

Cardinal Points

a veces ir atras
ir adelante.

neufrajo
/ migración

) navigating away while looking for
finding the way, sometimes
confusing, frustrating, chaotic
+ success

2 hemispheres
2 bodies active-passive



PUNTOS CARDINALES

JOSÉ SEOANE & SIGI TORINUS

paradise
find sth
El Dorado

From San Francisco, November 30, 2003

On the phone from San Francisco, on the same day that news broke of American troops mowing down more Iraqis (this time in Samarra, where the U.S. was delivering a massive cash shipment to its employees and colonial subordinates), Sigi Torinus was outlining for me the core concerns of her art. She spoke of the “gypsy” spirit in her video and installation work; of her international venues and her reluctance to reassemble an installation once it was dismantled, its current of imagery cut off, its audio silent, its images dissipated, reassimilated to their oceanic origins in the internet and elsewhere, and the supports, props, and projectors packed away or discarded. Her voice had a happy jump in it. “I like the idea that the moment you pull the power it’s gone; it’s so present-time.” I was worried what to make of it all. I hadn’t yet seen a single real-time real-space projection, much less an installation, unless viewing a website photo or scanning through the electronic work-in-progress imagery that she was e-mailing me now constitutes, after the moment of conceptualism, a valid ontological postscript to the work of art (heavy phrase, but here merely functional) as an extended object. I was set to write about *Puntos Cardinales*, the exhibition she was preparing with the Cuban-born painter José Seoane. But I had little to go on and it made me uneasy to have to hunch and synthesize an imaginary exhibit from viewing a few separate parts: Seoane’s handmade oars, a couple of his well-advanced but unfinished canvases in acrylic, and digital stills from *Browsing Beauty*, an internet-driven installation that Torinus and Andrea Sunder-Plassmann, a Berlin artist, assembled in Sydney in 1997, and then toured over a two-year period through galleries in San Francisco, Moscow, and finally Berlin. Seoane’s objects and paintings I could smell, touch, and stand with, feeling their empirical measures. Torinus was different. Her elementary matter was situated in video and cyberspace, and she offered, according to these media, a discarnate sense of physicality. Prior to the phone call, we had already huddled around her laptop in a crowded office (crowded, partly because it doubled as Seoane’s painting studio) at the University of Windsor’s School of



Visual Arts where she is a professor of Integrated Media while Seoane teaches painting and drawing. We linked through various window-worlds, and though Torinus commented and lingered over salient elements as we went along, it was a typical internet experience, recreational and totally transitive. I was registering dispersals and temporary fascinations rather than integrated impressions. Torinus showed me a clip of boxing kangaroos, another in which a man massages a plump cock (rooster), an amorphous blizzard of washing water, and an installation that had three chairs with video insets in the seats. This last work was *Nadir*, which has been partially reconstituted for *Puntos Cardinales*. But I remember being immediately taken with the mysterious planetary volumes of *Browsing Beauty*. Within the miniaturized, highly-resolved format of the flipback screen, the installation appeared to be set in the darkened corner of a galactic laboratory, a place where the old Euclidian space and the universe of geometrical solids were being altered by the experimental modalities of postmodern technology. The question of beauty, which had arisen from that old world, one that had persisted from at least Plato all the way to the lapsing diaphanous daydreams of the Symbolists until their aesthetics were theatrically rent apart by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (lapsed symbolist himself, and not uninfected by its legacy, even as a self-fashioned modern man of steel and wheels, a *Futurista!*) and decomposed by other avant-gardists in pre-War Europe — yes, this question of beauty was being submitted to a fresh interrogation, apparently non-dogmatic, lateral, and global. The installation presented large, spherical balloons onto which an assortment of images and line diagrams were flashed from variously angled video and slide projectors. As far as I could tell from my peering, the surrounding space was darkened and of indeterminate dimensions, and this lent the whole ensemble a suggestive, hypnotic quality.

Above Bök

The first time I saw Sigi Torinus was on Friday, March 14, 2003 at the University of Windsor's Lebel Gallery. She was into a four-hour performance, seated motionlessly, under glowed-down potlights (the Gallery fluorescents had been turned off), on a chair suspended at ceiling level. Beneath her the room was awash with a large audience listening to Christian Bök spurt forth his sonic strings of linguistic drivel. His reading couldn't have been more opposite to her



performance. He almost literally belched and spouted his poetry. Calibrated consonant chains came in quick pulsations. Bök lunged outward from a fixed position, but his expulsions also seemed to trigger a reverse dynamic, as if he might imminently and systolically cave back in on himself. He was spectacular. His face contorted and his knees bent as he expelled hisses and beeps, wild yowls and gruelling, throaty gratings. This was countdown time. The U.S. was about to launch its war of colonial emancipation against Saddam Hussein's Iraq, and Bök's riveting notch-up of the Marinetti-Ball aesthetic was like a scene of welcome reversion. It spat back conscience and anarchy. Bök wound down the night with a sardonic salute to George Bush and his crusade of homicidal righteousness, launched on behalf of Mesopotamian 'democracy.' Torinus, meanwhile, had fallen out of time. Behind her, through the gallery windows, heavy transport trucks were lining up in the night waiting to mount the Ambassador bridge and enter America. Those leaving the bridge were streaming in well-spaced intervals. Torinus appeared to me to be strangely asleep, as oddly alien and peripherally insistent in her stillness as a Duane Hanson dummy made of fibreglass and wearing Wal-Mart fashions. I later learned that her purpose was to establish a removed



psychic space where she could tune out the world's economic momentum and war fever. She was keeping her back turned to the traffic and the now-customary terrorist scares cruising through the media. Her concentration was extraordinary. She transcended the bustle below her and the rubbish being peddled about potential threats to the bridge. Two hardwood, schoolhouse chairs had been placed beneath her, inset with small monitors in the centre of each seat. From these, her glazed attention could, if she chose, take a downward prospect of her own feet washed by the surf of Black Sand Beach near San Francisco; as well as an opposite perspective of the tops of nearby eucalyptus trees put into a dizzying, circular motion by the rotations of the video camera.

