

MAN A - GIBSON / MARTELLI

Background:

'MAN A takes military Dazzle Camouflage as its point of departure. Unlike traditional camouflage which operates on the principle of concealment, dazzle camo uses complex arrangements of high-contrast, interrupted patterns of geometric shapes intended to confuse the calculation of a ship's range, speed and bearing in an enemy's optical gunnery rangefinder.

The distinctive aesthetic of Dazzle found its way into Art discourse in the work of Vorticist artist Edward Wadsworth, who - having been commissioned to supervise the camouflaging of some 2,000 ships during WW1 - produced a series of canvases in the style during the post-war period. Gibson/Martelli's installation brings this thoroughly modern aesthetic into a contemporary framework by exploiting its monochromatic, geometric patterns as the de facto standard for machine reading, akin to a barcode or QR pattern. This appropriation takes the form of a custom 'augmented reality' mobile application created by Martelli, in which the device's camera 'recognises' the pattern and superimposes three-dimensional imagery into the live-camera view.

It is at this stage that the project's complexities begin to unfold. Upon the (technologically-mediated) appearance of this previously-invisible data encoded into the structure and objects of the gallery space, the viewer is presented with multiple approaches to 'reading' the work.

The superimposed imagery occupies the screen of the viewer's mobile device, atop its live-camera digital representation of the space, which is filled with re-presentations of dazzle camouflage - which was itself designed with optical representation in mind. This multiple layering of imagery foregrounds the simulacral nature of the experience, highlighting the ways in which images and technologies produce both each other and the viewing subject simultaneously. Furthermore, the artist's purposeful 'glitch' in this chain of representation becomes apparent; what was once a pattern intended to obfuscate in the analog era becomes one able to reveal and expand upon the image in the digital era, by way of image-recognition and augmentation.

The specific nature of these augmentations is crucial. In presenting stylized humanoid forms whose movements are derived from 3D motion-captured contemporary dance performances, Gibson/Martelli reintegrate embodied perception into a process that otherwise privileges the visual and cerebral almost exclusively. This occurs at not only the conceptual level, but the practical; in order to fully interact with the installation, viewers must engage their spatial and proprioceptive faculties, positioning themselves in the public street where the exhibition begins and moving throughout the gallery space, and using their full range on physical articulations to view all facets of the exhibition's virtual performers.

The performers who lent their motion-captured presence to the installation are all experts in the Skinner Releasing Technique model of contemporary dance, which holds as its core premise that all humans are endowed with a natural, animal-like grace that can be tapped by the combination of technical movement principles with poetic images and spontaneity. It is from this principle of natural force and energy - referred to as mana in Pacific Island cultures - that MAN A takes its name.'

- *Kevin Clarke - UNION Gallery*

Works in Complicity Artifice and Illusion

MAN A VR, 2015, Virtual environment, custom virtual reality headset.

Snow Right Back Thigh 2016, Digital print on Vinyl, EB Flute, Augmented reality App.

Upper Arm Battle 2016, Digital print on Vinyl, EB Flute, Augmented reality App.

Tropical Left Back Thigh Wire 2016, Digital print on Vinyl, EB Flute, Augmented reality App.

Chest Bites 2016, Digital print on Vinyl, EB Flute, Augmented reality App.

MAN A exhibitions

2016 *Complicity Artifice and Illusion*, Collyer Bristow Gallery London

2016 *Digital Revolution* Milan, Italy

2016 *Digital Revolution* Athens, Greece

2015-16 *Lumen Prize* Tour

2015 *MAN A Jaffe-Friede Gallery*, Dartmouth College USA

2015 *Everything is Data* ADM Gallery, Singapore

2015 *POLITICS OF AMNESIA II* Cafe Gallery, London

2015 *MAN A UNION* Gallery, London

2015 *Digital Revolution* Tekniska Museet, Stockholm

2014 Archive Fever! Clay & Glass Museum, Waterloo, Canada

2014 *Digital Revolution* Barbican, London

2014 *You/Me/It* Institut Jozef Sefan, Ljubljana, Slovenia

2013 *Festival of Imagination*, Selfridges London

We are pleased to announce that we have won the coveted Lumen Prize for *MAN A*. The Lumen Prize is an annual global competition & tour of works selected by an eminent panel of judges. It was revealed in 2015 that *MAN A* was one of 25 works selected for the Lumen Exhibition which will tour to NYC, Shanghai and London in 2015-16.

About the Apps

MAN A is accompanied by three apps all available from the Google Play and Apple App stores. The QR code on the right takes you to a mobile website that has direct links:

MAN A - the iOS & Android app adds augmented reality characters to the exhibition.

MAN A VR - this is a virtual reality app for iOS & Android which is designed to work on a smartphone in conjunction with the limited edition Google Cardboard VR headsets. The larger headset takes larger phone sizes, i.e. iPhone 6, Nexus 6 (5" screen sizes). The smaller headset takes the smaller phone sizes, i.e. Nexus 5.

RAGTIME VR - this is a virtual reality app Android only, again designed to work on a smartphone in conjunction with the limited edition Google Cardboard VR headsets. *RAGTIME* is part of the *MAN A* series.

We have a dedicated webpage for the project here:

www.gibsonmartelli.com/MANA

This provides download links for the apps & also enables users to download and print the markers so they can use the app at home.

