International Artist Run Space Symposium in Hong Kong’ (2001), Interwalls with Western Front in Vancouver, Canada (2002), Parallel at Hanjeon Gallery in Seoul, South Korea (2013), OCENART at Parakou in Hong Kong (2003), and Telephone at West Space and Western Front (2006). In 2007 West Space has been involved with ‘Too Nave Too Far at Carcel in Milan, Italy, and Viewmasters-Rama in Osaka Arts Aporta, Osaka, Japan.

Plastique Kinetic Worms is a registered non-profit art organisation developed by artists for artists with a common vision to pro-actively further the development of contemporary art and artists. PKW for short, runs a gallery-space, which not only operates as a platform for promoting artists to explore and realise fresh, alternative ideas, but also as an initiative to instigate collaborative projects and cultural exchanges both locally and internationally.

Plastique Kinetic Worms has generated great interest, earning the respect and acknowledgement of various local and foreign art communities and institutions, establishing itself as a meeting ground, bridging individual artists, art communities and the public.

PKW vision includes establishing a contemporary art space for promoting alternative and experimental art practices; showcasing and encouraging young emerging artists explore their creativity and to network with the art community, providing public access to new forms of expression, and fostering exchanges with foreign artists, cultural institutions and art centres.
WEST SPACE EAST IS CONCEIVED AS A PROJECT WHICH FACILITATES NEW DIALOGUES BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS AND ARTIST-RUN INITIATIVES. IT PRESENTS A SELECTION OF WORKS AND A FORUM BY MELBOURNE-BASED ARTISTS AT PLASTIQUE KINETIC WORMS (PKW) IN SINGAPORE COORDINATED BY WEST SPACE IN MELBOURNE. WHILE THIS PROJECT IS FACILITATED THROUGH THESE ORGANISATIONS, IT HOLDS AS ITS MOST FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT THE ARTISTS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT, RATHER THAN THE ORGANISATIONS THEMSELVES.

West Space East brings together three Melbourne artists, Damiano Bertoli, Bianca Hester and Sue Dodd, committed to experimentation and innovation across media. While their artistic practice may be relatively well known within Australia, and in particular Melbourne, their works will be unfamiliar to the arts community in Singapore. Each artist has, over the past decade or more, forged a distinctive artistic practice which is beginning to garner international recognition. Significantly, within the context of this exhibition, the selected artists have all had sustained involvement with a number of artist-run initiatives in Melbourne, including West Space, exhibiting projects, collaborations, contributing publication texts and serving on committees. Subsequent to their various involvements with West Space they have developed further artist-run initiatives and projects, while concurrently creating projects for larger arts institutions throughout Australia and internationally.

The practices of these artists, along with those of their peers, and their involvement with artist-run initiatives form the basis of a forum which will be presented at PKW, coinciding with the exhibition of West Space East. This enables artists and curators to discuss the issues, opportunities and infrastructure negotiated by contemporary artists. Importantly, this will also provide an opportunity for the Australian artists to meet Singaporean artists to see further networks can be initiated and that they may gain an understanding of the practices of, and issues facing, contemporary Singaporean artists.


**ARTIST// SUE DODD**

SUE DODD HAS DEVELOPED AN ARTISTIC PRACTICE THAT INCORPORATES SIMULTANEOUSLY PERFORMANCE, VIDEO

Her performances and video work are an insider post-modern reflection on contemporary life. Dodd's work utilises the performative codes of pop music to elucidate our culture's increasingly banal obsession with celebrity, beauty, youth and gossip. Dodd is part of the performative group Group Pop (with Phil Dodd) which employs an amalgamation of performance and video to create a simulacrum of pop and celebrity culture, and serious performance art. Group Pop utilises sampling, displacement and decoration in the tradition of beat poetry, feminist performance and karaoke. Dodd has performed and exhibited in widely Melbourne and throughout Australia.

**ARTIST// BIANCA HESTER**

BIANCA HESTER'S PRACTICE INCORPORATES SCULPTURE, INSTALLATION, RESEARCH AND DIALOGUE

Her practice is concerned with the relationships between art and space, art and artists and art and audiences. Hester generatesinstallations which deal with the production of site situation in terms of process and event, writes on the practices of others and produce independent publications. Her practice is a site for an engagement with materiality and its relationship to the production of context and sociability, multiplicity, excess, the production of the local, issues of sustainability, the question of how practice can be made public in multiple formations, collaboratively, and the tension and productive relation between the notion of the individual and the collective, in both a material and social sense. Hester is a founding member of the artist-run initiative CIJIBS project and teaches sculpture at Victorian College of the Arts.

**CURATOR//MARK FEARY**

WEST SPACE EAST FACE

BEEN CO-ORDINATED BY MARK FEARY. FEARY IS AN INDEPENDENT CURATOR, AS WELL AS BEING PROGRAM COORDINATOR AT WEST SPACE.

His previous position includes Staff Manager at the Australian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2003 and 2005, and Gallery Officer at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art Melbourne. Recent projects include Rules of Engagement (West Space, Melbourne), Revisiting Optimum (The Carlton Hotel & Studios, Melbourne), Family First (VCA Gallery, Melbourne and The Physics Room, Christchurch, New Zealand); Modified Terrain (Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane), Nao Noir (Ethereal Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne and Tougher Than Art, St Floret, Melbourne).
The photographs are from the production with Dina Kertesz. 

Art: Video installation, sound: Dina, mixed media. 

Installation and performance: Courtesy of the artist.
run artist run is an Artalk touring program in partnership with 1/2byte, a little blub blub, Conical, p-10, Postique Kinetic Worms (PKW), Rylegs and West Space.

The organizers would like to thank the artists as well as their respective galleries. Damiano Bertoli appears courtesy of Naxos Fine Art, Melbourne and Jonathan Jones appears courtesy of Galleria Barry Baert, Sydney. Katie Lee and Dean Lingue can be contacted through Conical Inc. Ruukii Lewis can be contacted through H25dac, Sue Dodd and Bianca Mester can be contacted through West Space.

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