

Demux: Marynowsky and Newman.

Written by Abram Powell

Hybrid New Media Audio Visual Electronic Digital Art is a strange beast. The confusion and contention over even naming it, let alone developing a deeper taxonomy for it, is testimony to the fluid assemblages that continually confound these various rubrics.

Moreover the broader trope of “Art” itself has been subjected to the vagaries of Pomo deconstruction, capitalistic commodification and glib non sequiturs – after Warhol anything can be Art. A left hook from Cultural Theory with a right from Mass-networking with Web2.0 and the flayed corpse of sign/signified in neat bundles of meaning are strewn across the ring. Some look back nostalgically to when Art meant painting and sculpture and stuff, and music was simply rhythm, melody and harmony: a neat package that trundled along for the last couple of hundred years but has now exploded.

Regardless of which intellectual excursion you choose to take, something, as always, has changed. The zeitgeist is now fracture, fragment, sample, split and share. The cultural signal has been De-multiplexed. Demux splits the signal into components but maintains the integrity of each part.

Following on from their DVD label launch at Carriageworks (Reviewed by Ann Finegan, Loop#3) Demux have released two works by co-founders Wade Marynowski and Peter Newman. Both DVDs serve as documentation of these artists wider practices in performance and installation, however these discs are artworks in their own right - this is a strange beast and can take many forms.

Paperhouse by Peter Newman is a chthonic chromium hypnosis that sporadically blooms into white hot luminance. Offering both stereo and 5.1 audio, *Paperhouse* is a six chapter snapshot of Newman’s oeuvre that has been deftly arranged to be experienced as a whole: the notion of the concept album is extended and spliced, at the same time eschewing traditional narrative structures.

Fold p.i.v. 8, the first track, serves as a playing field – this is the landscape, the ground and boundary. The obsession with film stock that captivated Stan Brakkage, Len Lye and Norman McLaren is redolent in Newman’s work, but to say that this is appendage or clever reference is to miss the point: although the techniques of the old and the new have equivalence, the aesthetic has shifted.

The affective quality in the work of early pioneers such as Dziga Vertov or Orson Welles is translated into a contemporary palette. Where, for example, Vertov places the eye as machine – the cine-eye – in *Man with a Movie camera*”, Newman situates the eye as internal and embodied. More than just consciousness perceiving the senses, the ear and the eye seem to etch this

work onto the brain. Where Welles used chiaroscuro to underscore a dramatic point Newman uses light and dark to obscure and reveal.

Newman's body of work seems to contain a sort of eclipsed nostalgia, not so much a Nietzschean Eternal Return but a Deleuzian Repetition producing Difference; a world of infinitely folding hallucination and memory: a son et lumiere of internal reflection.

Wade Marynowski's *Interpretive Dance* opens with a documentation of his automaton *Autonomous Improvisation v1*, a digital triptych presented at Artspace earlier this year that perhaps highlights the attendant issues with both these DVDs: those who have seen Newman and Marynowski's performative works should not be expecting a direct translation from stage to screen. As novel must be interpreted and adapted to the medium of cinema so to these discs should be seen to stand alone as snapshots – more intimate insights into these artists worlds.

Interpretive Dance also carries a more direct socio-political tone than *Paperhouse*: where the latter is infused with a sense of the history of the material of film and video, the former has a tendency to weave a subtle critique of the contemporary Australian condition. No more so than in the final piece on Marynowski's disc, *Apocalypse Later*, which is well described by the artist as "Australia's history of violence through abstraction and the destruction of sound and image."

These impressive documents are a timely contribution to the cultural landscape and will likely stand up in years to come. They call into question the boundaries that supposedly demarcate the borders of Hybrid New Media Audio Visual Electronic Digital Art without resorting to didactic doxa. Both to those familiar with these artists and those who are not, those who are interested in the bleeding edges of contemporary art practice and those who just like the seduction of the glowing cathode rays and sonic push of particles, these first outings from the Demux label has indexed an important point in the Sydney scene.

<http://www.demux.org>

Peter Newman
Paperhouse
\$16 AUS inc postage
\$22 OS inc international postage

Wade Marynowsky
Interperative dance
\$16 AUS inc postage
\$22 OS inc international postage