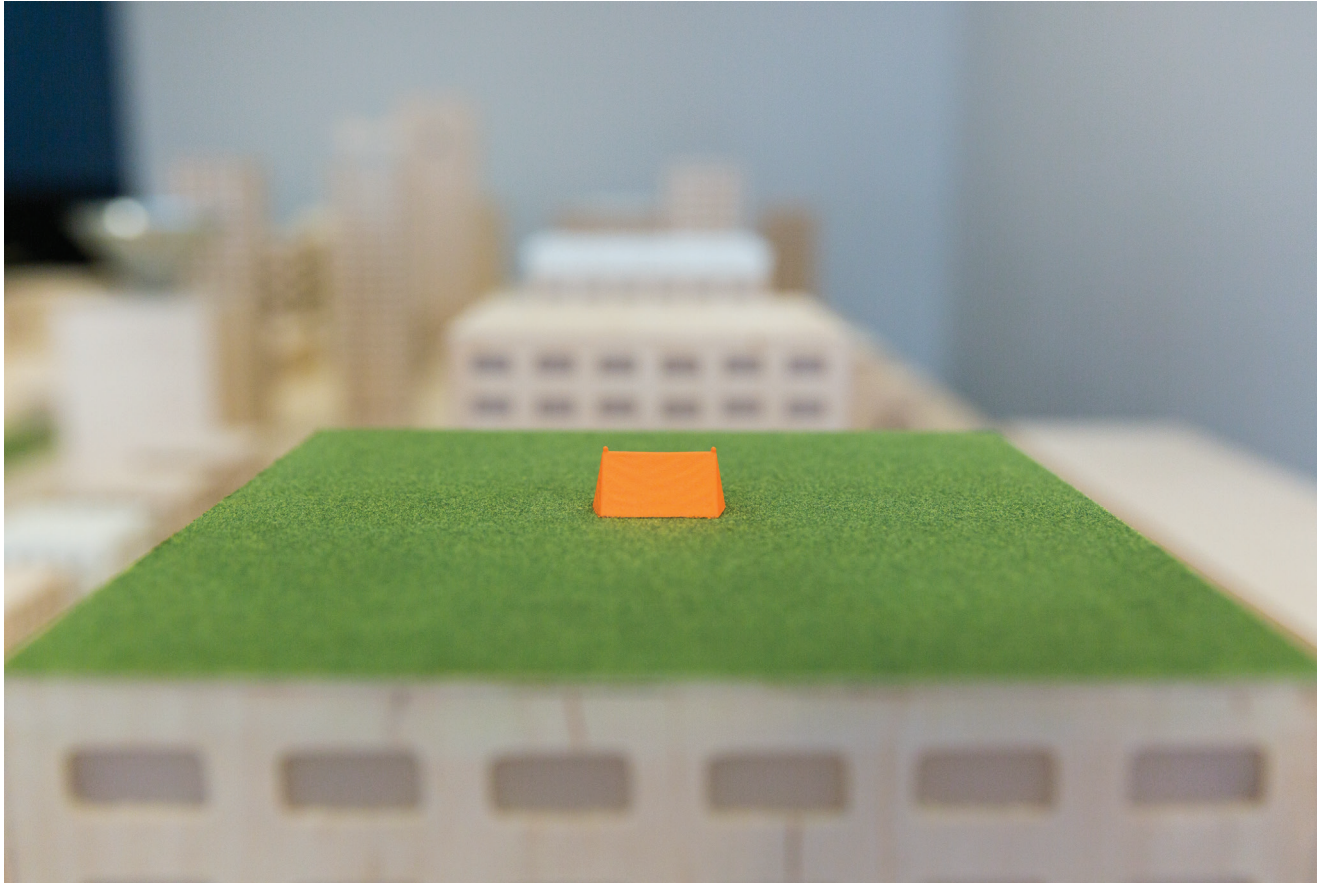


GALERIA VERA CORTÊS

John Wood and Paul Harrison Other plans



27 Janeiro – 11 Março 2017

27 January – 11 March 2017

Cara Vera,

Sei que prometi enviar-te o texto antes do prazo, mas iniciar a escrita deste ensaio está a revelar-se extraordinariamente difícil. A pressão que a tarefa tem colocado sobre mim começou mesmo a afetar a forma como me relaciono com as pessoas à minha volta... Tenho dado o meu melhor, fiz uma quantidade enorme de notas e articulei algumas metáforas que parecem descrever bem o que se está a passar. No entanto, mal vejo o teclado do meu *laptop* sou invadido por um estranho estado de torpor intelectual...