Tropical Socialism

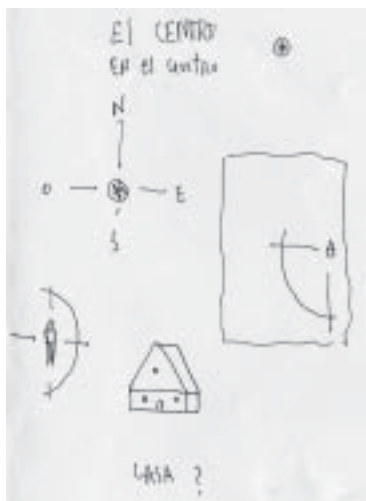
"I'm intrigued by Bloch's thoughts on utopia. The utopian function of art." "Ernst Bloch?" I ask. The mystically-illuminated apostate of the Frankfurt School, he who held hopeful views of Stalin and the Soviet Union? Yes, the same. I know that she's referring to quite another side of Bloch, but it was those views, and the hermetic drift of his utopian thinking, that compelled

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer to stand toward him as the devil stands toward a metaphysically-deluded angel in one of the Memorable Fancies in William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "Opposition is true friendship."¹ Torinus quotes for me the first epigraph in Bloch's essay "The Representation of Wish-Landscapes in Painting, Opera, and Poetry."² It's a passage from Franz Marc: "Painting is surfacing in a different place." This is to compare her new-media explorations with the hot, florid, tropical light of Seoane's acrylics in *Puntos Cardinales*. "I like video because it's liquid light. I like working with the glow. You can talk to José about painting. Bloch talks about the special light in Rembrandt. Rembrandt's light doesn't exist in the natural world." Torinus is quoting from memory. After her return to Windsor, she will hand me the essay, where Bloch declares, "Rembrandt's paradoxical light does not occur anywhere in the entire world, but it also does not emanate, despite its continuous reflections, from some old metaphysics of celestial light."³ So I do talk to Seoane about painting and go on to take a look at his paints. The jars are pasted with standard, flatly functional names. But exposure to the paintings, even in their earliest states of completion, demands new names and images for the sensations. Seoane's light is not at all Rembrandt's, but it is comparable to Marc's, although he differs from him in medium by favouring acrylic for the paintings in *Puntos Cardinales*. In one fiery abstract, Seoane centres the composition on a frontally-presented human torso pulled equally in two directions. It's possible that the image could, at first glance, be mistaken for a hare or dog carcass, or a transposed apparition meant to resemble a goat's skull. The figure floats up from a broad furnace of reds and yellows. Something is being pulled apart, or held in place for sacrifice. Divisions and tensions are about to be burned away or purified, which explains the roar and warmth of this and other canvases. Of the ten untitled paintings in this exhibit, this is the first one that viewers see as they enter the gallery. Like the others, but rather more emphatically, it conjures a sense of something remote and half-remembered. The headless, and effectively armless, torso is perhaps in the process of being constellated. Where the head should be is a widely-winged v-shaped object whose 'arms' trail off into a line of dots that might be stars. I think of the abstract machine-head of Umberto Boccioni's heroic, striding sculpture from 1913, *Unique Forms of*



Virgen de la Caridad, patron saint of Cuba

Continuity in Space. All ten canvasses combine images of manufactured machine parts and carpenter's tools with organic elements. We see numerous propellers, plumb-bobs, and plumb-lines, stencils of house designs and sections of diagrams, some of which directly borrow from the flightmaps that Torinus has projected onto another wall of the gallery. Seoane is clearly establishing metamorphic linkages between man's body and man-made objects. This combination seems to me to belong to a pre-electronic world, to a world fixed in a relatively primitive state of modern industrial development, perhaps Cuba as it was or still is. At the same time, Seoane envelops everything within a blaze of superthermal reds and yellows that encourages a mythic reading (almost as if these canvasses are meant to parallel visually what Blake evokes verbally and allegorically in his poem "The Tyger"). Another torso appears in another one of the paintings. This one is seen sideways and appears to have a tensile, whip-like monkey tail curling out from its buttocks. This, however, is only a cadmium red ghost-tail that extends beyond a loosely brushed shadow area that cloaks the rear, upper half of the torso. Both the torso and its shadow are situated within the linear outlines of a house, and both float over a grid pattern. The larger context for all the paintings is "tropical socialism," a trope for Cuba, with Castro's revolutionary experiment being pulled in two



directions. Immanent to this context are the rituals of Santeria, with the splayed, frontal torso signifying a two-sidedness in the nation's cultural life. At some level, Cuban identity can be said to divide between sacrifices and gestures toward the socialist revolution and the old, grey-bearded father Fidel, and the obloquies performed at real, home altars that are devoted to ancestors and saints.

Rembrandt's colours "made of night, incense, myrrh, and gold,"⁴ as Bloch describes them, are the standards of a different Christianity, predating the mixed rituals of Afro-Cuban Catholicism. The people's Cuba — palm crowns, roosters, dirt floors, churning meaty sunsets and violet wonders of twilight, creaky jetties, shouts and processions, the chingle of a ramshackle bicycle, the cantankerous burbles of old American cars, etc — has been cooked up into abstract sweeps and patches of galvanized reds and russets inflamed with yellow. The light in Seoane's paintings is like incandescent irradiation gorging out from the insides of a blood-orange. I caught it flaring one cold

night in December 2003 as I drove away from the Lebel Building and looked over in the direction of Torinus's office. Waiting to join the truck stream heading south on Huron Church road, I glanced through her window and saw how the colours pulsed and swam in contrast to the outer darkness.

Rembrandt's Baghdad

Situating Rembrandt's "paradoxical light" somewhere between, or outside, the opposing orders of natural and celestial (physical and metaphysical) luminosity, Bloch identifies it as— in his italics — "the *perspective light of hope*."⁵ The paradox for Bloch is that Rembrandt's light emerges from "nowhere"⁶ as he says and yet exists within his painted worlds as a representation of emotional infinitude and the space of personal "closeness and solitude."⁷ Bloch could not have foreseen where his reasoning might lead once the real world as well as its painted other were no longer solely illuminated by the double options of organic, diurnal light, and its heavenly progenitor. "The Representation of Wish-Landscapes in Painting, Opera, and Poetry" was apparently written between 1938 and 1947, revised in 1953, and finally published in volume II of *The Principle of Hope* in the mid-50s. This timeline coincides with a cataclysmic period in European and world history. Within a Eurocentric perspective that includes the near East, one reflects tragically on the major milestones of 20th-century history, the three well-known historical landmarks by which the century has been mapped and in fact monumentalized: "The Great War," "The Holocaust," and the "*nakba*" of 1948. These events continue to emanate and impose meaning, and the last, significantly, is not yet finished history. But the question of causal linkage and collective, psychological carry-over from one of these events (actually, not so much 'events' as a fluid, evolving mass of actions well beyond the reach of a complete inventory and yet marked off for our epistemic convenience by calendar dates) to the other(s), always leads me into a state of moral despair. Picking out survivors, victors, victims, victimizers, onlookers, protestors, resisters, collaborators, intellectual quietists, escapist bourgeois authors and artists, national leaders, helicopter pilots, bombmakers, etc. etc., from the successive generations that have lived through these events, I would want to ask, "where in your account of what you did or witnessed or heard about or merely imagined was happening — where in this will you admit your own drift toward revisionism and selective amnesia of the Other's experience?" It is a question that looks up against the sharp incline of monumental, collective memory; a question that wants to erode the public pieties of such a memory and the present-day political interests that it serves. As the Balkan wars of the first half of the 1990s fade back in time, I've found that I need to put myself in the firing-line of this very question. As for

