

Opening reception March 1 at 6pm

TELIC Arts Exchange: 975 Chung King Road, Los Angeles www.telic.info

Gravity Art / Curator's Statement

A couple of years ago, as I was making a documentary about the Dutch/Californian artist Bas Jan Ader, I discovered a sizable amount of conceptual art films which appeared to use gravity as their medium. In fact, just as pratfalls and other gravity-induced mishaps gave rise to the silent movies of the slapstick era, the collective conceptual film oeuvre, from the '60s onwards, consist of so many movies (and photoworks) exploring this elemental force that we could speak of gravity art as a timeless subgenre.

Today's resurgence of similarly themed films coincides with the popularity of extreme sports, phenomena like the *Jackass* TV series and the emergence of *YouTube*, where everyone can now stage a public performance by just pointing a digital camera at themselves.

It didn't take long before a growing list of films, made by several generations of artists, reached sufficient critical mass to initiate an exhibition in Amsterdam's Art Center De Appel, which featured 25 films and 16 photo works, spread out over multiple rooms covering three floors. The show was mounted according to museum standards, providing ample space for isolated art works and lending the pieces on display the requisite aura of respectability.

Even though the exhibition was a big success, its impact fell short of my personal expectations, precisely because of the traditional museum approach with its strong focus on each of the individual artists, as if their work was meant to exist in a vacuum. I realized that what I missed in the lay-out was the ability to see all the works together, reflecting on each other and visually interacting while merging their audio-tracks of wind, falling bodies and clattering objects into an ambient soundscape.

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To me the powerful correlation between these works was not just their common theme, but the fact that they *collectively* conveyed in a visceral way how the inner workings of the universe impact our existence.

When I was asked to curate a similar show in Los Angeles at TELIC Arts Exchange, whose premises basically consist of one big black box, I gladly accepted the opportunity to adapt the Gravity Art exhibition to a very different circumstance. With the help of Jens Hommert, who designed the much publicized European exhibitions for Dutch architecture firm OMA, we managed to bring together 30 gravity-based films by different artists in one place. Soon they will be joined by visitors from the outside world, who will hopefully be inspired to revisit their own conflicted relationship with this most mysterious force of nature that is at once invisible and yet revealed by every move we make.

Rene Daalder, Los Angeles, 2/29/08
www.renedaalder.com