



**LEEDS
ARTS RESEARCH
CENTRE**

/SECONDS PETER LEWIS

OUTPUT INFORMATION

Title:
/seconds

Output Type:
M – Exhibition

Venue:
Sharjah Art Foundation

Year of first exhibition:
2014

Research Groups:
Curation



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION STATEMENT

/seconds is a large-scale curatorial project which intersects the fields of new media, publishing and the archiving of contemporary art in the internet age. Lewis's contribution to the field is an original model, an online journal (www.slashseconds.co.uk), questioning the role of curatorship in digital spaces by reversing the exhibition and publication process, starting instead with online publication.

In 2014, Lewis curated a substantial exhibition which was held at the Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF), featuring 150 artists from the journal, which has, since its launch, showcased the work of nearly 2000 artists. The /seconds exhibition transposed artworks from digital space into the gallery, which led to new research insights about the relationship between curation and publishing practice. The journal, which positions the 'global network' as a space of engagement between artists and the public, also presents an assemblage of text, visual and sound-based work, and acts as an ever-materialising platform.

The exhibition, installed by the Foundation's exhibition team of 70, was accompanied by the launch of the /seconds catalogue, which included essays translated into English and Arabic. The catalogue launch at SAF, an internationally important foundation, and a curator's talk was held at The Jam Jar, Dubai. Throughout the exhibition, a series of educational tours maximised impact.

/seconds was seen by 1500 people at the preview and a further 5000 for the duration of the exhibition. For this work, Lewis was nominated for the Global Fine Art Award (2015), in the category of Contemporary and Post-War art. Impacts include: a broadcast for Resonance FM for which Lewis was interviewed by Fari Bradley, a newscast on Sharjah TV, which conveyed the scale of the project, and international press (The National; Art Rabbit). In its online format /seconds continues to reach worldwide audiences with an average of 612,470 unique visitors per annum.

2015 AWARD NOMINEES GLOBAL FINE ART AWARDS

America Is Hard to See

Whitney Museum of American Art

NYC

Islamic Art Now: Contemporary
Art of the Middle East

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Los Angeles

Agnes Martin

Tate Modern

London

/seconds

Sharjah Art Foundation

Sharjah

In Part

Fondazione Prada

Milan

Shirin Neshat: Art in exile

The Smithsonian's Hirshhorn
Museum and Sculpture Garden

Washington, DC

Sol Lewitt

Fundacion Botin

Santander

On Kawara – Silence

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

NYC

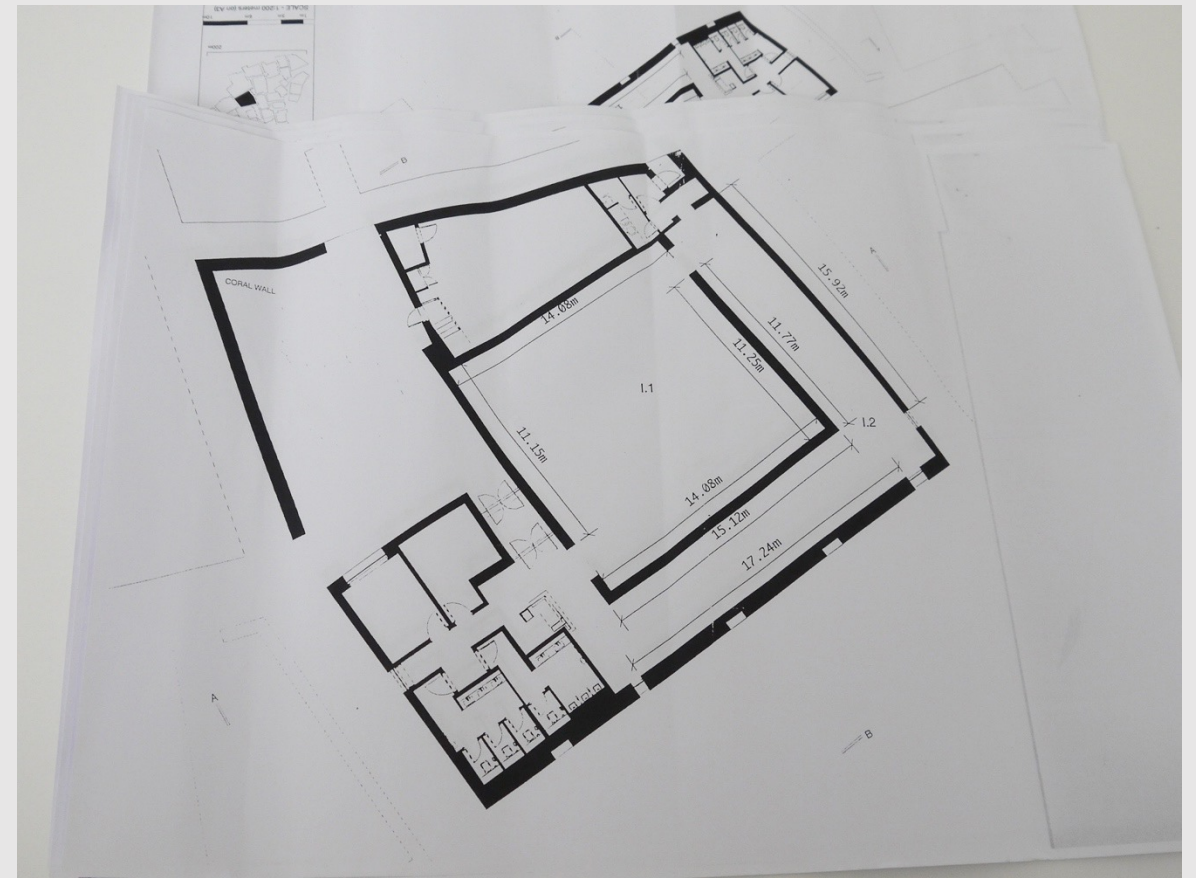
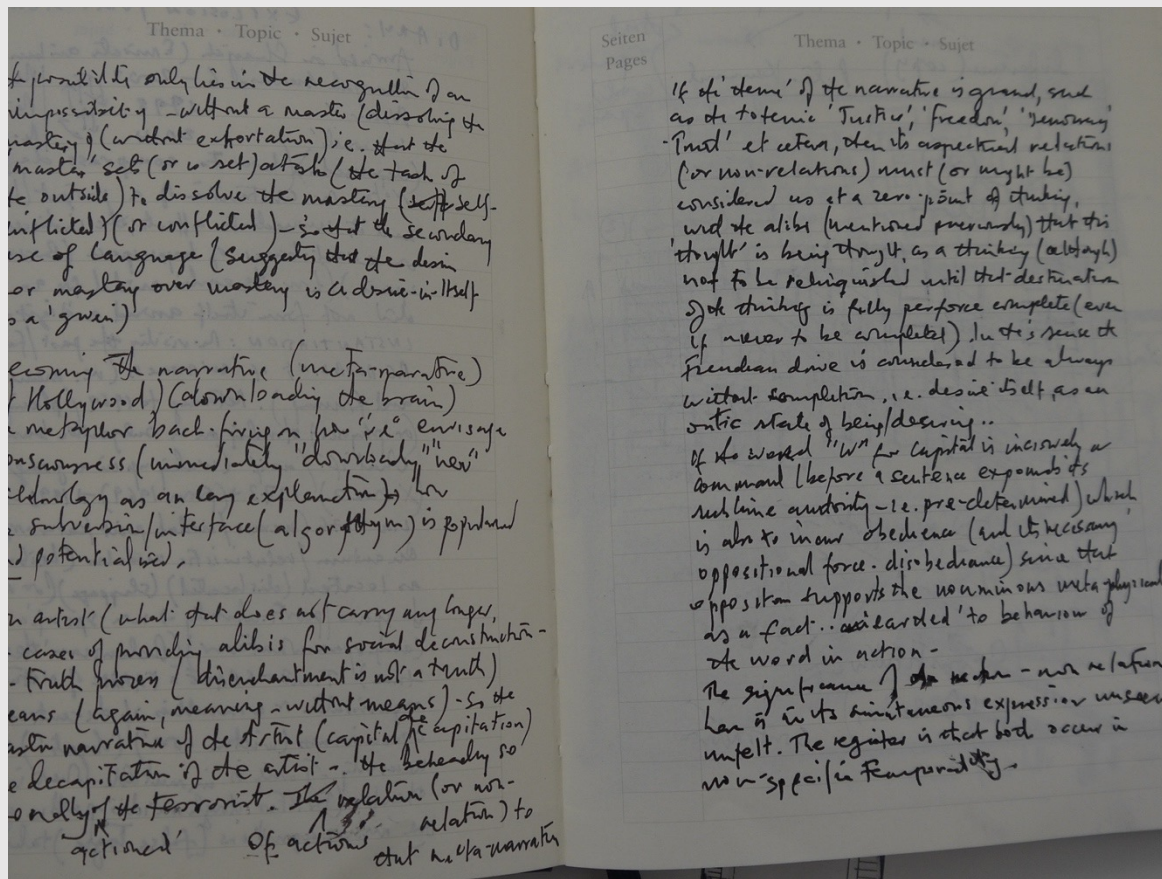


