

**Olivier Castel:** You were talking about the different things that you have done for Space in Between – the prints, the forthcoming show and *Maman* in the middle.

**Kazimierz Jankowski:** Ok, yes. So the prints for *annual ONE*, well Jennifer Bailey had made this work *Study Group* that she submitted for *Monaco Magazine* Issue 2<sup>1</sup>. It was this scrawly abstract drawing which she'd done in response to a collaboration that we were starting to think about. I was aware that this drawing was going to exist in *Monaco* and around the same time I was asked to do this work for Space in Between's *annual ONE* show, an exhibition of prints from artists that they had worked with. At the time I was rethinking aspects of my practice and so when asked to do this print for *annual ONE* I decided to take a back-seat and use a friend's work, which turned out to be Jenny's work *Study Group*. I liked how with this decision the space that I had been given for the show was made available for another work to kind of 'invade'. And this is something that has recently come into my work, this notion of having your little 'plot' in the gallery space being invaded by another work, having some other element popping up in that space, just suddenly appearing as if it had come out of nowhere and perhaps not even having any relationship to the context. So that's what happened there, and now me and Jenny are doing a larger show at the gallery, a two person show, which is about...well at the moment we're still in the process of making it, but to me it is an attempt to elaborate that first idea, and a more complex version of it. It's unlikely to resemble the work I submitted for *annual ONE* much on the surface, but as you dig deeper there will be more there to draw parallels with. The middle work *Maman* (made in between the *annual ONE* work and the two person show) was the one that you saw.

**OC:** When I came in I already knew that it was a sort of 're-make' of this *Film Show*<sub>2</sub> (2008) you did for Katie Guggenheim's series of solo exhibitions<sup>2</sup> where artists were invited to select a feature film to be screened alongside artwork in an exhibition space. And at the time of the *Film Show* you had put a sign outside of the space and so I was aware that you were doing this re-make with a different film, but I didn't know which film and when I came to see the show I almost forgot about the one main rule or tool or work in the show, that only one person may view the exhibition at a time, just one person.

**KJ:** That's maybe because there wasn't a queue outside?

**OC:** No, I had a queue, but I was in a rush and the show was almost closing and so I hadn't looked carefully whether there was a sign or not. But once inside I didn't feel that I could go back outside to check. As in a way my time inside is quite precious as I'm really aware that I'm taking other visitors time, so time becomes something valuable suddenly. Suddenly you can't just hang out and start daydreaming or something, as it makes you aware of how respectful of the other visitors you are or not. I could have been just like, fuck off, I'll just take the show to myself and not leave the room until the film ends. And I tried to remember if there was a sign or not and I think there wasn't...but also this second version had a different title which I got from the email invitation, it was called *Maman* and in the email invitation it didn't say what film it was. And before I came to the show I looked online to find films with the title *Maman*, but all of the results came up with things that I thought you wouldn't present. And it

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.monacomagazine.net/issuetwo.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pagesofexhibitions.net/filmshows.html>

was a really big surprise when seeing that inside it was Donnie Darko playing, which is both new and old. I had seen it at the time it came out but I couldn't remember it.

KJ: That's funny because when I selected Donnie Darko, it was sort of because of those reasons that you describe, of it being familiar, of it being new and old, that I'd seen it but that I couldn't remember it. I chose it because I didn't have a strong relationship to it. But then funnily enough I watched it again after the show and actually really liked it, more than the first time.

OC: An impression I had, which may be because I hadn't seen the film in sometime, was that you had edited the film and that you had muffled the words in the dialogue, or the sound had been enhanced, but I also suspected that it may be sound leaking from other floors, from neighbours – which I really liked but didn't quite believe in this idea – I liked the effect. So there were these strange but nice qualities that were entering the space...because yes, the space is empty.

KJ: Yes, the space is completely empty.

OC: And again you enter inside and you're aware really aware of the time, you're like shit people are waiting outside I can't like be too long ... and there is nothing inside.

