

# CHICKS ON SPEED: ~~DON'T~~ ART FASHION MUSIC

5 JUNE - 8 AUGUST 2010

## BACKGROUND

Chicks on Speed are an ever-changing group of artists. Current members are: Melissa Logan (born USA, 1970, lives and works in Hamburg and New York), Alex Murray-Leslie (born Australia, 1970, lives and works in Barcelona), Kathi Glas (born Germany, 1977, lives and works in Berlin), Anat Ben-David (born Israel, 1970, lives and works in London) and A.L. Steiner (born USA, 1967, lives and works in New York), Krõõt Juurak (born Tallinn, Estonia, 1981, lives and works in Vienna), Faustine Kopiejwski (born France, 1981, lives and works in Paris), Merche Blasco (born Spain, 1979, lives and works in Barcelona) and Nadine Jessen (born Germany 1974, lives and works in Hamburg).

For this exhibition Chicks on Speed would like to thank the following additional collaborators: Anton Beaver, Michael Conrad, Steven Dawson, Matthew Ferrie, Girl Geeks, Paul Harrison, Adrian Murray, Robert Page, Gilmar Ribeiro, Alexandra Ross, Gianluca Turini. All DCA staff and in particular the DCA crew and DCA expert printers in the Print Studio. In addition, Morwenna Garrick and the team of weavers: Hollie Donnelly, Taisir Gibreel, Karen Knapp and Hatti Pattison, supported by Craft Festival Scotland; dancers: Yolanda Aguilar, Katrin Davidson and Sylvia Law. Additional support: Vicky Hale and Wilke Heijnen.

DCA would like to extend our sincere thanks to: the Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Screen, Dundee City Council, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee, Goethe Institute, Roman Lull Foundation, Kate MacGarry Gallery, Booth-Clibborn Editions, the Visual Research Centre, DJCAD for enabling Chicks on Speed to work in Centrespace prior to the exhibition and to the 'Past Present & Future Craft Practice', University of Dundee/Craft Festival Scotland for their generous contributions to the exhibition and public programme.

## LIMITED EDITION PRINT & PUBLICATION

To coincide with this exhibition Chicks on Speed are producing a special limited edition print made in DCA Print Studio. This edition is now in production. Please email [sandra.derycker@dca.org.uk](mailto:sandra.derycker@dca.org.uk) for the latest information.

DCA are co-publishing a new Chicks on Speed book 'Chicks ~~DON'T~~...' together with Booth-Clibborn Editions. Designed by Jonathan Barknbrook and priced at £20.00, it will be launched in September 2010. Please contact: [sandra.derycker@dca.org.uk](mailto:sandra.derycker@dca.org.uk) to pre-order a copy.

## PUBLIC PROGRAMME

A series of events, talks, workshops and cinema screenings will accompany the exhibition. These will take place in the Gallery, Activity Space and VRC (level 1). Please pick up the Public Programme Leaflet. Information will also be updated online, visit: [www.dca.org.uk](http://www.dca.org.uk).

## POP UP SHOP (in association with Chicks on Speed)

Access via the stairs in the DCA shop

To coincide with Dundee Contemporary Art's Chicks on Speed ~~DON'T~~... exhibition and Craft Festival Scotland, DCA Shop has selected a diverse range of emergent artists working in jewellery, textiles and design. Encompassing a wide spectrum of ideas and techniques from DIY Craft to the fusion of traditional methods with technological innovation, these artists offer a spirited take on contemporary craft practice and an alternative to mass production. The Pop Up Shop is part of our continuing Craft Focus programme of local and national applied artists displaying high quality, innovative work for sale.

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*'against guitar solos, against any kind of sedative art, against conservation of art in museums, reconstruction against any individual retrospective now and in the future'*

NAKED by Kroot Juurak, Chicks on Speed, 2010

This is the first major solo exhibition in the UK by Chicks on Speed (CoS); an ever-changing multidisciplinary art group who apply a punk-inspired DIY ethic to blur the lines between art, craft, fashion and music. Chicks on Speed are known globally for their hybrid and chaotic aesthetic – encompassing music (including electronica), performance art, record publishing, collage, graphic design, painting, 'objekt instruments', film and DIY fashion.

