# THE STRAIGHT OR CROOKED WAY

Royal College of Art Galleries 15 March—6 April 2003 IIAM—6PM daily, admission free

an exhibition curated by graduating students on the Curating Contemporary Art MA at the Royal College of Art, London





Welcome to THE STRAIGHT OR CROOKED WAY. This exhibition has been conceived as an immersive environment, an enclosed world that invites the viewer to take the lead role in an unfolding scenario. There are no signposts along the way, but this guide is designed as a means of identifying various moments in the journey and as a brief intro-duction to each artist's work. The exhibition might be thought of as overlapping experiences or stages where one can lose oneself, where decisions must be taken, surprise encounters negotiated, and unfamiliar lore observed.

The layout of THE STRAIGHT OR CROOKED WAY is shaped by the artworks, functioning with the existing architecture of the college galleries. The gallery space usually employed for the annual CCA exhibition has been deliberately reduced, so that the works are condensed together and may infiltrate one another. THE STRAIGHT OR CROOKED WAY thus contains no 'neutral space' that might act as a buffer or threshold between works. Instead the works may touch or corrupt each other, functioning as parts of a whole.

Offering moments of rest or escape, and sometimes misleading in order to surprise, the galleries take on a theatrical quality. There is no prescribed way to walk around the exhibition. What this guide offers are suggestions of how to locate oneself

### Olafur Eliasson

Born 1967 in Denmark, lives and works in Berlin

Room for one colour, 1998 light, control panel, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and neugerriemschneider, Berlin.

Eliasson is fascinated by the ways in which our relation to colour is related to our cultural habituation. His interest in colour is not only focused on how we perceive things in the world, but on how perception operates in physical terms. Adapted for the Royal College of Art galleries, Room for one colour bathes the viewer in a pure yellow light. As the eyes submit to this monochrome field, all colours are perceived as shades from yellow to black.



#### Peter Fischli and David Weiss

Peter Fischli born 1952 in Switzerland, David Weiss born 1946 in Switzerland The artists live and work in Zurich

#### Der rechte Weg (The Right Way), 1983

16 mm film transferred to DVD, 52 min. Courtesy the artists and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.

THE RIGHT WAY WILL START ON THE HOUR, **EVERY HOUR** 

Peter Fischli and David Weiss celebrate the wonders of everyday life. The artists have been collaborating since 1979, and their work often invites the viewer to join them as they delight in the utterly unremarkable. In Der rechte Weg (The Right Way), a bear and a rat - the artists in costume - explore dark forests, treacherous ravines and snow-swept glaciers in a folk tale of their own devising. Both wickedly humorous and disarmingly profound, the film revels in wandering with no real aim in mind.



### Jeppe Hein

Born 1974 in Denmark, lives and works in Berlin

#### Smoking Bench, 2003 acrylic mirror

(c. 220 × 400 cm), bench, dry ice, technical installation. Courtesy the artist and Johann König Gallery, Berlin, support for the production of the work provided by the Royal Danish Embassy.

Jeppe Hein's works address us directly, whether we ask them to or not. Playing with our expectations of objects, he conjures up scenarios in which, in response to our presence, seemingly sentient behaviour is coaxed from inanimate things. Smoking Bench sends up a cloud of dry ice to engulf the individual sitting upon it, slowly obscuring their reflection in a large mirror.



### Carsten Höller Born 1961 in Belgium, lives

and works in Stockholm

### **Umkehrbrille**

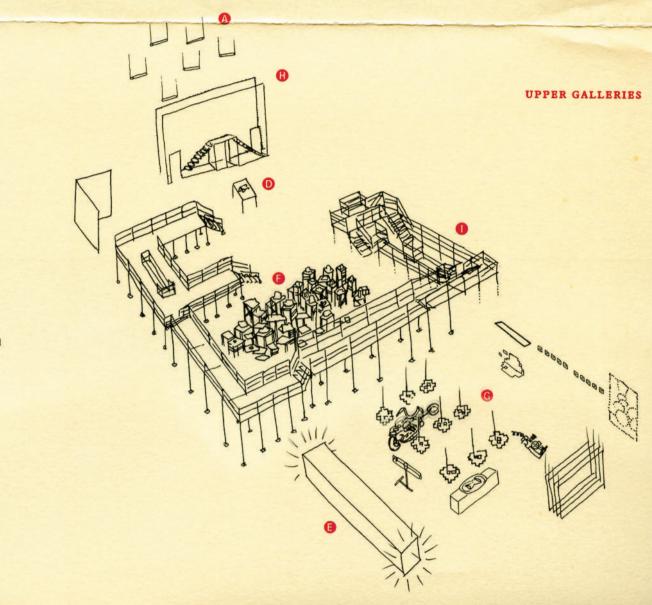
(Upside-Down Glasses), 2001 mixed media,

c. 11 × 21 × 41 cm. Courtesy the artist and

Schipper & Krome, Berlin. background informs a

Carsten Höller's scientific practice comprised of a series of experiments. Yet his artistic investigations are not dedicated to proving hypotheses, but instead are tools for exploring individual interactions with the world. Höller's Umkehrbrille (Upside-Down Glasses), available for use in The Straight or Crooked Way, employ mirror trickery to turn the world on its head and offer the wearer a dizzying inversion of their surroundings. These spectacles are inspired by experiments conducted by English physiologist George Stratton at the end of the nineteenth century. After eight days of continually wearing a similar optical device, Stratton was able to perceive the world 'upright', his brain having adjusted to the inversion of

his visual field.