KJ: Yes, there's nothing happening inside other than the film playing. But it's interesting that when you came out and you were curious as to whether I had played around with the film, that I'd changed the soundtrack, or I'd muffled something, and I think that it's totally natural to go into that space and be very alert to lots of things because there is so little going on. You become more and more sensitive because you're thinking, "oh, I must pick up on something here". But then on the other side of things, someone came out and said "so, it's just Donnie Darko then?" And I was really pleased to hear this story because yeah, it was 'just Donnie Darko.'

OC: But then, it's Donnie Darko chopped up how ever many times you have visitors....

KJ: Yeah, it was broken up. Well the premise of the work on a basic level...*Maman* essentially involved selecting a film, playing it in a gallery space and allowing people to enter the gallery space one at a time so that the film is 'chopped-up' into however many times visitors pass through the exhibition. So each audience member will come in at different point in the film, and even if they come back at a different point in the day to watch it and happen to see the same section again the big window adjacent to the wall on which the film is being screened will let in light from outside. So unlike viewing it in a controlled environment like a cinema, the environment in *Maman* has been allowed to change to ensure that the conditions are not static. There is a film being projected which would normally work better screened in the dark and so when you show it in an environment where light comes into the space, a space that is more explicitly permeated by light and permeated by the view from through the window, then suddenly the border between the inside and outside of the space becomes a bit looser, a bit more fragile.

So going back to the viewers experience of the work, they will come in at a different point in the film, there will be different action happening...

OC: ...and that's what I loved so much, when you talked about this raised awareness that you develop for the viewer and how much the movie, or the bit you catch as the viewer really becomes yours, it kind of reflected my day then...how much the excerpt that I caught was reflecting my day that day. How much suddenly the film is there for you, suddenly you read it as really being yours. It becomes a mirror. I think it's really important how much it played on the visitor's awareness. Its like this song 'you're so vain you probably think this song is about you', the work was exactly that, the movie was really about you, suddenly you were the centre. And also, inside the exhibition you had this press release that didn't mentioned what film is or where the title *Maman* comes from and so you are left with these very bare materials and you start to look at everything with suspicion...I think a really key aspect is this raised awareness. And then exiting the gallery and looking at all the details, the sign outside saying only '*Maman*' ...

KJ: Yes, '*Maman*' with 12 – 6 written underneath, which I thought was funny becomes I partially named it after the Louis Bourgeois' giant spider sculpture, and to think that like a fairground ride it was only open or viewable between 12 and 6 after which you had to go home because it would be closed. I think also that because the set up inside was so provisional and the fact I didn't have a budget, you know I couldn't have this super slick installation where all the wires are concealed and you have some discreet speaker system. But I remember when you came out the first thing that you said was 'I'm nicely confused' and I knew the work was pretty obscure because there is literally nothing to read once you're inside the space, the only thing you can read into is the title of the work. The title is literally and perhaps comically the 'overbearing mother', it's tiny but is massively inflated as one of the only components of the work, it is the only thing in the space that creates any sort of dynamism. The title worked to draw a comparison between the experience of the viewer in front of a film that exists in time and the viewer in front of something that exists in space. With a sculpture which you can't see the entirety of at the same time, that you have to literally walk around it and where one view is always at the expense of another view. In the same way that you can't see a film 'gestalt' so to speak, you have to see it in a sequence of moments in time in order to receive the whole picture. Because you are only there for a small time you can't encounter the film as a whole object. I just thought that there was a nice relationship there between that work and my work *Maman*, but also in the sense of *Maman* being an improbable work to bring in for me at that point. I mean it's not a work that I reference or think about but at the same time it's this sort of epic work...and I like drawing comparisons between things that I perhaps don't have the right or authority to do so with. When people quote things it's usually because it perhaps confirms one's own aesthetic view of the world or you bring them in because they might be a hero or something, and they reinforce a reading of your work. But in this instance it was a disruption in the work.

