

*Craft/Work*

## Craft/Work: Welcome To Our New Art Section With Bobby Barry

—Robert Barry, October 3rd, 2015 08:28

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Bobby Barry introduces us to tQ's new art section and provides a gallery round up featuring an installation in a vintage arcade machine, a reinterpretation of Enter The Dragon and a micronation founded by an ex-magician in an artist's studio in Bristol



*Bill Viola photographs courtesy of Kira Perov*

“So what do you think of the current state of art criticism?” The question, it seemed to me, had barbs. I was at a private view in a Swiss art centre. Men in tailored suits milled about sipping white wine and nibbling grissini. I forget exactly how I responded to the query. Probably I muttered something non-committal, hoping neither to offend nor get drawn in. But my interrogator evidently had more exacting opinions. “Isn’t it all just friends writing about friends?” he wanted to know.

I'm not sure about that (I've written about Georg Baselitz but he never invited me round for dinner. Anselm Kiefer never once texted to ask if I fancied a pint. I interviewed the Argentine kinetic artist Julio Le Parc once and he was quite friendly but we didn't end up going shopping for clothes). But maybe that's not quite what he was driving at – rather a sense that art writing has become a closed loop, speaking only to an art world that appears forbidding to outsiders.

In 2012, the online journal Triple Canopy published a downloadable pamphlet entitled *International Art English*. The authors, Alix Rule and David Levine, analysed the entire backlog of e-flux mail-outs using a piece of software called Sketch Engine. They discovered a language that was “oddly pornographic” resembling “inexpertly translated French” that, perhaps most damning of all, didn't so much ask to be understood; “it demanded to be *recognised*.”

There was another guy that I met at that party in Switzerland. An art teacher at a local college. I had told him about my background in music and he looked sympathetic. “I used to play music,” he said. “I was in a band. It was quite serious. But then I went to art school and discovered this whole other world...”

Rule and Levine's *International Art English* had posited the existence of this thing called “the art world” that effectively polices its own borders with an abstruse use of language. But there is another, more positive sense to be gleaned from this notion of art having, and inhabiting, its own world. I find this quite a lot with some of the exhibitions I've been to – that feeling you get when you step through the doors of the gallery and find yourself in another world, at once familiar and strange.

I like this idea of art offering vistas to other worlds, operating under different laws, according to different logics. It appeals to the utopian in me. But as in the ‘real’ world, I can't stand borders or customs officials. Perhaps we can start to use these pages as a sort of Unhome Office, not deporting peaceable citizens but rather eagerly shepherding cultural migrants through the castle gates. There's this whole other world, you see...

### **Round Them Up, Put Them In A Field, And Bomb The Bastards: Our Pick Of Gallery Shows Opening This Month**

**Bill Viola - Blain | Southern & Brewer Street Carpark, London**



Today, Bill Viola works on operas with Peter Sellars and gets commissioned to make “digital frescos” for the Guggenheim, but back in 1979 the New York artist was a member of David Tudor’s Rainforest group (aka Composers Inside Electronics) and a technical director at WNET Thirteen Television Laboratory, an experimental video art space at the New Jersey public broadcaster which provided a temporary home to the likes of Nam June Paik and Shirley Clarke.

Viola’s early installation, *Moving Stillness (Mt. Rainer)*, incorporating water, projections and sound recordings, will be shown at Blain | Southern from October 13 for the first time since its premiere at Buffalo Media Study in that year.

Meanwhile, the Vinyl Factory’s space at the top of a Soho carpark will be exhibiting some of Viola’s early sound works, *The Talking Drum* and *Hornpipes* from around the same period.

### **The Chimurenga Library - The Showroom, London**

The Pan African Space Station (PASS) is an online radio station and occasional pop-up recording studio, founded by Cape Town based group Chimurenga and curated by Ntone Edjabe. But from 8 October, this space station will be landing at the Showroom gallery of the Edgware Road in North London and playing host to guests including Christine Eyene, Larry Achiampong, Ekow Eshun, Sorryyoufeelcunomfortabe, Pass Me The Microphone and Anthony Josephs.

This is just one element of the Chimurenga Library, described as a “major cartographic installation” presented by the Showroom and Turner Prize nominees The Otolith Collective. Since 2002 Chimurenga has been championing new art, words, music and ideas from throughout Africa and the African diaspora through regular publications, online archives and performances.

The Showroom exhibition is set to bring together a vast archive of existing work as well as providing a platform for collaboration and research looking at subjects from photographer George Hallett to the legendary Lagos arts festival FESTAC ’77.

### **Zhang Ding - Institute of Contemporary Art, London**

Bruce Lee’s (1973) *Enter The Dragon* opens with one of the most graceful and beautifully shot fist-fighting scenes in all of cinema. It’s not so much the actual punch-up, but the location, the build-up, and everything else around it. The scene was directed – uncredited – by Lee himself who claimed he wanted to introduce Western audiences to the beauty of Chinese culture.

Taking inspiration from Lee’s masterpiece, Zhang Ding will be transforming the ICA’s theatre space into a “mutating sound sculpture”, covered in reflective surfaces and bedecked with sound panels and moving mirrored sculptures. Thus kitted out, the theatre becomes a platform for regular daily performances throughout the life of the exhibition, with guests chosen in association with NTS Radio.

Each day, a pair of sonic pugilists will battle it out through the medium of sound, surrounded and reflected by Zhang Ding’s surreal and disorientating environment, kicking off with Bon Ningen and Powell on the October 12, the run also features friends of tQ Chrononautz and CASUAL SECT on October 15 and ending with Amnesia Scanner and Bill Kouligas on October 25.