



MARK TITMARSH & TODD ROBINSON

Public Fitting

2011 | *MOP Projects, Sydney; SEAM 2011*

Public Fitting is located in a cross disciplinary field between art and design, more specifically painting and fashion. The work questions the nature of rigid boundaries between modes of practice showing instead that a convergence of disciplines and conceptual strategies is essential in an age of integrated media. Consequently outcomes in this work were seen to reach across painting, fashion, performance, installation, video and theory.

Performance view

The aesthetic premise of this work is that the artist and designer can work together to produce a collaborative live performance that combines aspect of the catwalk and the artisanal studio. The work so produced carries aspects of public display and private creativity, pre-prepared choreographic events and chance happenings of the moment. This collaborative work references a significant example of performative making by fashion designer Alexander McQueen, Spring/Summer 1999. In this work the designer presented a white dress which was painted by two robotic arms, normally used in automotive production. While this precedent draws heavily on productive technology in a performative context, *Public Fitting* embraced a dialogical and participatory approach where discrete practices become entangled in a productive mode of collaborative making.

The catalogue essay from the original exhibition at MOP was reprinted as 'Public Fitting: Wet and Wild Discussions', in *The Australasian Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol 1, No 3, 2012, pp.383-388. The work was re-presented at SEAM 2011 and the lively discussion after the performance between the two artists and the audience is documented on the official SEAM DVD of the conference.



Performance view



Performance view



Performance closeup view

**MARK TITMARSH &
TODD ROBINSON**
Public Fitting



Stills from the video performance

For the full video, visit:
<http://vimeo.com/28140972>

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Supporting evidence

Public fitting catalogue



Wet and Wild



This exhibition is an art and fashion collaborative project between Mark Titmarsh and Todd Robinson. It features a live performance where paint is poured onto a series of garments worn by models. The project grew from informal discussions around a work by Robinson titled *Star Dressing* (2004), where a store bought shirt is disassembled, painted by hand then reassembled. The ideas also grew out of Titmarsh's previous interventions into garments and fabrics as a part of his practice of expanded painting. Both artists meet in the act of marking surfaces, fabrics, and bodies in inverted relations between fashion and painting. The outcomes of this production-performance include garments, video, paintings, and their combination as a productive infrastructure forming the project titled *Public Fitting*.

The artists discuss the intersection between art and fashion, paint, fabric and their individual practices.

Mark Titmarsh: I am thinking of a spectrum that runs from Alexander McQueen's *Robot Paint Dress* to the images of Kenyan protesters sprayed by police trucks with pink coloured water. The first is a moment of the catwalk in the Spring Summer collection of 1999 and the other an incident during political protest and civil disobedience in Kampala 2011. What McQueen doesn't seem to quote Yves Klein neither do the Kenyans refer to yellow stars or pink triangles. However both scenes stripped of their political and aesthetic details are immediately graspable as peculiar moments in painting. Paint in an excessive or extreme sense denotes and exceeds a supporting surface, it soaks the clothes, runs away, pours down, dripping, almost earning the humans who dare to wear clothes as canvas touched by colour.

Todd Robinson: When I recall the McQueen dress it always strikes me as the quintessential fashion event, the spectacular production of the fashion moment, a particular kind of staging that fashion hasn't matched since. The model rotates on a circular panel set into the floor and the paint is applied by spray guns deployed by pre-programmed robots used in automotive manufacturing. It's also a peculiar moment in painting because paint becomes a terrifying substance for the non-painter. It has to be avoided, it is dangerous and shouldn't be put on your body, you have to wash it out immediately, with the whole normative kind of response to getting paint on you. Paint is generally associated with artists, commercial painters, children, home renovators, but outside of those sanctified areas it is a de-stabilising substance. Our response to paint and dirt is the same, and is underpinned by a vague sense of shame, which is probably why in used

as a punitive kind of crowd control by the Kenyans, it marks you out in some way and it also ruins your clothes up, changes your public impact entirely.

