



SEAN O'CONNELL

FOLDS

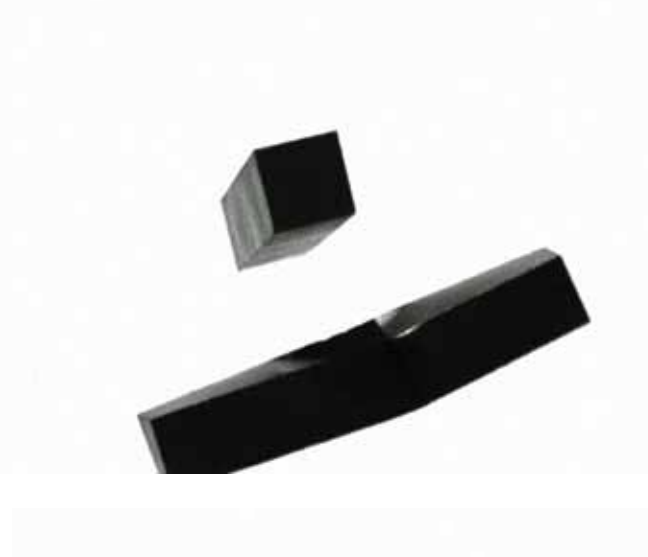
For a few years I have been obsessed with colliding boxes. I love the way they interact, the way their inner structures are revealed in the moment of impact through folds of crumpled metal.

It all started with me in Japan, feeling very abstract and longing for my girlfriend, but it has become more and more a portrayal of our everyday collisions - mundane encounters that reveal our own inner structures.

The two videos here are the first documents from these on-going collision experiments. An elaborate set-up has been built to launch two hollow metal boxes into motion, while moving images and sound recordings are taken of their brief intimate moments of interaction. At the heart of all this silliness is a machine powered by compressed springs and pressurised air, two long arms directed inwards, ready to propel the boxes toward collision course in mid air.

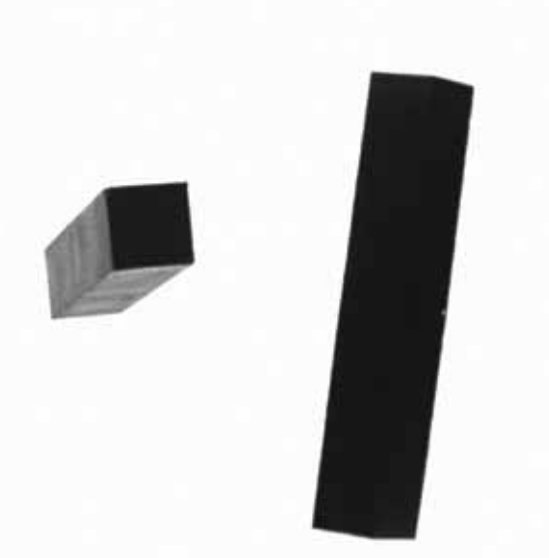
Poised upon this space where they meet, old high speed film cameras and audio microphones document their interaction. The visual recordings, comprising thousands of still images on moving acetate film, reveal the meeting of the forms in multiple samples stretching out slowly through time. The film itself betrays the stress of rapid motion caused by the mechanical cameras, with jitters and tears clearly evident in the final video. The audio, capturing sound radiation through air and waves of vibration upon the thin surface of the boxes, describes the shock of impact as it ripples along the metal and out into space.





These video and audio components are stitched together to portray a final document of the collisions revealing subtle negotiations of force and form. The emptiness of the space surrounding the collisions, and the absence of any real reference, remove this very physical experiment into an abstract realm, where the only absolute is the relationship between the two forms. The interaction between the boxes becomes everything.

There are conceptual undercurrents and overlays to the work, constantly shifting, inspiring the basic idea and developing it as it evolves. While the physical meeting of the two boxes and the experimental process are at the core of the work, the concepts and ideas that surround it greatly influence the overall method, interpretation and final aesthetic.



For me these collisions explore fundamental forces within everyday events, such as our constant negotiations with others and the world around us. The meetings of these boxes are not so much about violence and destruction (though there is a certain regressive teen part of me that revels in that too), but rather they describe explorations and trials, conversations in force and form, revealing the weaknesses and strengths of each box - its speed and posture as it collides, its shape, material and inner structure.



