



Speak, Memory

Speak, Memory

December the 12th 2010 - February the 20th 2011

Opening: Saturday December the 11th 2010, 5PM
Screening MASSAGE THE HISTORY at 4PM at
Filmhuis Den Haag (Spui 191)

Stroom Den Haag, Hogewal 1-9, The Hague

Our memory has a will of its own. We tell ourselves, 'This is something I must remember, this is a moment I must hang on to, this look, this feeling, this caress', yet within a few months, or even after just a couple of days, we find that the memory can no longer be summoned up with the colour, smell or savour we were hoping for. 'Memory', says Cees Nootboom in Rituals, 'is like a dog that lies down where it pleases.'

Douwe Draaisma WHY LIFE SPEEDS UP AS YOU GET OLDER (Cambridge University Press).

SPEAK, MEMORY

Some people are said to cry when they taste or smell food from their childhood. Oliver Sacks has to ask people to wear nametags at his own birthday party because he can't remember faces. What one person might remember vividly can be completely gone and lost to another. Our memory works in mysterious ways and our images of the past are coloured, distorted and blurred by time and emotions. There are few things as fascinating and elusive as our memory.

Personal stories, distorted memories, lost moments and old traditions, traces of buildings: these are the elements that connect the diverse works in this exhibition. The starting point for *Speak, Memory* is the work of three artists – Leontine Lieffering, Sara Rajaei and Vittorio Roerade – who received last year's high profile grant for individual artists: Stroom Premium. Their work is contextualized in an international discourse with works by Omer Fast, Sara van der Heide, Anne Holtrop, Cameron Jamie, Andrew Lord and Rachel Whiteread.

In this exhibition guide, the artists and their contribution to the exhibition are briefly introduced.

* The title is derived from the memoirs of Vladimir Nabokov.

OMER FAST

Omer Fast (1972) was born in Israel and lives and works in Berlin. His work is characterized by a fascination for the ways in which stories and realities are constructed. Who decides how history is written and "known"? What makes one version of a memory more true than another? Fast works with film, video, performance, media and television images to examine how we deal with our personal or collective history. The narratives in his work navigate between personal stories and media versions of these same events.

In *Speak, Memory*, Fast shows the video installation of the performance TALK SHOW (2009), that was held for the first time during Performa 09. In the video installation a story changes totally and unrecognizably through six retellings. The child's game 'broken telephone', whereby a sentence is whispered from one child to the next so that in the end it sounds nothing like the opening sentence, not only describes this work strikingly but also the ways in which our memories often distort and transform under the influence of time and other forces.

* Omer Fast has a solo exhibition at The Netherlands Media Art Institute (Amsterdam) between May 14 and July 23, 2011.

After Ayers finished speaking, he left the stage and was replaced by the actress Lili Taylor, who then played host to Noonan's rendition of Ayers's story. Taylor in turn told her version to Jill Clayburgh. And on and on six times, ending with Rosie Perez speaking to Ayers, closing the circle so to speak. By which time Ayers's highly nuanced description of protest and radicalisation, social conscience and moral dilemma during the Vietnam War years had morphed into a 'Catholic high-school girls in trouble' tale of violent protest against the Iraq War and George W. Bush, whom Perez fittingly called "the most stupid president we have ever had".

Joshua Mack on TALK SHOW by Omer Fast in Art Review, November 2009.



Talk Show - A Platform Commission co-produced by Arts Contemporary Israel Art Fund, ESSE-Russ House for Media Arts, Osterburg and The Clavette Institute, Hong Kong 2009 Photo by Olympia Dier CAPTION INFO: DO NOT PRINT



Talk Show - A Platform Commission co-produced by Arts Contemporary Israel Art Fund, ESSE-Russ House for Media Arts, Osterburg and the Clavette Institute, Hong Kong 2009 Photo by Olympia Dier CAPTION INFO: DO NOT PRINT

Omer Fast, screenshots TALK SHOW (2009). Images courtesy of the artist and gb agency, Paris.

