

# BROOKLYN RAIL

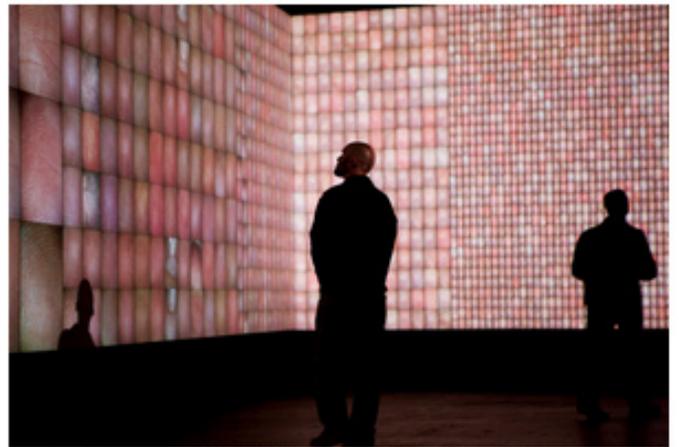
## *Time-Lapse*

SITE SANTA FE | FEBRUARY 18 – MAY 20, 2012

SITE Santa Fe lies on the edge of town by the railroad tracks, at a welcome distance from the schlock art malls of Canyon Road and the tourist-friendly museums in the town center. It's a relief to enter a white box environment and discover some challenging art. As the title of the current exhibition suggests, *Time-Lapse* showcases pieces that either address the subjective experience of time or rely expressly on the passage of time to achieve full realization. Works accrue gradually, offering visitors a unique viewing experience every day, if not every minute. Despite the variety of media employed and the evolving nature of the work, many of these individual pieces gather in force to represent some of the paradoxical concerns of our collective human existence.

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, "Pulse Index," 2010. SITE Santa Fe, Installation View, 2012. Photo: Kate Russell.

Two works center around sustaining a ritualized process, bringing immediately to mind On Kawara's epic conceptual project, the *Today* series. Every day since 2007, Mary Temple has sketched a major character in the news, summarized the story with a single phrase for a caption, and hung the drawing on a calendar grid. Visually, it's not much to write home about, but it does provide a review of this year's major news stories: Greece's economic collapse, the European debt crisis, North Korea's power transition, Aung San Suu Kyi's parliamentary campaign, and Obama's commentary on all of the above. Byron Kim's Sunday Paintings track more personal events and are also more aesthetically appealing. Each Sunday since 2001, Kim has painted the sky on a 12-inch-square panel and scratched down a few thoughts on the happenings of that week. Considerable perceptual skill goes into the recording of the weather, so much so that the scribbled text occasionally detracts from the painterly qualities of the work. But on the whole, Kim's diaristic passages add depth to the series, revealing him to be an involved father and a social being, who frequently enjoys dinner with friends and, like even the best of us, is prone to the occasional doubt ("it is not possible to be happy"). Observed over time, Kim's primary concerns are those of every man.



Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, "Pulse Index," 2010. SITE Santa Fe, Installation View, 2012. Photo: Kate Russell.

A selection of 31 video works, chosen by *Time-Lapse* curators Irene Hofmann and Janet Dees and on view here under the umbrella title "March 2012," was conceived in homage to conceptual artist/organizer Seth Siegel's "March 1969 a.k.a One Month," a published exhibition catalogue featuring the work of 31 artists—yet without a realized accompanying exhibition. In the new "March," one video is added each day during the month of March to the cumulative loop playing in the galleries. The curatorial structure itself thus becomes part of the conceptual framework. Depending upon when the viewer drops in, and for how long, his experience will vary. "March" touches on a wide range of concerns—not least among them the democratization of art through digitization. But the intermingling of public and personal themes occurs here as well.

As part of "March," this author viewed, among other works: a bootlegged, BitTorrent version of a *Mad Men* episode by Conor McGarrigle; an unwittingly comic video piece portraying a young couple stacking children's toys to the ceiling of a garage by Hillerbrand+Magsamen; and an extremely disturbing video game developed from actual footage of a troubled neighborhood in northern Ireland by Faith Denham. By far the most thoroughly entertaining and gently thought-provoking work was Finnish duo Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen's ongoing "Complaints Choir." Originally composed and performed in Birmingham, England, the concept of a hearty song devoted solely to listing complaints caught on and choirs have since popped up all over the world. Each retains its local flavor. The Singaporean choir, which was originally banned and later debated in their Parliament, delivered particularly pointed and self-deprecating social criticism; the British chorus complained about the price of beer; the Finnish complained about the long winter. But each touched on universal gripes as well: long work hours, short vacations, low salaries, high stress, annoying cell phone ringtones, snoring partners, the drudgery of commuting, odd neighbors, lonely times, and fear of death. It's a lighthearted reminder that so much of human experience is common to all.

Several works on view aside from "March 2012," however, leave the quotidian completely behind. These pieces develop over time, mutating and re-creating themselves anew with the help of digital technology. Rafael Lozano Hemmer's "Pulse Index" invites participants to scan a fingerprint and record their heartbeat simultaneously. Projected onto a large screen, the magnified fingerprint in garish pinks and flesh tones is the primary focus of the dark room. A few moments are allotted for the viewer to note his or her unique whorl before the image moves along a dazzling grid of progressively smaller screens. As time passes, the print becomes one of many hundreds of small panels, and the momentary sensation of one's own vast importance is gradually and rhythmically reduced to a reminder of one's actual irrelevance. We struggle with the conflicting knowledge of our value as individual beings and our ultimate insignificance in a very large cosmos. Eve Sussman | Rufus Corporation's video "whiteonwhite:algorithmicnoir" (2011) makes an argument for the dystopic and random nature of life with this algorithmically driven film. Comprising 3,000 film clips, 80 voice overs, 150 pieces of music, and imagery seemingly borrowed from the former Soviet Union, the ever-mutating video disorients, underlining the position that there are as many versions of reality as there are viewers. The narrative becomes completely subjective, which unfortunately prevents it from being very compelling.

*Time-Lapse* achieves its goal of deconstructing the notion of artwork as static and immutable. Along the way, it highlights how some thoughtful artists search for an understanding of global forces while others elect to deal with the mundane physical and emotional needs that shape daily life. Still other artists investigate the elastic and subjective nature of time, asking the viewer to participate in the exploration. The work on view here is revealing, both in its methods and in its conclusions about humanity, individual, and universal.