

VIVID

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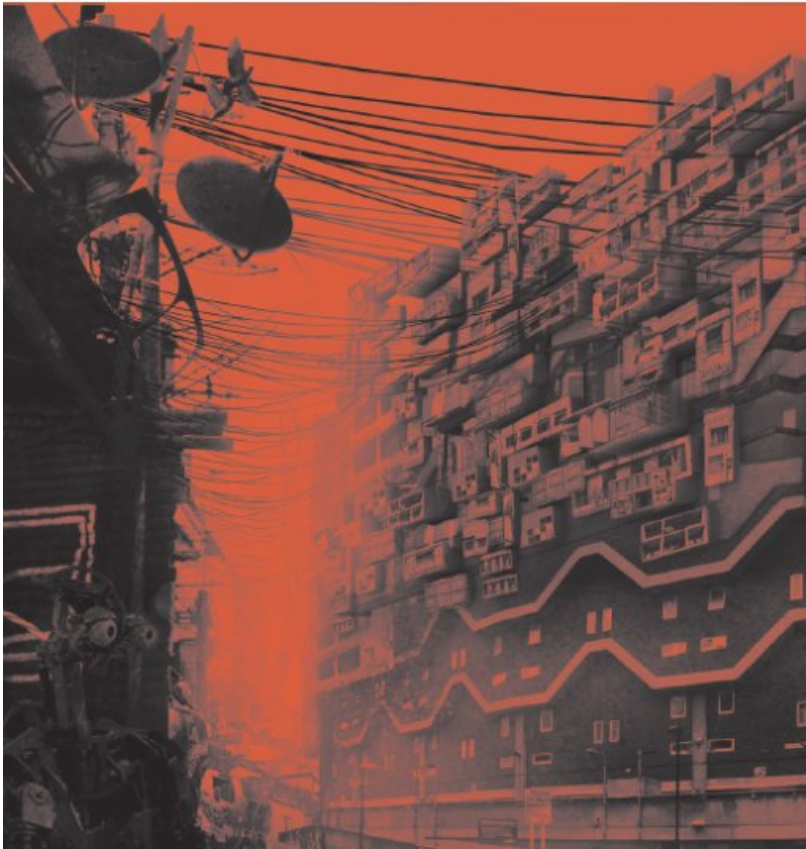
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PRESS RELEASE

CRASH | *24 September – 29 October 2011*

An experimental season of sonics, moving image, installation and construction stimulated by the vision of J.G. Ballard.

Artists include: Dan Tassell, Kibwe Tavares & Chris J Lees (Factory Fifteen), Mr. Underwood, Mark Essen, and Contingent of the First Response feat. Nic Bullen, Gene-George Earle, Sarah Farmer, Adrian Lee, Relmic Statute, and Cathy Wade.



The novels of J.G. Ballard stand among the most provocative literature of the twentieth century. His writing is prescient, and always alert to the near future, encompassing topics ranging from ecological fears to the sexualisation of technology, urban ruin to suburban alienation. The Ballardian universe pervades music, film, fashion, visual arts, architecture and recent philosophical constructs such as psychogeography, popularized by the writers Iain Sinclair and Will Self.

CRASH tunes in to the 'Ballardian universe' through a multi-disciplinary season embracing Ballard's own cross-media engagement and his profound influence on film and our responses to urban life. Architects, designers, sonic artists and interdisciplinary practitioners conjoin to explore technology, media, art and culture and the slippage between the present and future realities.

A series of video interventions from Chris J. Lees, Tan Tassell and Kibwe Tavares, three of the founding members of Factory Fifteen and post-graduates of the acclaimed Bartlett School of Architecture explore architectural themes across the broad span of Ballard's writing. Film and animation, video and motion-graphics are used to evoke dystopian depictions of the present and future, its bleak, man-made landscapes and the recounting of the psychological effects of technological, social and environmental developments on humans.