SARA VAN DER HEIDE

Sara van der Heide (1977) was born in South Korea and lives and works in Amsterdam. In her drawings and paintings, fiction, current events and personal memories come together. In this sense her works are monuments for the here and now, for the moment that is always already gone once it has been captured. The present tense, the now, is the only time when the muddling of our memory through time and emotions is not at play. But once you say "now", the moment is already gone and remembering becomes harder. You could say that most of the works in this exhibition are a monument to a bygone time, odes to that which no longer is.

In *Speak, Memory* three drawings from her most recent solo exhibition FROM THE BEGINNING TILL THE END AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN (Lullin + Ferrari, Zürich) are shown as well as the new work MUSEUM (2010) in which the names of major European ethnographic museums are placed side by side. Ethnographic museums are controversial classification systems in which the past and present are ranked and valued: this will be saved and this won't. Like other heritage institutions, they "distrust" the human memory and capture usages, ideas and cultures. By doing this they create a framework for our collective memory.

* Coinciding with the work MUSEUM, an artist publication will appear. More information on this publication will be made available on the Stroom website.

Ethnologisches Museum (Berlin, Germany)
Etnografisch Museum (Antwerp, Belgium)
Etnografiska Museet (Stockholm, Sweden)
Horniman Museum (London, United Kingdom)

Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika (Tervuren,
Belgium)
Musée d'Ethnographie de Genève (Geneva, Switzerland)
Musée de l'Homme (Paris, France)
Musée du Quai Branley (Paris, France)

Musée National des Art Asiatiques (Paris, France)
Museo Nacional de Antropología (Madrid, Spain)
Museu Etnològic (Barcelona, Spain)
Museu Nacional de Etnologia (Lisbon, Portugal)

Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico Luigi Pigorini
(Rome, Italy)
Museum der Kulturen (Basel, Switzerland)
Museum Volkenkunde (Leiden, The Netherlands)
Museum für Völkerkunde (Vienna, Austria)

Oriental Museum (Durham, United Kingdom)
Östasiatiska Museet (Stockholm, Sweden)
Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden (Dresden,
Germany)
Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde München (Munich,
Germany)

Tropenmuseum (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)
Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich (Zurich,
Switzerland)
Wereldmuseum (Rotterdam, The Netherlands)
World Museum (Liverpool, United Kingdom)

Sara van der Heide, MUSEUM (2010).



Sara van der Heide, MUSEUM (2010). Images courtesy of the artist and Galerie Diana Stigter.

ANNE HOLTROP

Anne Holtrop (1977) is a Dutch architect who, in addition to his architectural practice, is editor of the independent architectural magazine OASE. His work is often temporary and in that sense conceptual. TRAIL HOUSE (2009), for example, is a temporary house built for the exhibition UNKNOWN TERRITORY (2009) at Museum De Paviljoens. The design of the house was based on improvised paths that ran over a wasteland. People living in the area often didn't take the long route home but cut it short, thereby creating a map of tracks that were used by Holtrop as the basis to design the house. The memory of users, ingrained in paths and tracks, was the inspiration and foundation for this architectural design. The design of TEMPORARY MUSEUM (2010) was inspired by the automatic drawings by Dadaist Jean Arp and showed work by Renie Spoelstra, Eva-Fiore Kovacovsky, Driessens & Verstappen and Sjoerd Buisman.

In *Speak, Memory* a model of TRAIL HOUSE will be shown, two pictures by Bas Princen and the thirty positions formulated by Lorenzo De Rita* (The Soon Institute) in response to TRAIL HOUSE.

* Lorenzo De Rita will give a guided tour through *Speak, Memory* in English on Sunday January the 30th, 2011. The book TRAIL HOUSE is on sale at Stroom.