Mark Titmarsh: Paint gets on everything, even in the painter's studio there is constant vigilance to make sure it is staying put in all the right places. It is part of its physical nature that it will attack itself severely and furiously. I remember when we did the first tests on your calico jacket in my studio, I threw paint over your back but most of it missed and sprayed across the whole studio hitting dozens of works, some of which I could clean up, others I had to live with because cleaning meant destroying something already partially completed and others I did not discover till weeks later.

Todd Robinson: I was thinking while looking at a dress I am considering for the show and wondering if it was enough as a fashion proposition. I then had a look at the image of the 'bespoke painting' performance done in your studio and recognised how dramatically paint (literally) impacts on the garment and affects the surface. The dress is demure in style, with a faint hint of a 1950s natural waisted silhouette, with a pencil skirt, and loose fitting blouse. A move away from this kind of figuration could detract from the gesture, interrupting the letting-go of paint. The paint splattered on garments, brings a contingency, a witness, an object quality to the human figure. By looking at the results and thinking about the process I realise, I've become enamoured with painting and its basic kind of materiality, as opposed to images or objects on the wall.

Mark Titmarsh: I am wondering what you think of those historical moments when artists become fashion designers and vice versa? I am thinking of a long line through Sonia Delaunay, Henri Matisse, Salvador Dali, Jenny Holzer, Vanessa Beecroft, Sylvie Fleury and Takashi Murakami? I am also wondering about the ways art and fashion can sit together or synapse. For example, fashion can be considered an art form, or clothes can be exhibited in art museums, as with *Lang Bury*, or fashion can be equated with art, as in *Key Models*, or another part of the map, art can be printed on clothes like Mondrian's paintings or fashion photographers can be seen as artists, such as Helmut Newton and artist like Cindy Sherman as fashion photographers.

Todd Robinson: That is difficult to address because the instances you mention are quite different, even incommensurable. I think the practice of making clothing is quite different from art making. Fashion when it has been considered an art form in the broadest sense, as a decorative or wearable art, still projects in difference from art. However there are those productive historical moments when collaborations like Salvador Dali and Elsa Schiaparelli produce a significant outcome for fashion. While others appear to quite productive for art, as with Vanessa Beecroft when she draws on the spectacle of fashion, its veneer and sensitive power. The public mobility of clothing and its desirability as a commodity have been attractive aspects for artists when they want to move beyond the bounds of the

Mark Titmarsh
Todd Robinson

Images:
[img alt="Placeholder for an image showing a person in a white dress with red splatters." data-bbox="323 115 391 164"/>
CHANGE IMAGE CREDITS

MOP Projects
2/79 Abercrombie St
Chapelade NSW 2008
Australia

Thursday 16 August – Monday 4 September 2011
Gallery Hours
Thursday to Saturday 1 – 6pm
Sunday and Monday 1 – 3 pm

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Public Fitting
Mark Titmarsh (Editor)
Todd Robinson
Published by Mark Titmarsh and Todd Robinson
in conjunction with MOP Projects,
Sydney, Australia, August 2011

Designed by Britanny Docus
Set in Helvetica Neue and Garamond
ISBN 978-0-9971483-1-5

ADD SPECIAL THANKS

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



MOP Projects is assisted by the NSW Government through Arts NSW

public fitting

gallery into everyday life. For some the garment might become a platform for visual ideas as with the Yves Saint Laurent *Moodman* dress, which is not necessarily a satisfying result for me. By contrast Sonia Delaunay's work addresses the notion of an underlying human vitality and a basic carnival in image making which lends itself to the worn form. Likewise Helen Oxenya draws on some of the more basic interconnections between fashion and art with his desire to dissolve that divide between the two and ultimately bring art and life together. His *Parangol* are basically worn paintings, large rectangular pieces of fabric that utilize the wearability of fabric as a logical extension of his painting practice, rather than simply printing a 2D image on a 3D object.