In **Kibwe Tavares's *Robots of Brixton*** London's new robot workforce - built and designed to carry out all of the tasks which humans are no longer inclined to do – has undergone a population explosion, resulting in unplanned, cheap and quick additions to the skyline. The film follows a populace hemmed in by poverty, disillusionment and mass unemployment. When the police invade the one space which the robots can call their own, the fierce and strained relationship between the two sides explodes into an outbreak of violence echoing that of 1981 and the summer of 2011. Resonant of the visions of Ridley Scott, China Mieville and JG Ballard, **Dan Tassell's *The Battersea Experiment*** imagines the crumbling shell of Battersea power station enclosing an arcadian world where all is not quite as it seems. **Chris J. Lees *Funland***, is a sinister re-imagining of a sentient Trocadero Centre resculpting the world at will, playing with visions of apocalyptic futures, robot cats and giant crab monsters. Artist **Mark Essen** takes George Berkeley's metaphysical theory of subjective idealism as a starting point for his installation *Concrete Radio*. Filmed around Wysing in Cambridgeshire, Archangel George presents the traces of human disruption in an abandoned and deserted landscape.

Contingent of the First Response is a temporal group of protagonists (Nic Bullen, Gene-George Earle, Sarah Farmer, Adrian Lee, Relmic Statute, Cathy Wade) that shifts and adapts in response to common concerns. Ballard is the black mirror that The Contingent are looking into, reflecting back a space in which they make new connections. The group collage, cut and conflate the beauty, horror and sense of overlapping banality that runs through Ballard, from **Cathy Wade's** 'He Hit Me...' echoing the song made famous by The Crystals to **Gene-George Earle's** visceral video take on The Atrocity Exhibition, described, as Ballard is quoted as describing his own work, a 'psychotic hymn'. Alongside this, **Adrian Lee** examines the commercial cultural trappings which form the background noise to our daily lives and **Nicholas Bullen**, founding member of the extreme music group Napalm Death reappropriates Brutalist imagery from Cronenberg's Stereo alongside Concrete Music, engaging with the psychological effects of architecture, environment and sound. Crash also sees a VIVID and Capsule co-commission for the exhibition and 2011 Supersonic Festival from **Mr. Underwood** featuring a special "Crash EP", fragments of which are contained in the immediate area, the decayed and abandoned spaces of Birmingham's Digbeth backstreets. Plug yourself in to the city.

EVENTS PROGRAMME:

FRI 23 SEP | 6-10PM | admission free

LAUNCH EVENT featuring a walking tour with Mr. Underwood and JG Ballard's Mixtape.

SAT 22 OCT | 12-5PM | admission free

PERFORMANCE: Contingent of the First Response artists present a series of performances and presentations in response to CRASH and to coincide with **The Event** and **Supersonic Festival**.

THU 27 OCT | Birmingham Library Theatre | 8:15PM | £4/3

FILM: Birmingham International Film Society presents a special screening in response to VIVID's CRASH exhibition.

CONTACT

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Notes to editor:

1. **IMAGES:** For further information and images please contact Laura Coult on +44 (0) 121 766 7876 or email laura@vivid.org.uk
2. **OPENING HOURS:** CRASH is open Saturday 24 September to Saturday 29 October 2011, open Thursday to Saturday, 12-5pm. There will be a launch event on Friday 23 September, 6-10pm. Admission to the exhibition is free.
3. **VIVID** is a leading media arts agency committed to the development of media arts practice through research, production and commissioning programmes. Established in Birmingham since 1992, in 2005 the company converted a former car garage in Birmingham's Eastside district into an atmospheric project space to support artist production and exhibition programmes. Noted in The Guardian (7/2009) as 'superb', the VIVID programme has exhibited artists who work across the arts and media spectrum, introducing audiences to both emerging local talent and work of international significance. From the little seen work of the Film and Video Workshop Movement including early films by Isaac Julien and the Black Audio Film Collective; to festivals about Fluxus and new shows from rising British artists such as Venice Silver Lion winner Haroon Mirza, the exhibition programme has won acclaim for juxtaposing new artist research and practice with key historical works and movements.
4. VIVID is a non-profit organization and gratefully acknowledges support from:



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