

***Hit The Ground***

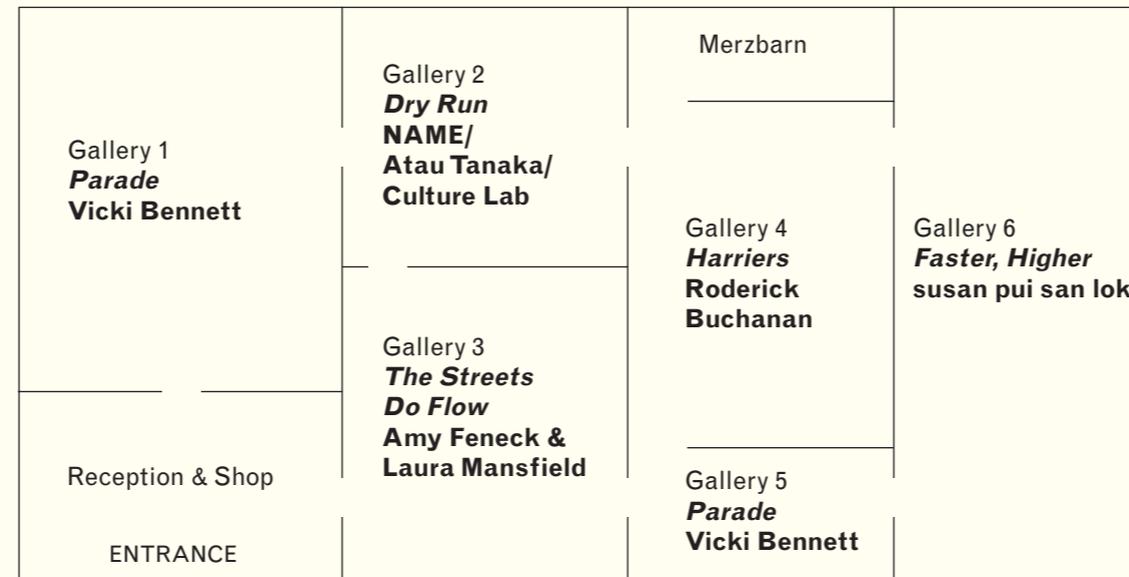
Vicki Bennett

Roderick Buchanan

Amy Feneck &amp; Laura Mansfield

NAME/Atau Tanaka/Culture Lab

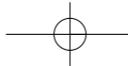
susan pui san lok



Hatton Gallery, The Quadrangle, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1RU  
0191 222 6059 [www.twmuseums.org.uk/hatton](http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/hatton) FREE ENTRY

Opening times: Monday to Saturday 10am – 5pm, Sunday 2 – 5pm

Great North Run special opening: Sunday 20 September 2009, 10am – 4pm

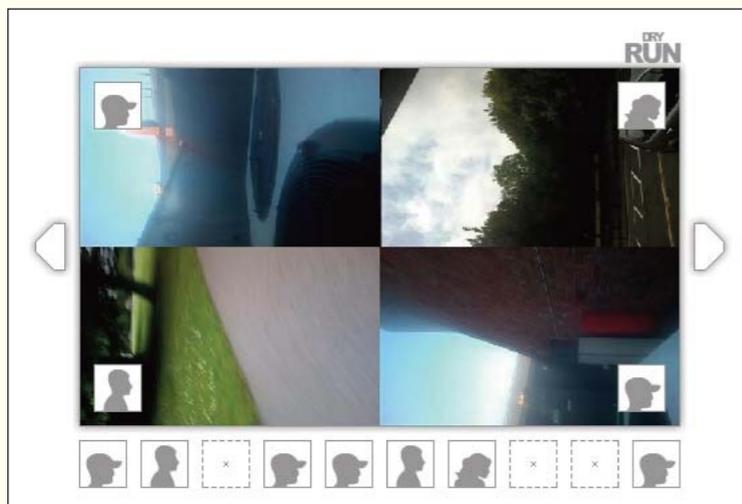


### Gallery 1: *Parade* (2009) Vicki Bennett

The spectators and iconic vistas along the route of the Bupa Great North Run are given centre stage in Bennett's new film *Parade*, an animated collage of archive footage from the last 28 years of the event.

