

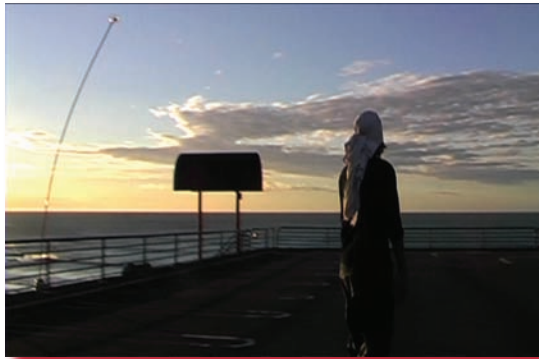


shaun gladwell

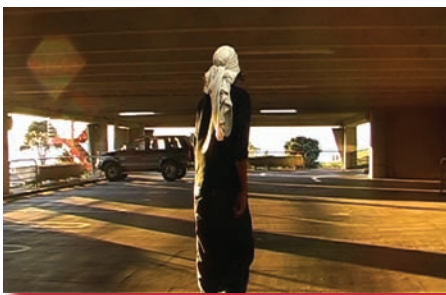


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*Taranaki Descent*, 2004  
digital video, 8:13 minutes

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*Kickflipper: Fragments Edit*, 2000-3  
digital video, 11:07 minutes  
videography: Michael Schiavello

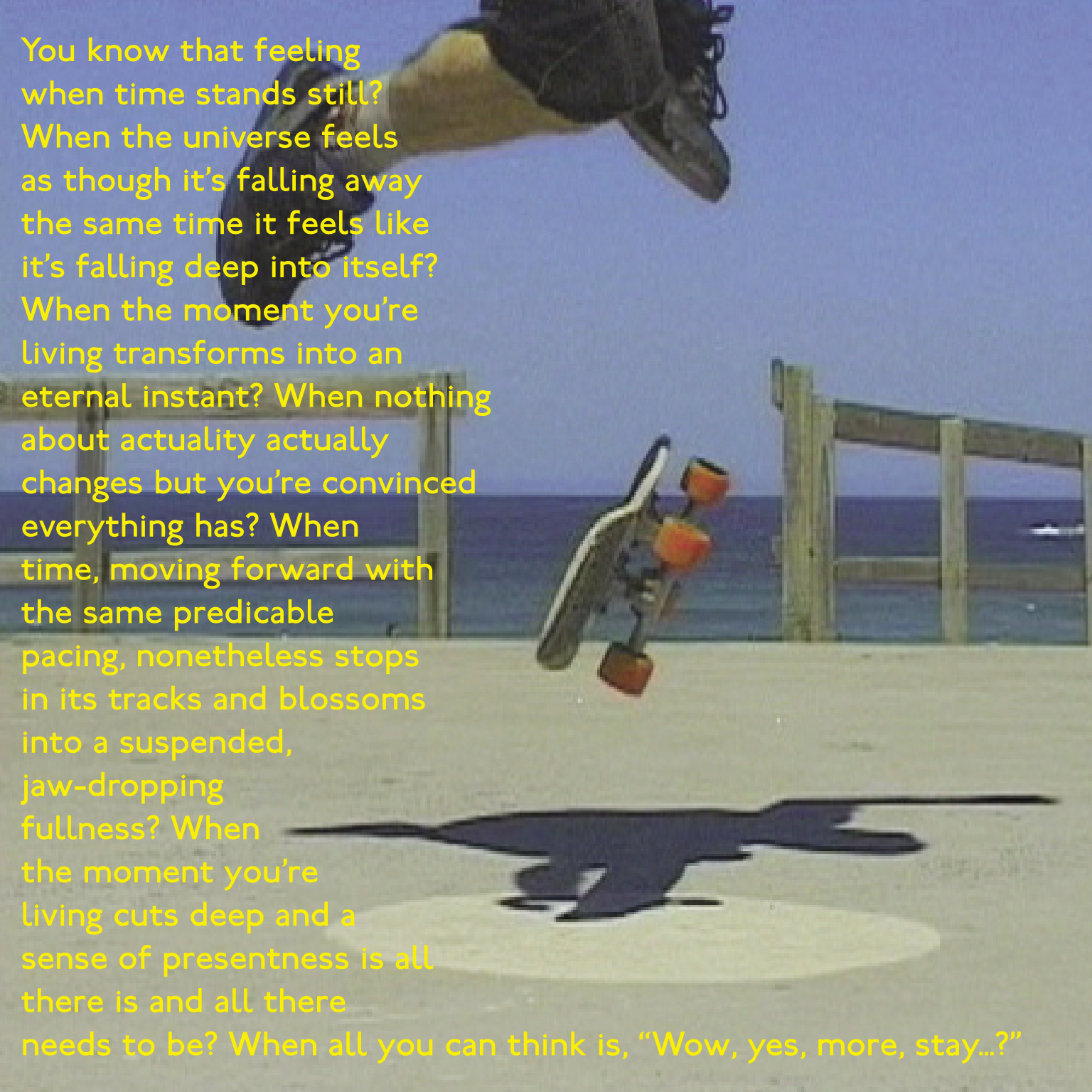


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*Godspeed Verticals*  
*(Escalator Sequence)*, 2004  
digital video, 50:32 minutes  
Performers: Melanie Hitchcock  
& Morganics  
Videography: Gotaro Uematsu  
Editing: Julie-Ann de Ruvo



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*Woolloomooloo Night*, 2004  
digital video, 25:37 minutes  
performer: Emma Magenta  
videography: Gotaro Uematsu  
sound: Kazumichi Grime





You know that feeling  
when time stands still?  
When the universe feels  
as though it's falling away  
the same time it feels like  
it's falling deep into itself?  
When the moment you're  
living transforms into an  
eternal instant? When nothing  
about actuality actually  
changes but you're convinced  
everything has? When  
time, moving forward with  
the same predictable  
pacing, nonetheless stops  
in its tracks and blossoms  
into a suspended,  
jaw-dropping  
fullness? When  
the moment you're  
living cuts deep and a  
sense of presentness is all  
there is and all there  
needs to be? When all you can think is, "Wow, yes, more, stay..?"