The Smallest Universe Ever

In the bathroom the ocean is taking a bath. The wind is flirting around with the curtains, which seem to appreciate the attention. The sky is busy framing itself into the kitchen's window. The night went out for the day but, so we were told, will be back for dinner. The time is lying comfortably on the sofa of the living room, confabulating with the silence. In the bedroom the sun keeps changing its mind on what shadow it should wear. Someone rings the doorbell of the Trail House. The future, slowly, goes to open the door.

Lorenzo De Rita on Anne Holtrops TRAIL HOUSE in the eponymous book.



Anne Holtrop, TRAIL HOUSE (2009). Photo Bas Princen. Images courtesy of the artist.

CAMERON JAMIE

Cameron Jamie (1969) is an American born artist who lives and works in Paris. Jamie works with video, performance, installation and drawing. He often starts from American history and culture and its strange or extreme excesses. Jamie explores the interplay between the mundane and the mythical, between ancient and modern rituals. The result is a mix of popular culture, contemporary folklore, ancient rituals and myths, or in the words of Ralph Rugoff: Jamie's "backyard anthropology".*

In Filmhuis Den Haag, the films BB (2000) and MESSAGE THE HISTORY (2007-2009) are screened. For the film BB (2000), Jamie spent two years as an ethnographer in the world of American "backyard wrestling". MESSAGE THE HISTORY is a documentary film giving a fascinating vision on the world of American urban "folk dance". Jamie followed over a period of two years a group of young men from the suburbs of Alabama who film themselves and their improbable, copulation-like dances and post these movies online. Like many of these movies, the living room is the setting where action takes place. The domestic turns into an imaginary stage for this trance-inducing dance. The soundtrack is from the New York group Sonic Youth.

* Ralph Rugoff in CAMERON JAMIE (Hatje Kantz Verlag).

The work moves from an anecdotal register to one of abstraction; extending outwards from the biographical, it becomes a generic representation of popular phenomena and cultural interaction. Jamie is interested in feeling the pulse of deeper drives, or kinds of human activity that appear in different time zones and in different historical eras.

Edwin Carels on the work of Cameron Jamie in
Afterall, issue 18, 2008.



Cameron Jamie, screenshots *MESSAGE THE HISTORY* (2007-2009). Images courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery, NY.

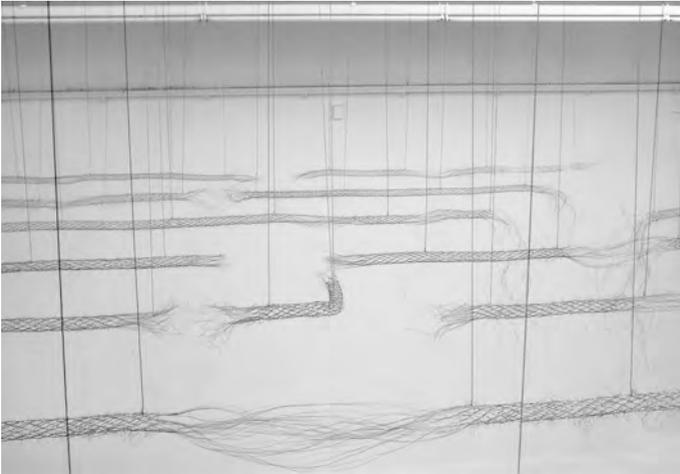
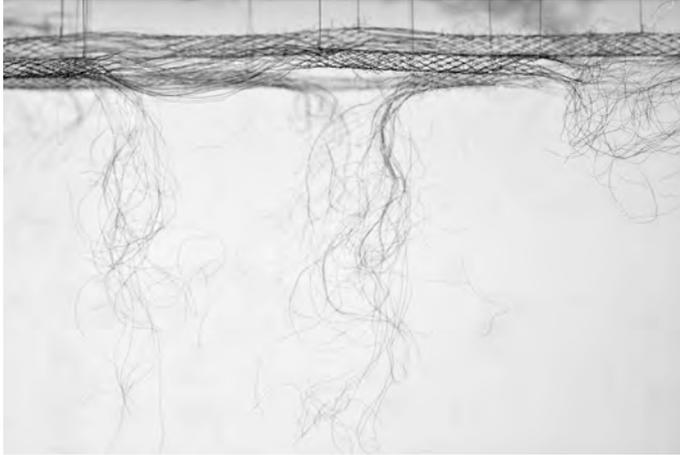
LEONTINE LIEFFERING