Creating a moving image montage of shifting perspectives and irregular angles the footage bursts out of the conventional TV format and reveals to the audience a unique panoramic view of the run. Referencing the Cubist and Futurist influence within the work, the film is accompanied by a playful recording of Erik Satie's *Parade* by the Willem Breuker Kollektief, providing a reflection of the excitement that surrounds the run itself.

2009 Great North Run Moving Image Commission



### Gallery 2: *Dry Run* (2009) NAME/Atau Tanaka/Culture Lab

The emotional and psychological journeys of runners in training for their first Bupa Great North Run are represented on the website [www.dry-run.org](http://www.dry-run.org). Ten runners from across the country were equipped with Nokia phones that captured information on every training run including GPS co-ordinates, routes and images. This data, combined with a psychological profile of the runners after every run, has been reinterpreted by NAME, Atau Tanaka and the Culture Lab team to create a beautifully abstracted visualisation of what it feels like to train towards the run. This installation enables visitors to explore the website using archived material.

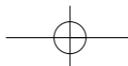
Commissioned by the Bupa Great North Run Cultural Programme. Produced in collaboration with Clicmobile, David King and Ali Colling and with the support of Nokia and the University of Northumbria.

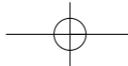


### Gallery 3: *The Streets Do Flow* (2009) Amy Feneck and Laura Mansfield

Feneck and Mansfield worked with members of Wallsend Harriers, a local running club, to document and record thoughts and perspectives about their journeys through the region. The artists have used these recollections to create an alternative map of the city of Newcastle and the surrounding area. The map has been distributed as a number of unexpected interventions using a billboard poster above St James Metro station and a series of text and image based designs in The Journal newspaper. Additional billboard posters of the map have been used to make small booklets, describing a runner's journey through the centre of Newcastle and are free to take away from the Gallery.

Commissioned by the Bupa Great North Run Cultural Programme. Designs produced in collaboration with Dust, Sheffield. With thanks to The Wallsend Harriers and The Journal.



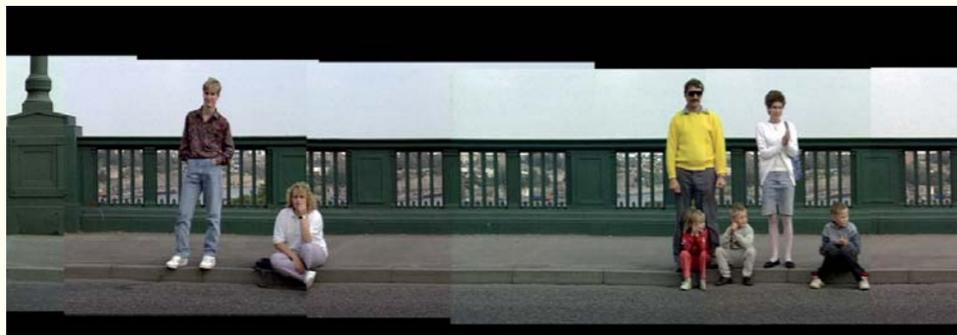


#### Gallery 4: **Harriers (2002) Roderick Buchanan**

Combining Buchanan's longstanding interests in sport and portraiture, Harriers is a three screen video installation that highlights the efforts and commitment of unsung amateur athletes and the unseen rigours of their regular training regime.

Filmed during a gruelling training session, a number of runners from Glasgow's Shettleston Harriers club step up to the spotlight of the camera. Their training programme involved them running to pace with lots of one minute breaks during which the runners were filmed. Having pushed their bodies to their limits, they attempt to compose themselves, struggling to recover their breath and eyeing the camera warily. Drenched and glistening, their breath and sweat rise as steam into the cold night air.

A Film and Video Umbrella Touring Exhibition commissioned in association with Cornerhouse. Supported by the National Touring Programme of Arts Council England and The Henry Moore Foundation.



#### Gallery 5: **Parade – Bridge & Parade – Coastal (2009) Vicki Bennett**

Using still images from her film Parade, Bennett has recreated long collaged stretches of archive footage. The photographs travel across the walls, revealing a strikingly different perspective of the Bupa Great North Run.