The Sharjah Biennale and Foundation have worked hard to make it a major international venue in the art world. It's not a commercial space, it's one of the most important free public spaces, beautifully designed and it can host people like me, or you, which is an extraordinary privilege.



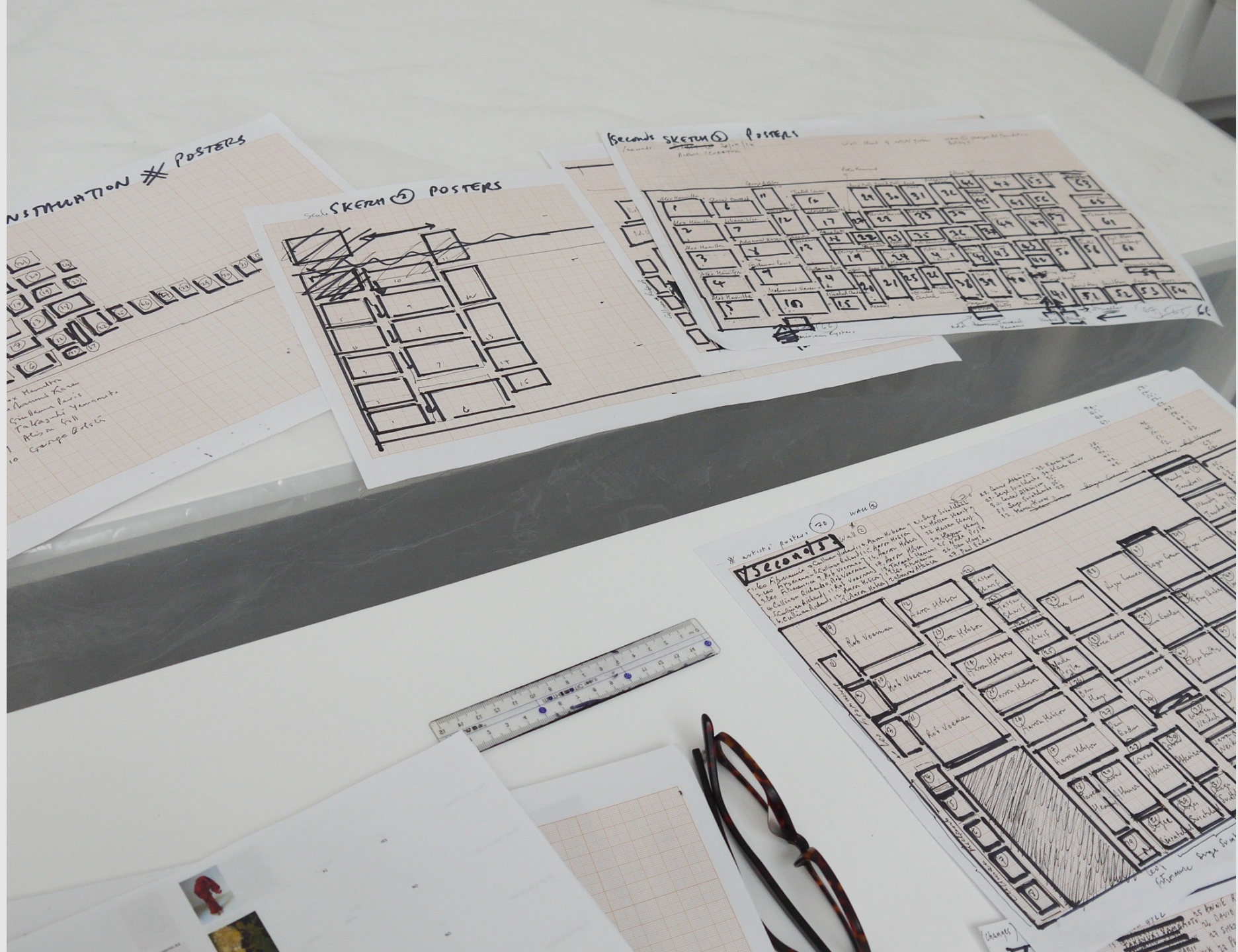


The exhibition is designed to be navigated.



For me, writing is an object just as much as a sculpture is an object, or curating.

In /seconds, we're more interested in the journalistic, poetic or the cinematic possibilities of text: storyboards, scripts, notes, notations, diagrams, scores, propositions, rehearsals, unfinished red pencil drafts.









[illegible]

✓ Reprint (new copy A0)

An archive that is continually re-assembling lost or forgotten works and their precursors.