The work of Leontine Lieffering (1963, lives and works in The Hague) is characterized by a fascination with architectural spaces and structures. She always works in situ and creates work for a specific location. The work reflects on its location by, for example, exposing old usages of the building or by (re)visualizing lost architectural structures. An interruption in the pattern of the floor of one of the rooms of the Venice Biennale, for example, inspired the wooden imprints in *WETLAND* (2008). And for *LICHTHAL VOORVERTREK BOVENZAAL* (1999), Lieffering placed in the vast vault of the former building of the public archives of The Hague, a synthetic rubber cast of doors long gone, as ephemeral afterimages of passageways that were once present.

For *Speak, Memory* she realizes an installation, *IN ZICHT LEGGEN* (2010), that takes the complex structure of the lower level of the Stroom exhibition space as a starting point. Her installation of iron wire tubes repeats the rhythm of the wooden beams in the ceiling and the ways in which these beams are used to hide wiring, tube lights, sound equipment and beamers. The technology that is concealed between the wooden beams is given, in a metaphorical sense, a prominent place by Lieffering. In addition, two photographs of works that only exist as images (because they were realized in situ) are shown: *K-708-10* (2002 – 2003) and *LOCIE IMAGINES II* (1995).

If you visit a place, this place always has an effect on your idea, your notes or the drawings that you make on the spot. Leontine Lieffering pushes this notion to the forefront in her work. The place where she makes her work is manifest in the work itself and the two overlap as much as possible. Before she begins working on her installations, she does research into the building, its functions and if necessary, its history.

Erik Lindner on the work of Leontine Lieffering.
The full text appears in the Premium publication,
February 2011.



**Leontine Lieffering, IN ZICHT LEGGEN (2010).
Images courtesy of the artist.**

ANDREW LORD

Andrew Lord (1950) is a British born artist who lives and works in New York and the Netherlands. Since the seventies, Lord is known for his characteristic and unconventional use of materials: clay, plaster, beeswax, bronze, ceramics are used to express physical experiences. The work of Lord was shown in the late seventies and early eighties at the legendary Art & Project Gallery in Amsterdam.

Lord approaches memory as an actual basis for creating his work. He produced, for example, a series of works titled WHITWORTH, in which childhood memories are captured in ceramics. The monuments, landscapes and people from his childhood are present in this series. One of the works shows the swallow tattoos of his uncle, as he remembers them.

In *Speak, Memory* the works TWO MODELLED SKULLS AND BASE, THE BOWERY, AUGUST, 7 PM., from 2007 and SMALL VALLEY (DOCTOR'S WOOD), WHITWORTH (II) from 2008-2009 are shown. The ceramic shows traces of the hands of the artist. He seems to have been working quickly, before the memories subsided further or eluded him completely.

“Well, the impact of place and an attachment to places lost has been enormous, particularly places that have become unreachable. And somehow I think lost places replaced an idea of lost time, or used time. The Whitworth show at Gladstone was an attempt to reclaim places that seemed lost and using these places as subject matter was a successful way to retrieve them.”

Andrew Lord in conversation with James Rondeau in ANDREW LORD (Milton Keynes Gallery & Santa Monica Museum of Art).



Andrew Lord, *SMALL VALLEY (DOCTOR'S WOOD)*,
WHITWORTH (II) (2008-2009). Image courtesy of
the artist and Gladstone Gallery, NY.

