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# *SYZYGY*

juried by david cunningham and misako inaoka

September 18 - October 10, 2009

Featuring: Randy Colosky, Eric Larson, Liesa Lietzke, Hye Yeon Nam, Dominic Nguyen, Flynn O'Brien, Benji Rowan, Gretchen Till, Jessica Westbrook, and Alan Disparte & Yoram Wolberger (in collaboration with the AArrow Sign Spinners)

25th anniversary

1984-2009

For twenty-five years, **The Lab** has presented some of the most innovative and experimental interdisciplinary art in the Bay Area. The organization has fostered local, national, and international artists, and served as a springboard for many to reach further career heights. In celebration of this milestone, The Lab issued an open call for entries, inviting emerging artists to respond to the work of past exhibiting artists, including Scott Arford (2002), Lauren Davies (2001, 2006, 2009), Paul DiMarinis (1988), Taraneh Hemami (1995, 2008), Lynn Hershman Leeson (1986, 1987, 1995), Barry McGee (1996), Orlan (1993), Tony Oursler (2001), Trevor Paglen (2005), Rigo (1994, 1996), and Rex Ray (1994).

Syzygy, from the Late Latin (*syzygia*: conjunction), has slightly different meanings in astronomy, mathematics, music, philosophy, poetry, and other fields of inquiry, but generally can be defined as a kind of unity achieved through coordination or alignment of two or more things without the loss of identity. In art, diverse ideas and forms are constantly challenged to be in syzygy as artists work with multivalent and sometimes oppositional concepts, materials, and/or approaches. Artists were chosen across a range of media based on their ability to exemplify the theme and bring further sensitivity and nuance to the already multifaceted definition of syzygy.

Please visit [www.thelab.org](http://www.thelab.org) for our upcoming events and exhibitions, to sign up for our email list, and to learn how to become a member and submit your work for consideration.

Since 2002, **AArrow Sign Spinners** have turned sign spinning into a blend of extreme sport, performance art and guerilla marketing.

The following Sign Spinners appeared in *GAIN, SATISFACTION, EASY, FUTURE, SECURITY, SUCCESS* (In collaboration with the AArrow Sign Spinners):

**Raphael Angeles**

**David Moore**

**Nikko Prosser**

**Berlyn Traylor**

**David Cunningham** is the founder/director of David Cunningham Projects, San Francisco. Established in 2006, DCP has a special focus on presenting work that is rarely seen in the Bay area, exhibiting new and often site-specific / commissioned work by local, national and international emerging artists in all media, including video and performance. DCP has presented offsite projects at New Langton Arts and in collaboration with Invisible Venue (Oakland). Earlier this year DCP hosted the first installment of an international traveling group show which was co-produced with Airspace Gallery, England and which will make its third stop at Cell Project Space in London later this year. Born in Lusaka, Zambia in 1967, Cunningham received his degree in Architecture from University College Dublin, Ireland.

**Misako Inaoka**, born in Kyoto, Japan, received her BFA in print-making from RISD and an MFA from Mills College. Inaoka works with mixed media in sculpture and site-specific installation. Her work has been shown at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, de Young Museum, Walter and de Saisset Museum, as well as galleries in New York, Seattle, and Miami; Japan, England, China and Italy. She is a recipient of residencies at the Headlands Center for the Arts, MacDowell Colony, Vermont Studio Center, and de Young Museum.

**Rand Colosky** created his *Snowflake* series by shooting buckshot at paper targets folded to produce unique shapes. The accompanying large-scale piece was made with a similar process on a farm in Napa. Colosky is interested in the contradictions raised by using an instrument associated with violence to create objects associated with childhood seasonal decoration. More broadly, he brings together the world of manmade excess with the systems of nature, harnessing these dualities under a visual economy to reveal sublime patterns.

**Rand Colosky** received his BFA in ceramics in 1987 from Kansas City Art Institute and currently resides in Oakland, CA. He has shown at the 4th Street Gallery in Long Beach, CA; Kavi Gupta Gallery in Chicago, IL; Adobe Books Back Room in San Francisco, CA; and at with Jack Hanley Gallery in the Frieze Art Fair in London, England.