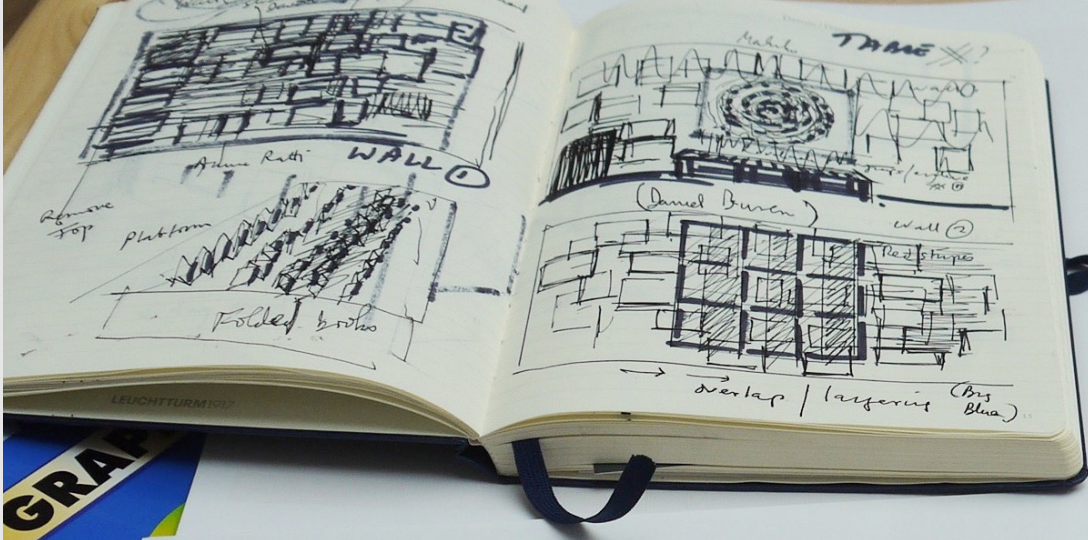






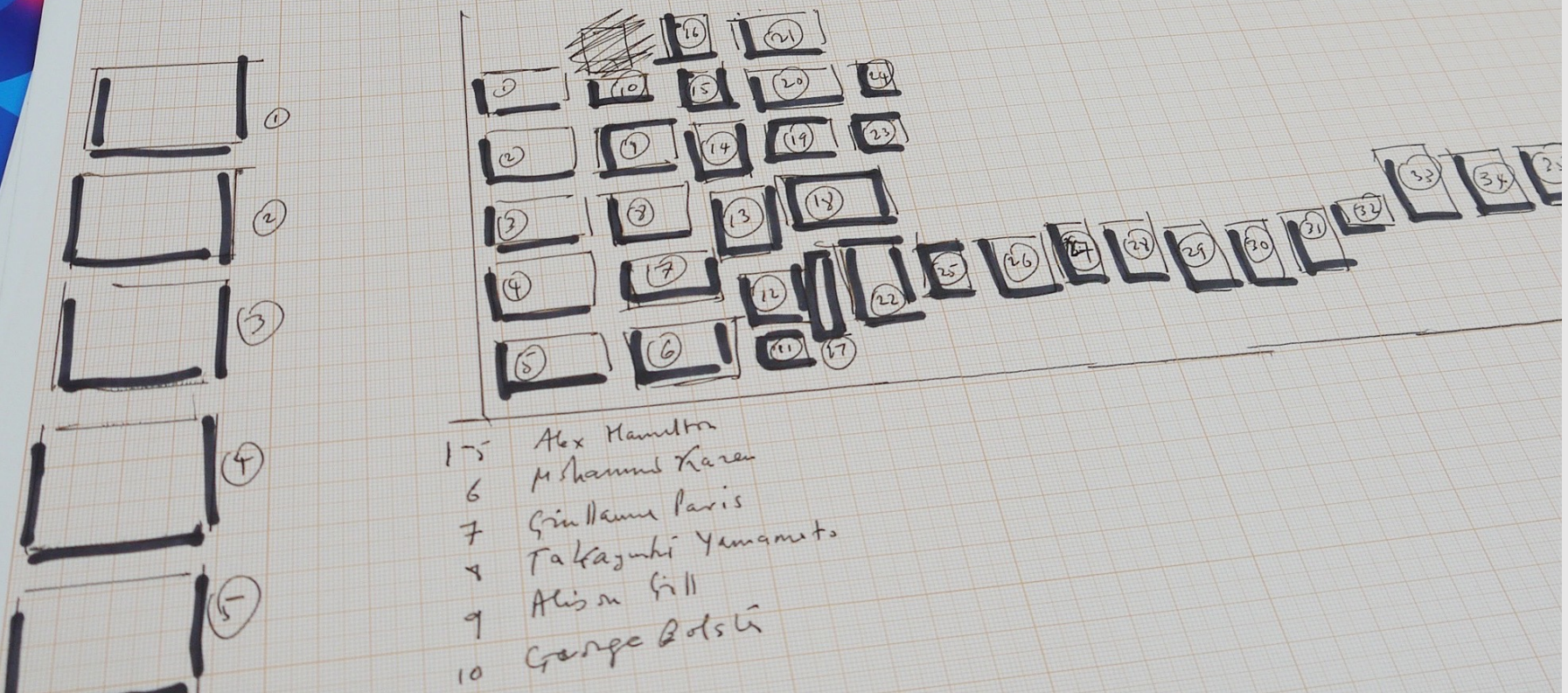
Curators use very traditional curatorial methods, but when artists duplicate them, they force a new chaotic space within that discipline that may produce a hybrid form.





GRAN

Sherds # LIST / DIAGRAM



/seconds is activated by fictions, synchronicity, co-incidences and connotations that circulate on the internet.

/seconds included installations,
interactive performance, video,
photography and several hundred
commissioned posters.







We worked as a team to install.



Sharjah Art Foundation presents a selection of artists' work from the online journal /seconds which covers a broad range of issues and art practices from different cultural perspectives.





If I feel that someone is more skilled or has better intuition or understanding of something, I need to let that happen. I'm just there as a kind of guide. The construction is crystalline, the space liminal. The workforce assembles its skills in bringing these qualities together.



Various pieces are not so relational. To make a distinction or affinity between them is intended to be difficult.



APPENDIX

SIX PILLARS Interview
/SECONDS
Fari Bradley and Peter Lewis
At Sharjah Art Foundation
October 10 2014

Curated by Peter Lewis, Sharjah Art Foundation presents a selection of artists' works from the online journal /seconds. (2004–2014), which covers a broad range of issues and art practices from different cultural perspectives.

Peter Lewis: We worked as a team to install. I could show you the video, there are about 50 video pieces, all edited for exhibition.

Fari Bradley: What, you had to edit them?

Peter Lewis: Well, you know, it's not always so simple to show pieces downloaded from the internet, so I asked artists for new copies.

Fari Bradley: Yes, because you don't have the work.

Peter Lewis: Some online video is ok to download. Hoor Al-Qasimi came up with a solution where we installed 14" monitors that have the same web screen resolution which is a nice way to look at them, because the 14" monitor is a small screen like a computer screen, so you don't lose any definition. It's the same as going on online, yet in a social relation to others. That online viewing aspect was quite important, where there are many different video presentations in the show. Some are intended by artists as autonomous, works by Liliane Lijn, Jalal and Graziella Rizkallah Toufic, and Guillaume Paris are intended for multiple monitors. In the main space they complement the central piece, by Al Fadhil – a new realisation we showed in Birmingham of his Baghdad Café, a social space where visitors can participate sewing and sitting around. Fadhil's Baghdad Café adds a socio-political dimension to his other nomadic project, The Iraq Pavilion, which appears in various media, from banners and murals, to wearing tee-shirts, produced specifically to alert attention to the serious omission of the Iraq representation at Venice Biennale. Others like Ruth McLennan and Nooshin Farhid are showing video films whose subject marks a personal transition through different cultures.

Various pieces are not so relational. To make a distinction or affinity between them is intended to be difficult, but I think nothing loses out in this provocation to entertainment. These placements are to do with the transitions from virtual space to actual place as much as in the experienced time both present and recorded. It's not a competition between the now and not now; the new and old, seen, unseen. There's no opposite relation, virtual and actual. That's played out. I think the show works as the online journal works, which super-imposes an archive, a magazine, an exhibition, a performative space, like a spiral. That's the task of curating to be adjacent to contemporary life. I'm not really a curator. I get labelled and, in a sense, I am a curator, but it's more to do with how to work with other artists, being an artist myself. The writing in the magazine is also in the show, translated into Arabic presented as wall texts transcribed from the editorial. In the tradition of conceptual art, the writing is as much an artwork placed with video works. Various trajectories run through this beautiful space; all three main areas present multi-dimensional work, some works in transit, arrived in crates, which originally had appeared in the magazine as pure images, now in their object form, play on physical presence.

That's interesting. We've discussed that a lot, the relation of how digital images are perhaps things in themselves, because when I asked artists would they like to be in this project, I was also referring them to the poster projects that I'd done over the last ten years by invitation, printing from digital files sent on the web. The main project was commissioned by Emma Dexter at Tate Modern a part of Century City in 2000 titled Big Blue where we had 100 or so artists' works installed in the Turbine Hall. I've repeated that as a nomadic kind of work re-surfacing with different participants; that's gone to Berlin, Glasgow, to various cities in the world before, but here, in Sharjah, I think this is probably one of the most fully realised and considered presentations.