The handmade feel provides a contrast to the slick production of the event and its global televised reach, presenting shots of the iconic Tyne Bridge near the start line alongside aerial images of the coastal finish area.

Commissioned by the Bupa Great North Run Cultural Programme



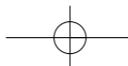
#### Gallery 3: **Faster, Higher (2008) susan pui san lok**

Faster, Higher is a 5-screen exploration of aspiration and endeavour. The effort and commitment of individual athletes training for and competing in a succession of Olympic Games is contrasted with the seamless spectacle of the event itself and its simplified, abstract parade of nations unified in their goals of sporting excellence and world peace.

Archive Olympic material and Chinese documentary news footage are combined with new images shot at East London's Wushu Academy, located on the periphery of the Olympic sit-in-progress, to explore ideas of nation, location cultural identity.

A book to accompany this installation is available in the Hatton Gallery shop.

Commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella and BFI. Supported by Arts Council England.



## Up and Running Paul Bonaventura

I am unpacking my library. Yes, I am.

That's how the German philosopher Walter Benjamin begins his essay 'Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting'. During two years of upheaval, Benjamin's library had been placed in storage for safekeeping. As he finally returns his books to their shelves he recalls how each one has contributed to his development, reminding him of where he bought it and why he bought it, and what he was thinking about at the time that he bought it. For Benjamin, his library is simultaneously a conceptual dwelling, 'with books as the building stones', and a register of his life as an intellectual.

Well, I've just come back from a run. Yes, I have.

Over the years I've tried my hand at many sports. I took up football late, but for most of my thirties I played for a team in an FA friendly league in Oxford before moving on to a more sedate, all-weather kick-about in south London. My game wasn't the best, as you might imagine of such a slow starter, although I do remember scoring one sublime goal against faceless opposition in the University Parks. Throughout my twenties and thirties I spent a ludicrous amount of money on tennis lessons, but the only good thing to come out of that was a joyously steamy affair with a statuesque dentist from R-. (Who said sport wasn't good for you?) Squash and ping-pong waxed and waned, but cycling has been a constant source of pleasure, and I have recently developed a genuine love of playing cricket. Yet were you to ask me whether I have a particular sport, I would have to say it's running. If books provided Benjamin with reminders of his life of the mind so long-distance running has provided me with souvenirs of my life of the body.

I've been running fairly regularly since my late teens, and even before then if you count those

desultory cross-countries over the Surrey downs at the beginning and end of each school term. I've managed a fair few 10k races, some in half decent times, and a clutch of half-marathons, although after the last, Snickers-sponsored debacle in Reading I half-vowed never to run one again. Sadly, I missed last year's Kilburn 7 because of work, and I dropped out of the Great North Run because of a bruised heel, and now here I am on the eve of the 28th Oxford Town and Gown in quite possibly the worst form of my life. So when I say I've just come back from a run, I mean I've just come back from a really dreadful run. I mean one of those runs that hurt even before you leave the house. I mean one of those miserable, puzzling, scraping-the-bottom-of-the-barrel runs that all runners are obliged to confront at some stage in their lives.

The novelist Haruki Murakami talks about the need for each of us to have a mantra in our mental locker at times like these: 'If you don't keep repeating a mantra of some sort to yourself, you'll never survive. One runner told of a mantra his older brother, also a runner, had taught him which he's pondered ever since he began running. Here it is: Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional. Say you're running and you start to think, *Man this hurts, I can't take it anymore*. The *hurt* part is an unavoidable reality, but whether or not you can stand any more is up to the runner... This pretty much sums up the most important aspect of (distance) running.' For the record, my mantra on days like today is pretty much unprintable.

Later in *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*, Murakami makes an eloquent comparison between writing a novel and running. The most important quality a novelist has to have is talent, he says. No matter how much enthusiasm and effort you put into writing, if you totally lack literary talent you can forget about being a novelist. After talent comes focus,

and after focus the next most important thing is endurance: 'Fortunately these two disciplines – focus and endurance – are different from talent, since they can be acquired and sharpened through training. You'll naturally learn both concentration and endurance when you sit down every day at your desk and train yourself to focus on one point. This is a lot like the training of muscles... You have to continually transmit the object of your focus to your entire body, and make sure it thoroughly assimilates the information necessary for you to write every single day and concentrate on the work at hand. And gradually you'll expand the limits of what you're able to do. Almost imperceptibly you'll make the bar rise. This involves the same process as jogging every day to strengthen your muscles and develop a runner's physique.'