OC: Yes, for me it highly disruptive. I'd like to talk about this alien element in the work, this giant spider that suddenly appears.

KJ: Well, I actually find it hard to speak about the disruptive experience of the work as my experience of the work is completely different to anyone else's experience and the same goes for everyone else too, this is what the work self consciously does.

OC: I think there was a really strong blurring happening, kind of like the space became a sort of vessel for each of the viewers' private journey. It's like taking the exhibition out of time but as well out of a social space...somehow it manages to put your experience as a visitor outside of, not of existence, that's too heavy, it somehow seems to be another space, something parallel and suddenly you're really made aware of yourself as visitor to be that space, to look at this...but you're left with barely anything, but then those things become even more prominent, become even more enormous, the title becomes gigantic...

KJ: It reminds me of that feeling of self-awareness or self-consciousness when I first went into an art gallery, or went into an expensive boutique, and of course the gallery still has that dimension, this sacrosanct aspect as Brian O'Doherty talks about.

OC: Like luxury shops...

KJ: Yes, exactly. The work exploited that feeling perhaps a little bit, to create a heightened awareness. The original version I thought of for Katie's Film Show had a very different existence, I mean this is a new work, *Maman* is a different work, but it's a development of that earlier work.

OC: It's a remake, a fake remake...

KJ: ...or a sequel. Except it's more real than the first one I think. I feel that the viewer's much more of a performer in *Maman*, they're closer to performing for themselves in a way or at least they're on the verge of performing for themselves.

OC: With the *Film Show* you had this sign, 'Urinating in the pool is not permitted', which highly coloured the space. It drew a set - the work there almost became theatre. You suddenly entered this space nominated as a swimming pool, whereas in *Maman* that doesn't happen.

KJ: With the Omega Man piece (The Omega Man was the film used for Film Show) people went in one at a time and it was maybe clearer that the viewer was supposed to identify with the protagonist of that film (Charlton Heston) who was alone in Los Angeles after some sort of nuclear disaster.

OC: There's a more direct reflection there, whereas with Donnie Darko it's more the audience being thrown back onto them selves.

KJ: It's true, there is less to identify with Donnie Darko in that context...but actually there is loads to identify with I think...

OC: But yes that's what I was saying, even more so because there's less direct reflection as it enters your own life for real, your own events during that day, how much it becomes one of the elements forming one of the events for me, that day, your entire day that day...

KJ: Yes

OC: It kind of materializes the movie.

KJ: What would you say the difference is between watching it at home?

OC: It's more that your looking at the movie in the gallery, you're not watching it and maybe to step back and include not just *Maman* but this earlier work that you did with Jenny, and the show that you're preparing together and maybe bringing in Richard Prince again in the sense of changing or cropping, so Richard Prince but also Tiravanija and Sturtevant and with those different levels of borrowing of relating, of translating, reframing, copying, remaking.

KJ: With Tiravanija and with Sturtevant, these are artists whose work deals with the present, with 'now', trying to understand the present as it's happening. With Tiravanija there's a performative element to how he envisages some of his work functioning, like Tino Sehgal, and it really makes you hyper aware of what's happening, it dramatises the present. But not in a way that's framed, it doesn't feel that it's framed by anything. You'd be in a gallery and then suddenly somebody will wave at you, they're addressing you directly, and for a second the frame disappears and the work overwhelms you, you're disarmed by it perhaps, and in the same way with this work you're really, really up close, the proximity to *Maman* is too much, you can't get a distance from it and that's it's mode of address. It's about experiencing the present tense as a melodrama. I saw the use of the film as something that you could measure your sense of time against, in the same way that you would stand next to the leg of the Louis Bourgeois spider sculpture and find yourself part of this landscape against which you would measure yourself physically and psychologically, you could measure your sense of time which film provides in the form of a stage-set or backdrop. I think that there's a paradox in that the viewer has at once very little agency in the work in as much as they're lost in the thing, but at the same time they're constantly fighting to reconstruct what's happening for them and make sense of it.