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The walls are six metres high, so you get this at a glance on arriving... I wouldn't call it a spectacle, but you do get a feeling of the scale through multiplicity, that keeps surprising you. Around the corner is another group of artists and one space keeps opening upon another space, it's very complex but, hopefully, the interstice presents each visitor with its novelty. I think it's a kind of public event that you don't need to know anything particularly specialised about the works. That egalitarian approach is something, of course that the Internet provides for everybody. Here it has a critical dimension, that transposes what we take for granted as automatic or immediate in the technology by interrupting the flow.

I didn't want to lose that principle, breaking the utopian logic. The Internet is a kind of utopia of inclusions that hides exclusions or fractures, the 'utopia' always excludes whereby there's a totalitarian concept of how we all should live and behave. Slavoj Zizek writes in The Universal Exception, that for Hegel "X is created, its space is outlined only by those repeated failures to achieve it". For audiences accustomed to a kind of generic modern art experience as a spectacle of objects, the exhibition offers at the very least, an exception such as Zizek's 'X', by its incompleteness.

Fari Bradley: It's important for you to make the difference between a kind of totalitarian utopia and a democratic process. I know, on /seconds, your online journal, the work is submitted but there is a panel that chooses, so they go through a selection process, right?

Peter Lewis: The name 'seconds' comes from seeing John Frankenheimer's 1966 sci-fi movie, which anticipated the technologies for a utopian dream concocted by an insidious industrial complex, where we are today. I think /seconds is activated by fictions, synchronicity, co-incidences and connotations that circulate on the internet. It's not a formal process at all. It's not peer review. When work responds well to an editorial or donates a 'second' diachronic perspective, we publish. Artists Annie Ratti or Makiko Nagaya, Cecilia Wee, Melanie Manchot, and Tony Chakar,

are all represented here in Sharjah, as regular contributors.

Fari Bradley: I noticed Cecilia Wee's name and I was surprised because she's known as a curator and broadcaster, but for you, in your practice, I would say, even though you've taught so much curating and you've done so much curating, you're still listed as an artist and present Cecilia's work as a curator. So, it's interesting to hear you say, "The writing that I did was part of the show," because I think it is too much of a delineation when we say someone who is curating is not doing any art. There's that kind of problem that we have with this categorising, which doesn't really explain the complexity of human capability.

Peter Lewis: Yes, for me, writing is an object just as much as a sculpture is an object, or curating, so if you're using words, most of the writing in /seconds is necessarily unacademic, although we break the rule. It's not categorically stable, if we suppose that there is an instability in displacing subject and object in kinds of writing. It's not a divisive process whereby you set up parameters, say, for publishing. For example, the polemic in Third Text's journal, I perceive as the long-term publishing project of Rasheed Araeen. Rasheed is represented in /seconds, as a highly influential artist and activist who has also acted as a curator and publisher. He maintains his intention to publish writing which is also something he perceives as an artwork, as an idea he nominates with many manifestations and possibilities. Third Text is now (since he left) more likely to be perceived as a peer-reviewed academic journal. It loses something in the translation, and in the denomination of writing as a significant influence between art and politics, that Rasheed argued for, not to be in the service one to the other.

But in /seconds, we're more interested in the journalistic, poetic or the cinematic possibilities of text: storyboards, scripts, notes, notations, diagrams, scores, propositions, rehearsals, unfinished red pencil drafts, that we like to put up.

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It just breaks down the paranoid-critical codification — the standardisation or normalisation of literature and art ‘practices’ and all the categories and the divisions between them are paranoid, once authorised with patronising moralism talking about borderlines only to set up new territorial divisions. Theirs’s is a peer community that keeps its secrets.

People that I have taught are included in /seconds as well, so my work as a teacher is equally as important as a curator and artist, I don’t make these divisions. 90% is oriented around making work blindfold. I meet people and we do shows together, and we make work together, but they’re also in the magazine in one way or another, or sometimes a topic will come up and form the basis of an exhibition or a new series of paintings or whatever, it’s a very fluent agency and lucid kind of material that escapes meaning. I write the editorial more from an initiation, which people can make what they like of. If I send out an invitation based around some of the ideas that I’m working on, I get responses that illuminate the idea, and that’s what constitutes the edition. An idea can be like a flash, momentarily remembered, then forgotten. Working with Hoor is another edition if you like, following a trajectory. It’s not changed over time but moved to a different situation.

Fari Bradley: To see people using the Internet in this way is illuminating. You were talking about using all these hidden processes like notes, and I was thinking about a couple of books that I’ve got on my shelf which are just application letters, failed application letters written with a typewriter by an artist, to different festivals with propositions for installations. And I thought about how much the Internet shows us, and all the digital media that you’re using. We see the finished product and it’s so easy to create this façade, that there’s none of the process, like you would see perhaps in a sketch or a painting where the process is revealed. You’re using the Internet in a way, as you say, like as an innovative space as opposed to just a showcase, like a Saatchi online where all the finished work is just up.

Peter Lewis: I think there are several things. Firstly, the idea of

multiplicity is key, we know that anything in the human realm that exceeds the limits of the human requires we go back to the idea of limits, which might disturb value but argue for a new universal conception. So, you try to represent four million painters, but it becomes virtually impossible to make value judgements on quality, if we only bear witness in the encyclopaedic quantitative representation of Biennales. So, we’re not interested so much in quality and qualification either. Nor visibility as such. Something must happen that marks a qualitative shift. What is worthless, may yet be without constraints. One of the things that happens, I think, is this feeling that things are mutable, or porous, they’re not fixed in the same way to qualify or disqualify, but limit how technology has affected the general reception of qualities.

Art goes underground rather than holds up the sovereignty of artists by consensus. I think /seconds is about more things that are happening under the surface. I was running Redux Projects in London, up to 2007, looking back on the previous ten years. We re-presented lesser known work by many artists and curators such as Giorgio Sadotti, Annie Ratti, Nooshin Farhid, Goshka Macuga, Ellen Cantor, Reza Aramesh, Lida Abdul, Paul O’Neill, Shezad Dawood, Harold Offeh, crossing over art and curating. Things are forgotten in the media, so I like the idea of an archive that is continually re-assembling lost or forgotten works and their precursors.

I still therefore use classical curatorial methods. I published for example, the scribbled notes and diagrams online. The acceleration of the internet, of course, means everyone can download whatever they want, there’s no kind of copyright – what you put up appears under another’s name instantly. You arrive before departure. Causality is broken by immediacy. Now that copyright is open to debate about what is owned, it’s a difficult one. It’s much easier in the museum to not accept or to accept based on authenticity, whereas the Internet has made it virtually impossible. I am not antagonistic to that in either case and I like to find affirmations rather than hostilities that are slippages between the disingenuous and genuine.

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Fari Bradley: That was a healthy outlook because I work a lot with sound art and experimental music, and we would deal with plunderphonics as an art form, so you would be cutting up and splicing other people's material and there's been this consistent battle, yes.

Peter Lewis: Yes, typically plagiarism was and still is a subversive strategy of the situation, deliberately shifts an original intention into new material effects by its recursion or tautology. The new issue in progress plagiarises everything as the edition itself is plagiarised.

Fari Bradley: But it's a nod, an honour, it's a nod to that work, it's not always, as you said, something antagonistic.

Peter Lewis: Yes, I'm just interested in the 'infrathin' state between states, and I think it's a category that hasn't really existed, therefore impossible to define, so we're in a bit of the dark, we know the sensory effects, but we don't have a cause, since the situation is all disembodied effects. No genus, no world. So, in some ways we are all floating in this intermediate place. Curators use very traditional curatorial methods, but when artists duplicate them, they force a new chaotic space within that discipline that may produce a hybrid form.

Fari Bradley: When artists use curatorial spaces?