Mark Titmarsh: Oxenya is very interesting in the way he uses colour as object and event, turning paintings into wearable structures that put colour into space and time. Colour in his work becomes something you can walk into, it is quite temporal and dynamic, rather than ultra thin and static.

Todd Robinson: Is that your interest in painting on living people? Is it a logical extension of your practice? I would like to know what are the productivities for you, what kind of constraints and potentialities are realised through painting on clothes and models.

Mark Titmarsh: I am interested in finding out where paint can't go, what kind of formal structures and situations will not let painting in. So far I haven't found any. So with this collaboration I am interested to find out how much painting I can do in relation to the creation of a wearable garment before it will stop me. As you say it goes much further than taking an image from a completed painting and putting it onto a garment. What is happening here is much closer to what goes on in the studio, some kind of introduction and insight into the act of making. When I get on a ladder and pour paint from a great height into model lying on the ground I am approximating something I would do in my own studio with other materials such as canvas, aluminium, Peepers, paper, dust jackets and so on. These are the chance events of liquid turbulence when it impacts on the uneven surface of the garment wrapped around the human form. The paint can look like Pollock, or a violent attack, or a fishbowl event, a collision between two practices, a tender synergy with unusual unpredictable outcomes. In all of them something of the natural flow and flux of liquids is revealed, also the dynamic shape of the human body, the pull of gravity as paint falls and impacts and then slips from a hanging garment. So many small truths come from this basic theatre of paint and fabric, the human form and the earth gravitational pull.

Todd Robinson: It has been argued that performance practice is now determined by a relationship to technology, in particular that video as a mobile medium disrupts performance from any need to audience. Video turns any ephemeral performance into an enduring document and artefact, such that there is no need to perform live. However in *Public Fitting*, the live

aspect of the event is paramount, including the human form, the dynamism of paint, the spontaneity of it all. The staging of the whole production highlights the significance of the moment in the processes of making. It turns the production process inside out, as you say bringing the studio into the gallery. While the catwalk is selective, it is rarely a zone of production, usually a form of presentation that focuses on garments. It is not the same as a performance where action and relationships between protagonists and artefacts are laid bare. In a fashion show the presentation of garments come forward and models despite their singularity, recede somewhat. One is looking at 'Fashion' in that kind of staging, it foregrounds a staging-of-fashion-garments. *Public fitting* retains the same focus on the garment but through a shift in the mode of production, the process of fetishisation is exposed. By challenging the mystique of the garment and revealing the act of making in such a way a series of other nested questions arise, what is intended, what is arbitrary, where is the virtuosity of both fashion and painting? That is what is so captivating for me about a project like this. It exposes the contingencies of making in contrast to a traditional system of production where the constraints are predetermined and out of view. In *Public Fitting*, the situation is all potentiality, exposed to viewers and exposed to flux, a flow of action, making garments of paint.

Mark Titmarsh: I am all of that I am thinking about the infrastructural environment where things take place such as the gallery, the theatre and the catwalk. The more I think about the catwalk the more fascinating it becomes, the more I want to go there with paint. I am fascinated by that little raised structural element, that puts the catwalk up above the floor into a space like that place behind the proscenium arch in the theatre and the cinema. But there is more to the catwalk because it comes out of you, it penetrates the invisible wall of the theatre and comes right at your face, right into your world, right into where I am here and now in space and time. It is quite shocking and thrilling and totally seductive. It also says a lot about the live nature of what we are doing in this project. It is not happening in the studio behind the scenes, it is happening in the gallery on the opening night, with paint doing its unpredictable thing in the moment, with the colour of paint meeting the colour of fabric right before your eyes, with models dressing and undressing and the visibility of the human form flexing by and in the end, an experience of living colour in all its extravagant ephemerality.