Bloch, where and how are his answers? His essay, as I've noted, was written and published before the end of the 1950s, before Adolf Eichmann is kidnapped and sent to Jerusalem for his government's massive, almost unbelievable crimes against Europe's Jews (but perhaps no more incredible in scope and abysmal sublimity than a whole North American continent cleansed of its indigenous population, vast acres of Slavs killed and enslaved by Stalin, or millions upon millions of black and brown peoples annihilated in the providential progress of Western colonialism), and during the consolidation of the Zionist dream for Judea and Samaria (the old new names for Palestine), but nowhere in the volume that I'm reading does he take up the strange light of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Instead, he turns back to the old paradoxical light of Rembrandt as one of the few remaining ciphers for the dawning of a hopeful future. And indeed, why should Bloch concern himself with the new light of the atomic age? Perhaps he concluded that the meaning of this new, historical light had not yet found a home in art, or should not find a home. With Rembrandt's world long since booked away as history, painting and its potential for the release of special light, the perspectival luminosity of hope, had to surface in a different place, as Marc said, though Bloch didn't go on to speculate where that new place should be. Nevertheless, I suspect that since the arrival of the light of nuclear holocaust and the emergence of our new, postmodern era of electric and electronic luminosity, the meaning of Rembrandt's light (as articulated by Bloch) has been reformulated under decisively altered historical conditions. While Rembrandt's special light is completely meaningless and unavailable to us in our culture, its promise of "hope" has nevertheless been transferred into the penumbral, systematic glow, floating like a superpulverized powder, of certain types of postmodern art that temporarily paint with rarefied, iodized gases (fluorescent light) or iodized beams that are magnetically diverted (television light). Bloch's belated resurrection of Rembrandt's light in a text whose composition and publication spanned the 1930s to the '50s, may actually help explain the mysterious attraction of specific types of artificial light today. It helps us consider how the glow thrown off by certain monitors, projectors, and coloured neons, as in *Browsing Beauty* and now in *Puntos Cardinales*, can have the semblance of a secret transferred from painting. (I could mention here the breathtaking luminosities and environments of James Turrell.) But how true is this? In what does the transfer consist? Rembrandt, or his assistants, was responsible in some palpable way for making his paints, while the light of new media arts is not at all the light of pigments and bases. True enough, but this specific type of materiality is not what Bloch is discussing. Moreover, painting, to paraphrase the tragic Franz Marc, mourner of animal apocalypses, lives on well past Rembrandt and keeps resurfacing in different places and in altered forms.

Upon this, however, a new paradox is generated, as the work of Torinus demonstrates; for while the light in her work may call up utopian longings, the machinery that actually produces and reproduces this light belongs to an economic and political apparatus that shuts down horizons of distance, tries to banish all darkness through its machinery of panoptic omniscience (satellites, bomb sights, night vision equipment, inner-body medical imaging, etc.). With these technical developments in mind, it is almost uncanny where Bloch goes with his meditations on Rembrandt, and how Bloch's essay matches against the wider context of world affairs that conditioned Torinus's work the first time I saw her suspended-chair piece. From the day of that performance to the San Francisco phone call, linked as it was for me to incidentally-heard news from Samarra, a certain public context has attached itself to my tracking and understanding of *Puntos Cardinales*. By the early morning of December 13–14, I had stayed up all night driving around and had begun hearing excited flashes on American radio. A big announcement was imminent. The Iranian news agency (IRNA) had publicized the capture of Saddam Hussein, a report as yet unconfirmed by American officials, which would mean that history is only history if the empire validates and owns it. It was now past 6 a.m. and I decided I would wait until the televised press conference that was due out of Iraq sometime after 7 a.m. When the news finally broke there were a host of inconsistent details suggesting that the official discovery of Saddam Hussein cowering in his dead-end "spider hole" was indeed just that, an official pantomime designed to play to the world on a predetermined date. That folksy term "spider hole," to describe the toppled dictator's last, lonely bunker, was casually made by Lieutenant-General Ricardo S. Sanchez, the U.S. military boss in occupied Iraq. To satisfy the skeptics as well as everybody else in the world, a few brief clips ran with the announcement. These showed a skinheaded marine poking around in the monster's mouth. The monster was a seemingly drugged or very tired and obviously resigned wildman of the woods and caves. He was the former butcher of Baghdad now looking like a version of Walt Whitman as a wanted fugitive. It's not at all unusual that a good part of *Puntos Cardinales* will be situated, as in the highest



traditions of painting, in a *chiaroscuro* setting. Such a setting is common for installations involving projection. *Puntos* features more ambient light than other exhibits centered solely on video, but this factor of the *chiaroscuro* in the age of new media does draw my mind again in the direction of Bloch's meditations on Rembrandt. I'm especially intrigued by his reflection on Rembrandt's spatial contractions, where Bloch claims that the "cosmic perspective" — by which I understand him to mean open vistas or adjacent orders of terrestrial and celestial space as in Raphael's *Transfiguration* and Titian's *Ascension of the Virgin* (1518 for both) — "is extinguished by dark space."⁸ In the continuation of this same sentence, Bloch then converts his seemingly crypto-gnostic observation into a Heideggerian moment; he writes of "the light that rises up against this dark space the same way as it breaks forth mysteriously from solitude and blackness [to] paint the truth of hope or of the shining that is not there into the dark ground of the existing world."⁹ That "existing world" is the world inside the paintings themselves, and yet in his Heideggerian image of the light "ris[ing] up against . . . the dark ground" of existence, Bloch also paints us an image of history as a small, hopeful light carried on through aeons of barbarism and surrounding darkness (almost an image from one of Macbeth's meditations). Bloch has in mind that Rembrandt's Europe was an organic, pre-industrial society where day and night were clearly distinguished. But where are we today, and can our world orient itself decisively in terms of figures and grounds, lights on darks? Looking at what Torinus has contributed to *Puntos Cardinales*, I am compelled to think, not of imagery alone, nor of impressionistic effects and dreamy video feeds which we well know are the stock in trade of so much intermedia installation art; and not only of the utopian associations that may arise through her use of artificial, high-tech light. Instead, I begin to ask what might be the contemporary artist's equivalent to that "dark ground" that Bloch saw in Rembrandt. What is "the dark ground of our existing world"? Where is it in Torinus's projections? Perhaps in the low-altitude aeronautical approach charts that she uses as frames for two of her projections in *Puntos Cardinales*? But these are hardly "dark ground[s]," or rather, they are indeed telling images of the "ground" of our world. In asking after this question of light and ground as Bloch sees it in Rembrandt, but asking it of a different historical moment, it seems that I've entered a hall of mirrors. I've been led there by a few intriguing 'utopian' words from Torinus, a few peeks at her website, and by the esoteric attractions of Bloch's prose which she has put in my hands. It is amazing in fact how uncanny all this is, for the more I read Bloch and think of Torinus's flight maps, the more timely, synchronous it all becomes. Writing of the exotic reaches of Rembrandt's illumination, Bloch describes the artist's "Arabization" in his "portrayal of Saskia and Jews," and how he manages — in painting hope as a special,

