

Nothing lasts forever was the recent solo exhibition of South African artist Greg Streak at the Soledad Senlle Gallery in Amsterdam (5 June - 17 July 2010). Streak was also represented by the Soledad Senlle Gallery at Art Amsterdam (May 2010).

Greg Streak was born in Bulawayo, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1971. His family immigrated to South Africa in 1978.

Streak is an interdisciplinary practitioner working in sculpture, video, installation and documentary film-making. His cool aesthetic, even minimalist work, is characterized by formalistic concerns and a preoccupation with the materiality of substance and things, but also space, both physical and psychological.

Streak has a sharply critical and eclectic eye. His more recent work is characterised by his seemingly effortless ability to transform mundane materials and objects into simple, yet complex constructions that give new value and meaning to their intersection. The titles of the work are critical in Streak's case; they give meaning to much of what would otherwise be obsessive abstraction:

"I am interested in the imperceptible space between a title and the accompanying work and how the work is transformed by the title and the title by the work. At best the works are supposed to hover in abstraction, multiple truths and fantasy and then the title acts as this cruel spike that pegs it to the ground even if in an ambiguous way."

Where most tend to specialize in search of a formula, Streak's work is characterized by an almost Naumanesque boastfulness - he is able to control almost any medium he turns to.

Following his two-year residency at the Rijkakademie in Holland (1997-1998), Streak founded PULSE (2000) - an artists run initiative linked to the RAIN Artists' Initiatives Network. Under the umbrella of PULSE, he has organised numerous international projects including the critically acclaimed Hiv(e) project (2004). His first full feature documentary film *Beauty and the Beasts* won a Special Mention Jury Award at the 2006 Durban International Film Festival.

Streak's first solo show in Amsterdam in 10 years - *Nothing lasts forever*, is an extension of the work from his critically acclaimed solo exhibition *Accumulative Disintegration* at the Bank Gallery in Durban, South Africa (2008).

Nothing lasts forever is, as the title suggests, a probe into the impermanence of things - intimate connections, power hierarchies and life itself. But it is also more than this. There is a distinct investigation into the micro and the macro, with the singular and the collective, and with the immediate and the distant. Many of the titles allude to the body; but this is not a collection of works that are about the body per se like much of the work in the late 90's, they are rather referencing parts of the body, conditions of abnormality typically related to the body, but used more as a metaphor for the dislocated and somewhat anomalous times within which we live. *Biopsy* (2010), is a 1.2m diameter sphere with a thickness of 100mm and floats approximately 50mm off of the ground. It is constructed from 57 000 wire ties into an intensely woven spiral. It looks like a cross section through, a core sample of ... and the title confirms this. A biopsy is the removal of a piece of tissue from a living body for diagnostic study. The title in itself alludes to the fact that something is potentially wrong - just not exactly what.

"I think *Nothing lasts forever* is really a body of work that alludes to the conflicted times in which we live; a time of blatant hypocrisy, malevolence and subterfuge often masked by sugar coated smoke and mirrors. I sense that we live in a time where there is a lot wrong. The works are intimate reflections, metaphors for this abnormality and what I see as social hemorrhaging."

Infection (open) - 2010

1974 x 1220 x 90 mm

MDF, wood sealant, pva paint, floor polish

one in a version of 3

Infection (open) straddles the interstitial space between conflict and resolution. A thick wood panel with the peculiar dimensions of 1974mm x 1220mm is in fact based on the golden section : a divine proportion. The panel itself is made up of thousands of incisions. The overall surface reminds one of elephant hide, scars, a wind blown grassland or vibrating bacteria under the microscope. The work suggests an alien invasion and perhaps references a time fraught with the anxiety of transgressions.

Envelopes for tears - 2010

1120 x 690 x 60 mm

white insulation tape, foam core, wood, fluorescent tube

one in a version of 5

"Envelopes for tears consists of tiny three-dimensional envelopes ingeniously constructed from white household insulation tape. There is barely enough space between the insulation tape envelopes and the glass front – inducing a sense of claustrophobia or suffocation. The wood and glass frame also references a museum case – a means of containing an object of value or historical significance. The envelopes themselves also look like small white sailing vessels or remind one of the beacons or markings on a map indicating conquests or victories. The envelopes are themselves empty, and Streak once again alludes to many possibilities of interpretation, but leaves the final meaning to be filled in." - Jose Ferreira

Nothing lasts forever - 2010

1000 x 20mm x 2mm

Aluminium, relief tape

Edition of 10

Nothing lasts forever is a text work - the words projected forward as white relief stamped letters onto black tape. The words NOTHING LASTS are separated by a 900mm black pause from the word FOREVER. As such, they are connected and separated providing contradictory meaning. NOTHING LASTS alludes to the fact that things, people, situations, everything is impermanent; they will all eventually perish. The isolated word FOREVER - suggests the opposite : everlasting, without an end, for eternity. Put together, NOTHING LASTS FOREVER suggests that things have their time, that they do exist with a degree of certainty, but will eventually come to an end.

