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Exit Biennial II: TRAFFIC
October 1 – December 23, 2005
Opening Reception Saturday October 1, 7-10pm

(New York, NY September, 2005) Exit Art, the nonprofit cultural center whose programs explore the diversity of cultures and voices in contemporary art, is pleased to present **Exit Biennial II: Traffic**. *Traffic* is the second of five biennials planned over ten years. The 51 multidisciplinary artworks in this exhibition look at the varied ways in which contemporary culture responds to different ideas of traffic.

All of the biennials focus on issues relevant to life in the metropolis and extend Exit Art's commitment to showcasing the work of young and emerging artists. Inspiration for Exit Art's first biennial, **Exit Biennial: The Reconstruction** 2003, was borne out of our recent move from SoHo to Hell's Kitchen and also the rebuilding of lower Manhattan after the September 11th attacks. This tremendously successful exhibition inaugurated Exit Art's new location and helped shape the programming and mission of the new space.

In response to Webster dictionary's five definitions for "traffic", the artworks in this exhibition explore how traffic is defining our constantly changing world; the sprawl of urban centers, borders being redefined, global import and export of goods, people moving from one place to another, the trafficking of drugs, people and children, the flow of information over the internet etc. Everything is in flux and traffic is the system in which it all moves. As put by Papo Colo, exhibition curator and co-founder of Exit Art, "Our birth is the traffic of genes, our sexes the route. One sperm among millions is caught. And there, we are a product of trafficking with love."

VISUAL ART EXHIBITION

Some highlights from the exhibition include **Christoph Gielen's** incredible series of photos, *Conversions*, portraying some of the world's densest highway systems as seen from a helicopter. Coincidentally, each of these roadways is in California and represents a central part of American culture, the road and its ensuing traffic. The complexity of the highway systems pictured further reinforces our understanding of traffic, why it is caused, and its results.

Canadian artist, **Michel de Broin** has taken an 80s era American luxury car, emptied its entire contents except for the seats and shell, and replaced the mechanized systems with a new

structure consisting of bicycle pedals and chain pulleys. His *Shared Propulsion Car* was created to allow passengers to self propel the vehicle with the goal of blocking traffic.

In **Tom Hébert's** series of paintings, *New York City Art Dealers*, the "power structure" of the art world is depicted in the portraits of prominent figures in moving, exhibiting, and selling art. These individuals are in a position to make decisions that impact the lives and careers of artists. Included in *Traffic* are portraits of Ivan Karp, Ronald Feldman, Magdalena Sawonn, Becky Smith, Bronwyn Keenan, Jessica Murray, Joe Amrhein, Paula Cooper, Gaines Peyton, and Stefan Stux.

Onge S. Warner creates a complicated web through the precise cutting out of interstate highways from maps of the United States. The roadway arteries form a delicate netting portraying the intricate traffic systems across the US today. Warner says, "the interstate highway system has set a national standard which allows people to travel and settle in distant places...it has been integral in the evolution of urbanism in our country."

Trains represent a safe image of industrial expansion in early, optimistic America. Paradoxically, they are also a symbol of the contemporary corporation that creates and markets anything and everything, from nuclear waste to genetically modified food and transports these goods from Point A to Point B. But in reality, trains are trafficking homogenous goods across lands- **David Packer's** ceramic trains demonstrate that we don't truly know what is being carried in the trains.

In the 1840's, the term "blackbirding" was used to describe a sporting practice in which white settlers would go hunting to kill native Aborigines in the Australian bush. By 1870, the term was commonly applied to the African slave trade. In **Angela Hennessy's** wall installation *Blackbirding 1440 – 1870 (human cargo)* she creates a map of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade out of unraveled velvet.

According to State Farm Insurance (2001), the most dangerous intersection in America is located in Pembroke Pines, Florida. Although **Zoë Sheehan Saldaña's** tapestry of the intersection appears typically American, with asphalt, cars, strip malls, and a blue sky- generally tranquil- an enormous amount of automobile accidents occur at this spot every year.