paradoxical type of luminosity — to make this “distant light speak most clearly through the fairy-tale land of the Orient; a transcendental Baghdad glows in the night.”¹⁰ This is a staggering passage as I read it, for, for us today, Bloch is here almost a prophet, for Baghdad was, until recently, dark ground, hopelessly benighted under the rule of its chief monster, until a great rain of missiles and bombs made it glow.

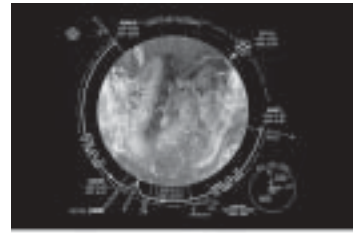
Pathos of Distance

Torinus raised questions that weren't completely rhetorical: “How do you regulate an artist or an intellectual? What is their place? Where do they belong?” I took her to be asking, ‘where is our climate of maximal self-fulfilment? To whom are we answerable and for what money?’ Here were matters that have moved to the forefront of theory and exhibition practice since postmodernism lost its academic and artworld currency and was displaced by postcolonialism and transnational issues. She described the recurring homelessness of the contemporary artist as a nomad borne forth on the global flow. This word “global” doesn't sit easily with me or with her, but it lingers around everything that she and Seoane have assembled for *Puntos Cardinales*. We discussed some of the commonalities in our separate experiences: the compass points of her life and career as a white woman native to the U.S. Virgin Islands, shifted and shifting between the Caribbean, the California Bay Area, and Germany; and my own successive displacements from Mediterranean roots on Croatia's Adriatic coast, to Italy's industrial north, to southwestern Ontario and Michigan. In both cases, the existential dilemma of “getting grounded,” as she put it, of trying to establish some sense of rootedness in any one place, and of tacking mentally and factually between shores and horizons, remains a living experience and is perhaps more than that: it may actually be our everyday mythic condition compounded of restlessness, homelessness, and what Nietzsche called “the pathos of distance”¹¹ (though I'm not sure that he meant it with any sentimentalism). Seoane shares in this commonality and has, literally, more first-hand tacking experience than the two of us. He left Cuba for the first time in 1992, and then departed for good in 2000. He is now “without a place,” as Torinus says. “The whole island is like a shipwreck, the boat is sinking, people are leaving.” But Seoane returns to Cuba periodically, as does Torinus, and his art, like hers, encourages us to dream and think along vectors of departure and arrival. If we put the two artists on a continuum, however, Seoane is likely to seem more materially-oriented than Torinus. His contributions to *Puntos Cardinales* are hand-worked objects, and his favoured medium, painting, involves a far more embodied register of manual and visual interaction than the electronic and digital data that she works with.

The Line from Braunschweig

At the centre of *Puntos Cardinales*, rising from floor to ceiling, is a tapering eighteen-foot ladder. Made with locally-gathered (Windsor) wood and with vines brought from Cuba, it threads upward like an organic pathway leading to a symbolic endpoint whose location, as in the term “utopia,” isn’t to be found on any map. (“True places never are,” one hears Herman Melville, he of the nautical novel, saying.)¹² Two chairs positioned back to back form the ladder’s base. But on each of the seats Seoane has also placed a few handfuls of earth, so that what we have here is a ladder nourished by its roots. An Ovidian object, for the backrests of the two chairs fuse into a structure made of nearly unaltered branch-lengths and rungs fastened with vines and cords. The organic materials and their textural variance have a strong, knotty impact. This is a sculpture salvaged from the rainforest, made to honour the natural architecture of trees and other flora. The chairs, however, are Bulgarian-made IKEA products, and when seen in profile, their joined backrests form the outline of a peaked arch that echoes the toyblock-styled houses that Seoane has placed on the balance-beam of another sculpture and used as motifs and stretcher-frames for some of the paintings. Taken together, the two chairs can also be seen as pendentive symbols summing up the artistic and personal partnership that gives *Puntos Cardinales* its coherence. The chairs constitute a pair, like Seoane and Torinus, while the ladder alludes to a line of vision, optical of course, but at the same time subjective, radiating upwards from the mind of someone occupying a specific hemispheric location, so that this line of vision is also a line of orientation and a lifeline. I’m suggesting that one does not merely look at the ladder but also up along it toward its implied extension past the tapering point, for this ladder could in principle have continued climbing — somewhat akin to the principle of Brancusi’s *Endless Column* of the 1930s — to whatever the height of the gallery ceiling. This conceptual verticality, moreover, corresponds to a geographic axis and to metaphoric locations and destinations. The ladder may be said to reach toward utopia, a nowhere station on the road to nothing, which may in turn be something like an elevated trance-state as in a performance by Torinus; or perhaps the ladder is much more mundanely a metaphoric line of orientation toward geographic North. This too is an interesting possibility, like Bloch’s thoughts on utopia, but we will have to wait and see. As I read it, the upward perspective of the ladder extends from a material base (chairs, earth) toward a wholly wishful zenith beyond the ceiling line. But to extract from this work its full significance it is necessary to go back a few years to the time when Seoane and Torinus first discovered each other during separate residencies in Braunschweig, Germany. They had, unbeknownst to the other, occupied the same room and when they finally met in Spring 2000, with one