Murakami's suggestion that a novel is forged in a crucible fuelled by talent, focus and endurance applies equally to the visual arts. If you totally lack artistic talent you may as well give up on the idea of becoming a professional artist, but if you have artistic talent then this can be refined and improved with focus and endurance. Without them you will accomplish little of value, but with them you'll be able to compensate for erratic periods of form, or even a shortage of it. Now I don't know whether any of the participants in *Hit the Ground* ever suffers from erratic periods of form, but I sense that all of them are blessed with their fair share of artistic talent.

*Hit the Ground* is an exhibition that offers us with a snapshot of the Great North Run Cultural Programme, a series of commissions to artists, writers and musicians that celebrate and respond to the Great North Run. Previous contributors to the Cultural Programme have included Bill Bryson, Michael Nyman, Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard and Jane and Louise Wilson. The current project features three new commissions by Vicki

Bennett, NAME and Atau Tanaka, and Amy Feneck and Laura Mansfield alongside two existing pieces by Roderick Buchanan and Susan Pui San Lok. The works by Buchanan and Pui San Lok were produced by Film and Video Umbrella, and like the Cultural Programme commissions they too articulate the relationship between art and the sport of running.

Vicki Bennett was the recipient of last year's Great North Run Moving Image Commission and out of this has come *Parade* (2009), a six-minute montage of extracts from archive footage documenting all twenty-eight renewals of Britain's best known half-marathon. The processional, multilayered images of runners, spectators and race marshals are viewed through a skittish, rectangular frame of varying proportions, a dynamic, celebratory window on the world of sport that dances to and fro across the screen following the direction of movement of the action.

Appropriately, Bennett's rumbustious tribute to what is, in a very real sense, a people's festival is set to the Choral from the French ballet *Parade*. *Parade* was composed for Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in 1917 and features a one-act stageplay by Jean Cocteau, music by Erik Satie, and costumes and sets by Pablo Picasso. Cocteau's theme for the ballet was a publicity pageant in which three groups of circus artists try to attract an audience to a performance, and Satie's Choral is a hauntingly syncopated piece of music that elicits nostalgic associations with circuses, carnivals and other popular spectacles.

In their contribution to the exhibition, the Newcastle-based art and design group NAME (Nikolas Barrera and Andrew Nixon) have collaborated with artist and musician Atau Tanaka to produce an online artwork called *Dry Run* (2009). *Dry Run* highlights the

achievements of ten first-time competitors in the Great North Run who were asked to trace their emotional and physical journeys in the weeks leading up to the day of the race.

Working with the University of Newcastle Digital Media Department and Northumbria University's School of Psychology and Sport Sciences, NAME/Atau Tanaka/Culture Lab have developed a website, which has permitted the runners to give glimpses into their training regimes via photographs and other information downloaded from Nokia phones. This technology logged where and when every training run took place, and the runners were able to tag and attach further descriptors to the data.

The artists have subsequently reinterpreted this data, creating abstract, colour-coded visualisations of the runners' routines. These visualisations take the form of steamgraphs, traces, photoboxes, tag clouds and word maps, using a chromatic key to register physical states and states of mind ranging from 'euphoric/powerful' and 'optimistic/energetic' to 'disappointed/sore' and 'depressed/exhausted'. Nokia handsets in the exhibition enable visitors to navigate their way around these visualisations and delve into a commission that communicates a different understanding of how people feel when they run.

I'm sure that most people find it easier to run with a running partner, and I have always imagined the same to be true of artists making art. For Amy Feneck and Laura Mansfield running and making art is one and the same thing. Since 2004 they have embraced running as an artistic action, mapping cities on the fly. Like the mark-making activities undertaken by artists Hamish Fulton and Richard Long, who inscribe rural landscapes through the act of walking, Feneck and Mansfield's runner projects delve into the narrative connections between geography, mobility, distance and time, and compel us to

think about a whole host of matters allied to running, such as personal aspiration, life goals and freedom.