Biopsy - 2010

1200 mm diameter x 100mm

57 000 wire ties, mild steel flat bar

one of

Biopsy (2010), is a 1.2m diameter sphere with a thickness of 100mm and hovers on a 50mm shadow off of the ground. It is constructed from 57 000 wire ties into an intensely woven spiral. It looks like a cross section through, a core sample of ... and the title confirms this. A biopsy is the removal of a piece of tissue from a living body for diagnostic study. The title in itself alludes to the fact that something is potentially wrong – just not exactly what.

Someday I will find you - 2007 / 2008

400 x 360 mm

archival pen drawing on 100% cotton paper, circular mount, obeechy frame
original drawing

Someday I will find you

600 x 400mm

digital print: archival ink on archival Hahnemuhle paper
edition of 8

"Someday I will find you is an extreme accretion of connected circular dots – a matrix of interconnectedness. The surface intensity is difficult to describe. Even with fine scrutiny one feels that one is not seeing it all - that it is finer than the eye can actually hold. Small patches of miniscule hollow circles are left unconnected, which almost serves to amplify the concentration of the rest of the drawn surface."

... a rush of blood - 2007 / 2008

400 x 360 mm

archival pen drawing on 100% cotton paper, circular mount, obeechy frame
original drawing

... a rush of blood

600 x 400mm

digital print: archival ink on archival Hahnemuhle paper
edition of 8

"... a rush of blood has a corpuscular feel to it; almost like some part of the inside of the body under a microscope. Reminiscent of a network of blood filled veins or a tap root system out of control, ... a rush of blood is both manic and delicate."

The end always has a beginning - 2007 / 2008

400 x 360 mm

archival pen drawing on 100% cotton paper, circular mount, obeechy frame
original drawing

The end always has a beginning

600 x 400mm

digital print: archival ink on archival Hahnemuhle paper
edition of 8

"The end always has a beginning has a more cosmological feel to it. A densely woven maze that flows over the entire drawn surface looks like an atomic detail of a meteorite shard captured from outer space."

Accumulative Disintegration - 2008

400 x 360 mm

archival pen drawing on 100% cotton paper, circular mount, obeechy frame
original drawing

Accumulative Disintegration

900 x 600mm

digital print: archival ink on archival Hahnemuhle paper

edition of 8

"Accumulative Disintegration as a whole looks to be an aerial map of somewhere we don't really know. Closer examination reveals individual marks that look like stitches: two small drawn dots connected by a line. But it's also molecular in feel - a vibrating double helix?"

Glaucoma (and the anxiety of seeing what I sometimes feel) - 2010

700 (diameter) x 350 mm (depth)

aluminum basin, opal perspex, 20 000 straws, silicon, CFL tube

one in a version of 3

Glaucoma is a disease of the eye in which the optic nerve is damaged leading to progressive, irreversible loss of vision. Glaucoma (and the anxiety of seeing what I sometimes feel) is not about physical blindness but is rather a metaphor for our inability to see or want to see; a lack of foresight.

Underbelly - 2008

1250 x 500 x 400 mm

polished stainless steel, 2000 razor blades

one of

An underbelly by definition is both a dark, hidden area and / or a vulnerable, weak point. A vertical stainless steel arc embedded with 2000 razor blades is presented as a reference to the torso; it becomes a stylized protruding stomach or belly. Like much of the work that forms part of the solo exhibition Nothing lasts forever - this piece references the body in order to speak of that which is situated in the outside world. Underbelly, with its razor armour speaks simultaneously to vulnerability and protection as well as the dichotomy between interior and exterior worlds.

Secrets (for those that don't have) - 2008

200 x 145 x 160 mm

perspex, mild steel, 2000 paper envelopes

one of

"Secrets (for those who don't have) consists of a perspex box fastened to a white powder coated steel bracket. The perspex box is filled with 2000 miniature envelopes that have been sealed and glued together to form 20 stacks of 100 each. The envelopes have been compressed into the sealed box, their contained messages suffocated below the transparent surface and locked away indefinitely; perhaps 2000 confessions captured and necessarily buried."