

GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY



OCTOPUS 12: FIRST AMONGST EQUALS (PART I)

ARTISTS: REBECCA BAUMANN, LEN LYE, CHRISTIAN MARCLAY, ELIZABETH MCALPINE, PAUL PFEIFFLER
CURATOR LEIGH ROBB

EXHIBITION DATES: 13 JULY - 18 AUGUST 2012

Gertrude Contemporary presents the twelfth exhibition in our annual *Octopus* series. *Octopus* is a unique program that offers leading curators from across Australia the opportunity to extend their professional practice, developing exhibitions that enhance curatorial and creative debate within Australia and internationally. This year *Octopus* is curated by Leigh Robb, Curator of Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts. Robb's exhibition *Octopus 12: First Amongst Equals* is the first part in a two part series of exhibitions.

First Amongst Equals (Part I & Part II) are a pair of connected shows, a double presentation at both Gertrude Contemporary in Melbourne (14 July - 18 August) and Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA) in Perth (3 November - 30 December) involving various strategies of repetition and re-enactment of an exhibition and artists' works across two spaces and cities. Repetition and doubling are strategies central to the practices of Len Lye, Elizabeth McAlpine, Rebecca Baumann, Paul Pfeiffer and Christian Marclay. The artists are connected through their interest in film, kinetics, colour, sound and time.

For *Octopus 12: First Amongst Equals* also looks at the structure and politics of group exhibitions and the solo show, bringing into play six works by Elizabeth McAlpine and creating pairings between these pieces and works spanning from 1935 to 2012 and inviting new sets of relationships, notes and asides, to be studied and renegotiated. Presenting the work of a British artist for the first time in Australia, with influential international and emerging Australian artists, the exhibition features works by McAlpine, including a double

Super 8 projection installation, a plaster-cast gramophone, pinhole camera photographs and sculptures, found postcards, and *Square Describing a Circle (Leaves)*, a site specific work of 180 parts for Gertrude Contemporary's front window gallery. Teamed with film and print works by Lye, Pfeiffer, Marclay and a painted colour environment for Gertrude Contemporary by Rebecca Baumann.

Drawing on literary influences such as Tom McCarthy's *The Remainder*, Adolfo Bioy Casares' *The Invention of Morel* and Jorge Luis Borges' *The Map of Exactitude*, the exhibition explicitly functions as a platform for the study of the experience of the formal, conceptual and spatial relationships between artworks within and across environments. *First Amongst Equals* looks at the shifts of meaning that might occur through doing something again, but differently.

Image credit: Elizabeth McAlpine, *Pan (in 2 parts)* (detail), 2009, Steel, two Super 8mm projectors, Super 8mm. Courtesy of the Artist and Laura Bartlett Gallery, London.

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition will be available in August.