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Other Plans: artists' bookworks by Juan Cruz and Michael Dean curated by Simon Morrissey, published by Forma

Book launch, Serpentine Gallery, London, 5 Dec 2006

Panel discussion & launch, Arnolfini, Bristol, 21 Feb 2007

Panel discussion & launch, Baltic, Gateshead, 22 Feb 2007

Other Plans was initiated in response to significant regeneration projects in NewcastleGateshead UK and to bids for European City of Culture 2008. The two resulting artists' bookworks by Juan Cruz and Michael Dean provide subtle critiques of projects that commission artists to respond to particular geographical locations or contexts.

For *Other Plans*, Dean and Cruz have produced two strikingly original new works that distinctly resist the idea of creating artwork that could be used to serve cultural agendas other than the artists' own. Both bookworks can be seen to work as displaced critiques of the entangled relationships between commissioner and artist, place and artwork, in this increasingly prevalent type of commissioning. The books are accompanied by a critical essay by the curator that explores the evolution of the project and its critical ambitions.

Juan Cruz - a translation of Niebla (fog) by Miguel de Unamuno

Niebla (fog) is a new English translation of Miguel de Unamuno's classic 1914 novel, by the artist Juan Cruz. Cruz draws on the act of translating specific texts to explore the mechanisms of displacement, the construction of identity and to interrogate the creative process. Seemingly a meditation on love, *Niebla (fog)* is composed of a series of tricks played on the protagonist by the other characters, on the characters by the author, and by the author on his reader. In *Niebla (fog)* Cruz re-presents the Spanish modernist writer, dramatist and philosopher Unamuno's classic text as a meditation on the blurred relationship between autonomy and dependence - the central problematic in making art public.

Michael Dean - mountains and triangles

Michael Dean uses the barest language and starkly minimal typography to create an almost physical linguistic space that becomes charged with an unexpected emotional impact. Rooted in the apparently mundane minutiae of everyday life, *mountains and triangles* is intensely visual. Dean's blunt descriptions of people, objects, interiors and fragments of landscapes have a staccato simplicity and austere appearance, yet they seduce the reader with their distinct cadence and hypnotic rhythm. In prioritising an intensely localised way of recording the world, Dean reformulates the idea of context as the 'super-micro' or as an intimate personally constructed space that is continuous and the basis of our relationship with different geographic, social and historical contexts.

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Notes to Editors

Launch events

Book launch Serpentine Gallery, London,
5 Dec 2006, 18.30 – 20.30

Book launch with introductory talk from Simon Morrissey and artists' signings, part of the Education Private View for the exhibition *In the darkest hour there may be light*, an exhibition of works from Damien Hirst's *Murderme* collection.

Panel discussion: Autonomy v's Context &
book launch, Arnolfini, Bristol, 21 Feb 2007,
18.00 – 20.30

Arnolfini theatre and bookshop

Juan Cruz and Michael Dean discuss their work and issues raised by the project together with project curator Simon Morrissey and artist Daphne Wright, whose project *Home Ornaments*, made for the Gorbals, Glasgow, similarly addresses issues of artistic autonomy within commissioning for specific contexts. A book launch and artists' signing will take place in the bookshop, following this discussion.

Panel discussion & book launch, Baltic,
Gateshead, 22 Feb 2007, 18.00-20.00,
Baltic cinema and bookshop

Simon Morrissey and the artists will discuss their work, the issues raised by the project and its critical ambitions. A book launch and artists' signing will take place in the bookshop, following this discussion.

Publications information

Juan Cruz – a translation of Niebla (Fog) by
Miguel de Unamuno

ISBN: 0-9548288-2-8, All texts in English
220 pp, softback + 10 pp critical essay by
Simon Morrissey, 185mm x 120mm

Michael Dean - mountains and triangles

ISBN: 0-9548288-3-6, All texts in English
320 pp, softback + 10 pp critical essay by
Simon Morrissey, 185mm x 120mm

Published by forma, £8.00 each (£15.00 for
Other Plans set – Juan Cruz + Michael Dean)
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www.cornerhouse.org/books

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Biographies

Juan Cruz is an artist whose practice has explored translation as a means of constructing identity and as a process that dwells on the relationship between narrative and physical space.

Juan Cruz lectures in Visual Arts at Goldsmiths College, London and is represented by Matt's Gallery, London and Galeria Elba Benitez, Madrid. Cruz has exhibited extensively in the UK and internationally. In 1999, he received a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award for Artists.

Michael Dean's practice foregrounds the idea of text as an interface between the artist's own experience and his audiences (displaced) experience of this in his work. His work takes the form of bookworks, posters and sculpture but keeps at its centre careful arrangements of evocative texts that suggest intimate fragments of lived experience.

Dean studied Fine Art Practice and Contemporary Critical Theory at Goldsmiths College, London (1998-2001) and since his graduation has exhibited throughout Europe. He was born in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1977 and currently lives and works in London.

Simon Morrissey is an independent curator and writer on contemporary art. His curated projects have been commissioned by public institutions including Arnolfini, Bristol; The Bowes Museum, County Durham; and The British Council; as well as by commercial galleries and artist-run organisations.

He has written extensively on contemporary art and edited publications for numerous leading galleries and publishers in Britain and internationally, and is currently Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Bristol School of Art, Media & Design, UWE.

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