In this abstract vision of our everyday collisions, there is always a clear sense of self, a place through which we engage with the world. Through such interaction we become more aware of how we are made, our qualities, and our distinction from that which surrounds us. This distinction, a defining boundary between self and other, allows us to find our centre, and to see ourselves as a separate whole being. As the french writer Georges Bataille wrote so eloquently,

'Oneself is not the subject isolating itself from the world, but a place of communication, of fusion of the subject and the object.'

Through the collisions of these boxes, I am exploring what it means to define oneself, as an individual amongst others. The meetings of the boxes draw out a deeper understanding of singular identity, and also move towards a more expansive idea - of movement and force that permeates all things, passing across individual boundaries, transgressing the notion of separation and definition. Separation, and unity, in an endless cycle of realisation, like a snake eating its own tail....

'Being is always a group of particles whose relative autonomies are maintained. These two principles - constitution transcending the constituent parts, relative autonomy of the constituent parts - order the existence of each being.'

Inner Experience, by Georges Bataille, 1954



crash was initially shown at Wollongong Regional Art Gallery through Vivian Vidulich, and *collide* was first presented as part of *Imagining Interiors*, initiated and produced by Craftsouth, curated by Wendy Walker and presented at JamFactory.

Sean O'Connell studied jewellery design at Enmore Design Centre, Canberra School of Art and Sydney College of the Arts, where he became overly concerned with small details. His practice moves between jewellery, mechanics and art, settling in no particular area. In his contemporary jewellery practice he has exhibited and won prizes internationally, but his video practice is still developing. The work here has evolved out of earlier kinetic sculpture, a love of the inherent materiality of metals, and the need to enclose a tight ordered frame around chaos, watching it closely, from a safe distance. There is a sparse aesthetic undercurrent that is common to all of his work, and a fascination with the simple abstract patterns revealed when unbalanced forces resolve themselves towards equilibrium. Sean lives and works in Bundeena, an hour out of Sydney.

www.oneorangedot.com

Photos by Vernon Bowden and Sean O'Connell



#85 GEORGE

It often takes a great deal of passion and perseverance to work in the creative industry and projects such as this are greatly motivating. The support generated from such a government initiative contributes to sustaining a healthy creative culture for Sydney and provides reassurance to the industry that the dedication artists put into generating the city's creative capital, is not overlooked.

The opportunity to create an exciting and engaging program for the city in a location as highly visible as The Rocks is extremely exciting. Our program consists of artists with whom Gaffa has worked with in the past, who have featured in our gallery program, or worked with us on off-site projects. All of these are young Australian artists who are making some of the most exciting and topical work today.