SARA RAJAEI

Sara Rajaei (1976) was born in Iran and lives and works in The Hague. Her films are based on stories from her own life or things that she (coincidentally) overheard. She retells these stories and personal histories never literally; there's always a dream-like element in the work that confuses the viewer and allows for multiple interpretations of the story.

Time, and how time changes stories and memories, is visualized by Rajaei. She does this, for example, by putting different ages of the same character in one and the same room. Sometimes her videos are vertiginous because voices, figures, different sides to the same story, spin around each other. The colours and images in the works are often warm and homey, but this cosiness is deceptive, the stories told are mostly about loss and bereavement.

Speak, Memory presents two of her videos. In *SHAHZAD* (2009), we see the famous Iranian poet Shahrzad who, unable by her own doing to leave her house, lives in the past and her memories. In *A LEAP YEAR THAT STARTED ON A FRIDAY* (2010) Rajaei retells her memories of an attack she witnessed as a young child. Her memory of the event is abstracted in text-based images and a few visual images that try to grasp her haunting nightmares after the attack.

The border between real and unreal, how imagination combines with reality and moments of Déjà vu and memoirs make my films. I have a sort of obsession with the past and Shahrzad lives in a nostalgic world. Her only connection to the everyday life and to future is her poetry.

Sara Rajaei on SHAHRZAD in Tubelight, July 2008.



Sara Rajaei, screenshot A LEAP YEAR THAT STARTED ON A FRIDAY (2010). Image courtesy of the artist.

VITTORIO ROERADE

The paintings, and recently also bronze sculptures, by The Hague artist Vittorio Roerade (1962) depict an inner world that evokes fables, old stories, a universe where the boundaries between humans and animals, dreams, fiction and reality are not (yet) so clearly delineated. His works are often fairytale-like constructions in which humans and animals merge. Roerade returns, sometimes literally, sometimes figuratively, in his paintings and bronze sculptures to a more basic memory structure that is often ascribed to children.

In *Speak, Memory* a recently realized one and a half meter high bronze sculpture, TOTEM (TREE OF DELIGHTS) (2010) is shown alongside the smaller bronze sculpture EGGMAN (2010). In addition, several paintings by Roerade will be shown. MASK (2008), for example, is part of a series of images by Roerade of largely abstracted and reconfigured faces that turn into distorted portraits. The painting MY FATHER'S HOUSE (2010) is an attempt by the artist to find a language to talk about the physical deterioration of his father. The house functions here as a metaphor for men and for the state of our body. The house also plays an important role in the work of many other artists in this exhibition as a place where memories are rooted, are hiding or where they are stored.

Postcards from the parallel worlds of Vittorio Roerade – that would be the best way to describe his work. Oil, epoxy, doll eyes, human hair, wool threads, glitter powder, Roerade uses any material in creating his world. (...) "It are the fleeting moments that you capture," says Roerade.

Dirk Limburg on the work of Vittorio Roerade.
The full text appears in the Premium publication,
February 2011.



Vittorio Roerade, MASK (2008). Image courtesy of the artist and Cornelia Weijnsfeld.

RACHEL WHITEREAD

Rachel Whiteread (1963) is a British artist and the first woman to win the Turner Prize, in 1993. She is best known for her sculptures. *GHOST* (1990) and *HOUSE* (1993) are two of her most famous works. The first is the cast of the inside of a room in a Victorian house, the second a concrete cast of a complete house in London's East End neighbourhood. After much controversy and protest, *HOUSE* was destroyed. Whiteread is fascinated by the traces of history, the layers of history, and loves playing with them.* She focuses primarily on architectural structures and common objects; making in her work tangible what no longer exists.

In *Speak, Memory* two small sculptures will be shown: *UNTITLED (ON, OFF)* from 2001 and *UNTITLED (DOORKNOB II)* from 1993/2003. These common objects or tools that are found in every home and that you normally pay little attention to and simply expect to work, are immortalized in metal. Thereby they become monuments to small, untold stories and unwritten histories. Or in the words of writer AM Homes: "She shows us the unseen, the inside out, the parts that go unrecognised."*

* Rachel Whiteread in an interview with Bice Curiger in Tate Etc, autumn 2010.