*The Streets Do Flow* (2009) has been made with the help of a group of runners from the Wallsend Harriers while they were training in the area covered by the Great North Run. Each runner was issued with a portable recording device with which to document their thoughts before and after training, and the final work derives from a compilation of these personal recollections and transcripts of interviews during which the participants shared stories and talked about their sport.

Feneck and Mansfield have distilled the spoken experiences of the runners into a series of evocative phrases – 'theres me breathless', 'sundays still in my legs' - which appeared in a series of eye-catching interventions in the regional *Journal* newspaper in the days before the event. Examples of these cartographically inspired artworks are included in the exhibition alongside audio recordings and a free leaflet printed on fragments of the related billboard poster. The poster features the Harriers' various training routes and routines overprinted on a highly stylised version of the local Ordnance Survey map and is currently on display at St James Metro station. Collectively, *The Streets Do Flow* charts Newcastle and its environs from the runners' perspectives, spawning an alternative picture of urban space.

Roderick Buchanan's *Harriers* (2002) is a hypnotic video portrait of members of the Shettleston Harriers, East Glasgow's premier athletics club, in the moments between training routines. On three separate screens, the runners come and go in close up, disappearing and reappearing in front of the camera every couple of minutes, one after another, like so many contestants in a relay race. Having pushed their bodies to the limit and manifesting varying degrees of composure,

irritability, self-consciousness and distress, the athletes are depicted in the process of recovering their breath, dripping sweat and evaporating clouds of steam. Deceptively simple, *Harriers* presents us with a silent and dispassionate testimony to the impact of intense physical exercise on bodies young and old, and encourages us to reflect on the heroic dedication and near-sadistic demands made of athletes in the top echelons of sport.

The effort and commitment on the part of individual athletes is a subject that is further explored in *Faster, Higher* (2008) by Susan Pui San Lok. *Faster, Higher* combines precisely edited historical footage and newly recorded material to contrast training and competition in a succession of Olympic Games with the seamless spectacle of the event itself. It was first shown at BFI Southbank in London to coincide with Beijing 2008 and has been described elsewhere as an 'imaginary precursor' to London 2012.

*Faster, Higher* addresses itself to the shared rhetoric of nations unified in the utopian quest for sporting excellence and world peace. Of course utopias are never achievable, but the desire for a better life is part and parcel of the human condition. Pui San Lok's elegant, five-screen video installation marries television and movie clips from the British Film Institute's National Archive with scenes shot at the newly opened Wushu Academy in Leyton, and the resulting cavalcade of images speaks of idealism and endeavour. With its formal and iconographic roots in propagandistic films like *Olympia*, Leni Riefenstahl's paean to the Nazi Games of 1936, *Faster, Higher* alludes to the political, economic and cultural agendas that lie at the heart of the Olympic movement.

Although all the works in this exhibition embrace a documentary approach to film making, they still operate according to the sometimes unknowable demands of the artists and offer us only a partial

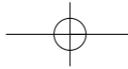
insight into what it is that makes runners run. Art and life are inseparable, but for art to be art - even if it takes its lead from something as commonplace as running - it must follow its own course, without which it has no mandate and is no longer distinctive.

That these crossovers between art and sport exist at all should come as no real surprise, and especially after Murakami's convincing identification of writing with running. At source, art and sport are creative pursuits that engage the personality. Both derive from broadly similar aesthetic impulses, and both share in a playful human inheritance. Together, art and sport constitute a declaration of who we are and what we are as thinking, feeling beings.

The painter Francis Bacon famously suggested that art is a lot to do with intuition and luck and taking advantage of what happens when you 'splash the stuff down' on the canvas. An artist's ability to conjure up a telling artistic statement is dependent on whether they are able to grasp when something has importance - whether they are able to recognise the implications of their actions – and the same applies in sport. We can witness and define what it is that makes Francis Bacon and Louise Bourgeois and Martina Navratilova and Kenenisa Bekele incomparable, we can talk about their knowledge of aspects of humanity which is no less profound for being untranslatable, but we can only speculate on why they succeed where others fail, on why it is that only some artists and athletes are able to sense when their actions have the most profound implications.