CoS play with a range of counter-cultural and feminist strategies. They draw on earlier practices that explored the boundaries between artistic and political action (eg. Agit Prop, Dada, Surrealism, Lettrism, Fluxus, Situationists etc). The contradictory title with the crossed out ~~DON'T~~ visually echoes this response through refusing labelling and categorisation. This approach is appropriated from the introduction to the Fluxus publication 'Fantastic Architecture' written in 1969, where Wolf Vostell announces: *"Everything is forbidden. Don't Touch! No spitting, No Smoking! No thinking! No living! Our projects – our environments are meant to free men – only the realisation of utopias will make men happy and release him from his frustrations! Use your imagination! Join in... share the power!"*.

The image used to promote the exhibition was produced by CoSp following a performance in Malmo, Sweden and this perhaps embodies most clearly some of their motivations. The image features five of the Chicks wearing 'Action Pants', a DIY ('Destroy it Yourself') homage to the Austrian performance artist VALIE EXPORT, whose work conveyed the idea that the production of art is also the production of commodity. This idea further links to the issue of how women are constructed as commodities both within and outside the art world.

Gallery One includes a film titled 'Fashion Archive' which was first screened in 'Kiss, Kiss, Bang Bang' at the Museo de Bellas Artes, Bilbao, Spain in 2007 alongside other introductory material used to create the Chicks ~~DON'T~~... exhibition for DCA. The large gallery has been transformed into an open stage, an installation which focuses on the '~~DON'T~~ Performance' and the world's first wireless guitar stilettos which have been created in collaboration with Milan-

based shoe designer Max Kibardin. This is the first presentation of the 'shoe guitar' which has been specially produced for DCA. The shoes re-appropriate the guitar - a masculine icon in popular culture - and replace it with the stiletto shoe, a playful reference to the fetishisation of fashion commodities and a reminder that the Chicks '*don't play guitars*'.

Alongside the shoes are other 'Objekt Instruments', including cigar box synthesisers, amplifying hats created by haute-couture milliner Christophe Coppens, and a Theremin Tapestry. The tapestry combines historical traditions of weaving with theremin technology and has been produced by The Victorian Tapestry Workshop, Craft Victoria, Australia with hardware from the Theremin Institute of Moscow. These 'Objekt Instruments' have been developed over the last five years together with engineers from Hangar.org, a visual arts production centre in Barcelona.

The large scale moveable stage incorporates both film footage of live performance together with film created on location as well as painting, remnants from the Chicks '~~DON'T~~ Performance' and a small weaving studio. During the exhibition an ongoing live weaving will be produced by a small group of Scottish Weavers. The loom refers to the context of textile production and 'craftwork'; creating a design that is reminiscent of both Bauhaus abstract weaving and African textile designs, but is in fact generated from a pattern created from an audio installation. This motif is played out in various forms within the exhibition. The loom will not only create a visual manifestation of the dialogue around production values, but will also produce a repetitive sound within the space at regular moments throughout the exhibition.

In addition to focusing on performative practice, *Chicks ~~DON'T~~...*, features painting, hand-painted statements (eg. '*small machines work hard*', '*create under all difficult circumstances*' and '*click click, foucka foucka*'), fanzine production, original prints that create associations with political activism, manifestos and other forms of spontaneous or guerrilla advertising. These hand-painted statements were produced during the installation period of the exhibition when the Chicks were delayed in Abijan, Ivory Coast, Africa due to flight disruptions from the volcanic ash. These banners as well as prints and textiles created for the opening performance were inspired by this experience. The contrast between the high-production values of the fashion industry and the relationship to the hand-made and spontaneous DIY production create a further visual tension. CoS work is created from a range of experiences born out of global travel, snatched moments in hotel rooms and collaboration with artists from many diverse cultural contexts.