Peter Lewis: Yes, they do use the curatorial, but they don't use it in an academic way because curatorial methodology, like scientific method, must break the rule. So, we break the rules in some ways, we're aware that we still use those rules, since we exist by them. I like the idea in /seconds that we are anarchic but have organising principles. I will show, say, my own work as an artist without worrying that I'm also the editor, I'm not having a problem about, say, neutrality or transparency, because I don't really believe that's the case. It makes me more of an artist in being an editor who is working with other people, where the project is a piece of work. It's an artwork with multiple viewpoints, why its transitive character translates so easily to exhibition forms, which are also mutable.

Fari Bradley: You're making me think of Nooshin Farhid's project Use this Kind of Sky. You wrote for that, and so when I went to read the piece of work that you'd put on there, it was very personal. Had she told you what to write for that?

Peter Lewis: No, in fact, when I did the first poster project, Big Blue, named after the movie and IBM program, everyone said, "You can't write this, it's so personal". When I first saw the British Tory party election posters and they were blue, someone had cleverly removed the party slogan, so it was just a big, blue rectangle, and I thought that's the best graffiti I'd ever seen. And I was writing about re-inventing Blue and, of course, referred to the '68 Situationist slogans, the ocean of politics. I found a picture of Karl Marx and stuck it on the blue background like a little star, a meteor, coming gradually towards you, or at the same time receding into space. I printed it as an invitation with the personal press release. And it really offended because I was playing around with these taboos, but its audacity changed things momentarily. To write a press release in a very personal way was not a problem, but it was inappropriate since it broke a kind of etiquette of an impersonal, neutral style, since it was an important election in UK. The press release was insincere, precisely since it disobeyed the standards for appropriate and acceptable objective writing. At that point everyone suddenly thought, 'well yes, why don't I do what I want?'

Interviewer: I think convention can be very suffocating. It steals honesty from us in a way because it's very difficult to be honest in a conventional format. So, when you came here, you worked with Hoor Al-Qasimi.

Peter Lewis: Yes, from the 90s actually, '98.

Fari Bradley: You curated the Biennial with her in 2003. For /seconds, Hoor has selected from the website with you as a co-curator. The works always existed virtually. What's it like to bring it here in Sharjah, in the Emirates, and give it a physicality?

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Peter Lewis: Well, when I left Sharjah in 2003, I started the magazine virtually straightaway, about six months later, and I'd got a research fellowship to do it from AHRC, at Leeds Metropolitan University. Hoor Al-Qasimi and I had worked together, and she also was involved in the inaugural projects at Redux, the space I ran with Makiko Nagaya in London between 2004 and 2007. She invited me, ten years on, to collaborate again, bringing our experience from the different routes we took since. She built the Foundation and established Sharjah as a centre in the Arab world. The Biennale and Foundation have worked hard to make it a major international venue in the art world. It's not a commercial space, it's one of the most important free public spaces, beautifully designed and it can host people like me, or you, which is an extraordinary privilege. But I also think Hoor knows exactly what she's doing. She selected the work for the exhibition very sensitively. This selection process is something that people need to feel reflects cultural certainty, but there is none available if you really think about it, and it's also not as simple as saying, "These are my friends," or it promotes a brand, it's not like that. Whatever happens is with the work and how it behaves in context. And you can't just accept everything, because then that wouldn't be a selection, but an indecision. The selection is important because the decision, what it acknowledges, is an absolute limit. It announces a deferral of meaning hidden in the decision. It posits uncertainty. That responsibility to ascertain is shared with the visitor. To be honest, it's abstract, like music, something that might flow, has different kinds of rhythms and tonalities, textures, sensualities, synesthetic qualities; it's a spoken thing, unspoken, silent, but there is an audience. It happens in conversations, in passing, overheard in transit. It happens in an inconstant way. You might be catching a train every day, and something comes to you suddenly whilst momentarily distracted. I don't know whether one needs even to know, it might be somebody else's job to analyse how that works, because what's on the surface is an instance. People say, "Well, that's incredible, I love that", nothing more. But the desire for explication is never fully satisfied. Maybe it's all surface.

Fari Bradley: Where will your work go, do you think, your personal work?

Peter Lewis: Well, there's the artist, Abdullah Al-Saadi, who I took to San Paolo Bienal in 2004, to represent the UAE Pavilion. He's been documenting the land between Sharjah and Oman, and his diaristic paintings, drawings, and collections of found objects are strange and beautiful. He lives in the mountains between the states. He's an artist, undeniably, whose life is inseparable from his work. We took a car ride yesterday in the mountains towards Khorfakkan on the Gulf, so I took a series of photographs of the landscape and I thought I would make drawings. I now realise I was unconsciously influenced by Abdullah Al-Saadi but I thought at the time these photographs would start a new work. Things fit together accidentally and shortly after I saw the maps of Rasheed Araeen that were overlaid in primary colours delineating the Mediterranean region and its movements. These also became an influence, re-drawing the Mediterranean to include hidden or erased relations of Africa and Asia. Nations were re-aligned through these diagrams. My own drawings of Palestine are derived from a strong empathy with these artists. That's, for me, fundamental. What [Alan Badiou] might call 'an event' is indeterminate, and unnameable. /seconds is a disobedient form of journalism, it's very 'polite' at the same time it's...

Interviewer: Offensive?

Peter Lewis: It's not offensive. It offends certain conservative notions of sanctioned criticism.

Interviewer: But I think if you had your own space which would probably be the natural progression for someone to be commandeering this innovative space online and occasionally, nomadically, making that happen in exhibitions. To then have your own space...

Peter Lewis: I've had spaces.

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Interviewer: Yes, but if it was permanent, it would be like a noose around your neck, because you constantly would have to feed the space and its programme, you wouldn't have the freedom. I think you're someone who thrives on the freedom of change and fluidity. You need that, and therefore, with the Internet, you're making the best use of it.

Peter Lewis: But, at the same time, I've worked with the people here over 15 years. In 1998, and then with the same team working in 2003 on the Biennale and now with /seconds. If I feel that someone is more skilled or has a better intuition or understanding of something, I need to let that happen. I'm just there as a kind of guide. The construction is crystalline, the space liminal. The workforce assembles its skills in bringing these qualities together. It was Paul Neagu in 1976 who showed me how important the engineering is in both making the work and installing it. Some archival material from the 1970s Generative period is presented here. Neagu taught me a lot about intuiting mathematics, how everyone could design or make something technical. The drawings are diagrammatic, so when I started to want to show work outside of the gallery system, the spatial relations, the way that one would, say, place a group of video works in a space without conflict or hierarchy, were paramount. The shelving encourages an engagement with each monitor, forming affinities between each as an assembled body of works.

The exhibition is designed to be navigated. That's why Frederick Kiesler's picture is set at the entrance with Marcel Duchamp's, first seen when you come in the door in a relation with all the diagrams I made for the installation. Both artists were interested in advancing the diagrammatic 'correalism' between objects, environment, and experience. I published the curatorial hand written and corrected notes recently for a lecture on Paul Neagu, to rehearse their informal delivery. The rehearsal is in the delivery. That could be initially confusing. There's that chaotic principle that produces value and I think that intermediate space is where a new possibility

emerges.

Interviewer: It sounds like the essence of your work. Thank you so much Peter, it's the opening tonight, so a lot of people are going to want your attention and it looks successful, so congratulations.

Peter Lewis: Thanks, thanks a lot.