* AM Homes on Rachel Whiteread in RACHEL WHITEREAD: TRANSIENT SPACES (Guggenheim Museum).

Whiteread derives her power from her perception of this transitory place, the temporal entrapment of the unpeopled room. She understands how the exclusion of mundane light converts the room into a recording instrument, a machine for remembering, as well as the memory itself.

Iain Sinclair on the work of Rachel Whiteread in HOUSE (Phaidon).*

* Iain Sinclair gives a Knight's Move lecture at Stroom on January the 25th, 2011.



Rachel Whiteread, UNTITLED (DOORKNOB II) (1993/2003). Image courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine Gallery, NY.

SIDE PROGRAM

FILM SCREENINGS **BB AND MESSAGE THE HISTORY** BY CAMERON JAMIE

There will be free screenings of the movies **BB** and **MESSAGE THE HISTORY** by Cameron Jamie at Filmhuis Den Haag (Spui 191). The exact dates will be communicated through our website (www.stroom.nl).

EVERY SUNDAY FREE GUIDED TOURS

Every Sunday at 3 PM there are free guided tours through the exhibition by the team of Stroom and three external guides. For this exhibition the external guides are:

16 JANUARY 2011 – LYNNE VAN RHIJN

Lynne van Rhijn works as assistant curator contemporary art at the RKD, the Netherlands Institute for Art History, and is a freelance art critic (she recently won the Prijs voor de Jonge Kunstcritiek – category reviews).

30 JANUARY 2011 – LORENZO DE RITA

Lorenzo de Rita from The Soan Institute will give a tour in English. De Rita wrote about the work **TRAIL HOUSE** by Anne Holtrop in the eponymous publication.

6 FEBRUARY 2011 – MAGDALENA PILKO

Magdalena Pilko studied at the The Hague Academy and shows her work regularly in the Netherlands and abroad. In her photographs and videos Pilko tries to capture ephemeral, fleeting moments.

STUDIO VISITS

During the exhibition, there will be a studio visit and talk either at Stroom or in the workspaces of the three artists who received the Premium grant – Lieffering, Rajaei en Roerade. The exact dates will be communicated through our website (www.stroom.nl).

14 JANUARY 2011 – SESSION WITH REBECCA GORDON-NESBITT

The British curator and critic Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt, who in 1998 together with Maria Lind and Hans Ulrich Obrist started salon3 in London and recently published about the social dimension of artist-run spaces, shall guide a discussion on the local art climate and its international context. How can we describe local art climates? What factors shape it and can policy influence this? And what is the relationship between the local and the international? The discussion will take place in the library of Stroom and has a limited amount of seats available.

25 JANUARY 2011 – KNIGHT'S MOVE LECTURE BY IAIN SINCLAIR

The British writer and filmmaker Iain Sinclair will give a Knight's Move lecture on the city and memory. The work of Sinclair is strongly related to London and psychogeography.

Psychogeography is used to denote the effect that the geographical surroundings have on our emotions and behaviour. It was introduced in the fifties by Guy Debord and is sometimes also referred to as the science of wandering and roaming.

The lecture takes place at 8PM. Entrance is free; reservations recommended (www.stroom.nl).

20 FEBRUARY 2011 – FINISSAGE & BOOK LAUNCH

The exhibition will end festively with a guided tour at 3PM by Arno van Roosmalen (director Stroom Den Haag) followed by the launch of the three Premium book publications on Lieffering, Rajaei and Roerade.

It is actually quite amazing that forgetting gets so little respect while we hold remembering in such high esteem. We need to forget in order to live, otherwise we would go crazy, but we always apologise for forgetting, never for remembering.

Marjoleine de Vos in NRC Handelsblad,
November the 12th, 2010.

Stroom
Den Haag