coming and the other going, they compared notes and learned that they had both produced installations involving chairs. Seoane had already made *Sacrificio*, which is the prototype for the chairs-and-ladder work in *Puntos Cardinales*, while Torinus had shown *Nadir*, part of which also appears in the current exhibit. With its plummeting title traceable back to Arabic origins and referring to a subjective axial orientation that lines the depths of the earth up with the highest point of the firmament (the “zenith” as it were, also an Arabic term), *Nadir* was a one-word, three-chair encapsulation of Torinus’s main themes and techniques. Into the seat of each chair she had embedded video monitors in which two of the three loops featured camera angles with a vertical orientation. This has carried over into the compositional strategies in two of her three projections for *Puntos Cardinales*. As with *Nadir*, which was an installation that projected scientific drawings of animal homing behaviour into a space behind the chairs, the projections in *Puntos Cardinales* combine the rhythms of nature with the functional patterning of maps or scientific diagrams. Torinus uses flight maps to frame downward shots of two naked bodies (hers and Seoane’s) boring through translucent waters or a single figure (Seoane) foetally exposed to the steady batterings of surf. In the latter, Seoane is encircled by a navigational map of Pearson airport in Toronto. This framing of a static nude shot from above, as if to fix an archetypal image of male vulnerability on the tempestuous verge of a maternal ocean, contrasts with the other projection in which the two swimmers traverse a pool, gliding past and over-under each other, like two marine specimens happily at home within the confinement of their hedonistic goldfish bowl. The projection with the two of them swimming is overlaid and framed — in this case, more irregularly than the other — by a flight map of San Francisco and the Bay Area, and recalls their common fascination, discovered back in Braunschweig, with matters of navigation. The idea of navigation, as well as its actuality, engrosses both of them: navigation through planetary space and into its cosmic extensions (once again, Nietzsche comes to mind for me — the parable of the Madman in the market, where he



speaks of history, and by implication the planet itself, “plunging continually . . . through an infinite nothing”).¹³ But what does all this amount to — this homing, swimming, navigating, and nudity? As I write it, staying faithful to what the art presents on its surface and what the two artists tell me, isn’t it — the exhibit, but also passages in my essay — simply a scattering of quirky, idiosyncratic images and internet clipouts, irrelevantly personal in import, and unified only by the title *Puntos Cardinales*? Is *Puntos Cardinales* perhaps no more than a chain of circumambient stops, with each object, projection, or painting contributing to an interlocking play of four elemental metaphors—earth, air, fire, and water? Perimeters and circles are obvious motifs within many of the works, but also seem to be determining factors in how the exhibit is installed. Everything finds the walls or ceilings or hovers closely in their vicinity. This is true of most exhibits, of course, given the circumstances of showing art in enclosed spaces. But *Puntos Cardinales* is not simply an installed show; it is an installation proper, with its reliance on the gallery perimeter designed to underscore a rotational quest motif as implied by its title and its pivotal referent: the compass. But now another question, adding to my previous observation about the four, cross-referenced metaphoric elements: are these doublings and triplings (and even quadruplings, e.g. what the works communicate internally, as it were; how the installation strategy compounds this message; what the title encodes; and finally, before it gets to the viewer, how the critic reads all this) of layered meanings merely a closed game? More sharply: is *Puntos Cardinales* a self-centered celebration of global redundancy (waves slapping roundly on all the world’s shores), a play of self-circling tropes exposing the diasporic plight of artists trotting the globe and suffering from an inconstancy of place in their lives? Any substantive answer to such questions would first need to arrive at a theoretical account of the importance of gaming or play in art. Whether it involves juggling concepts, giving an objective dimension to metaphors, finding a form for private visions, or constructing specially delimited spaces, play is serious business to artists, as Freud noted, even when it’s openly silly or manifestly anarchic business. ‘Play’ as such, may in fact constitute non-linear or intuitive forms of experimental research (crudely or complexly worked) into phenomenologies or ontologies of time, space, memory, colour, and so on. And if the term ‘experimental research’ doesn’t quite apply in the scientific or academic sense, it nevertheless holds that what artists often do is construct alternative vantage points and critical perspectives on the normative reality surrounding and enclosing their play-worlds and play-spaces. Thus, for me, these flight maps of Toronto and San Francisco enclosing Seoane and Torinus put issues of navigation and utopia, even the celebration of erotic compatibility, into a global perspective. Complementing Seoane’s chairs-and-ladder,

Torinus's framing strategies and the vertical axes of her camera angles trigger questions about the relationship of centres and peripheries. Certainly their careers and life stories are enough to validate the rage for global paradigms in contemporary art and exhibition practice. And indeed, *Puntos Cardinales* does appear to function like a parallel play-universe incorporating globalism as a natural condition of 21st-century art and life. But seeing the two artists presented as they are in the two circular projections in — Seoane in the mysterious self-enclosed universe of the foetal man; he and Torinus like the brown and white,



male and female, pair of a rarely-seen submarine species; both of these images in turn rimmed, as two tondos, by a tiara of aeronautic signifiers in which topographies and landmarks have been converted into an abstract scheme — leads one to conclude that they are at the same time sensitive to the cool, controlling mastery afforded by global technologies. *Puntos Cardinales* is replete with implied autobiographical notations, and yet its manifest symbols and motifs reinforce the sense that the artists are not simply pursuing an inward investigation of their geographic displacements and career itineraries; but that they are seeing these as the effects of coercive, neoliberal forces projected across all points of the planet. Nevertheless, Seoane and Torinus draw this latter point out through an extended formal and metaphoric interplay; they do not speak from dissident positions or propound an alternative social vision to the global model. They set up faux-utopian locus points and then undermine these (in the projections, a tropical beach as a site of foetal retreat, or for the monotony of circling footsteps; in the paintings, a body torn in two directions or a modular house hanging like a pendulous weight and slowly oozing its substance in paint-streaks). *Puntos Cardinales* proposes that nomadic imaginings, though they cannot actually transcend historical conditions and material contingencies, can and must creatively exploit fissures in the global system. So many of the images, as well as the objects, pursue levitational plateaux or recall travels and touch-downs and an abiding sense of being in transit. The exhibition is an expression of utopian longings delicately balanced against an awareness of the global forces that shape our lives and portend unknown risks in our collective future. “It was in Braunschweig in Spring 2000. I had gone to Germany just for a short trip to present a talk at the University, was on my way back, and José arrived to

do a mural with Susanne Hesch and our common friend Karsten Meier through whom we met (it was at his house). We literally crossed paths, and José's slogan was '*Caminante, no hay camino. Se hace camino al andar*' (from a poem by Antonio Machado), which means 'Wanderer, there is no path. You create the path for walking.'¹⁴ After that we met in Havana for the Biennale, worked on two mural projects together, on a film which was shown in Santiago de Cuba, a solo exhibition, and a few performances (one at the Festival del Caribe in El Cobre in which we were part of an Afro-Cuban procession with a boat José had built which was carried up a mountain and then lowered into a pool that was part of an old copper mine. I was projecting into the pool imagery around notions of personal space, such as kids creating personal iconography as a way to experience other worlds/spaces or leave the mundane behind. José set fire to the boat that was surrounded by oars he had built, each carrying the name of a saint). The boat theme showed up again in Oakland, California. We did a performance piece titled *What Floats Your Boat* with video on the walls of a swimming pool into which people set boats afloat onto which they had written all kinds of thoughts as validations to what would 'float their boat' in life. For quite a few people it was touching and those who hadn't brought a boat folded some out of paper. Here, too, I worked with video around the nude body exposed to the intense forces of nature."



