

Conspiracy Countdown Robert Boyd

Robert Boyd's *Conspiracy Theory*, the first part of his forthcoming project *TOMORROW PEOPLE*, is a synchronized two-channel video installation. Located in the Corner Gallery on the first floor, *Conspiracy Theory* addresses issues of social paranoia and civil distrust in an era of questionable politics using excerpts from syndicated radio talk show hosts, international conspiracists, amateur documentary filmmakers, and the mysterious Commander X. For this issue of the P.S.1 Newspaper, Boyd has submitted a top ten "Conspiracy Countdown."

10. *Welt am Draht (World On a Wire)*, 1973

The made-for-TV science fiction film by Rainer Werner Fassbinder portrays a computer programmer who is working on a project called Simulacron that is able to simulate a full featured reality, only to discover that he, and the world he inhabits, is a simulation.

9. *Secrets of the Matrix*, 2004

David Icke presents a 6-hour lecture about "a network of interbreeding (reptilian) bloodlines that have been pursuing an agenda for thousands of years to impose a globally centralized fascist state with total control and surveillance of the population."



Still from Robert Boyd, *Conspiracy Theory*, 2008. Dual projection video installation, color and b&w video. Courtesy the artist.



8. *UFO Abductions: A Global Phenomenon*, 1998

Michael Hesemann's documentary about alien abductees features Rauni-Leena Luukanen-Kilde, a former medical officer from Finland; Whitley Strieber, the author of *Communion*; and Louis Turi, a metaphysical doctor who was abducted while en route to his brother's disco in the south of France.

7. *Anthrax, Smallpox, Vaccinations and the Mark of the Beast*, 2005

Leonard Horowitz presents "little known facts regarding threatened outbreaks; the science, economics, and global politics underlying bioterrorism and forced vaccinations," and the mark of the beast.

6. *Loose Change: 1st Edition*, 2005

Dylan Avery theorizes in an online expose that "9-11 was an inside job."

5. *Dark Secrets: Inside Bohemian Grove*, 2000

Alex Jones infiltrates the Bohemian Grove in Monte

Rio, C.A. to expose "the occult playground of the global elite."

4. *The Strecker Memorandum*, 1988

Robert B. Strecker theorizes that AIDS is a man-made disease that was introduced into the human population through medical injection programs.

3. *Communion*, 1989

Film adaptation, starring Christopher Walken, of Whitley Strieber's bestselling novel about the author's personal experiences of being abducted by aliens.

2. *The Secret Underground Lectures of Commander X*, 2004

A retired military intelligence official reveals the "shocking truth about the New World Order, UFOs, Mind Control and more."

1. *V: The Original Miniseries*, 1983

A race of reptilian aliens attempt to take over Earth.



Robert Boyd: Conspiracy Theory

When: Through Oct. 24, 10 a.m.–7 p.m.

Phone: 503.226.4391

Price: FREE

robertboyd.info

Anyone familiar with the hinterlands of late-night talk radio and the ill-designed websites of the lunatic fringe will understand the source material for Robert Boyd's *Conspiracy Theory*. Part of a larger work called *Tomorrow People*, this multi-channel video installation addresses the odd explanations we create to mollify our fear when confronted with experiences and events we don't want to understand. Drawing from archival footage, homemade documentaries, and popular film, Boyd's work juxtaposes frantic rhetoric with images of abduction and destruction. Chockfull of aliens, one-world government paranoia, and those who think 9/11 was "an inside job," *Conspiracy Theory* is a dark look into the cold corners of American distrust. What it finds there is a world of reptilians, mind control, and red-faced shouting. It's the same world that gave us *The X Files*, but Boyd dispenses with special agents and brings us face to face with the non-fictional proponents of global mistrust. PAC

PNCA Feldman Gallery

1241 NW Johnson St.

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frieze

Time-Based Art Festival: 09

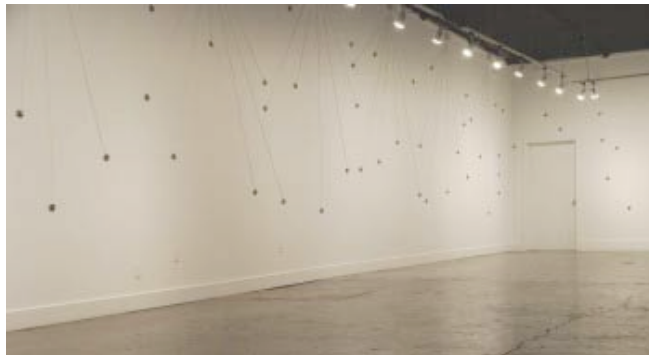
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VARIOUS VENUES, PORTLAND, USA