Quero também agradecer-te as dicas sobre a gastronomia e costumes locais. No entanto, apesar da combinação encantadora de comida requintada, vinho extraordinário e hospitalidade (o chefe do *Hotel Estrutural* é mesmo fenomenal), confesso que esta cidade tem a estranha capacidade de me confundir uma e outra vez. O facto de ser a capital acrescenta um conjunto vibrante de características singulares às tendências culturais deste lugar... por exemplo, a cena cultural parece ter recebido uma infusão de vida nova com a abertura da nova ala do *Museu de Estratégias Obsoletas*, mesmo ao lado do realocado *Monumento à Circularidade*. Dedicado a colecionar, arquivar, mostrar e pesquisar modos obsoletos de pensar, fazer e produzir (aqui o vernáculo para obsoleto implica, de alguma forma, um estado de «memória» transitório e reversível, «memória» que, curiosamente, partilha uma raiz etimológica com a palavra «lapso»...), o museu é mais uma contribuição para o modesto orgulho que se faz sentir entre os mais cosmopolitas habitantes da cidade.

Não longe do museu, do outro lado da praça, há um edifício que me chamou a atenção e que tenho urgência em visitar: o *Centro de Estudos Ficcionalis*. Próximo do *Passeio Oblíquo* (que é o delírio das multidões, sempre cheio de gente a subir e descer a rampa de 45°), o edifício não impressiona no que diz respeito à arquitetura, mas na porta principal há uma inscrição que, segundo me disseram, pode ser traduzida para «Tudo o que é sólido dissolve-se no ar». Se me agradou imediatamente o aspeto «Marx citado por Berman citado por esta instituição de investigação académica» daquela inscrição, o que realmente me chamou a atenção foram as palavras grafitadas antes e depois da frase. Ainda que, obviamente, eu fosse incapaz de as ler, o meu anfitrião/guia/intérprete temporário, que é o Diretor do Centro, explicou-me que aquelas poucas letras alteravam completamente o sentido da frase, que passava a querer dizer «Se tudo o que é sólido se dissolve no ar, porque é que ainda estamos aqui?» Sei que, conhecendo-me tão bem como tu conheces, podes imaginar o que é que estas palavras produziram na minha imaginação delirante...

Aparentemente, estas duas instituições, uma cultural e a outra académica, têm vindo a colaborar naquilo que parece ser uma espécie de re-fundação ideológica da paisagem cultural e histórica da cidade e do país em geral... Ainda não entendi bem como o estão a fazer, e ainda não encontrei ninguém capaz de me dar uma explicação precisa que não entre em contradição com o que outros me disseram. De qualquer forma, todos parecem aceitar isto como um facto... Só fui capaz de perceber, e novamente através do Diretor do *Centro de Estudos Ficcionalis*, que o projeto se baseia numa leitura assaz literal de Borges e Calvino, e que tem como objetivo institucionalizar a ideia de que diferentes relatos da nossa história coletiva resultam de perceções divergentes dos eventos enquanto eles acontecem. Estas lacunas tornam a realidade descontínua, múltipla e fragmentária, até ao ponto de ela se tornar ficção... Esta disposição para a divagação parece estar no centro de toda a estratégia de renovação urbana que está agora a ser aplicada.

De qualquer forma, vou estar ocupado durante mais alguns dias, a visitar estas instituições e a tentar fazer sentido desta onda ficcional e lacunar que parte do centro da cidade e já se espalha pelos bairros adjacentes. Espero voltar a escrever-te antes de sexta-feira, já com um primeiro rascunho do artigo. Está bem para ti?

Até breve!

xxx
L.

Luíis Silva
January 2017

Dear Vera,

I know I promised I would send you the text before the deadline, but starting this essay has been extremely difficult and putting such a strain on the way I engage with everyone around me... I have been doing my best, taking an enormous amount of notes and articulating a few, apparently good metaphors about what seems to be going on, but the sight of my laptop's keyboard just brings me to an odd state of intellectual numbness...