Earth and Shit

I am tempted to see Seoane's chairs-and-ladder sculpture as a sublimation of Beuys's famous *Fettstuhl I* of 1964, which symbolizes the lower roils of the human trunk and its abject intestinal psychology. Beuys's chair reminds us of a specific bodily site, its functions and meanings. Seoane's ladder complements and offsets this downward orientation by symbolically growing from the earth and defying gravity. It also brings on me — as I think of Beuys cradling a dead hare, his head gilded with honey — an image of spine and vertebrae supporting the brainy, golden volleyball of the human head. The two chairs aid in this imaginary act of art-historical collaboration. They are pelvic halves turned outwardly. The scoops of earth, while not nearly as high as Beuys's brutally frank mass of fat, are quietly suggestive of the frequent need to go groundwards, to expel stool, long after we've disciplined the sphincter and moved beyond our earliest

expression of the art instinct, which, according to Freud, is in the production of infant shit. I thought of this theory one day as I watched a young woman tissue off the metallic green-gray sludge pasted to her baby's buttocks. Wasn't it the child's attraction to base matter, to its textures and runny gravity, and its range of colours and smells, that Freud should have gone on to analyze as evidence of the child's aesthetic latency, and to prophesy in the same instant the course that art would take well into the 20th century? There seems to be no reason why the centrepiece of *Puntos Cardinales* shouldn't be said to pivot on the legacy of *Fettstuhl I*, and yet we have to be scrupulously careful not to embrace the fallacy that Erwin Panofsky identified as "pseudomorphosis."¹⁵ On the very first page of *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition* (1975), his revisionist study of painting from Friedrich to Rothko, Robert Rosenblum succinctly defines pseudomorphosis as "the accidental appearance at different moments in the history of art of works whose close formal analogies falsify the fact that their meaning is totally different." Beuys was respectably dead by the 1990s when Seoane began his visits to Germany. Beuys, however, had said of his art and its social mission that "the causes lie in the future"¹⁶ — a paradoxical statement, seemingly, but perhaps telling us to secretly pioneer conditions for future revolutions or not to foreclose the past, any past, until the future finds a way to resume its promises. In other words, wait and plan, but live fully in an enlarged dimension of the present, ripeness being all that one can ever hope to have firmly in one's possession. It is unlikely that Seoane could be completely immune to Beuys and his afterlife in European art. I return to *Fettstuhl I*, not because of an implacable case of pseudomorphosis in my critical approach, but because Seoane has, in his chairs-and-ladder installation entered into a type of oblique, cross-cultural dialogue with Beuys. Seoane speaks with Beuys hemispherically. There's much more than a superficial formal similarity, as we'll see, that keeps the two artists talking. Seoane wasn't simply adding a ladder to a pair of IKEA-made Platonic multiples whose precedent was a Beuysian ur-chair. If chairs were at issue, why not Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (1965)? If mounds of earth presented a corresponding question of ancestry, why not, though they be exceedingly small, stack these against any number of works in the 1960s and '70s that were made of piled earth? When Seoane made *Sacrificio* in 1994 he didn't know *Fettstuhl I*, and while *Fettstuhl I* is strongly earthbound, weighed through with the glutinous mass that rests on the seat, Seoane's ladder is built to escape the earth, to ascend from the nadir. It originates in the earth and acknowledges a ritual dimension grounded in Cuban and Caribbean folk religions, but it rapidly climbs beyond this. There is a politics in this, very personal and very hidden — occult almost — and conditioned in the end, not by height and depth, but by geographies and seaways.

Nearness of the Sea

When I think of the sea I think of the all-solvent, a dimension where no covenants should haunt us. I think of the sea as the solution to a chronically inflamed scalp and specifically of the Adriatic as the sea where this healing would answer deeper needs and subconscious cravings to have done with the culture that's now become mine, the culture framed by an Anglo-American worldview. This difference in how the sea signifies to me, as opposed to Seoane, and yet differently again to Torinus, is of course all due to the accidents of our respective geographies and the effects of these on our histories. In war and politics, geography is always what Kant would call a "condition of possibility,"¹⁷ and it proved to be a decisive and paradoxical factor in some of the warped geopolitical dissymmetries of the Cold War era. Leaving the Yugoslavian, communist Tito state, which backed contiguously onto the Warsaw Pact nations, was always easier than escaping Fidel-dominated and American-strangled Cuba. You would think that having a Stalin and his less-Stalinized successors breathing down your neck would be more ominous than having an American giant looming to the north of your island. But history has shown just whose vision and muscle determine the shape of economic and political reality, and, through this, the psychological dimensions of our very small, very buffeted lives. Under varying historical or cultural conditions, geographies will leave a different set of formative imprints on people and linger and exercise a different type of immanence on their psychic make-up and in their artistic imaginary. Geographical factors persist in one's corporeal memory long after the specific historical conditions have come to an end. Somewhere in me there is a geographical residue that no subsequent historical force or cultural displacement can fully modify or totally erase, and it concerns the nearness of the sea.

North-South

Beuys always declared that his objects and materials were means of "transformation" and "transubstantiation";¹⁸ that they were concrete aids to a *geist*-driven vision of a new social order. When he exercised his geographic imagination, Beuys projected himself and the ritual function of his objects along a West-East Eurasian axis that stretched, experientially for him, from the Rhine to the Soviet Steppes. For Seoane, however, it is Cuba and the seaways washing between that island and the U.S. that determine his geographic imaginary in the objects that he contributes to *Puntos Cardinales*. It has long been apparent to me that North-South, not West-East, has been the chief axis of world economy, world politics, and world art over the past half millennium. The neocolonialist policies of today's global elites have their roots in