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POP UP

gaffa

A six month program of contemporary art

The Rocks

POP-UP

PROJECT



POP UP PROJECT OVERVIEW

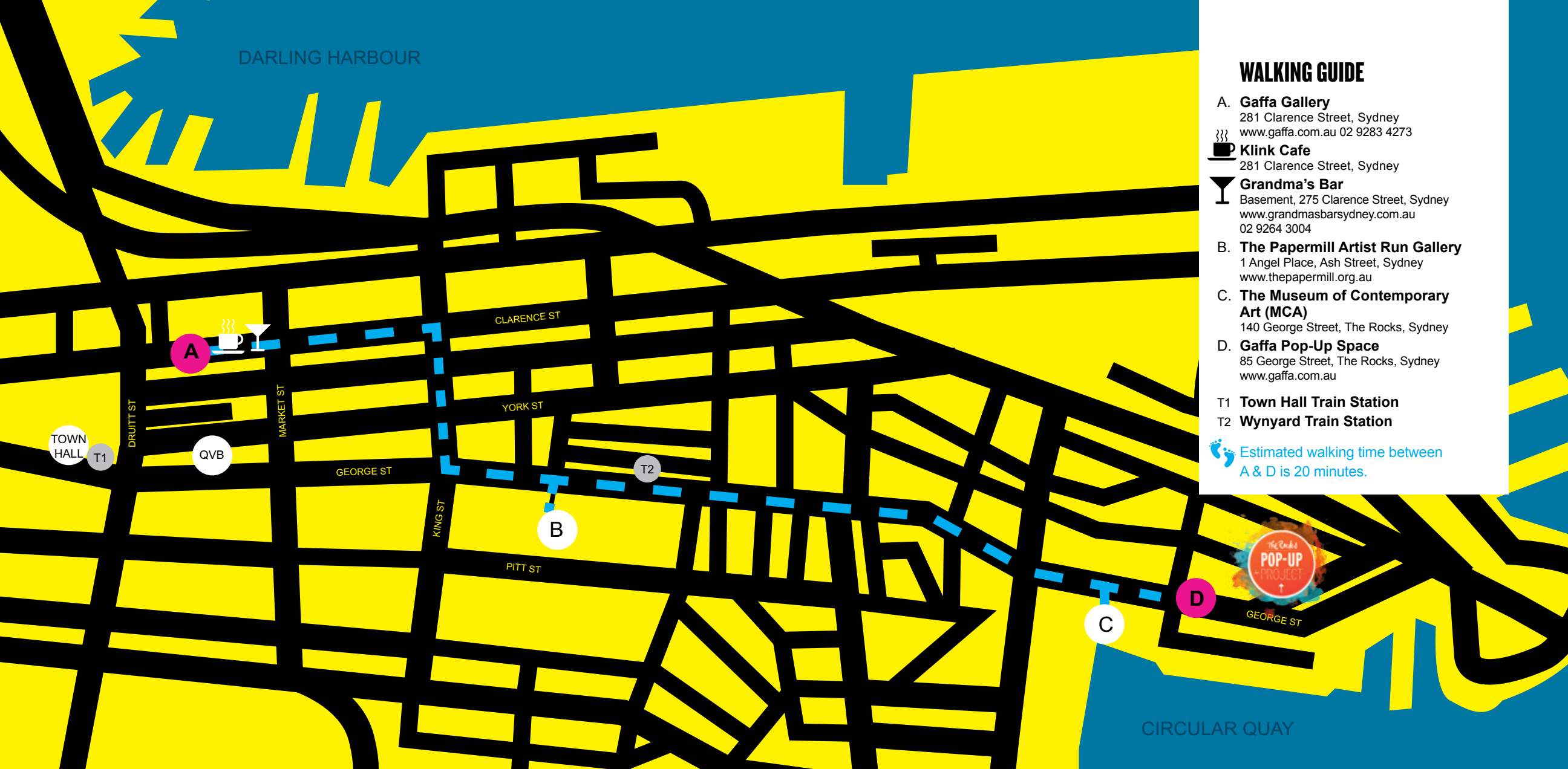
The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority invited arts and creative organisations to become key participants in *The Rocks Pop-Up Project*.

The pop-up concept promotes short-term reuse of temporarily vacant retail premises and other spaces for creative and community uses.




As part of a 6-month pilot project Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority identified a small number of properties in The Rocks for short-term use.

A small group of key organisations will manage the spaces and co-ordinate their use by artists and creative workers for a range of innovative activities. Some of the premises will be activated as creative working spaces, others to showcase design and artwork, and some will hold events such as small-scale performances and screenings.

DARLING HARBOUR



WALKING GUIDE

- A. **Gaffa Gallery**
281 Clarence Street, Sydney
www.gaffa.com.au 02 9283 4273
 -  **Klink Cafe**
281 Clarence Street, Sydney
 -  **Grandma's Bar**
Basement, 275 Clarence Street, Sydney
www.grandmasbarsydney.com.au
02 9264 3004
 - B. **The Papermill Artist Run Gallery**
1 Angel Place, Ash Street, Sydney
www.thepapermill.org.au
 - C. **The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA)**
140 George Street, The Rocks, Sydney
 - D. **Gaffa Pop-Up Space**
85 George Street, The Rocks, Sydney
www.gaffa.com.au
 - T1 **Town Hall Train Station**
 - T2 **Wynyard Train Station**
-  Estimated walking time between A & D is 20 minutes.



CIRCULAR QUAY