Also, I would like to thank you for the tips on the local gastronomy and traditional customs. However, and despite how charming and entertaining the combination of exquisite food, extraordinary wine and local hospitality may be (the chef from the *Structural Hotel* really is incredible...), this city has the uncanny ability to puzzle me over and over again. Being the capital adds of course a whole new vibrant set of distinctive features to the cultural bearings of this place... for instance, new life seems to have been bred into the cultural scene with the opening of the brand new wing of the *Museum of Obsolete Strategies*, right next to the relocated *Monument to Circularity*. Dedicated to collecting, archiving, displaying and researching on obsolete (the vernacular word here for obsolete is somehow connected to a transitory and reversible state of "memory", which in turn shares an intriguing etymological connection with the word "lapse"...) ways of thinking, doing and making, the museum constitutes a renewed reason for modest pride amongst the more cosmopolitan of the city dwellers.

Not far from the museum, across the square, is something that also caught my eye, and that I will have to visit urgently: the *Centre for Fictional Studies*. The building, next to the *Angled Promenade* (which is, by the way, a crowd pleaser, always packed with people going up and down the 45° incline), isn't at all exciting from an architectural point of view but the main entrance has an inscription that I was told translates into "All that is solid melts into air". If I immediately enjoyed the "Marx quoted by Berman quoted by this academic research institution" aspect of such an inscription, what really interested me was the few words graffitied before and after the inscription. Obviously unable to read them, my temporary host/guide/translator, the Director of the Centre himself, explained that those graffitied words changed the entire sentence to the amusing "If all that is solid melts into air, why are we still here?". I'm sure that knowing me like you do, you can imagine what it produced in my quasi-delirious imagination...

Apparently these two institutions, one cultural and the other academical, have been collaborating in what seems a sort of ideological re-purposing of the cultural and historical landscape of the city and country at large... I haven't been quite able to perceive in which ways they're doing it, or how, and no-one really knows how to explain it precisely or without contradicting each other, but they all accept it as a matter of fact... I've only been able to understand, again through the Director of the *Centre for Fictional Studies*, that a fairly literal reading of Borges and Calvino was the departure for this endeavor, which is aiming at completely institutionalizing the idea of very different narrations of collective history being the result of diverging perceptions of events as they take place. These gaps render reality discontinuous, fragmentary and multiple, to the point it becomes fiction... The willingness to digress seems to be at the core of the whole urban renewal strategy now taking place.

Anyway, I'll be busy a few more days visiting these institutions and trying to make sense of this gap-driven, fictional wave departing from the centre of the city and already spreading across the nearer neighborhoods. Hopefully I'll get back to you no later than Friday with the first draft of the article. Is this OK with you?

All my best,

xxx
L.



Installation view: *A film about the city*, John Wood and Paul Harrison, 2015. Courtesy of Carroll / Fletcher





A film about a city, 2015 (detail)
 Contraplacado e mixed media
 Plywood and mixed media
 10 x (100 x 200 cm)

What is a city?
 What is a film?
 Where is the beginning?
 When does it start?
 Where is the end?
 What happens inbetween?
 Why do people queue around buildings?
 What do architects do all day?
 What is a civil engineer?
 What is a landmark?
 What is the background?
 How do you get from A to B?
 Is there still an A to Z guidebook?
 Do you think you are in a film?
 Is it quicker to walk?
 How many decisions did it take?
 What are you standing on?
 Is there a slight incline?
 What time is it?
 What are they looking at?
 What is this a version of?
 Can you undesign a building?
 Where is the music coming from?
 Who invented car parks?
 How long would it take to draw a city?
 Where is the exit?

These are some questions that we asked ourselves when we were making 'A Film About a City'. Originally we were going to make a video using architectural models. We began storyboard-ing a kind of narrative. And then we started to draw buildings and spaces. After a while we realised that the architectural models were the work. Some are loosely based upon actual buildings, some are autobiographical, some are things that we would design if we were architects, and some are from films. We thought about intention and use, and how human beings don't always use things quite in the way that they were designed for.