patterns of colonial domination that began in the 15th century with Henry the Navigator nibbling at West Africa in a bid to outflank Arabs in the eastern Mediterranean (and thus becoming the first European to establish black plantation slavery) and Christopher Columbus sailing Spanish vessels toward the fantastic East. The ideology of North-South domination was studiously expounded in 19th-century Euro-American racial discourses, in a proliferation of pseudo-scientific theories on racial geography and environmental determinism. Just as Torinus projects and frames images of Seoane and herself enclosed by navigational air-charts, Seoane's ladder is like a longitudinal pathway lifted from the face of a world map and stood upright in three dimensions. It refers to a particular axis of the global system as viewed from the ground and the peripheral outposts of that system. The ladder asserts a delicate, soaring vertical only to visualize more emphatically the tenuousness and the risks of an escape from the peripheries. But where does the ladder lead? Surely not to a plateau of secure First-World citizenship, for it's not strong enough to form a sure-footed bridge, just as the sea is never a sure-footed pathway for fleeing Cubans, Haitians, Albanians, and so on. I'm reminded of an informative, gossipy, and smugly critical article in the 75th Anniversary Issue of *The New Yorker* (February 21 & 28, 2000), listed as "Letter from Havana," where Castro is quoted as he preaches to a group of domestic and foreign economists. He excoriates the International Monetary Fund for being "the backbone of the New World Order of Globalization . . . the gendarme and the executioner who places the guillotine over the heads of all of us in the Third World."¹⁹ Castro will eventually lose, of course, if only biologically, and then Cuba too could founder chaotically after he's gone. In these days when an American army is planted firmly in the Middle East and rings Russia with bases in its former Soviet republics, we shouldn't expect a long postscript to Castro's revolution. The "War on Terror" has brought its prisoners to Guantanamo Bay. The American President feels strongly, with the unassailable conviction of a crusader, that the growing dung heap of American and Iraqi dead is a price worth paying if you're to 'stabilize' a country stolen from a dictator whose murderings and anti-Iranian secularism were once eagerly abetted by U.S. policies in the region. The chairs-and-ladder is not a response to any of these things. It does, however, set in motion those same issues that Castro announced to his economic forum, though it does this from a worm's-eye view. The ladder of success, or the ladder of escape and survival — either way one is up against, or eyeing upward along its axis, the steep logic of our global access to each other's worlds, what it means to be a mobile individual today, with options for seasonal harvesting contracts in Leamington or for academic wage labour in any number of universities.

Oars

The ladder is coded with utopian aspirations that are post- rather than pro- or proto-revolutionary. The world is not to be messianically remade but navigated by taking Darwinian risks and initiatives. In addition to the ladder, which threads toward a symbolic height beyond ceiling-level, Seoane places seventeen of his own hand-made oars in a recessed area of the gallery. Their multiplicity reveals what the singularity of the ladder may hide: the statistical fatalism of the global system, the bushels that die in their dinghies and folk flotillas, trying to make it to America or Italy. On some of the oar handles, Seoane has painted skeleton keys and attached coat-hooks. These become esoteric notations, the signs and secret prayers of those willing to dispossess themselves of even the little that they have and set out to ply the sea for farther shores. The oars are made of wood salvaged from a small scrap area located at the rear lot of the Lebel building. “Nothing is garbage. You find a use for everything.” Seoane is talking about the immediate sources of his art, while also describing home-made boats illegally and secretly made by Cubans desperate enough to flee the island and set a course for Florida. He shows me a photograph of a group of men carrying one of these constructions toward a beach. The boat looks more like a rudimentary crate than a seaworthy vessel. I may not know what I’m looking at, exactly, and Seoane explains: “Some of the boats are a work of art. You believe it. The whole family puts everything into making it, design, construction, supplies.” The oars are brightly painted, exuberantly coloured like folk costumes. But they are more than mementos of a people’s Cuba, prosaic tokens of desperate survival runs on devouring global oceans. They are also elements in a gallery exhibition. They reverse the terms under which the so-called “real world” has entered the art world in the 20th century, disturbing its sacred quiet. One thinks immediately of the judiciously ‘found’ shovels and urinals of Duchamp and the simulated Brillo boxes of Warhol as real-world incursions of a different sort. Yet these were either reflexive expressions of conceptual wit or exercises in commercial cynicism, and were therefore studied disruptions. But Seoane’s oars have a different ancestry. They’re more in keeping with the felt and the fat that Beuys used as accessories or components in his performances (staying warm, staying true to the memory — or was it an elaborate and calculated myth? — of his *Luftwaffe* crash in the Crimea), and they share in the spirit of *arte povera*, which was low-tech, oriented toward common, organic materials, and infused with



what Germano Celant called a “guerrilla” sensibility.²⁰ The oars conform to the referential function of the sign rather than its conceptual, its signified dimension, as would be the case if these were Duchamp’s or Iain Baxter’s oars. They are parts for a possible boat and therefore metonyms for a whole island, ringed concentrically by a twice-spun noose — the rotting inner ring of Castro’s long rule and the punitive outer ring of the long U.S. blockade. As I’ve said, this sets them against a certain history of modernism and postmodernism, one in which real objects are co-opted into an atmosphere of semiotic self-critique and jibes at art and its dependency on mercantile contexts. Seoane’s oars occupy a place in what the philosopher-become-art-critic Arthur Danto (in 1964, year of the Brillo boxes, and one year after *Fettstuhl I*) called the “artworld,”²¹ but could easily re-enter the real world and lend themselves manually, rather than rhetorically, to the making of microhistories. These would be the millions of unwritten, largely anonymous histories of the migrants and boat peoples of the earth. Seoane isn’t didactically or politically in pursuit of such histories. Neither is Torinus.

A Hinged Endnote

A final word, then, on *Puntos Cardinales*. The title of the show was adopted two months prior to the San Francisco-Windsor conversation, during a meeting in curator Carl Lavoy’s suburban living room, where his young son, the blond princeling of a playful mess, intruded anarchically into our business as the nearby television flashed financial figures and added another handful of integers to the colonial death toll banding across its lower edge. The three adults were studying the Thames Art Gallery’s two-tiered floor plan and blocking off display locations. The little boy was crying joyously over some little piece of devastation he’d unleashed when Seoane volunteered the exhibition title in Spanish. The mere sound of those six syllables, with each of the words ending in short sibilant jets, seemed itself a palette of global allusions. And so *Puntos Cardinales* was immediately adopted. The title evokes the compass, of course, and beyond that, a poetics of travel and navigation. It also references points and turning-points. I picture notch-marks on an illuminated dial and think immediately of astrolabes and antipodes. I also detect the imagery of joinery and turning-points, and the logic of the metonym in postmodern art, for *cardinale* comes from the Latin where it means “hinge.”