Mark Titmarsh and Todd Robinson, August 2011
SMALL IMAGE CREDITS HELLO



1/ Brett East, *Seeking to gain access to an immaterial reality beyond the limits of human vision*, 2011 oil on linen, 213 x 152cm showing at Gallery 9, with Rebecca Pearson until 6 August. www.gallery9.com.au

3/ Performance view, *Bespoke Painting*, Todd Robinson and Mark Titmarsh, 2011. Public Fitting MOP Projects, Sydney, 18 August to 4 September. Todd Robinson & Mark Titmarsh in a collaborative art/fashion project draw on action painting, garment making & performance.

3/ Joanna Lamb, *Interior 1a*, 2011, acrylic on canvas, 106 x 140cm. Showing in *Interiors* at Sullivan & Strumpf until 13 August.

New South Wales

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Vale Roddy Meagher

Former Justice of the NSW Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, Roderick Pitt 'Roddy' Meagher AO QC passed away on 3 July, aged 79. Roddy was well known not only for his contribution to NSW law but as a connoisseur and collector of International and Australian art, amassing a collection of over 2000 paintings and drawings and dozens of sculptures and ceramics and antiques. Roddy's life-long passion was also directed to many young and emerging artists (including his nephew Julian Meagher) with continued loyalty to his alma mater, the University of Sydney, which previewed it with the 2009 exhibition *Collecting Passions: A century of Modernism from the home of Justice Roddy Meagher*.

OBE for Liz Ann

Elizabeth Ann Macgregor, Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, became an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) as announced in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June. The award acknowledged Scottish-born Macgregor's vision and leadership she has had on the visual arts during her 20-year career in Britain and subsequent move to Sydney in 1999. Macgregor, who has been with the MCA for 12 years, is currently overseeing the museum's \$53 million redevelopment with its relaunch scheduled for March 2012.

David Aspden survey

The first in-depth survey of the work of David Aspden (1935-2005) is being presented by the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Curator Anne Ryan has focused exclusively on the Gallery's extensive Aspden collection, largely gifted by his widow Karen. Aspden came to prominence in the 1960s. As one of Australia's foremost abstractionists, he was sustained by 3 major inspirations – colour, landscape and music. *David Aspden: the colour of music and place* runs to 4 Sept. and is accompanied by a publication.

Berlin blitz

A series of programs celebrating Modernism in German art is being presented across Sydney's leading arts venues from Aug. to Nov. With a particular focus on Berlin in the 1920s, exhibitions, panels, theatre, music, film, cabaret and events have been scheduled to coincide

with the AGNSW exhibition, *The mad square: Modernity in German Art 1910-37* (6 Aug. to 6 Nov.), a major international loan exhibition featuring over 200 works surveying the turbulent Weimar period. To coincide with the theme, Rex Irwin Art Dealer is showing prints by 4 important German Expressionist artists – Käthe Kollwitz, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Max Beckmann and George Grosz.

ZOO AIR 2011

20 contemporary Australian artists have made Taronga Zoo, Sydney their second home for the last 3 months. Works produced during the residencies are being donated to the Taronga Foundation for auction by Bonhams in Sydney on Sunday 21 Aug., with all proceeds supporting the Zoo's conservation work. Participating artists include Ann Cape, Tom Carment, Isabel Gomez, Rew Hanks, Julie Harris, Michael Kempson, Alex Kosmas, Song Ling, John Olsen AO OBE, Jenny Sages, Dean Sewell, Wendy Sharpe, Adriane Strapp, and the Strutt Sisters. The University Gallery, Newcastle hosts a preview exhibition (to 6 Aug.)

Australian Urbanism

After wowing over 93,000 people in Venice and 68,000 people in Seoul, Object Gallery, Sydney, hosts *Now And When: Australian Urbanism*, a 3D immersive sound and visual environment that catches glimpses of Australian cities like you've never seen before. *Now And When* considers the urban landscape of our cities 'now' and imagines the possibilities of change 50 years into the future. The 14-minute film uses groundbreaking 3D stereoscopic technology to allow visitors to move through hypothetical urban environments; admission is free! Runs to 25 Sept.

