

Common People

In Our Name
The Commons Project

4 sound performances
4 public/private venues

January–April 2011

Free admission
www.adamartgallery.org.nz

Richard Francis (Auckland)
& Jason Kahn
(Zürich/Los Angeles)

Sunday 30 January 7pm

Royal Antediluvian Order of
Buffaloes, Bats Theatre,
1 Kent Terrace

Campbell Kneale (Wellington)
& Alan Courtis (Buenos Aires)

Thursday 3 February 6pm

James Smith Carpark,
162 Wakefield Street

David Watson (Auckland/
New York) & NZ School
of Music (Wellington)

Sunday 20 February
12noon–2pm

Parade commences at the
Adam Art Gallery, 12pm
culminating in a performance
at the Embassy Theatre,
10 Kent Terrace, 1pm

Annea Lockwood (New York)

Wednesday 27 April
11am–5pm

Peter McLeavey Gallery,
147 Cuba Street

Public Private

What and where are the commons today?

The commons is a space where resources are collectively owned or shared. Deriving from pre-industrial agrarian times, the commons was a demarcated site that could not be commodified. It was neither public nor private. The commons was managed by the local community which advocated for inclusivity and shared activity.

This project seeks to establish the commons again within the fabric of Wellington city. It calls on the community to gather in our urban environment and to claim space outside the market paradigm. It advocates for a common ground and collective experience.

To locate a space between public and private is to acknowledge that our environment is determined by power relations. The difference between what is private and what is public is marked by who is given access and for what ends. Finding somewhere between these definitions is to open up possibilities for action and to enable new meanings to take shape.

Right now we are living in a time of commercial contradiction: between hyper-capitalism and economic instability. There is also renewed investment

in developing communities based on effective conservation and resource management. Here, in the space of negotiation – between community needs and capital enterprise, between the commercial agenda of the street and the city's endorsed behaviour as a creative capital – a commons can be established. The proposition of this event is that this can be effected through sound.

Music is a popular medium. It creates shared states of being. It is undeniably pervasive. It cannot be ignored. People who make music do so together in the spirit of community and without regard for the structures of class. Music for this project is a tool, a means to explore an alternative to today's rampant culture of consumption and propose other ways of communicating.

The Commons Project will not simply deliver music freely. It will challenge expectations of what music can be – delving into electronic sampling, score-based instrumentation and processional sounds – and where it should be performed. We have set a challenge for participants, by inviting them to work in city sites that are either unfamiliar or that test expectations of where one might hear sounds performed.

This series is based on collaboration. The collective dynamics explored by each performance will not only build relationships between sound and site but will also connect local practitioners with artists from other places with potentially long-term effects. The aim is to establish common ground not only in the public and private spaces where performances will be staged but in the connective threads that will stretch in many directions from this point.

Through the pervasive and popular medium of sound, this series of performances aims to empower an understanding of community and to re-imagine the commons as a public space to be re-claimed *In Our Name*.

Laura Preston – Curator

The Adam Art Gallery will stage this series between January and April 2011. *The Commons Project* is the second off-site series to be staged as part of the Adam Art Gallery's *Sound Check* programme focus, which sets out to explore the overlap between the visual and the aural. We acknowledge the generous support of Wellington City Council through its Creative Communities Funding Programme.