

IKON

Exhibition Guide

juneau/projects/ *The black moss*
First Floor Galleries and Ikon Reception
29 March – 14 May 2006

This is the most comprehensive exhibition to date of work by British artists Ben Sadler and Philip Duckworth, collaborating as juneau/projects/. It comprises existing sound, video and performance pieces alongside two major new artworks, commissioned by Ikon.

juneau/projects/ have transformed the First Floor Galleries through rough construction work and a mass of plants and shrubbery. On entering the galleries, we are confronted by a selection of early pieces which test the limits of electronic gadgets. The artists take a range of consumer goods such as mobile phones, CD walkmans, computers, televisions and tape machines, and systematically abuse them in a process which ultimately leads to their destruction. This is captured on video and presented amongst the tattered remains of the technology involved.

Walkman/Lake (2001) is set against the backdrop of picturesque mountains. Artist Ben Sadler rows a dinghy into the middle of Coniston Water in the Lake District and slowly lowers a cassette tape player overboard. The music that it plays, *Metamorphosen* by German composer Richard Strauss, is the soundtrack, distorted as water seeps into the mechanism, short-circuiting the electronic systems. It attempts to continue, whilst becoming increasingly submerged, but stops in the end. In the same vein of destruction, *Stalker* (2001), shot in Grizedale Forest in Cumbria, involves a marksman, employed by juneau/projects/ to hunt down a hidden video camera. As the piece unfolds, the 'stalker' slowly comes into view, taking aim and firing at the camera, whilst the machine records its own death.

juneau/projects/ experienced a turning point in 2003 when they began to make objects, as opposed to destroying them. One of the new commissions, *I'm going to antler you* (2006), involves the imaginary music groups *the embers* and *ebony angels*. During a residency in New York in 2004, the artists planned to collaborate with US rock band, *Flaming Fire*, but for one reason or another, this project never

materialised. Based on the idea of recreating an event that did not happen, juneau/ projects/ present 'evidence' of what this partnership might have yielded. Costumes and logos were developed by working with groups of young people from the region over several weeks. This process culminated in 'becoming' the bands, acting out roles, conducting photo shoots and experimenting with music. These photographs, costumes, musical instruments and an audio soundtrack form the installation. This piece builds on previous work where the artists joined forces with a diverse range of individuals and groups including cub scouts, teenage bands, soul legend Lee Fields and highland warriors to create a range of materials including audio CDs, magazines and an online record label.

The new work *Beneath the floorboards of the forest, empty space* (2006), features a number of purpose-built, interactive workstations, where visitors can engage with a text-based 'computer game'. Keyboards and monitors are incorporated into a mock landscape, featuring plants and detailed paintings, reminding us of miniature model-making by hobbyist enthusiasts. The screen-based game involves a complex story. As we read the descriptions, we must make decisions about the direction we take, leading to adventures in which we encounter a range of bizarre characters and creatures. One of the workstations is fully accessible, with spoken text, large print and instructions in Braille.

A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition for £12.95, available from Ikon Shop for a special price throughout the show of £10.95. Ikon is also offering a special student price of £8.95, valid on presentation of identification.

This exhibition is supported by the Arts Council England National Touring Programme and the Henry Moore Foundation. The exhibition tours to Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge; Model Arts and Niland Gallery, Sligo and FACT, Liverpool.