*For those groundbreaking artist-runners Jim Allchin, Jordan Baseman, Stephen Farthing, Jeff McMillan and Florence Ray.*

*Paul Bonaventura was a member of the selection panel for last year's Great North Run Moving Image Commission and likes to think of himself as a gentleman amateur. He is also the senior research fellow in fine art studies at the University of Oxford.*



## Something Old, Something New

Wednesday 16 September, 6.30pm, Tyneside Cinema

Artist talk and book launch with Vicki Bennett and susan pui san lok.

Rebecca Shatwell, Director of AV Festival, will chair this talk with Vicki and susan as they discuss their latest works. Come along to find out more about how they have engaged with visual archives as part of their practices and receive a complimentary glass of wine.

This event also marks the launch of a new publication celebrating lok's work *Faster, Higher*, published by Film and Video Umbrella, which features extensive visual documentation of this major multi-screen installation, alongside specially commissioned essays from critics Adrian Rifkin and Chris Berry.

Event presented in collaboration with Film and Video Umbrella.

**Tyneside Cinema**, 10 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6QG, 0845 217 9909  
www.tynesidecinema.co.uk FREE BUT BOOK IN ADVANCE

## Exhibition Tour and Talk

Tuesday 6 October, 6.30pm, Hatton Gallery

Beth Bate, manager of the Bupa Great North Run Cultural Programme and exhibition curator, gives a tour of *Hit The Ground*. Join us to find out more about the artists and their commissions.

**Hatton Gallery**, The Quadrangle, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1RU, 0191 222 6059  
www.twmuseums.org.uk/hatton FREE BUT BOOK IN ADVANCE



*Faster, Higher* (2008) susan pui san lok. Installation shot by Dave Morgan (2008)

## 13.1 Mike Kenny

Wednesday 16 – Thursday 24 September, 7.30pm (not Sunday 20 or Monday 21)

Saturday 19 September, 11am, 2pm and 7.30pm, Live Theatre

*'Life is not a race', 'Yes it is', 'Are you calling me a loser?'*

*Alice and Diane are sisters. They're doing the Great North Run. Alice is fast – she loves running. Diane is slow – hates it. Basically Alice is a bit of a hare whereas Diane is more of a tortoise. See who wins this time, assuming they reach the finishing line without throttling each other. They're doing the run to raise money for charity in memory of their Mam but she's not the only thing they remember.*

Thousands of people run the Great North Run and they all have their stories. This specially commissioned play celebrates them all. Suitable for all the family.

**Live Theatre** Broad Chare, Quayside, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 3DQ 0191 232 1232  
www.live.org.uk, £6; £4 concession; family ticket £16. Book in advance to avoid disappointment. Please be aware that vehicle access to the Newcastle Quayside is restricted on Saturday.

## Great Street Games KMA

Thursday 29 October – Sunday 1 November, 5.30pm till late

Come and take part in a series of outdoor games, taking place simultaneously in three North East locations; Gateshead, Sunderland and Middlesbrough. Each area competes against the others in this world-first event created by media artists KMA.

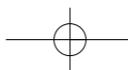
Projected light and thermal-imaging technology are used to create jaw-dropping interactive playing arenas in which the physical movements of players determine the outcome of the games. Develop your game-playing skills as you progress through a number of levels to help your area to victory or to simply have fun.

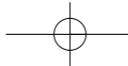
Games repeat in ten minute cycles. *Great Street Games* is open to everyone and does not exclude those with limited mobility.

Visit [www.greatstreetgames.org.uk](http://www.greatstreetgames.org.uk) for information.

**Baltic Square**, Gateshead, **Centre Square**, Middlesbrough, **Burdon Road**, Sunderland

In association with Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council, Middlesbrough Council and Sunderland City Council. Supported by the BT Group. Juice forms part of Newcastle Gateshead's world-class programme of festival and events developed by Culture 10. The Sunderland City Council presentation is part of Octoberfest 2009.





## Acknowledgements

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Cultural Programme Assistants: Helen Mitchinson, Elspeth Lawson

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