

Home Alone IV

the exhibition

A successful installation artist not only broadens our concepts of what constitutes art but causes us to question trends in modern society. Marcus Williams certainly does both. Mixing sound, video, mirrors, video stills, doors and sticks he challenges our view of both art and reality television.

Home Alone IV is made up of 'three things from America:'

- the Cosmic Home Drawings
- break on through (to the other side) – Jim Morrison and The Doors
- reality television.

the cosmic home drawings

This suite of nine drawings is an example of artworks that were regarded back in the 1960s as American avant-garde. Meaning was decided by the viewer in the precise moment of time the artworks were viewed rather than by the artist.

break on through (to the other side) – Jim Morrison and The Doors

Around the same time Jim Morrison, a film school dropout from California, began reading, writing poetry, experimenting with hallucinogenic drugs and ruminating on the spiritual essence of the American experience. American Indian and eastern mysticism were wide-ranging influences of the day. Marcus' version of Morrison's music features as the sound byte of the artwork.

reality television

Emerging seamlessly from game shows, *Smile – You're On Candid Camera*, TV bloopers and Oprah Winfrey's groundbreaking daytime talk show, reality television has become a part of life in '*America's unquenchable thirst for realism*' (Umberto Eco).

the artwork

What links these three features together in the one artwork is the ongoing question about how we view reality and the modern trend of reality television.

The way the artwork is set up gives you the feeling of sneaking in the back door, of spying on something.

Each picture is made from video stills pasted onto doors and linked by lengths of stick, which can seem random until you realise that they are 'drawings in space' rather than on the wall. All the pieces combine to make one artwork. The work is constructed to give the sense of breaking through to the other side as well as the experience of walking around inside an artwork instead of just admiring it from a distance.

The artist has combined all these factors to produce a work that asks us to consider whether the intrusive, voyeuristic character of reality television (not real at all by the time it is scripted, people are chosen and film is edited) is something we value as part of our culture. And leaves us, of course, with the question – what is reality really?

the artist

Marcus Williams is an established artist and self-acclaimed amateur phenomenologist. He currently works as a lecturer in art and design at Unitech in Auckland. He has a Masters in Fine Arts from RMIT university in Melbourne and a First from Elim School of Fine Arts in Auckland. He has been teaching for 16 years, mainly photography but also sculpture and art theory. He was previously artist in residence at the Sarjaent Gallery in Wanganui and was also an artist in residence in Italy. He enjoys working on collaborative artworks with other artists, especially musicians and those with quite different skill sets. His installation works often feature sound.

A word from.....

the artist

My art practice focuses on the relationship between experience 'in the moment' and experience coming to us from 'the other side,' in other words, from media such as television, film or advertising.

The ad hoc constructions made from bits of pine you see in the gallery were made up as I went. I had no real plan conceived beforehand. I just brought some sticks and started building. This is in stark contrast to the video and the captured video stills around which the sticks are constructed. These were premeditated, planned and mediated through various photographic technologies.

I hope this contrast raises questions about how we learn, how we conceive the world and what the primary influences are in that conception.

I suspect that the various mediated experiences we blissfully engage with on a daily basis have as much if not more influence in how we conceive the world, value it or understand our existence than Husserl's notion of 'the things themselves'*..... the things and experiences of our daily lives.

Marcus Williams
Artist and amateur phenomenologist
2003

**All phenomenologists follow Husserl in attempting to use pure description. Thus they all subscribe to Husserl's slogan 'To the things themselves.'*

the director

Welcome to our new installation work **Home Alone IV** by Marcus Williams.

This work is an example of how our arts and cultural facility can bring new and exciting opportunities to Upper Hutt. Upper Hutt has never before hosted an installation work of this nature and we are thrilled that an established artist such as Marcus has taken the risk to exhibit in our new gallery.

The artist's intention is to make us think about the appropriateness of reality television. My own experience of seeing the work for the first time left me feeling I'd come through the back door and somehow entered a place where I shouldn't be – breaking through to the other side.

I hope you too are challenged and inspired by this work.

Stephanie Cottrill
Director