In the end (and the beginning and the middle), the four videos by Shaun Gladwell that are exhibited in this moment, this instant, are about just that. *Kickflipper*, *Taranki Descent*, *Woolloomooloo Night*, and *Godspeed Verticals*(*Escalator Sequence*) are situational vignettes in which either skateboarding or breakdancing are the featured actions, but not the ultimate subjects. Pyrotechnical athleticism and a sporty performance—evident in varying degrees in all the videos—are not really the point. They are, instead, points of departure for the pursuit of a deeper resonance.

All four videos are set in public spaces and allude to the manner in which these once-fringe activities carve up and redefine these spaces in ways never originally intended. There is the emphatic application of a personal aesthetic upon the public world. At the same time, Gladwell shoots these spaces as though they are an otherworldly realm. In *Woolloomooloo Night*, we are never tricked into believing this isn't an actual gas station, but the cumulative effect of Gladwell's lone breakdancer—like some shamanistic ritual—transforms the quotidian into a space existing on some other plane.

Why do the teenagers in *Taranki Descent* ascend in a mirrored, ethereal elevator before gliding downward in the fading light? Yes, okay, they need to go up before they can physically skateboard down the parking ramp, fair enough, but that's not it. Why do the breakdancers in *Godspeed Verticals* need to descend an escalator to begin breaking? We are sliding between worlds here, but it's not a simple earthly/heavenly paradigm. There is no single maneuver that best suits this slippage. It happens vertically, laterally, and—in

*Kickflipper*—within a single spot.

So it is less about traversing distance, less a linear journey, than it is about revelation through ritual.

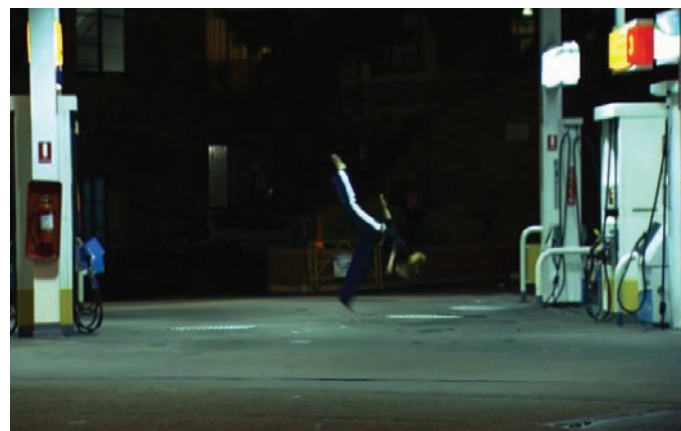
The physical maneuvers Gladwell is shooting also operate as formal devices within the videos, emphasized through the use of slow-motion and a rigorous (though not onerous) sense of composition. Hubs of action are located within visuals that are otherwise calmly composed. Gladwell elegantly and fluidly divides his picture plane—a terrain of resounding colors and composition—in a manner both painterly and cinematic. The hardcore modernist lines and columns of a subway platform. The deep, darkness and intense florescence of the nighttime gas station. Or concrete, fence, sea beyond, sky above, legs and board frothing in mid air. It's all ordinary and it's all gorgeous.

I've been watching and thinking about these works for the past year. And they've seeped in deeply, in a manner almost haunting. And almost certainly eternal. Gladwell is diving deep into the moment, chasing the sublime within a singular gesture, a repetitive act of beauty winding its way toward a state of grace.

"Wow, yes, more, stay..."

John Massier  
Visual Arts Curator

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*Woolloomooloo Night*, 2004  
digital video, 25:37 minutes  
performer: Emma Magenta  
videography: Gotaro Uematsu  
sound: Kazumichi Grime







SHAUN GLADWELL • April 22 to May 31, 2006

Shaun Gladwell is an accomplished painter, sculptor and video artist whose work encompasses images and ideas that cross cultural and historical boundaries. A Samstag scholar, Gladwell recently completed postgraduate studies at Goldsmiths College, University of London, following three months at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris. In 2003-04, Gladwell's work featured in several major exhibitions, including 2004: Australian Culture Now, Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), Melbourne; Home Sweet Home: Works from the Peter Fay Collection, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, and Primavera 2003: Exhibition of Young Australian Artists, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. His video works are currently represented in exhibitions in Darwin (24 Hr Art), New Zealand (Govett-Brewster Art Gallery) and (Art in General), New York City and Kunsthau Baselland, Switzerland.

Shaun Gladwell is represented by Sherman Galleries, Sydney [www.shermangalleries.com.au](http://www.shermangalleries.com.au)  
All images and works are courtesy the artist and Sherman Galleries, Sydney.



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