John Wood and Paul Harrison







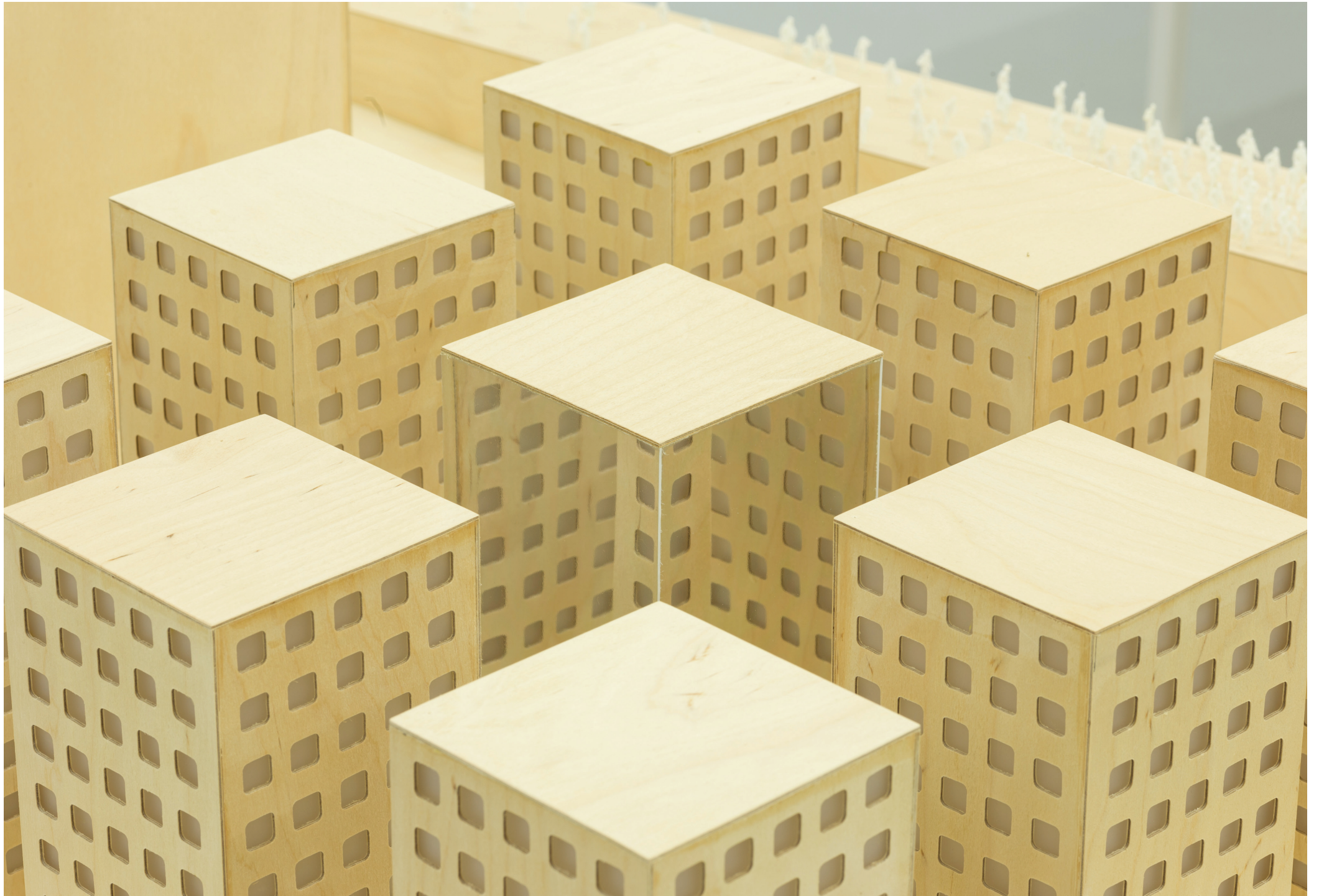
A film about a city, 2015 (detail)
Contraplacado e mixed media
Plywood and mixed media
10 × (100 × 200 cm)





A film about a city, 2015 (details)
 Contraplacado e mixed media
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 10 x (100 x 200 cm)









A film about a city, 2015 (details)
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 Plywood and mixed media
 10 x (100 x 200 cm)





It's all work
It's not work
It doesn't work
There is no work
This is the work



Broken chair, 2016
 15', HD, 16:9, single channel
 Papel, tripode e media player
 Paper, tripod and media player
 Dimensões variáveis
 Variable dimensions





