

ASHOK SUKUMARAN (b.1974) came to international prominence with the extraordinary work *Glow Positioning System*, 2005: a public lighting installation that involved street decorators, shop owners and residents to produce a giant panorama of lights, across a city square in Bombay, that one could move with a small hand-crank. His recent work is commissioned and exhibited internationally. In 2008, he co-founded CAMP, a space for critical artistic research, imagination, and archiving projects.

Sukumaran was awarded the first prize of the 2005 UNESCO Digital Arts Award, and received a Golden Nica at the Prix Ars Electronica, 2007. He recently showed (with Shaina Anand) the video ensemble "Lossfulness" in the Indian Highway exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, London and is currently developing (with CAMP) a two-part work on the sea trade to Somalia, for the Sharjah Biennale, 2008.

Sukumaran has a degree in Architecture from the School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles.

He lives & works in Bombay, India.

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Forum:
Who is the Neighbour /
What is the Neighbourhood?
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Wednesday, 25 March 2009, 6–8pm
P3, University of Westminster

This forum will open up discussion around issues raised by Ashok Sukumaran's *The Neighbour*. Have the techno-utopias of communal communication been supplanted by technologies of paranoia, voyeurism and stalking? How can we then be curious, how can we be generous? When our designed means of escape, such as the mobile home, do not in fact succeed in their escape, what happens next?

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Speakers include Ashok Sukumaran, Prof. David Garcia (Dean, Chelsea College of Art & Design) and Prof. Murray Fraser (School of Architecture & the Built Environment, University of Westminster). Chaired by Nicola Triscott (Director, The Arts Catalyst).

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ACCESS: BSL interpreted. Wheelchair access. Please call to enquire about other access needs.

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FREE. Advance booking is highly recommended.

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TO BOOK, CALL LALA THORPE ON
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ADMIN@ARTSCATALYST.ORG
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Supported by The Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media (CREAM) and the Centre for Architecture & the Built Environment, University of Westminster, The Arts Catalyst and P3.
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TheArtsCatalyst
the science-art agency



PRESENT

The Neighbour

ASHOK SUKUMARAN

MARCH 13 – APRIL 9, 2009

OPENING HOURS:
11 AM – 6 PM WED, FRI, SAT, SUN
11 AM – 8 PM THU



BOMBAY-BASED ASHOK SUKUMARAN is one of the few artists in the world making work that directly addresses issues of infrastructure: the ideological and human landscapes that surround flows such as electricity, water, data and trade. Beyond the claims of infrastructures of access, his work engages with ideas of distance, hierarchy, directionality and doubt amidst the "networks".

This ambitious project is Sukumaran's first major one-person exhibition in the UK. In *The Neighbour*, two ostensibly "mobile" habitats share space. These two objects, from the inside and out, ask us to inhabit questions about the contemporary "housing industry", the overlaps in our landscapes of desire, of crisis, and the psychic dimensions of enclosure and spacing that have evolved not just among people, but also among competing machines, and their regulatory frameworks.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

"No, you are not like me (even though the modernists would place us on a continuum of the factory-built house-car-boat, and even though the judeo-christian injunction is to love thy neighbour "as thy self"). We are maybe second-cousins, somewhere between the family and the polis. Our encounter is the result of our mutual migrations, from the car, and the house. But it is tension between our "families" and the world at large, our own and not our own, that produces the deepest questions, and greatest opportunity.

Lately, we have retreated back into these categories, of car and house. I hide my wheels, you've retracted your roof. It has become harder to inhabit those in-between spaces. Those millions of people "looking for England", those traffic jams, you remember. We were unable to escape each other. I would say you are mostly an evolutionary dead-end. But so am I. Beyond lies an open field.

Now society is obsessed by "safe distance". From the gypsies, from the smokers, from each other. It is also obsessed with "networks", in which they say, the distance between one and the other disappears. In this, the neighbour is an aporia, a battlefield, in which the lines of curiosity, suspicion, competition and desire coalesce. The neighbour, neither friend nor enemy, is the one who may not be in your "network", but is nevertheless in your world.

In the end what we seek is "neighbourhood". The philosopher Alain Badiou defines neighbourhood through "openness", that is, a space without boundary. The space being open is necessary, for others to be able to enter it, for universality. Our mobility, our travel, means that we can imagine this space as real, geographical, nearby. The open space of neighbourhood is created by a "decision", a subjective act, a choice. That decision, is love."

Ashok Sukumaran, 2009.

THE NEIGHBOUR IS COMMISSIONED BY THE ARTS CATALYST, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH P3.

The Arts Catalyst is a leading UK-based interdisciplinary and visual arts organisation commissioning new work that experimentally and critically engages with science.

P3 is a 14000 square ft space developed from the vast former concrete construction hall for the University of Westminster's School of Engineering. It has recently been described as 'One of the capital's hidden and most exciting new spaces' by The Guardian.

www.artscatalyst.org

www.p3exhibitions.com

Please discuss any access needs with the invigilators or call The Arts Catalyst on 020 7375 3690.

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