[End of recorded material at 00:25:00]

This text is an extended version adapted from the original interview with Fari Bradley, 6 Pillars and Resonance Radio recorded October 2014

Available online at:

https://www.mixcloud.com/6Pillars/six-pillars-peter-lewis-fabienne-adeoud-and-the-gcc-collective-at-sharjah-art-foundation/?fbclid=IwAR3x6B4LYtQNNIF9F2AFHc_8NYXx_cdZ8sl7vrKn7h9pLp0KgXEGrRu0wHU

Background Sharjah Art Foundation and Biennale

Founded in 1993, the Sharjah Biennale has grown from a traditional and regionally focused exhibition into the global event it has become today. Originally modelled on a classic biennial format with artists chosen to officially represent each participating country, the Biennale provided a rare glimpse into the world of artistic practice. 2003 saw a marked shift in direction as Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi took on the role of its Director. She invited the artist and curator Peter Lewis to curate the 6th edition of the Biennale with her. With two artists at the helm, the focus turned more directly towards the art and the individual artists themselves, thereby establishing what has proven to be an enduring theme in the Biennial's future manifestations, and the ethos of its Art Foundation.

About the Exhibition, /seconds

Hosted by the Sharjah Art Foundation, the exhibition /seconds followed a line of collaborative work between Al-Qasimi and Lewis since 1998. The inauguration of the Art Foundation by Sheikha Hoor Al-Qasimi has since focused the Arab region in a sustained programme of international exhibitions, events, residencies, and commissions, establishing it as a world class institution. In the last decade Sharjah Art Foundation has stood as a globally recognised centre for the meeting of art and political discussion. The exhibition /seconds, in its conception, echoes the desire to articulate the Foundation's universalism as a new and provocative conception.

/seconds has curated over 100 artists' posters and 40 video works, for the exhibition, selected from a decade of its online publication. The works chosen by Al-Qasimi and Lewis expose a global condition, addressing the effects of networks. The exhibition includes work that translates digital transmissions in a wide range of materials and approaches to reconstitute the radical activity of independent curating, in transition to a contemporary form of exhibition making. How can museums respond, when installation art long ago dissolved the boundaries between 'private space' and 'public space', collapsing the frameworks of gallery, institution, art

world, commercial market, which contextualise the artwork? "The gallery, and the wider reaches of publicly accessible space, are subsumed within the artist's territory, and there is no longer any unambiguous line between where the viewer is asked to submit to an artist's terms of engagement, and where socially established rather than artistically contingent laws prevail." (from Painting Space, Frieze 6, Autumn 2012), accessed at <https://frieze.com/article/painting-space>.

In this endeavour, the exhibition engages the multiplications of global time and space, to challenge a privileged territory, the exhibition of the museum. According to the Lebanese writer Walid Sadek, writing on post war art in Lebanon in 1999, "...installationist modes of display are constructional and excavationist and rely on particularities (even if only temporary) of a place. There is a gradual shift to another mode whose basic characteristics are of a floating intervention in an already existing non-artistic field." (p.75, Sadek, Tamass) The artists and curators, by Sadek's observation, favour a "precise, or light, parasitical instrumentalization of the already existing and dominant epistemological networks: the informational, cultural and distributional." (Walid Sadek, Tamass – Contemporary Arab Representations: Beirut/Lebanon, 1999).

Tamass, (which means contact, touch, contiguity, adjacency, tangency and confrontation), is part of Catherine David's long-term project Contemporary Arab Representations commenced in 1999. The will of modernity has been to decolonise the artwork. Al-Qasimi and Lewis read an instruction in Sadek's updating of the prevailing contingencies, to take his thesis forward. /seconds stands at the threshold of an intermediate space, between the museum and the network, where we make contact through these interventions.

Participating Artists:

Abdullah Al Saadi, Emily Allchurch, Conrad Atkinson, Fabienne Audéoud, George Bolster, Tony Chakar, Elizabeth Chadwick, Gordon Cheung, Ami Clarke, Stephen Clarke, Judith Cowan, Roger Cremers, Myriam Custers, Shezad Dawood, Sean Dower, Milena Dragicevic, Thomas Draschan, Alan Dunn, Paul Eachus, Laura Emsley, Al Fadhil, Nooshin Farhid, Anna Faushauer, David Ferry, Damian Flores Cortes, Peter Fillingham, Leo Fitzmaurice, Alison Gill, Margarita Gluzberg, Alex Hamilton, Margaret Harrison, Laura Hatry, Dan Hays, Taraneh Hemami, Aaron Hobson, Janet Hodgson, Mandy Lee Jandrell, Mohammed Kazem, Peter Kennard, Uta Kögelsberger, Karen Knorr, Colm Lally, Thaniel Lee, Liliane Lijn, Rut Blees Luxemburg, David Mabb, Ruth MacLennan, Melanie Manchot, Kito Mbiango, Makiko Nagaya, Adam Nankervis, Warren Neidich, Guillaume Paris, Nada Prlja, Annie Ratti, Cullinan Richards, Graziella Rizkallah Toufic, Giorgio Sadotti, Hilary Koob-Sassen, Edgar Schmitz, Hassan Sharif, Lisa Stansbie, Sergei Sviatchenko, Jalal Toufic, Rob Voerman, Jonathan Whitehall, Cindy Wright, Takayuki Yamamoto.

This exhibition also presents a special section composed of selected artists' video and audio from issues 1-14 with works by: Asa Anderson, Paul Allsopp, Martyn Blundell, Ben Brierley, Tim Brotherton, Edward Chell, James Chinneck, Rosie Cooper, Patrick Courtney, David Cunningham, James Early, Luciana Farinati,

William Furlong, Mark Harris, Véronique Janin Devoldère, Ben Judd, Anne Keleher, Conor Kelly, Peter Lewis, Peter Lloyd Lewis, Katrin Lock, Karl Lydon, Elizabeth McAlpine, Monika Oechsler, Uriel Orlow, Mark Pickles, Adrian Shaw, Marie-Anne Souloumiac, Stuart Tait, Anders Weberg, Cecilia Wee, Robert William, Jo Wonder

/seconds

The Indeterminate Object

The move from the private space to the online public or social space is a dramatic one that changes the way we think about ourselves and know each other (e.g. by sharing pictures, as such, these are signatures that present ourselves). The internet is good at transmitting billions of images every second, by compressing time and space to an instant. That was one of the reasons for /seconds, to acknowledge the phenomenon as part of everyone's experience, whether resident or visitor to the internet, and how the network impacts on art.

An online journal such as /seconds, as all internet sites, made of informational bytes, is configured into an order of 'pages'. The digital wiring is transformed as soon as we see a picture or hear a sound, into something more 'real'. It could be a picture of a painting, or a poster, someone talking through the screen, dancing or just pure abstraction, composed of electronic noise, or by contrast, the sound of walking in the street, so familiar that we take for granted how this illusion is generated. We enter the spatial frame of an illusion, and by implication, an architecture of seduction that suspends disbelief. The communications system of the internet has changed the cultural experience of art. Before Marshall McLuhan wrote of the 'Global Village' in 1962*, (The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man), cultures, which were held in balance by virtue of their difference, have in the last decade been adjusted on a new, uncommon ground, by virtue of a mass conglomeration and intersection of perspectives. We inherit a situation that McLuhan imagined, predicting the electronic organisation of reality and its saleable dissatisfaction. There is always more copy, more dissatisfaction, more market share, more labour.

The instances provided by the digital copy, proclaim the universality of the image. This accelerated world of images inevitably has recruited artists into membership of the virtual space, sharing works of art 'online' through the digital medium. Yet the revolutionary power of art and literature has always been initiated

by concepts of its plasticity. The Virtual, at core, is abstract, written or drawn from thought, in whatever formless beginning is made manifest. The material is born out of this contingency, finding necessity through the imaginary born of concrete social relations. We could say the Actual (or if you like, what we can think of in the turn from ideal to real) is born of the material imaginary, by an ideological adjustment of the objective world made to double- think its constitution as Virtual. The real appears as nodal point of an immense field of virtual possibilities.