Grey plastic chair 2, 2015
Marcador permanente sobre papel
Permanent marker on paper
100 x 70 cm

It's all work

It's not work

It doesn't work

There is no work

This is the work

Work, 2016
Lápis sobre papel
Pencil on paper
100 x 70 cm

John Wood and Paul Harrison
Kowloon, Hong Kong, 1969
Wolverhampton, 1966

John Wood e Paul Harrison trabalham de forma colaborativa desde 1993. Exploram o mundo ao seu redor através de uma série de obras de vídeo construídas imaculadamente, peças de texto úteis e inúteis, desenhos, rabiscos e pensamentos incompletos e esculturas bastante úteis. Enquanto os conceitos de confiança e apoio e causa e efeito são operados através de materiais simples e gestos conceituais, os artistas questionam e, em última instância, afirmam uma posição do homem no mundo que é essencialmente positiva.

Uma selecção das suas exposições individuais inclui: *Some Things Are Hard to Explain* (InterCommunication Center, Tokyo, Japão), *Erdkunde: The Study of the Earth* (Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Bristol, UK), *John Wood and Paul Harrison* (Museo de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia), *Answers to Questions* (Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, EUA), *No Beginning No Middle No End* (Kunstmuseum Thun, Thun, Suíça), *Deadpan* (Pacific Design Centre, Los Angeles, E.U.A.), *Some Words, Some More Words* (Galeria Ikon, Birmingham, Inglaterra).

Das coletivas em que participaram destacam-se *In Ascents: Light art Festival* (Stuttgart, Alemanha), *Diamonds always come in small packages* (Kunstmuseum Luzern, Suíça), *Eppur Si Muove: Art and Technology, a Shared Sphere* (MUDAM, Luxemburgo), *Private Utopia. British Council Touring Exhibition* (Kochi Museum of Art, Japão. Okayama Museum of Art, Japão. Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Nova Zelândia), *Un Nouveau Festival* (Centre Pompidou, Paris, França), *Slapstick* (Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Alemanha), *Super 8* (Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil), *Le Geste Premier* (bbb, Centre d'art Toulouse, França), *12 From Number 10* (Whitechapel Gallery, Londres, Inglaterra), *Supertemporal Kulturhuset* (Estocolmo, Suécia), *Open Space* (ICC, Tokyo, Japão) e *Mardin Bienali* (Mardin, Turquia).

John Wood and Paul Harrison have been working collaboratively since 1993. They explore the world around them through a series of immaculately constructed video works, informative and uninformative text pieces, drawings, doodles and half thoughts, and quite useful sculptures. As trust and support, and cause and effect are played out through simple material and conceptual gestures, the artists question and ultimately affirm a human position in the world that is essentially positive.

A selection of their solo exhibitions includes: *Some Things Are Hard to Explain* (InterCommunication Center, Tokyo, Japan), *Erdkunde: The Study of the Earth* (Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Bristol, UK), *John Wood and Paul Harrison* (Museo de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia), *Answers to Questions* (Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, USA), *No Beginning No Middle No End* (Kunstmuseum Thun, Thun, Switzerland), *Deadpan* (Pacific Design Centre, Los Angeles, USA), *Some Words, Some More Words* (Ikon gallery, Birmingham, England).

Some of the collective exhibitions in which they have participated include *In Ascents: Light art Festival* (Stuttgart, Germany), *Diamonds always come in small packages*, curated by Fanni Fetzter (Kunstmuseum Luzern, Switzerland), *Eppur Si Muove: Art and Technology, a Shared Sphere* (MUDAM, Luxembourg), *Private Utopia. British Council Touring Exhibition* (Kochi Museum of Art, Japan. Okayama Museum of Art, Japan. Dunedin Public Art Gallery, New Zealand), *Un Nouveau Festival* (Centre Pompidou, Paris, France), *Slapstick* (Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany), *Super 8* (Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil), *Le Geste Premier* (bbb, Centre d'art Toulouse, France), *12 From Number 10* (Whitechapel Gallery, London, England), *Supertemporal Kulturhuset* (Stockholm, Sweden), *Open Space* (ICC, Tokyo, Japan) and *Mardin Bienali* (Mardin, Turkey).

