

## EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Absalon, *Propositions d'habitation*, 1991. Video, 3:30. Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris.

Heike Baranowsky, *Barometer (i)*, 2011. Single-channel installation, HD video, 54:00. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin.

Jack Goldstein, *A suite of nine 7-inch records with sound effects*, 1976. 45-rpm vinyl records with cardboard sleeves. Collection of Ann and Marshall Webb.

Cao Guimarães and Rivane Neuenschwander, *Inventory of small deaths (blow)*, 2000. Super-8 film transferred to digital video, 5:30. Courtesy the artists and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York.

John Massey, *Twilight's Last Gleaming*, 1988. Gelatin silver print. 51.4 x 46.3 cm. Courtesy Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

Jonathan Monk, *The Silent Tornado (for Jack Goldstein)*, 2003. 16mm colour film, 2:50. Courtesy the artist.

Bruce Nauman, *LAAIR*, 1970. Artist's book, staple-bound, colour offset printed, 30 x 30 cm. Published as part of the box *Artists and Photographs* by Multiples, Inc.

Berndnaut Smilde, *Nimbus D'Aspremont*, 2012. Lambda print, 75 x 110 cm. Courtesy the artist.

## ARTISTS' BIOS

**Absalon** was born Meir Eshel in 1964 in Ashod, Israel. He relocated to Paris in 1987 where he would live and work until his premature death in 1993. KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin presented the first comprehensive solo exhibition of Absalon's work in 2010/2011, which has since circulated to the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

**Heike Baranowsky** was born in 1966 in Augsburg, Germany. She studied art in Munich, Hamburg, and Berlin. In 1999 she completed an MA at the Royal College of Art, London. Her work has been exhibited internationally and she teaches at various universities in Germany and abroad.

**Cao Guimarães** was born in 1965 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. A filmmaker and visual artist, he studied philosophy at the Federal University of Minas Gerais and completed a Masters of Arts in photographic studies at Westminster University of London. His work is exhibited in art galleries and film festivals internationally.

**Jack Goldstein** was born in Montreal in 1945. He was one of the first graduates of the California Institute of the Arts and went on to experiment with performance, film, recording and painting, until his death in 2003. The first American retrospective of Jack Goldstein's work will open at the Orange County Museum of Art in June 2012.

**John Massey** was born in Toronto in 1950. He became known for his sculptural/installation works of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Since then, he has focused on photo-based media. He was awarded the Gershon Iskowitz Award for lifetime achievement in 2001. He teaches in the Department of Visual Studies at the University of Toronto.

**Jonathan Monk** was born in 1969 in Leicester, UK. Monk received a BFA from Leicester Polytechnic in 1988 and an MFA from Glasgow School of Art in 1991. His work includes a wide range of media including installations, photography, film, sculpture and performance. His tongue-in-cheek methods often recall procedural approaches typical of 1960's Conceptualism, but without sharing their utopian ideals and notions of artistic genius.

**Bruce Nauman** was born in 1941 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA. He graduated with a BFA from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1964, and with an MFA from the University of California, Davis, in 1966. His practice spans a broad range of media including sculpture, photography, neon, video, drawing, printmaking, and performance. He represented the United States at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009.

**Rivane Neuenschwander** was born in 1967 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. She earned a BFA from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais in Brazil in 1993 and a MA from the Royal College of Art in London in 1998. In 2004 she was short listed for the Hugo Boss Prize at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. Solo exhibitions of her work have been organized at Portikus in Frankfurt (2001), Walker Art Center in Minneapolis (2002), Aloisio Magalhaes Modern Art Museum in Recife (2003), the Saint Louis Art Museum (2004 and 2007), and the New Museum (2010).

**Berndnaut Smilde** was born in 1978 in Groningen, The Netherlands. He graduated with a BFA from the Minerva Academy, Hanzehogeschool, Groningen in 2011, and an MFA from the Frank Mohr Institute, Hanzehogeschool, Groningen. This is the first exhibition of his work in Canada.



### *Red Sky at Night*

Absalon  
Heike Baranowsky  
Jack Goldstein  
Cao Guimarães &  
Rivane Neuenschwander  
John Massey  
Jonathan Monk  
Bruce Nauman  
Berndnaut Smilde

Curated by Sarah Robayo Sheridan

20 January–10 March 2012

Opening: Friday 15 June, 7 PM



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Cover image: Berndnaut Smilde, *Nimbus D'Aspremont*, 2012. Lambda print, 75 x 110 cm. Courtesy the artist.

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*Red Sky at Night*



Left: Jack Goldstein, *The Tornado* from *A suite of nine 7-inch records with sound effects*, 1976. 45-rpm vinyl records with cardboard sleeves. Collection of Ann and Marshall Webb, Toronto.  
 Right: Bruce Nauman, *L A A I R*, 1970. Artist's book, staple-bound, colour offset printed, 30 x 30 cm. Published as part of the box *Artists and Photographs* by Multiples, Inc.

Canadians like to talk about the weather. Living in climes with extreme highs and lows, we have even evolved our own peculiar measurements—the scientific reading: “-20° C,” followed the emotive measure: “feels like -33° C.” This second type of observation points to the weather as subjective experience, the uneasy intermixing of the psyche with the physical world. Idioms running from the pejorative— “feeling under the weather” to the superlative— “cloud 9”—are indicative of the force of climate on our sense of being. While the weather has been a long-standing tradition in landscape painting, it also surfaces as a concern in post-modern art forms. The exhibition “Red Sky at Night” places in conversation artworks which each contend in their own subtle ways with atmospheric effects and environments.