VIDEO PROGRAM

Seventeen videos will be shown simultaneously throughout the installation of *Traffic*. Some highlights include **Lisa DiLillo's** *This Call May be Monitored*, a video that records interactions that occur between nature and man's construct of nature, as a group of pigeons gather around a lost cell phone in an urban park. As they peck at the keyboard, they inadvertently dial a company that employs an Automatic Voice Recognition System and get lost in the circular voice mail system.

With the help of the people of Montello, Nevada, **eteam** created an artificial traffic jam in order to combat a unique traffic situation. When faced with the problem of traffic on a dirt road traversing their newly purchased land, they eliminated the problem before it could start by using reverse-psychology and creating an artificial traffic jam. Their video documents this performance.

Jeremy Quinn's three single channel videos, document California traffic on three separate trips. In *Traveling to Infinity*, the viewer glides along a picturesque California highway behind a tanker truck with a highly polished, mirrored surface that reflects the highway behind the traveler, so that the viewer is caught in a repeating moment of double vision. *Repetition 01* captures everyday moments of the sublime, from the blinking, seemingly reversible movement of a highway guardrail, to the visual flipping of passing vineyards. *Light Change* applies elliptical editing to a streetlight hanging in front of a view of Century City.

Linda Wysong's video *Alternate Arterials* focuses on the traffic that takes place under the streets, in the vast system of underground pipes. Based on the idea of these pipes as an arterial system that mimics the pathways within our own bodies, the video traffics the viewer inside the arteries that lie beneath our cities.

ARTISTS

jonathan allen

Justin Beal

Gail Biederman

Johannes Buss

Alfredo Conde

Matthew Cusick

Michel de Broin

Lisa DiLillo

Uri Dotan

Hasan M. Elahi

eteam

Eddie Figueroa / Rafael Rivera / Aaron

Salabarrías

Chantel Foretich

Adam Frelin

Graciela Fuentes

Christoph Gielen

Eduardo Gil

Shuli Hallak

Tom Hébert

Angela Hennessy

Todd Jokl

Marie-Christine Katz

Michael Lalicki

Matthew Lusk

Mitchell Marco

Bryan Mesenbourg

David Packer

Debra Pearlman

Plamen Petkov

PIPS (Providence Initiative for
Psychogeographic Studies)

Preemptive Media

Jeremy J. Quinn

Nicholas Rodrigues

Augustine Romero

Shane Ruth

Marie Sauvaitre

Romy Scheroder
Simon Schiessl/Saoirse Higgins
Zoë Sheehan Saldaña
Paul Slocum
DoEAT
János Sugár
Stefanie Trojan

Jovan Villalba
Onge S. Warner
Seth Weiner
Letha Wilson
Bradley Wood
Mike Wsol
Linda Wysong

ABOUT EXIT ART

Exit Art has charted the new in art and contemporary culture since its founding by directors Jeanette Ingberman and Papo Colo in 1982. Over the course of 20 years, Exit Art has acquired a substantial reputation for curatorial innovation, depth of programming in diverse media, and especially for bringing to public attention the work of important unknown artists. Part of its mission is to present the work of under-recognized living artists in innovative ways that expose the diverse, multi-disciplinary nature of contemporary culture. Its exhibitions, performances and programs challenge traditional notions of what art is and explore the rich amalgam of voices and cultures that continually shape America. As such, it has grown to become one of the most admired, innovative spaces for supporting artists and providing the public with a visionary look on what's to come. Exit Art now stands as an archive of cultural thought and expression routinely mined by artists, students, curators, and scholars. It is no small wonder that Exit Art's programs have attracted a million visitors from across the country and around the world.

FUNDING

General support for Exit Art's exhibition program provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Starry Night Fund at The Tides Foundation, Greenwall Foundation, Jerome Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts, Brown Foundation, The Carnegie Corporation of New York, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Exit Art's Board of Trustees and our members.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exit Art is located at 475 Tenth Avenue at 36th Street. **Traffic** will be open each Tuesday through Thursday, 10 am – 6 pm; Friday, 10 am – 8 pm; Saturday, noon – 8 pm Closed Sunday and Monday. There is a suggested donation of \$5. For more information, the public may call 212-966-7745 or visit www.exitart.org.