Language, in the oldest forms of print-making, advances by the collective wish for communication for its own sake. We communicate every day without needing to say anything 'important'. Language, in this case, reads visually or by sensory activation, as the choreography of signs, articulates by pattern and rhythm, or in hearing sounds, transmits a sequence of repetitions, harmonies and dissonances. Words are themselves highly organised objects. The book and the magazine are such objects by which we seek to design ourselves, to feel something of the real world through others' experience. The book, the archive and the internet are all exponential, and can be decomposed and recomposed in any virtual order. All are unique entities to endlessly configure and entangle. Their unity is never complete, nor entirely knowable.

What is the Actual? The Virtual is, at base, design. Whether translated and multiplied into words or images, singing or dancing, or in making things, we start from notations, diagrams, scores or codes from which to compose our thinking out of, and to be free from, labour. In the process, we are always acquiring new skills. Time spent on the work at hand in fact generates transformation from one medium to another, so that making is a wish for immediacy – but can only arrive through difficult, specific processes and contingent forces.

/seconds

The Indeterminate Object

Technology frames human consciousness and reconstitutes its definition and borders. The technology that we witness and apply today is really deep in our consciousness, which translates the neural objects of thought as a formation of networks. The devices and their objects carry structural complexity so instantly that the machinery that enables transmission becomes transparent. What mediates the social practices of crafting objects, now exceeds the human touch. The network provides the metaphor for all experience yet overturns all its values and objective orientation, again re-defining and questioning what it is to be human. We propose a turn to speculate the orientations of the object, always more than a bundle of networks and borders separating human from the non-human.

But what of the Actual? What subsists in a virtual world? Have these aspects moved gravity itself, so we emerge out of an imaginary only to enter an unreal world? Rather than grounded in real places what had unique character begins to appear everywhere, yet radically distorted. The order of things changes, and effects which are normally conceived as secondary, exceed their primary causes. This is not then a reflection of the world but a refraction that bends the world itself, skews our thinking of objective reality upon its virtual, 'second' character, as something actual, in-itself, which exists outside of our thinking.

The work over ten years of /seconds provides thought of how actual objects and events might emerge by chance from virtual space. The exhibition is the proof that things move into and out of the world as events, which always offer another possibility of an unexpected, virtual dimension.

The publication that accompanies the exhibition presents a selection of texts published in the issues of the journal /seconds. These are examples of writings about art, technology and politics that enable the reader to ask difficult questions about the effects of de-localisation and the construction of figures and new sequences.

Is art and its communication today compromised by technology or does the new technology release art to a renewed purpose? Does art still represent the world from a neutral space and category? Is art today a 'symptom' of contemporary culture? Does the copy now exceed the original work of art? Do effects exceed their causes? How can we 'use' the internet? What are the social implications for the present? What are the relations of art to the rapid changes in the face of media power and markets?

Peter Lewis

* 'Global Village' is a term closely associated with Marshall McLuhan, popularized in his books *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962) and *Understanding Media* (1964). McLuhan described how the globe has been contracted into a village by electric technology and the instantaneous movement of information from every quarter to every point at the same time. In bringing all social and political functions together in a sudden implosion, electric speed heightened human awareness of responsibility to an intense degree.

A version of the text was published as the preface of the accompanying catalogue of various writings, published in /seconds 2004-2014.

/seconds is published by Sharjah Art Foundation on the occasion of the exhibition

ONLINE JOURNAL /SECONDS

/



Peter Lewis
/seconds at Sharjah Art
Foundation Selected writing
(publication)



Peter Lewis
/seconds exhibition
(installation)



Sharjah Art Foundation
/seconds exhibition (news)



Sharjah Art Foundation
/seconds exhibition (wall texts)



Sharjah Art Foundation
/seconds exhibition White
Rorschach Peter Lewis & Makiko
Nagaya (postcards)



Sharjah Art Foundation
/seconds video (installation)

<https://www.slashseconds.co.uk/issue-16/>

/seconds.

Exhibition
10 October — 9 December 2014

Gallery 3
Al Mureijah Square

Curated by Peter Lewis, Sharjah Art Foundation presents a selection of artists' works from the online journal */seconds.* (2004—2014), which covers a broad range of issues and art practices from different cultural perspectives.



<https://www.slashseconds.co.uk/issue-16/>

Overview

Curated by **Peter Lewis**, Sharjah Art Foundation presents a selection of artists' works from the online journal */seconds*. (2004-2014), which covers a broad range of issues and art practices from different cultural perspectives. The project was initiated in 2004 and has invited over 1500 artists and writers to contribute over the years. The exhibition features key contributors from the ten year period, in tandem with Lewis' curatorial projects. Works on display include installations, interactive performance, video, photography and several hundred commissioned posters. The opening will also include performances by French artist and singer Fabienne Audéoud, Al Fadhil's audience participation of *Baghdad Cafe*, and a unique screening of Judith Cowan's film, *Angelica*. Additionally the exhibition will present the premiere screening of *Ah Istanbul* by Graziella Rizkallah Toufic and Jalal Toufic.

Participating Artists

Abdullah Al Saadi, Emily Allchurch, Conrad Atkinson, Fabienne Audéoud, George Bolster, Tony Chakar, Elizabeth Chadwick, Gordon Cheung, Ami Clarke, Stephen Clarke, Judith Cowan, Roger Cremers, Myriam Custers, Shezad Dawood, Sean Dower, Milena Dragicevic, Thomas Draschan, Alan Dunn, Paul Eachus, Laura Emsley, Al Fadhil, Nooshin Farhid, Anna Faushauer, David Ferry, Damian Flores Cortes, Peter Fillingham, Leo Fitzmaurice, Alison Gill, Margarita Gluzberg, Alex Hamilton, Margaret Harrison, Laura Hatry, Dan Hays, Taraneh Hemami, Aaron Hobson, Janet Hodgson, Mandy Lee Jandrell, Mohammed Kazem, Peter Kennard, Uta Kögelsberger, Karen Knorr, Colm Lally, Thaniel Lee, Liliane Lijn, Rut Blees Luxemburg, David Mabb, Ruth MacLennan, Melanie Manchot, Kito Mbiango, Makiko Nagaya, Adam Nankervis, Warren Neidich, Guillaume Paris, Nada Prlja, Annie Ratti, Cullinan Richards, Graziella Rizkallah Toufic, Giorgio Sadotti, Hilary Koob-Sassen, Edgar Schmitz, Hassan Sharif, Lisa Stansbie, Sergei Sviatchenko, Jalal Toufic, Rob Voerman, Jonathan Whitehall, Cindy Wright, Takayuki Yamamoto.

/seconds.

SHARJAHART.ORG

/seconds is a disobedient form of journalism.

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**Talk with /seconds. Curator
Peter Lewis and Exhibiting
Artists**

Panel Discussion
Sunday, 6:00 pm
12 October 2014

the jamjar
Al Quoz, Dubai

The panel will address the new relationship between art and technology and how the move from private to online public space has influenced contemporary culture.



[https://www.slashseconds.co.uk/
issue-16/](https://www.slashseconds.co.uk/issue-16/)

<https://www.slashseconds.co.uk/issue-16/>

/seconds.