An aphorism by Jack Goldstein holds that the “sky is to the 20th Century what landscape was to the 19th Century.”<sup>1</sup> We can take Bruce Nauman’s artist’s book *L A A I R* to be exemplary of this shift in thinking. Issued in 1970, the pages are saturated with lurid hues, suggestive of the polluted air of Los Angeles. Bereft of horizon line, these cloudless skies are rendered through a commercial offset printing of flat mechanical layers of ink in place of textured brushstroke. The adoption of industrial processes was also a preferred method for Jack Goldstein’s art. Having been included in the seminal “Pictures” exhibition curated by Douglas Crimp at the Artists Space in 1977, Goldstein was associated with a generation of artists noted for their innovative appropriation of media. He was drawn in particular to the apparatus of Hollywood’s film industry and its available offerings—trained animals, lighting technicians, camera operators, stock sound libraries, etc. Remarking on the freedom he felt in appropriating film props and technologies, Goldstein states: “That’s what the industry gives me: resources, effects, control. I can do or make anything I want. If I had all the resources of Hollywood at my disposal I’d make weather films: blowing trees, twisting trees, floods, walking on the ocean.”

Close in concept to the imagined weather films, Goldstein realized a series of 45rpm recordings titled *A suite of nine 7-inch records with sound effects*. The individual records

*Sailor's Delight*



Left: Cao Guimarães & Rivane Neuenschwander, *Inventory of small deaths (blow)*, 2000. Super-8 film transferred to video, 5:30. Courtesy the artists and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York.  
 Right: Absalon, *Propositions d'habitation*, 1991. Video, 3:30. Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris.

bearing titles such as “The Dying Wind” and “The Tornado” were pressed into corresponding colors of vinyl—clear for the wind, purple for the colour of the sky before the storm. He thought of the sound recordings as images: “The first sounds I chose are actually pictures to me, so I arrive at a sound through an image. Through being manipulated the records become sound objects. Through the colour, the sound, and the title I have created that thing as an object, as a mechanical prop.” By this artifice, Goldstein proposes contained environments that can be regulated by the lifting and dropping of the record needle.

Jonathan Monk offers a rejoinder to Goldstein’s “The Tornado” by shooting a silent 16mm film of one side’s rotation the record, calling it “The Silent Tornado.” Through this simple appropriation, Monk meets the promise of Goldstein’s expressed idea: “The record spins like a tornado and is translucent purple. You can hold it up to the light. You can turn the volume up or down. All of a sudden you have control over the tornado.” Effectively, Monk accepts the invitation to control the tornado, muting it and fixing it down to the 16mm film frame. Left to run as a film loop, it becomes a somewhat benign reduction of a violent force of nature.

The desire for the control over nature is exemplified by Goldstein’s wish: “I would love to be able to do a performance where a black cloud comes over a hill and it would rain for thirty seconds. It would be like Moses making the Red sea part.” As if responding to the request, Berndnaut Smilde has proposed a body of work in which he manufactures clouds. Short-lived occurrences contrived through water, smoke and spot lighting, these artificial clouds suspended indoors recall a surrealist trope. The inversion of inside for outside supports the fantasy of clouds as physically tangible sculpture. Though in reality the clouds dissipate very quickly, the photographic documentation suggests permanence, allowing us to entertain the consequences of the proposal. Smilde’s interior environments show natural forces leaking into the interior. Smilde has stated, “I wanted to make a very clear image, an almost cliché and cartoon like visualisation of having bad luck.” In this vein, one could also read them humorously as a depiction of a conservator’s nightmare, a direct threat to the climate-

*Red Sky in the Morning*



John Massey, *Twilight's Last Gleaming*, 1988. Gelatin silver print. 51.4 x 46.3 cm. Courtesy Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

controlled neutrality of the white cube.

Originally shot on super-8 film then transferred to video, Neuenschwander and Guimarães collaborative piece, “Inventory of small deaths (blow)” renders a fleeting soap bubble invincible, through the editing and the looping of the film, in which the bubble is never seen to burst. A visual signifier for containment and for the camera lens itself, the bubble both frames and distorts the background Brazilian tropical landscape in its passage. The fragile nature of the soap structure means that interior and exterior are separately only by the finest membrane and the bubble’s infinite float suggests a certain erotic anticipation for the petite mort of the title.

Absalon is best known for his austere solo living units—a series of white cellules based on primary geometric form custom-built in wood and plaster to the exact proportions of the artist’s body. He intended to inhabit the finished series of these cellules which were to be built in Tokyo, New York, Tel Aviv, Paris, Zurich and Frankfurt, though the plan was not realized before his death in 1993. In the video “proposition d’habitation” we see a person dressed in white tunic, pants and slippers, in a closed white room, illuminated through a single skylight window, as he navigates various geometric surrogates for domestic furniture. Philippe Vergne has written of the piece: “Looking at Absalon’s investigations at this moment, it seems that he was trying to find, invent, understand the furniture-object that would occupy a space without being an intrusion: an object so well integrated that it participates fully in its environment.” The motions of the protagonist suggest an intimate and private architecture. He leans, lies and rubs up against the forms. This particular figuration of shelter is of an antiseptic environment, closed off from the world, and limited to a single being. Vergne has described this situation as “a violent re-questioning of a social order based on what the home represents and reinforces. For the home is the foyer both of our possessions and of our institutions (marriage, sexuality, family, education). What does an asexual dwelling, for the “single person,” stripped of all possessions, of all decorum represent?”

*Sailor's Warning*



Heike Baranowsky, *Barometer (I)*, 2011. Single-channel installation, HD video, 54:00. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin.

Massey  
Baranowsky

—Sarah Robayo Sheridan

Notes

1 Jack Goldstein aphorisms first published in Documenta 7, exhibition catalogue, Kassel, 1982.