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Press release

Parades and Processions: Here comes everybody 28 May – 24 July 2009

Francis Alÿs, Fiona Banner, Jeremy Deller, Thomas Hirschhorn, Rachel Hovnanian, Teresa Hubbard
/ Alexander Birchler, William Kentridge, Michèle Magema, Annette Messenger, Amy O'Neill and
Hiraki Sawa.



Images from left: Thomas Hirschhorn, *The Procession*, 2005, Exhibition view: *Carried Away – Procession in Art*, Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Arnhem, 2008, Courtesy Arndt & Partner Berlin ; Amy O'Neill, *Ghost Float*, 2004, Floral sheeting, vinyl fringe, and vinyl, twist festooning, wooden construction, Courtesy Le Consortium; Jeremy Deller, *Veteran's Day Parade*, 2002, Video installation, Courtesy Art: Concept, Paris.

This spring Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art will present *Parades and Processions: Here comes everybody*¹. The exhibition will feature works by twelve international artists who take their inspiration from the traditional meanings of 'parades' and 'processions', creating works that epitomise the social and political context of our time. The resulting works, ranging from sculpture to installation, films and videos, are powerful forms of expression that address issues of history, culture, identity and politics. They also highlight the recent and increasing phenomenon in our society of holding parades and processions. This exhibition aims to show a selection of works by contemporary artists who see in these themes considerable possibilities for expression.

A 'parade' is usually a festive occasion for which people dress up in extravagant costumes and create elaborate and highly structured artefacts, while a 'procession' is more often an organised group of people proceeding in a formal or ceremonial manner, often with a religious or political connotation. Throughout civilisation, parades and processions have been integral to the human experience and social customs have been abundantly illustrated on ancient monuments. Often connected to religious, sacrificial or triumphal occasions they eventually evolved into festivals and carnivals. Nowadays parades and processions have become democratic activities in which people participate, interactively sharing a special experience with a group of like-minded people. They have become the perfect vehicle for communication and solidarity, and also raise questions about sociological and behavioural phenomena of our time, such as the increased surge in urban life, group selection, self-expression and the marked focus on the body.

The expressive power of parades and processions allows many contemporary artists to adopt these traditional themes, and by replacing some of its emblems and icons with other symbols

¹Joyce, James, *Here Comes Everybody* (1923) is the title of a sketch in which Joyce introduces HCE, eventually the main protagonist in *Finnegans Wake* (1939)

and objects, bring new meaning to the work. In so doing they revitalise the concepts of parades and processions, which in the past have been considered formal traditions. In their quest to create new ways to express themselves, these artists have benefited greatly from the efforts of those artists who in the 1960s and early 1970s, liberated art from the museum walls and placed it in the midst of society and public spaces in the form of happenings and performances.

This exhibition is curated by Ziba Ardalan de Weck and will be accompanied by a new publication.

The exhibition is supported by



Visitor information

Gallery opening times: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm and Sunday, 12 – 5pm

Admission: Free

From Angel tube, turn left out of the station and onto City Road. Continue down City Road for ten minutes and turn left onto Wharf Road before the Texaco Service station.

From Old Street Tube, leave the station from exit 1 and walk up City Road for five minutes. Turn right onto Wharf Road after the Texaco service Station.

Buses 43, 205 and 214 all travel down City Road.

Notes to editors

Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art is an independent educational charity devoted to promoting contemporary art for the benefit of the public. The core activity of the foundation is to showcase the work, in various media, of leading and emerging international artists in various media. Each year Parasol unit mounts four exhibitions in various media, and each is usually accompanied by a publication. In order to encourage the widest possible access to its exhibition programme, Parasol unit does not charge admission fees.

2009 Programme

Keith Tyson

Cloud Choreography and Other Emergent Systems

16 September – 11 November 2009 (Preview 15 September 6:30 – 8:30pm)

Visible/Invisible

25 November 2009 – 7 February 2010 (Preview 24 November 6:30 – 8:30pm)