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CURATOR'S STATEMENT

TRAFFIC

Our birth is the traffic of genes, our sexes the route.
One sperm among millions is caught.
And there we are, a product of trafficking in love.

Traffic is our notion of velocity and mutation.
Interchanging gods, goods, and people.
In traffic danger is always present.
Its movement is the fuel.
Slow or fast, giving us protection against confusion.
Its order is the chaos, it exists in any circumstance.
Traffic is the repetition of an action, the constant change of space, and the dynamics of speed.

Traffic is the illegal definition of trade: people, drugs, money, information. But it is also a way to translate, transmit, trance, transmutate, transpast, and transfer ideas of art into a 3d space in a manual or electronic method.

Traffic is an alpha word in which meanings flow, like art?
When we traffic in imagination, we adapt ugliness into beauty, money into refinement. Our sense of utility, transplants any predilection of taste. Traffic is the medium of building answers and imagining questions. The reality of the changing hands, the 3 card Monty.

Exit Art 's TRAFFIC is our second Biennial. The first was RECONSTRUCTION in 2003. Our biennial exhibitions deal with the phenomena of "mega cities." Traffic is an important issue for a metropolis and here at Exit Art... the subject matters.

In the "conceptplus" system the artist submits---or we, the curators, see or know of an artwork related to the topic of the exhibition. We choose artists with individual ideas of the theme, and construct a group exhibition. Having the topic of the exhibition before hand artists who are interested in the issue can also adapt their work to engage with the theme, creating a more solid work of art. The curators then place their work in strategic positions so it has a dialogue and a language, a territory that the public walks and reads. In the installation, there are no rooms or walls to divide the work. The individual pieces work together as a collective story. An essential show like this one--on the art of traffic--deserves meditation, observation, and analysis.

Exit Art Biennials deal with cultural necessity. The artists' interpretation is not about a commercial opportunity. We don't traffic in laundering money, house decoration, secure investments, or cultural tourism. This is done and we don't disagree, it is good for the artist. Nowadays there are biennials, triennials, "big" art events everywhere. These events give us

cultural entertainment and some artists enter the art business. The art world is full of individual pretensions and tribe proud. It makes sense. Art is a poetic commentary of the self and where the artist comes from. This is not good or bad, it is the fact of the complex ornamental-intellectual commerce of who is who in the ruling class of the art world. We take our hat off for that....touché.

But we are a non-profit experimental arts cultural center, (small but effective, a kind of first, second, third, and fourth world simultaneously]. We deal with the pragmatism of the possible, the invention of presentation, the discovery of new talent and innovative ideas of culture that are affecting our lives. We are more concerned in the analysis of specific world issues: traffic, water, habitat, fuel, wars, race, country relations, climate, beauty or ugliness and the aesthetics of necessity. All of this is achievable because we have the public treasure of benefactors, foundations, individuals and our committed, extraordinary board of directors.

A focused artist is an optimum performer. The artist's mind is a labyrinth of ideas mirroring their surroundings. Their local preoccupations have become a global angst. Visual artists are the actors of sight; they belong to the eye of the mind. They are experiencing the traffic that rules their lives, and we plant their work into our garden of thoughts for the public's appreciation.

If we are always entering someplace, we are always trafficking to an exit. Traffic subsequently is the distance between in and out.

Which means that your existence is a moment, multiplied with other moments.

Traffic then is your time and space in life.

Because we are also in traffic from one life to another,

broadcasting and decoding our biography to an illustrated story... our art.

We are reaching for immortality in route to the unknown,

hoping traffic will keep growing until the chaos and order that it produces, keeps us on our toes for the rest of this life.

Papo Colo, Artist / Cultural producer
NYC-Vieques, 2005