Sculpture in Willoughby

The Willoughby Sculpture Prize returns to the iconic Incinerator Space in Willoughby, Sydney, presenting 51 indoor and outdoor sculptures, installations and site-specific works. The public program includes children's activities, exhibition tours and artists talks. Prizes awarded total \$20K. Runs 20 Aug. to 4 Sept. www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au

Riverina Glass and Print forum

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery is working in partnership with TAFE Riverina to provide a series of events in 2011 that aims to encourage

greater audience interaction with their exhibitions and collections. The events are associated with Wagga Wagga City Council's 2011 Winter Cultural Festival, Masters and Apprentices. The next lecture in the series invites participants to join glass artist Robert Wynne, printmaker GW Bot, and others to share their insights and experiences. Workshops are free but reservations are recommended. www.waggaartgallery.org.

John McDonald blogs

You can now follow art critic John McDonald via his new blog and website. McDonald is one of Australia's best-known critics, writing for the *Sydney Morning Herald* – on and off – for almost 30 years. McDonald's nationally touring exhibition *Studio, Australian Painters on the Nature of Creativity* (based on his publication with photographer Ian Lloyd) opens 12 Aug. at Bathurst Regional Gallery. johnmcdonald.net.au.

Winners

Sydney artist Adam Chang won the People's Choice Prize at this year's Archibald Prize for his portrait of novelist and academic JM Coetzee. The 2011 Archibald Prize exhibition is currently touring regional galleries (Vic & NSW) to July next year. Sydney's Tamara Dean took out Tweed River Art Gallery's biennial Olive Cotton Award (\$20K) for her photographic portrait, *Damien Skipper*. Noel McKenna won The NSW Parliament Plein Air Painting Prize (acquisitive, \$20K) for *My Backyard*. 2011 Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarships (\$20K each) have been awarded to painter James Drinkwater from Newcastle and Sarah Contos from Sydney (ex-Perth). The Mount Eyre Art Prize 2011 (\$8K) was won by Blue Mountains artist Neil Taylor for his painting, *Dawn*, 2011.

Appointments

Paul Brinkman has been appointed to the position of Blue Mountains Cultural Centre Director. Brinkman, the former Director of Cairns Regional Gallery, commences his new position late August and will play a crucial role in the completion of the much anticipated new Regional Gallery & Cultural Centre at Katoomba, opening mid-2012. Regional Arts NSW has welcomed Catherine Wyburn to the position of Funding Officer. Heidi Ford has been appointed to the newly-formed position of Regional Touring Coordinator at Arts North West. Former Artbank Curator Jackie Dunn is the new Director at Manly Art Gallery & Museum.

MARK TITMARSH & TODD ROBINSON Public Fitting

Supporting evidence

1. As noted in Art Monthly
2. As noted in Real Time mention

SPACING MOVEMENTS OUTSIDE IN

SEAM2011

LABS & OTHER EVENTS 5 - 24 SEPTEMBER
SYMPOSIUM 16 - 18 SEPTEMBER

ABOUT SEAM2011 | SYMPOSIUM | WORKSHOPS PROGRAM | CURATORS | FACILITATORS | PUBLIC EVENTS

14.9.11

We're stoked! SEAM2011 Symposium is happening this weekend!!



The SEAM2011 Symposium - Spacing Movements Outside In is happening this weekend,

and we are really looking forward to seeing everyone of you! We are currently looking at a FULL HOUSE for both the Friday night launch and for the weekend. The most recently revised schedule is on the blog - see Downloads on the righthand menu or if you have trouble viewing this document please email seam2011@criticalpath.org.au. As you can see it has been jam-packed with some great performances, papers and opportunities for discussions!

ABOUT CRITICAL PATH

Critical Path is a choreographic research and development centre for dance artists in New South Wales, Australia.

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RECEIVE NEW UPDATES VIA EMAIL

DOWNLOADS

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE - final version (pdf)

SYMPOSIUM REGISTRATION FORM - Guests (word)

SYMPOSIUM REGISTRATION FORM - Presenters (word)

DRILL HALL FLOORPLANS (pdf)

1.