In *GAIN, SATISFACTION, EASY, FUTURE, SECURITY, SUCCESS (In collaboration with the AArrow Sign Spinners)*, aspirational words that are commonly used in our culture are introduced to the 'Sign Spinning' phenomenon. Together these elements give a much broader meaning to the directional promises we're led to believe in.

**Alan Disparte** was born and raised in a rural town in southern California. He received his B.F.A. from California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, CA, and his M.F.A. from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2007. Disparte, who works in a variety of media, which includes painting, drawing, video, mixed media, installation and sculpture, is inspired by a range of subjects, including pop cultural musings, broken celebrity, subversion of reality, fabricated nostalgia, nature and sensationalism. His work has been exhibited in La Jolla, the UK, San Francisco and Denver, most recently at David Cunningham Projects in San Francisco and Hatch Gallery in Oakland. Disparte's work has been published in *Art Forum*, *Artweek* and most recently *Studio Visit Magazine*, due out in spring 2010.

Born In Tel Aviv, Israel, and living in San Francisco, CA, **Yoram Wolberger** has exhibited, performed and co-curated shows in the United State and abroad. Wolberger received his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and was a recipient of the Murphy Fine Arts and the Schmidt Family Foundation Fellowships. His installations and sculptures have been shown in galleries and museums such as Brooklyn Museum, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Orange County Museum of Art, CA and San Jose Museum of Art, CA. His work is part of the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum, NY ;Orange County Museum of Art, CA and Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, CA. Wolberger manipulates and challenges our perceptions of the familiar through a variety of interventions, such as enlarging objects, slicing them into pieces or turning them inside out. Wolberger is fascinated by the uncanny experience of transforming everyday objects and situations, raising new associations and questions about their relevance.

*Product Placements* is a moving image sequence intersecting non-nutritional food habits with drive-by natural worlds. It is a formula for delightful nothingness, and presents a spectacle of consumer desire that communicates using text and visual language, but has nothing to say.

**Jessica Westbrook** Jessica Westbrook is an artist working with photography, video, language, and information design. Her projects explore desire, cues, cultural artifacts, and contradictory sensations that vacillate between fortune and catastrophe. Increasingly semantic in nature and modular in form, she considers her work a section of visual language culled from a complex matrix of assets, reconfigured and repurposed per space and time. Westbrook received an MFA from Tyler School of Art and has exhibited internationally. In 2005 she established SEED, an artist collective based in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In 2009 she began collaborating in TEH, an art and technology research group with special interests in simulation and interactivity. Westbrook's recent creative research has led to publication in *Static*, the *Journal of the London Consortium* and a solo feature on Chicago's artstorage.org. She is Assistant Professor of Art at UT Chattanooga where she teaches courses in both the photography/media arts and graphic design/web media concentrations.

**Eric Larson's** collages and graphite drawings invoke a charged perceptual experience through the repetition of dots and waves. The accumulation of these hand-made marks over time creates a unique surface activating perception. United by a fascination with newspaper / halftone images, a variety of subjects from the occult & science fiction to graphic design are represented. Larson is interested in how halftone process reduces visual production to a binary image while tricking the eye to see a continuum.

**Eric Larson** received his MFA from the California College of the Arts in 2004 and BA in Philosophy from Ball State University in 1995. He has had solo shows at BayVAN in Oakland, CA and Sanchez Art Center in Pacifica, CA, and has been part of group shows at Swarm Gallery in Oakland, CA and Southern Exposure in San Francisco, CA.

In *Polypsis* and *Breach*, **Liesa Lietzke** uses charged materials such as glover fingers, onesie sleeves, and latex embedded with Red Hots to create troubled fetishes that complicate bodily perceptions and flirt with appeal and aversion. Kleinian psychoanalytic reflections, gendered ruminations, and a curiosity about the medical gaze all inform her work--work which may invite the viewer to squeeze. (Whether some postmortem spinal reflex will trigger a squeeze back remains unclear.)

