

# GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY

## MEDIA RELEASE



### WHY NOT WALK BACKWARD?

FIONA ABICARE, CATHERINE OR KATE, TANIA BRUGUERA (CUBA), NINA BEIER (DEN) AND MARVIN GAYE CHETWYND (UK)  
CURATORS: BROOKE BABINGTON AND LIANG LUSCOMBE

EXHIBITION DATES: 2 MAY – 31 MAY 2014

PERFORMANCE: SATURDAY 24 MAY, 4:30PM

*To those who turned their feet around so that their tracks would confuse their pursuers: why not walk backward?* - Seth Price

*Why not walk backward?* considers the implications of reiteration. To repeat, when contemporary time threatens to subsume our sense of history and narrative, is to propose a different type of relationship to time. The group of five Australian and international artists in *Why not walk backward?*, Fiona Abicare, Nina Beier, Tania Bruguera, Catherine or Kate and Marvin Gaye Chetwynd, retrace old steps – their own and others – using appropriation to deal with the ghosts of the past in new and imaginative ways.

Each of these artists utilise performance or strategies associated with performance to appropriate existing, historically significant works of art through homage, reinterpretation or re-enactment. Working at the intersection of performance and appropriation they address issues of temporality and historiography.

This use of appropriation is taken up by Melbourne artist Fiona Abicare in an evolving installation and performance work. 'Artist Actor, Artist Auteur' reworks and combines costumes worn by female artists depicted in film as the material basis to ground an elaborate network of personal recollections, associations and schematic representations.

Nina Beier's sculpture 'Trauerspiel' will be recreated by an actor employed to perform the creative act on the artist's behalf, armed only with verbal descriptions of the original work. This will be the third iteration of Beier's 'Trauerspiel': the work dictates that the exhibition copy be destroyed at the close of each exhibition to be remade again by another collaborator at a later date.

Alongside these works will be a video by 2012 Turner Prize nominee and performance artist Marvin Gaye Chetwynd (formerly Spartacus Chetwynd) whose ad-hoc, amateur performances throw together references from art history and popular culture. For *Why not walk backward?* Chetwynd presents 'A Walk to Dover', a film photomontage that documents a journey taken by her and a group of friends from

London to Dover following in the footsteps of Charles Dickens' David Copperfield.

Returning from a semester at 'comedy school' in Chicago, emerging Brisbane duo Catherine or Kate will gently mock and pay homage to mentor artists Paul Harrison and John Wood (UK) and The Art Guys (USA). These video works copy video interviews and artworks by their mentors in a humorously lo-fi and irreverent style that sits at the intersection of performance and appropriation.

Tania Bruguera engenders a profoundly different tenor through her decade-long project of re-enactment in an attempt to effect a reclamation of her Cuban-born compatriot Ana Mendieta's work within Cuban cultural identity.

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A part of the exhibition's interest in appropriation is the concurrent desire to re-examine Australia's often forgotten history of performance art. This event will include a number of performance works from the 1970s and 1980s that have been reworked and re-performed by the artists and invited performers:

ALEKS DANKO, ROBYN RAVLICH and JULIE EWINGTON, *This Performance is a Mistake* (1972)  
BONITA ELY, *Murray River Punch* (1980-1981)  
TIM JOHNSON, *Light Performance* (1971-1972)

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Image: Marvin Gaye Chetwynd, 'A Walk to Dover', 2006.  
Image courtesy the artist and Sadie Coles.