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The Internet, the Voice, the Gulf – Sharjah Art Foundation (broadcast)

Peter Lewis and Fari Bradley

14 February 2016

Contributors

A

All Horizons Club
Abdullah Al Saadi
Justin Hunter Allen
Joe Allen
Rasheed Araeen
Conrad Atkinson
Fabienne Audeoud

B



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<https://www.slashseconds.co.uk/issue-16/>

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/seconds exhibition (news)

Sharjah Art Foundation

11 June 2016

Contributors

A

All Horizons Club
Abdullah Al Saadi
Justin Hunter Allen
Joe Allen
Rasheed Araeen
Conrad Atkinson
Fabienne Audeoud

B

Joe Banks



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Anna Seaman
Oct 13, 2014

SHARE



Sharjah Art Foundation brings together three distinctive new exhibitions

► Three shows opened at Sharjah Art Foundation this weekend. As varied in content as their artists, here's what's in store at the exhibitions /seconds; Abdul Hay Mosallam Zarara; and GCC: Achievements in Retrospective



/SECONDS / PETER LEWIS AND SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION

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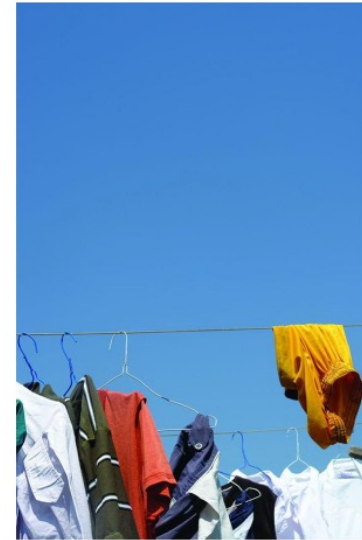
/seconds



About the Exhibition

Invited by the Sharjah Art Foundation the exhibition followed the collaborative work of Sheikha Hoor Al-Qasimi and Peter Lewis since 1998, who had together initiated the 6th International Biennial, and the design and building of a major Art Foundation that would focus the Arab region and countries in terms of its exhibitions and events toward establishing a universal dialogue. Sheikha Hoor Al-Qasimi and Peter Lewis had established the Biennial in 2003, at a time of international

conflict. In the last decade Sharjah Art Foundation has stood as the intellectual meeting place that brings together



EXHIBITION

/seconds.

11 Oct 2014 - 10 Dec 2014

Sharjah Art Foundation Art Spaces

Sharjah

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

[Location details](#) ▾



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Curated by Peter Lewis, Sharjah Art Foundation presents a selection of artists' works from the online journal /seconds. (2004-2014), which covers a broad range of issues and art practices from different cultural perspectives.

Press Releases

Global Fine Art Awards (2015) '2015 Award Nominees', [Press Release] <http://globalfineartawards.org/wp/index.php/award-categories/>

Sharjah Art Foundation (2014) 'Sharjah Art Foundation Announces Fall 2014' [Press Release] <http://hosted-p0.vresp.com/1476947/8b124f36bb/ARCHIVE>

Online

Cision PR Web (2015) 'The Global Fine Art Awards Selects 2015 Nominees', posted on 1 September 2015, <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2015/07/prweb12823010.htm>

Elsner, T. (2014) '/seconds', Art Rabbit, posted on 11 November 2014, <https://www.artrabbit.com/events/seconds-1>

Global Fine Art Awards (2015) 'Peter Lewis, Leeds Beckett lecturer is nominated for Global Fine Art Award', posted on 12 October 2015, <http://globalfineartawards.org/wp/index.php/2015/10/12/leeds-beckett-lecturer-is-nominated-for-global-fine-art-award/>

Scotney, K. (2015) 'Leeds Beckett Lecturer is nominated for Global Fine Art Award', Leeds Beckett University, <http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/news/0915leeds-beckett-lecturer-is-nominated-for-global-fine-art-award/>

Seaman, A. (2014) 'Sharjah Art Foundation brings together three distinctive new exhibitions', The National, posted 13 October 2014, <https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/sharjah-art-foundation-brings-together-three-distinctive-new-exhibitions-1.263014>

Seaman, A. (2014) 'Sheikha Hoor retains her position of power', in The National, posted 23rd October 2014,

<https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/art/sheikha-hoor-retains-her-position-of-power-1.274901>

What's On (2014) 'The Other 100 – must see galleries in Dubai in October', <http://whatson.ae/dubai/2014/10/art-galleries-in-dubai-art-exhibitions-for-october/>

Global Fine Art Awards (2015) '/seconds / Peter Lewis and Sharjah Art Foundation' [Exhibition Page] <http://globalfineartawards.org/wp/index.php/portfolios/seconds/>

Heart of Sharjah Press, /seconds <https://www.heartofsharjah.ae/event-saf-seconds.html>

**Peter Lewis, Leeds Beckett
lecturer is nominated for Global
Fine Art Award**

In its second year, the GFAA is the first annual programme to recognise the best curated art and design exhibitions and installations worldwide. The awards honour innovation in design, historical context, educational value, and public appeal.

Peter is nominated for his work, /seconds (2004–2014), at the Sharjah Art Foundation, United Arab Emirates; the art centre of the Arab world. Peter said: “The Foundation is possibly among the most important organisations for new developments in art exhibitions, providing platforms for dialogue, and exchange, contextualising works produced in Arab countries in the globally interconnected art world and market.”

/seconds presented a selection of work by 140 artists who contributed to Peter’s online journal of the same name, which has covered a broad range of issues and art practices from different cultural perspectives.

Peter added: “Leeds Beckett awarded me the Research Fellowship in 2004, allowing me the opportunity to produce /seconds. Its research evolved from my previous work as an independent ‘artist-curator’ for various organisations (especially within the London ‘alternative’ scene of the 1990s). I was invited to guest curate for contemporary art museums both nationally and internationally. For example, my curation of works for ‘Century City’ held at Tate Modern was the first display to be installed in the Turbine Hall. I was commissioned to make a work composed of hundreds of posters along the full length of the Hall, alongside video works shown in rooms designed by Caruso St John (2000-2001). This model of presentation was a breakthrough in how exhibitions can be assembled on a monumental scale through digital technology platforms for publishing, and has provided the template for the Sharjah Foundation exhibition for which I have been nominated.”

Global Fine Art Award October 12 2015

<http://globalfineartawards.org/wp/index.php/2015/10/12/leeds-beckett-lecturer-is-nominated-for-global-fine-art-award/>



Keywords:
Curation
Publishing
Online
Archive
Journal
Networks
Exhibition

Key Dates:

Online Journal: /seconds, online journal of contemporary art, published at <http://www.slashseconds.co.uk>
ISSN: 17514134 (2004–present)

Exhibition: /seconds at the Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE (October 10 2014–December 09 2014)

Exhibition Catalogue Launch: (October 10 2014)

Curator's Talk and Panel Discussion: 'Talk with /seconds. Curator Peter Lewis and Exhibiting Artists', at The Jam Jar, Al Quoz, Dubai (October 12 2014)

Awards: Global Fine Art Awards, held at Miami Dade College, Museum of Art & Design, Freedom Tower
/seconds shortlisted for the category: International Contemporary Art Exhibitions (November 30 2015)

Interviews: 'Six Pillars: The Internet, the Voice, The Gulf', Broadcast on Resonance FM from the Sharjah Art Foundation. Peter Lewis interviewed by broadcaster Fari Bradley. (January 02 2015)

Publication of Booklet: 'seconds.' Published by Sharjah Art Foundation (2014)

<http://sharjahart.org/sharjah-art-foundation/publications/seconds>

This booklet, that accompanied the exhibition, comprised a selection of texts about art, technology and politics published in the issues of the journal /seconds. It includes essays by Emily Allchurch and Nigel Warburton, Gail Burton, Stephen Clarke, John Francescutti and Lanfranco Aceti, Peter Kennard, Peter Lewis, Falke Pisano and Stephanie Polsky.

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Sharjah Art Foundation
UAE Government
Sharjah Islamic Cultural Capital
Leeds Beckett University
AHRC

Links:

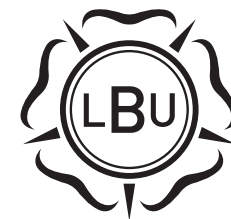
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