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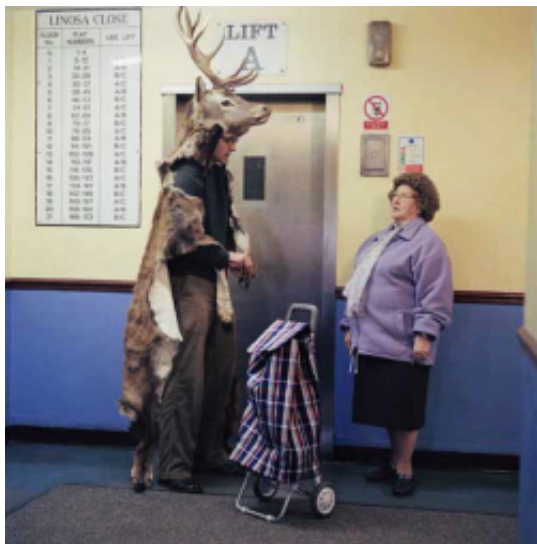
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## Synthetic Ritual

*Fri, Sep 09, 2011*



Synthetic Ritual, curated by Gabi Scardi and Ciara Ennis, brings together a number of Los Angeles and international contemporary artists working in a variety of media including installation, drawing, performance, and video. Opens September 28 at Pitzer Art Galleries.



The exhibition examines the presence of ritual and superstition in our professional and personal lives and asks why, in such an advanced and sophisticated technological and cyber driven world, ritual still occupies such an important and dominant role. Exploring the three central themes of ritual in relation to sport, religion, and artistic practice the artists provide refreshing and surprising commentary on ritualized behavior in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Elaborate ritualized behavior by sports fans and players dominates the world of sport. Whether it involves wearing the same unwashed jersey throughout the season, sleeping with a baseball bat to overcome a hitting dry spell, boxers drinking blood before a prizefight, repetitive rituals performed by baseball players with their gloves or feet before stepping into the batter's box, fishermen avoiding the path of barefoot women, all

of these behaviors are regarded as acceptable decorum; yet when isolated and examined, free from the clutter of a falsely normalizing setting, they are utterly absurd and hardly distinguishable from madness.

Similarly, sociocultural practices such as occultism or Freemasonry—as well as more conventional religions like Christianity or Buddhism—are sheathed in secrecy and cryptic codes, and all require adherence to specific practices and costumes. Whether it is transubstantiation or reincarnation, each has its own particular set of rules and fantastic belief systems that require faith in the irrational and the unproven.



Tic disorders, obsessive-compulsive behavior, and repetitive involuntary movements have legitimate expression in many artworks today. Examples abound, this century and last, in expressionism, abstraction, conceptual, pop and performance, and can be seen in work as far apart as Roman Opalka’s mapping of numbers one to infinity and John Bock’s Paul McCarthy-inspired deranged personae performances. Whether artists are using these “syndromes” as systems to make the work—process, series, repetition—or evoking these states to call attention to social/political/cultural aspects, the list of artists is extremely long and likely to grow.

Common to all these practices and activities—whether athletic, religious or artistic—is their reliance on behavior that is obsessive, repetitive, irrational, and unsubstantiated. The work of the artists in Synthetic Ritual all reference or employ some form of ritualistic behavior that, if taken out of the context of art, would be regarded as aberrant and unstable.

Participating Artists: Mounira Al Solh, Meris Angeoletti, Beatrice Catanazro, Marcus Coates, Joel Kyack, Lawrence Lemaiana, Yoshua Okon, Adrian Paci, Marco Rios, Kara Tanaka, Carlin Wang, Amir Yatziv

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