SEAM2011

SEPTEMBER 5-18
SPACING MOVEMENTS OUTSIDE IN

A partnership between Critical Path and School of Design, University of Technology Sydney in association with Performance Space.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 17

8.30am	SET-UP FOR PRESENTATIONS	2.15-3pm	FRAMING TALK Tim Gruchy
9.45-11.30am	SESSION 1 Materials performed through the body - the body performed through materials Chair: Martin del Amo Location: Drill Hall	3-3.30pm	Full Colour - A propositional performance: a strategy to act Shelley Laska
9.45-10am	FRAMING TALK Mary Moore	3.30-4.15pm	REPEATED IN CYCLES TO ALLOW FOR SMALL GROUP AUDIENCE The Body in Performance Hami James Location: Action Space Speechless: research into body-focused interactions Lian Loke Location: Annex
10-11.30am	1. The Light Arrays project: The invisible skirt and other imaginary things Danielle Wilde/Alvaro Cassinelli 2. NYC Garmenture #02: So Ho Throw Charles Anderson 3. Public Fitting Mark Titmarsh/ Todd Robinson	4.00-4.30pm	BREAK
		4.30-5.45pm	SESSION 4

2.



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SEAM2011 - Spacing Movements Outside In

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Dear Todd,

We are delighted to invite you to present your performative presentation at **SEAM2011 Symposium: Spacing Movements Outside In** taking place at Critical Path in Sydney on the 17th and 18th of September 2011. Having presentations with the detail, rigor and insight your proposal offers is key to creating opportunities for diverse interdisciplinary dialogue and extending hybrid creative outcomes in SEAM2011.

In the spirit of making SEAM2011 a performance event that plays with conventional presentation formats, the panel will create a number of contexts for presentation such as:
>IMAGE ROOM - to show documentation of projects.
>ACTION ROOM - a space for workshops and interactive performances to engage directly with audiences.
>WEARING IT OUT - a party with performances and installations.

The programming of the symposium will include open format discussions based at the conclusion of each session of presentations. The SEAM 2011 committee reserve the right to curate the presentations in negotiation with presenters. Presenters of performative/media-based works must be clear about both their technical requirements and the mode in which they are to be presented.

Please confirm your intention to present by the 18th of July. If you require any additional documentation to support funding please contact us. Registration to the Symposium is free for presenters, however there is a required cost of \$30.00 a day for catering; please let us know if you have any special dietary requirements. Special keynote presentation and performance will be ticketed: \$15.00 full price and \$10.00 concession. Drinks and Hors d'oeuvres will be provided for this event.

For your information, important dates for SEAM 2011 **Spacing Movements Outside In** include:

- Keynote lecture by Slovenian philosopher and dramaturge Bojana Kunst (16th Sept 6.30pm venue Critical Path. Professional Exchange Laboratories with:
- Mårten Spångberg (choreographer - Sweden): *Radical Rethinking* (5 - 9 Sept).
- Mary Moore (Scenographer - Australia): *Architecture as Source Material* (14 - 16 Sept).
- Tim Gruchy (media artist - New Zealand): *The Synaestherium: Explorations in special and psychological immersion* (13 - 16 Sept).
- Bojana Kunst (philosopher/ dramaturge - Slovenia): *Embodied Context: On Dramaturgy in Contemporary Dance and Performance* (21 - 24 Sept).
- Fernando Quesada (Architect, performance maker/ writer - Spain): *Autotelic Spatial Practices* (12 - 15 Sept).

We look forward to your presence and presentation at SEAM2011.

Margie Medlin and Benedict Anderson
Curators SEAM2011



Communities arts nsw



Critical Path is an initiative of Arts NSW, with program funding from the Australia Council, the Australian Government's arts

3.



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Supporting evidence

1. SEAM 2011 website
2. SEAM 2011 program summary
3. SEAM 2011 letter to Todd Robinson

Weblinks:

http://www.realtimearts.net/article/104/10410

http://www.mop.org.au/archive/110818.html

| 9