# Henrik Plenge Jakobsen

Born 1967 in Denmark, lives and works in Copenhagen

Nuit Blanche 2, 1998/2003 wood, FlexiFlash, controller, acrylic mirror, c. 122 × 122 × 700 cm. Courtesy the artist and Gallery Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, support for the production of the work provided by the Royal Danish Embassy.

WARNING: THIS WORK CONTAINS STROBE LIGHTING AND MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO PEOPLE WITH EPILEPSY OR OTHER CONDITIONS

Henrik Plenge Jakobsen's work can be seen as a type of body art, in which the visitor - rather than the artist - is subjected to a corporeal experience. Nuit Blanche 2 is a reworking of his installation of the same name shown in 1998 at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Recalling rave culture with its powerful stroboscopic lights and mirrors, the work disorientates the viewer in a way that disturbs a sense of boundary between body and environment.



## Goshka Macuga

Born 1967 in Poland, lives and works in London

After J.M. Gandy's 'Architectural visions of early fancy, in the gay morning of youth, and dreams in the evening of life', 2003 wooden plinths, maquettes,

models, paintings, dioramas, c. 16m2 Courtesy the artist. commissioned for

The Straight or Crooked Way Often hosting the work of other artists within her own elaborate installations, Goshka Macuga questions the roles of the curator, the artist and the collector. Her work for The Straight or Crooked Way incorporates paintings, maquettes and models by artists and architects to recreate the soaring landscape depicted in a J.M. Gandy watercolour housed in Sir John Soane's Museum, London. In a homage to this depiction of Soane's

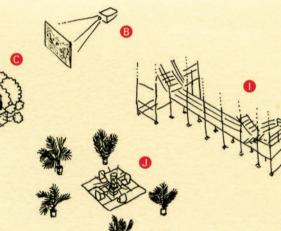
unrealised building designs,

Macuga considers the nature

of ambition, design and

realisation.





# LOWER GALLERIES

### Cerith Wyn Evans Born 1958 in Wales, lives and works in London

rest of the exhibition. A door-

to be an ordinary gallery wall

system of stairs which in turn

Double doors in the centre of

the wall bypass this internal

way through what appears

opens onto an enclosed

lead into an open gallery.

Dreamachine, 1998

mixed media, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and White Cube, London

> WARNING: THIS WORK MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO PEOPLE WITH EPILEPSY OR OTHER CONDITIONS

The original 'dreamachines' were designed in 1960 by Ian Sommerville together with the poet and artist Brion Gysin, a contemporary and friend of William S. Burroughs. These devices stimulate the optic nerve and the visual cortex through their use of flickering light. Cerith Wyn Evans's installation for The Straight or Crooked Way incorporates a functioning dreamachine in a setting with Japanese tatami mats and potted palms. The viewer is encouraged to 'look' at the flickering lights with closed eyes. Everyone has a different respose to this stimulus: some see faces, animals, spinning galaxies and dazzling colours, others experience states of altered consciousness.

### **ROR** (Revolutions on Request)

Formed 1998, live and work in Helsinki, Finland Jiri Geller born 1970; Klaus Nyqvist born 1976; Panu Puolakka born 1972; Karoliina Taipale born 1973

ror: piece by piece, 2003 installation, c. 90m2.

Courtesy the artists, Jan Watteus and Helsinki City Art Museum, support for ROR's participation provided by the Embassy of Finland, FRAME (Finnish Fund for Art Exchange), MOMART and John Nurminen.

Incorporating practices as diverse as embroidery, interior design, painting and heavy metal, ROR's installations immerse the viewer in their paradoxical nihilistutopian conception of the world. The collective merges a hippy-like nostalgia for the handmade with an acute technological awareness. For ror: piece by piece, the four members have customised a section of the gallery into an environment that invites participation and utopic reverie.



### Born 1973 in Portugal, lives

and works in New York

Wall Intervention, 2003

wood c. 400 × 725 × 90 cm. Courtesy the artist, commis-

Crooked Way, support for the production of the work provided by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Sancho Silva's work is mathematics and philosophy as it is to sculpture and archi-

tecture, and elements of all

of these fields occur in his

practice. Wall functions as

both a separation and a con-

nection between Eliasson's

Room for one colour and the

sioned for The Straight or

perhaps as closely related to

Sancho Silva

exhibition.

structure completely. Ana Maria Tavares

### Born 1958 in Brazil, lives and works in São Paulo

Kensington Maze, 2003 scaffolding platforms, walkways, steps, acrylic mirror wall, 230m2. Courtesy the artist and Galeria Brito Cimino, São Paulo,

commissioned for The Straight or Crooked Way, support for the production of the work provided by the American Center Foundation.

Inspired by the architectural grammar of the modern city, Ana Maria Tavares often employs materials such as steel, glass and mirrors to make structures that resemble street furniture or fittings. Such motifs are recontextualised in her installations and come to form puzzles or mazes for the visitor to explore. Kensington Maze comprises a system of walkways, steps and platforms that cut through the gallery spaces. Involving extended discussions with and support from building management, external contractors and safety officers, Tavares's design presents radically new possibilities for circulation through and navigation of the

was curated by graduating students on the Royal College of Art's MA Curating Contemporary Art: Miguel Amado

THE STRAIGHT OR CROOKED WAY

Max Andrews Louise Coysh Tatiana Cuevas Marcello Grioli Naveidul Haq Rachel Kent Beth McDowell Francesco Manacorda Erin Manns Eliza Patten Abigail Scholar

The MA Curating Contemporary Art is co-funded by the Royal College of Art and the Arts Council of England. For further information e-mail fiona.key@rca.ac.uk