GALLERY ONE
Kuabar, a channel video, 5 mins, 2007.
(from the series 'Floating Worlds', 2009).

GALLERIES TWO
A Dog Laid Over Do, single channel video, 5 mins 20 secs, 2009.
A View, single channel video, 5 mins 20 secs, 2009.
The Shadow, single channel video, 4 mins 15 secs, 2009.

AV GALLERY
Phil Davis, single channel video, 5 mins 20 secs, 2009.
(from the series 'A Time to Die', 2006).

KILLING TIME
A VIDEO RETROSPECTIVE
CURATED BY AMELIA DOUGLAS

CHRISTOPHER KÖLLER

PRODUCTION CREDITS
Cormac Lally, editing and sound for 'Aberrant' series
and 'A Time to Die' series; Tommy Green, editing for
The Shadow and A Dog Laid Over Do, single channel video,
Mizuno Ogi, single channel video.

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KINGS
Kings Art Centre, 100 Miller Street, North Melbourne 3051
Killing Time
1-29 October 2010
Kings Art Centre, 100 Miller Street, Melbourne 3051
Gallery hours
Wed, Fri, Sat 12-5pm, Thurs 12-7pm
www.kingsartcentres.com.au
Left: Urn, from the series Aberrant 2002
Right top: Jailer, from the series Aberrant 2002
Right bottom: Loopy (Boys on Bed), from the series Aberrant 2002
What is the meaning of the unacceptable? The unacceptable is in part a matter of visibility — of image—present and image—absent. In the panopticon Jacques Rancière, an image is never the solitarily embodiment of a reality, but an element in a chain of representation that weaves an understanding of a world through consensus. Killing Time brings together a selection of Christopher Killer’s video works on death, sex, golf and surfing in a bid to question notions of acceptability and abnormality within contemporary society. At the heart of Killer’s practice is a desire for dizziness—a desire to “kill off” stagnant thought—bogus logic by offering new configurations of perception and meaning. His videos in particular are marked with an emantic sensory of rebellion that reflects the sheer wretchedness of an all-too-regulated world.

Although most well known for his photographic practice, Killer has also been producing and exhibiting video installations for nearly a decade. The videos in Killing Time were shot using a digital camcorder between 2000 and 2002, and are populated with a cast of rebels including poets, rock-fish-eaters, film noir protagonists and Japanese surfers. These are stories woven around an unlikely collection of characters that do not, cannot, or will not fit within ‘normal’ societal roles, and who move through life as socially histórically loaded and poetically charged.

In 2000, Killer wrote that “in the 1980s, writers and artists have acknowledged that actual abenai (authenticity: truth, sincerity, extreme, romantic, sexual and religious passion) is not only fascinating to others, but also that ‘normality’ can appear abject when shifted in context.” This acknowledged link between context and consciousness was the jumping-off point for his ‘Unevent’ series, represented in this exhibition by the works Shikoku, Spike and Loop (all 2002). Based on stories found in various newspaper clippings and articles, these works visualize instances of ‘abnormal’ behaviour by re-enacting reported scenarios. Shikoku investigates the pathology of the ‘Kara Syndrome’, a psychiatric disorder in which the sufferer believes his penis is slowly disapproaching into his body, and that this genital retraction will eventually result in death. Spike is based on the story of a German veteran who was hospitalised for septicaemia caused by obsessively pinning his World War II medals to his naked chest.

Killer’s work is inspired by the story of a pair of rockfish-eaters in the UK who doped thousands of British citizens into donating their works to a non-existent ‘charity’, and then incorporated the works as props in their private, radio-masochistic rituals. When Detective Sergeant John Belger entered the couple’s flat, he had to step through an inch thick carpet of works seeking “they were everywhere and anywhere. All over the furniture, hanging from lampshades and even in the microwave, flying pan and cockerel.” The pair were arrested for “conspiring to commit acts of gross indecency and incitement to commit unlawful wounding on each other” and jailed for 18 months.

The punitive and sinister eradication of ‘unacceptable’ behaviour reappears in Killer’s 2002 movie works around the ambiguous murder of poet and playwright Federico Garcia Lorca. Lorca was allegedly executed in 1936 during the Spanish Civil War, in retribution for his leftest political affiliations, ‘liberal’ sexual preferences and anti-fascist views. For the production of a One Legged School Teacher, Two Anarchists Bullfighters and a Poet (2002), Killer visited the forest in which Lorca may have spent his final moments. He took with him historian Ian Gibson’s book The Assassination of Federico Garcia Lorca as a kind of guide book or map for his journey. Although Lorca’s body was never found, Gibson’s book includes testimony from a gravedigger who claims to have buried the poet along with a one-legged schoolteacher and two anarchistic bullfighters in the hills outside Granada.

If one proceeds along The Archbishop’s Road, Gibson writes, leaving the Coloma behind and taking the road that runs along the railroad tracks, you’ll reach a forest edge. “Three minutes walk at a sharp jog, up a steep path, you reach the road where it passes over a small gorge...” Running along the path towards the edge of Lorca’s forest, Killer’s, gritty handheld walk through the forest is interspersed with footage captured in a hedge maze, the images merge and melding in a dark and unsettling meditation on the termination of individuals deemed ‘unacceptable’ by the State.

This video is presented together with a large-scale colour photograph (Ajijic, Site of Execution, 1936), and a second, silent black and white photo (The Shadow, 2002). As an actor in a student theatre, Federico Garcia Lorca played the part of the Sombre (the shadow) during a racial of the 17th century play ‘L’Ile de France’... A story about a man who, through the use of the leisure activities of golf and surfing, drifting off the shore of Chigasaki Beach in Ajijic (2002), an industrial surfer waits for the next wave. Rusted, industrial debris juts out of the ocean around him, cutting through the sleek, grey water like strange, post-apocalyptic ruins. For many Japanese surfers, beaches like Chigasaki are viewed as symbols of resistance or as antibodies to mainstream corporate culture. They are, quite literally, sites of escape. As Killer has noted, these are the surfers’ “fanatic pursuit of authenticity through connection with the natural world” reveals a desire to escape the ‘phantasmagorical’ of signage, neon and LEOS’ that saturates their everyday environments.

Similar motifs course across the green in Mitsuho Jdou’s 2006, a mini-loop set in the spattered, manicured grounds of the Takashimadaira Golf Course in Tokyo. Killer’s static camera takes in the vast expanses of green grass as golf balls roll out into the dark, sublime recesses of space beyond the green. Against the invisible driving range like a bizarre dusting of synthetic snow, the balls are eventually swept away by the automated moving course, suspended in an endless state of ‘play’, human activity here completely subsumed by the rhythm of technology and the automation of the machine.

Mitsuho Jdou, like many of the videos in Killing Time, appears to view escape as a form of active removal or extraction, as a means by which to overcome the constraints of fantasy, retreat and passive evasion. Such liberatory promises are found throughout Killer’s practice. The point, to return to Rancière, is to not announce the reality hidden behind the frame, but to build over this reality other communities of perceptions and meanings, other settings of time and space that demesh the terms of ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’ in the pursuit of dizziness. Normality is a fiction, Killer suggests, that constantly provokes dissent.