**Liesa Lietzke** received her MFA from the California College of the Arts in 2009 and BA in creative arts from San Jose State University in 2009, graduating *Cum Laude*. Lietzke has shown in the Deitch Projects Art Parade in New York, NY and the Garage Biennale in San Francisco, CA. Her work also resides in the private collections of Dr. Michael Burton in Santa Cruz, CA and Jennifer Moody in New York, NY.

*The Long Goodbye* is a notational installation and an intermittent performance about the transformation of cities; and the person as agent of, and crafted by, states of mobility. In this experiment of geographic play, the act of contemplating the artifact of a building at the edge of its existence is the focus around which the navigator, on a self-guided tour, passes as doer and seer.

**Gretchen Till** is a collaborative designer of place, space, and time. This work began through being a bicyclist in and urban planner for the City of New York / Parks & Recreation, and continues through her work as an architect in the Bay Area. Till studied the sociology of urbanism at Columbia and Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. She was invited into the world of performance through work with Great Small Works in NYC. In 1999 she was introduced to the California landscape as a photographer on tour with Jennifer Monson on a geographic dance work along the coast. As part of the Berkeley Landscape/Architecture Student group 'Queers In Space' 2002-4, she worked with a group on social installations.

In *Iceberg*, **Benji Rowan** interprets an iceberg floating in the ocean. using paper mosaic pieces colored with acrylic wash on wood also colored with acrylic wash.

**Benji Rowan** was born and raised in .St. Louis, MO and has lived in Boston, PA, Houston and Austin, TX, and San Francisco, CA. He lives and works in St. Louis, Mo. as a union carpenter, substitute teacher, and often exhibiting artist.

In *Wonderland*, a single channel video, **Hye Yeon Nam** explores the themes of displacement and conformity through the act of walking. Nam walked backwards in her video, and then reversed the footage to create the illusion that she is walking forward against the crowd. Her intention is to create a space in which she is neither *here* following the correct rule nor *there* following the incorrect rule.

**Hye Yeon Nam** is a digital media artist working in kinetic sculpture, audio and video in Atlanta and NYC. She is a PhD. candidate at Georgia Institute of Technology and holds an MFA in digital media from Rhode Island School of Design. Her artwork reflects on human (e)motion, identity, and social issues. Nam's art has been showcased by The Tank NYC, eyebeam in New York, and SIGGRAPH 2008. Her work has also been broadcasted on the Discovery Channel and published in *WIRED* and *Makezine*, among other publications.

In *Gun*, dual video loop wall projections by **Dominic Nguyen** in collaboration with David Whitaker, presents the reduction of an action to the human hand –a search for reality. It is an exercise in futility and a map of the accumulation of debris over time. The absurdity of throwing ash acts as a metaphor for man's obsession with the unattainable, offering a glimpse at base human nature. The aggression of the gun is echoed by the hand's sudden arrival into the frame, yet its insufficiency is quickly revealed by the ephemeral nature of the ash. *Gun* demonstrates a discontinuity in the paradigm of cause and effect, where the hostile action produces a passive result.

**Dominc Nguyen** was born in Pittsburg, PA and resides in the San Francisco Bay Area. He received his BA in practice of art from the University of California, Berkeley in 2009. His work has been shown at Root Division in San Francisco, CA and Worth Ryder Gallery in Berkeley, CA. In 2009 he received the Theresa Hak Kyung Cha Fellowship from the Berkeley Art Museum / Pacific Film Archive.

**Flynn O'Brien** combines walking, photography, and documentary practice to create maps of personal spaces. O'Brien asks his collaborators to lead him on a walk of their choosing, and creates a map by pointing his camera straight forward and taking a photograph every 30 seconds to create a random, yet patterned, visual sampling of the walk. By walking through areas that one is connected to, he re-examines everyday histories and explores the similarities and differences between our physical and psychological environments.

**Flynn O'Brien** received his BFA in photography from California State University, Long Beach in 2007. He has shown at Merlino Gallery in Long Beach, CA and SF Camerawork in San Francisco, CA. In 2006 he was awarded the Milton Norton Arts Grant.