Miguel Gutierrez and the Powerful People, *Last Meadow* (2009)

A giant beaver, dancers in drag, images of 9/11 and a vegan burrito truck flashed by me during the opening weekend of this year's Time-based Art Festival (TBA) organized by the Portland Institute of Contemporary Art in northwest Oregon. Founded in 2003, the annual two-week multimedia festival – this year guest-directed by Cathy Edwards of New York's Dance Theater Workshop – is dispersed at venues and outdoor spaces throughout the handsome city that's famed for fir trees, microbreweries and indie rock. This year's festival featured more than 60 events, including theatre, dance, film, a slow-food picnic, 'Death Electric Emo Protest Aerobics' and a pancake breakfast. While I would have loved to gear up in a unitard and sweat out my existential doubts, you can never do it all.



Ehan Rose, *Movements* (2008)

Newly added this year was a central venue called the WORKS, a disused high school that hosted many performances as well as two floors of visual art. The latter included a jive-talking animation by Kalup Linzy, instructional aura tracings by Peter Coffin, Fawn Krieger's soft sculptural park, as well as somewhat puerile internet-based video projections by Brody Condon, Johanna Ketola and Antoine Catala, each of which was housed in its own dark classroom. Following the sound of chimes, I

discovered local artist/composer Ethan Rose's lovely installation *Movements* (2008), which comprised more 100 altered music boxes fastened to the white walls of a room, plinking out plaintive minimal music with tiny metal teeth.



Robert Boyd, *Conspiracy Theory* (2008)

In a talk that morning at the Pacific Northwest College of Art, the curators discussed themes running loosely through the festival such as the American landscape, Sol LeWitt-style 'instruction pieces' and the deep anxiety replacing our post-election elation. Angst was certainly the root of the world premiere of *Last Meadow*, a dance by Brooklyn-based Miguel Gutierrez and the Powerful People. Knitting together James Dean movies, brain injuries and the sham of the American Dream, three performers crafted a deeply depraved phantasm that felt akin to screening *East of Eden* (1955) backwards and discovering satanic messages. The petite woman playing Dean uncannily captured his hunted, lost-boy look, but the performance occasionally slid into apocalyptic heavy-handedness, with a recorded voice dramatically whispering 'America... is... a *disaster*' (really?) and a lot of lascivious pelvic-thrusting that took the deliciously sublimated sex and dread coursing through Dean's films and yanked them under stadium lights. An even higher anxiety was the subject of Robert Boyd's two-channel video, *Conspiracy Theory* (2008), which spliced together scenes from sci-fi films, television news, docudramas and various loons ranting about the 'inside-job' of 9/11, HIV conspiracies and aliens, all to the driving beat of Kylie Minogue singing 'I believe, I believe!' Mesmerizing stuff, which – somewhat scarily – conjured some of the furious extremism seen in the US since the presidential election.



Hitoshi Toyoda, *NAZUNA* (2003-4)

Downshifting from panic to deep Zen was Hitoshi Toyoda's haiku-like slideshow *NAZUNA* (2003-4). Dozens of people gathered on the dark lawn of the WORKS to watch the silent 90-minute sequence of colour photographs. A typical segment might include a sequence such as: a dog; a ginkgo leaf; George W. Bush on Japanese TV; trees covered in snow; the hospital where his mother laid dying; a bowl of tofu; the sky. The silence of the rapt audience – you could actually hear crickets – added to the astonishing tenderness and reverence of Toyoda's images; their potency also evoked the gripping power of Chris Marker's similarly conceived film *La Jetée* (The Pier, 1962). Did I mention that we sat in a light rain while wood-smoke drifted over from a nearby house? It was almost too sublime.

One of the best things about a festival like TBA is its location in a city that, while boasting plenty of art, isn't completely sodden with it, adding a sense of camaraderie and unguarded excitement to such events. I ended my visit with the jubilantly regional *Oregon, Oregon!*, a musical written by Stan Freberg in 1959 and updated for the state's sesquicentennial, with music by local stars Pink Martini. It was campy, silly and sweet: Americana by way of *Waiting for Guffman* (1996) and Garrison Keillor. This was where the giant talking beaver entered from stage right – just the right dose of *élan* every serious performance festival should strive for.

Lyra Kilston