Lorenzo Buj
February 2004

Notes

1. See the fourth Memorable Fancy (Plate 22) in Blake's illuminated book, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. (1790) Ed. Sir Geoffrey Keynes (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975).
2. See *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, Ernst Bloch, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT P, 1988), 278–92.
3. Bloch, 286.
4. Bloch, 287.
5. Bloch, 286.
6. Bloch, 286.
7. Bloch, 286.
8. Bloch, 286.
9. Bloch, 286.
10. Bloch, 286.
11. See 160 of Francis Golffing's translation of "The Genealogy of Morals: An Attack" (1887) from *The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals*. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956).
12. See Chapter 12, "Biographical," of *Moby-Dick, Or, The Whale* (1851), eds. Luther S. Mansfield and Howard P. Vincent (New York: Hendricks House, 1962).
13. The parable appears in Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* (1882, 1887), ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), 181–2.
14. See fragment XXIX of Machado's *Proverbios y Cantares*, which was first published in the 1917 version of the poet's collection *Campos de Castilla*, and which can be found in Eds. O. Macri et al.'s four-volume collection *Antonio Machado: poesía y prosa* (Madrid: Nueva serie 11–14, 1989).
15. Panofsky, Erwin. *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (1939) (Boulder, Colorado and Oxford: Westview P, 1972), 70ff.
16. For further elucidation of Beuys's linkages between politics and artistic practice, see Lukas Beckmann's essay, "The Causes Lie in the Future," trans. S. Linberg and R. Brenner in *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, ed. Gene Ray (New York: John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art, 2001), 91–111.
17. See 66ff in "Part I: The Blomberg Logic" in Kant's *Lectures on Logic*, trans. and ed. J. Michael Young (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), 5–246.
18. For example, see 11–12 in "Questions to Joseph Beuys," trans. Caroline Tisdall in *Joseph Beuys: The Multiples. Catalogue raisonné of multiples and prints, 1965–86*. Jörg Schellmann and Bernd Klüser. (Cambridge, Mass: Busch-Reisinger Museum et al., 1997), 9–28.
19. See 24 of Anderson, Jon Lee. "Letter from Havana: The Old Man and the Boy." *The New Yorker* (February 21 & 28, 2000), 224–31.
20. Germano Celant introduced this term in his essay "Arte Povera: Appunti per una Guerriglia," originally published in *Flash Art* No. 5 (November–December 1967): 2. Henry Martin's English translation of this essay, "Arte Povera: Notes for a Guerrilla War," appears in the 20th-anniversary publication *Flash Art: Two Decades of History*, eds. Giancarlo Politi and Helena Kontova (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT P, 1990), 189–91.
21. "The Artworld." *Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (1964): 571–84.

Sigi Torinus is a performance and installation artist from the Virgin Islands, addressing perceptions of space, time, and materiality as they meet or collide in the virtuality of digital space or physicality of a geographic location. She holds an MFA from Braunschweig, Germany and San Francisco, USA and has exhibited in Europe, Australia, and the United States.

Selected Exhibitions / Performances

slouch flop slump, Media City Festival of Experimental Film and Video Art, Windsor, Ontario (2004)

One Second, Labour Arts Festival, Windsor, Ontario (2004)

Global Lure, View Points, School of Visual Arts, Windsor, Ontario (2004)

Puntos Cardinales, with José Seoane, Thames Art Gallery, Chatham, Ontario (2004)

transit, School of Visual Arts, Windsor, Ontario (2003)

Un día más, with José Seoane & blackhole-factory (Germany), Santiago de Cuba (2002)

Pase a Tierra, with José Seoane, Santiago de Cuba (2002)

A Novo, with José Seoane, Santiago de Cuba (2001)

Amala: Obba y Changó, with José Seoane & Teatro Macuba, Santiago de Cuba (2001)

Show Me Me, *Figurations of the Space Between*, San Francisco Art Institute (2000)

Cross Links, *browsing beauty*, with Andrea Sunder-Plassmann, Berlin, Germany (1999)

The Panther's Scent, Gallery 939, San Francisco (1998)

Nadir, San Francisco Art Institute Faculty Show (1998)

Sluschai: Suschki & der Kosmos, with Andrea Sunder-Plassmann, Galerie am Marstall, Berlin (1998)

Observer/Secret Services, Zentrum für Kunst und Medien Adlershof, Berlin (1998)

browsing beauty, with Andrea Sunder-Plassmann, TV Gallery Moscow, Russia (1998)

Arcadewhispers, Soma Gallery Berlin, Germany (1998)

browsing beauty, with Andrea Sunder-Plassmann, Gallery 16, San Francisco (1997)

browsing beauty, with Andrea Sunder-Plassmann & Anita Kocic, SCA Gallery, Sydney, Australia (1997)

Frames / Adelaide Film & Video Festival, Australia (1994)

Suite Nothings, Brindabella Gallery, Canberra, Australia (1994)

Digital Masters, Ansel Adams Center for Photography, San Francisco (1994)

Imagina des images qui passent l'imagination, Monte Carlo, Monaco (1993)

Perspectives in Digital Art & Architecture, San Francisco (1993)

Siggraph 1993, Anaheim/Los Angeles (1993)

Parallax, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne, Australia (1993)

Digital Salon, New York (1993)

Add Noise Digital Art Show, San Francisco (1992)

Salon, Institute for Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia (1992)

Arches, with New Music Theatre, Theater Artaud, San Francisco (1991)

Artist's Television Access, San Francisco (1990)

Seductive Strategies and Virtual Revisions: The Body In Context, Southern Exposure Gallery, San Francisco (1989)

Galerie Heide Freiberg, Braunschweig, Germany (1989)

Festival of Plagiarism, San Francisco (1989)

7. International Experimental Film Festival, Osnabrück, Germany (performance with Daniel Simons and Klaus Bleier) (1989)

José Seoane Hernandez is a painter and installation artist from Cuba working on ideas around identity and transculturation. He studied at the San Alejandro Art Institute in Havana, and has exhibited in Europe, the United States, Canada, and Cuba.

Selected Exhibitions / Performances

Faculty Exhibition, School of Visual Arts, Windsor, Ontario (2004)

Puntos Cardinales, Thames Art Gallery, Chatham, Ontario (2004)

Faculty Exhibition, School of Visual Arts, Windsor, Ontario (2003)

What Floats Your Boat, installation/performance with Sigi Torinus, Oakland, California (2002)

Un Día Más installation/performance with Sigi Torinus, Santiago de Cuba (2002)

Pase a Tierra Taller Cultural, Santiago de Cuba (2002)

Obba y Changó, with Sigi Torinus and Teatro Macuba, Santiago de Cuba (2001)

A NOVO installation/performance, Santiago de Cuba (2001)

Espiritus Santus Galeria ZHEN, Hanover, Germany (1999)

Taller installation, Amsterdam, Holland (1997)

OPFER Gallery KK Fisch, Braunschweig, Germany (1994)

Quien tiene el fuego Taller Cultural, Santiago de Cuba (1992)

galileo Museo de arte Moderno, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (1991)

Pinturas Galeria UNEAC, Santiago de Cuba (1987)

pinturas e instalaciones Galeria Arte Universal, Santiago de Cuba (1985)

la agonía segun SH Centro de ARte Boyeros, Havana, Cuba (1982)

Buen Humor Casa de la Cultura Santiago de las Vegas, Havana, Cuba (1980)

Puntos Cardinales

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