

Reece Terris

MCSPADDEN AVENUE, VANCOUVER

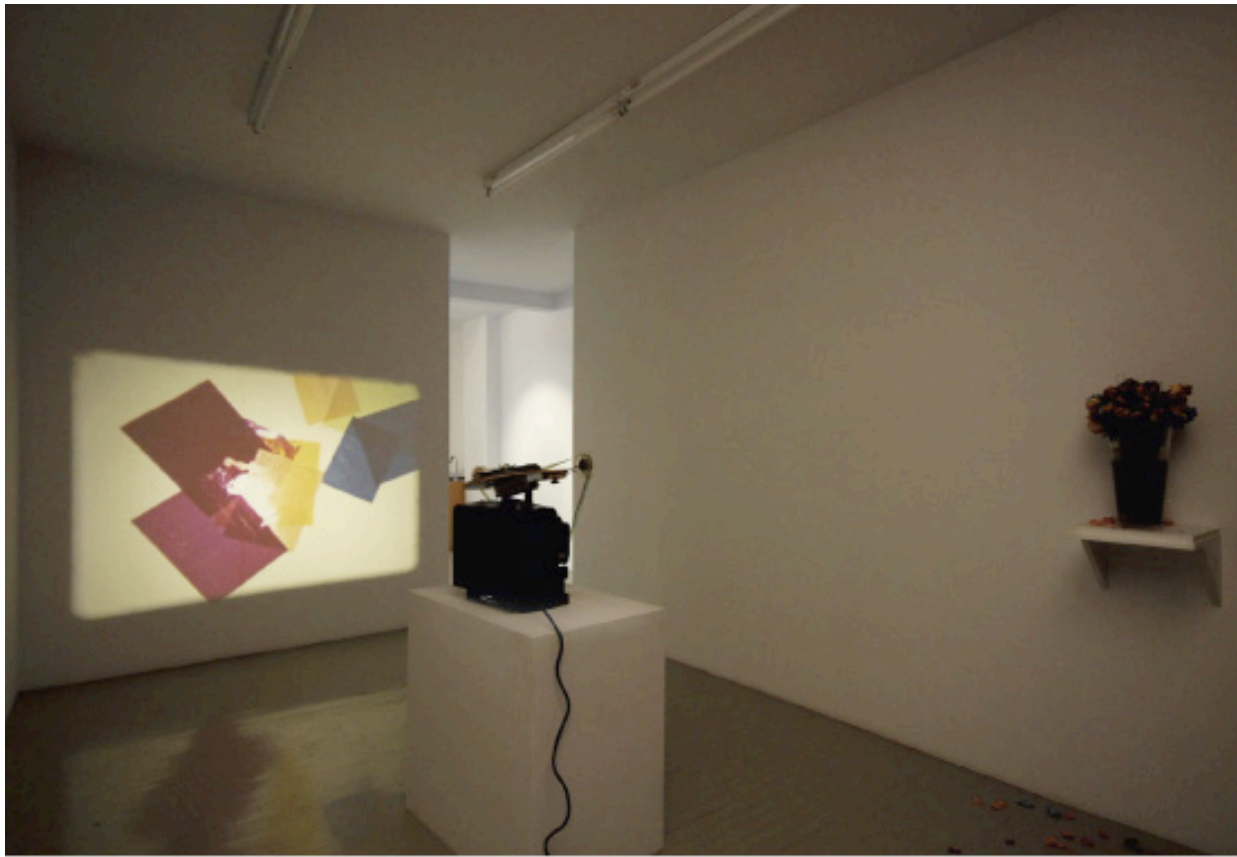
by DAVE WEBB

Bridge (Wooden Arch), by the Vancouver artist Reece Terris, is exactly that—a bridge between the artist's back porch and a neighbour's. The work, sponsored by Presentation House Gallery, spans the gap between Terris the artist and Terris the contractor and defies artificial boundaries: between properties, between “yours” and “mine.” From above, it describes a diagonal line. From the side, it makes an elegant arch, a rejection of the rectilinear grid of Vancouver's streets. Terris sees the right-angled pattern common to most modern cities as a restriction not only of movement but also of thought. He believes the grid conditions us, choking off alternative ways of thinking and being even before they arise.

Situated in the bohemian heart of Vancouver's East Side, *Bridge* crosses the fence separating two lots to provide a concrete metaphor that questions arbitrary boundaries even as it breaches them. The project facilitated the friendship between Terris and his neighbours Gwendal Castellan and Tania Lo, whom he barely knew before getting their permission to build. At the opening last fall, Terris's neighbours and friends shared his backyard with figures from Vancouver's art scene, all craning their necks to look at the structure, most venturing across it at least once. The evening had a warm community feel, in neat contrast to a news story from one of Vancouver's tonier residential areas, where a neighbour was objecting strongly to a tree house built by an architect for his children. If the purpose of bridges is to allow people and goods to traverse natural obstacles and connect points on a map, the purpose of Terris's bridge is to allow playful human connection to disrupt the map.

Terris often uses construction materials as media for his art. *Bridge* is built from unfinished spruce two-by-fours, screws, nuts, bolts and manila rope. For a previous work, *American Standard* (2004–05), he installed a waterfall of urinals that overflowed into one another, flooding the men's washroom in Simon Fraser University's studio space—a reference to Duchamp and, less obviously, to the champagne waterfalls of society weddings. *Brick* (2002–03) was a wall containing brick-sized gaps through which he pushed bits of his anatomy—a weird and oddly funny piece. All testify to his imagination and capacity for hard work. So, while he builds and renovates houses, Terris also delights in deconstructing the reality he helps create.

This, perhaps, is the main function of *Bridge*: to open lines of communication, forge connections, remove barriers, help people come together. Like a benign virus, or a newly forged synapse, *Bridge* challenges the norm. It opens up new avenues for communication, connection and ideas.



Installation view (detail) of Michael Snow and Jonathan Monk's *Back and Forth* [Apert] 2006. Two 5-min 16-mm colour silver film loops, dyed floral bouquet, aquarium with fish. PHOTO ARCHIVE/ARTCHIVE

the title of a celebrated film Snow made in 1969, handily describes the process. Ultimately, Monk suggested each artist make a 16-mm film-loop projection, a form common to both their practices; the gallerist Jessica Bradley proposed each respond in some way to the other's film. Each pairing was like a volley in an artists' game, more match of wits than collaboration.

Monk made *Fireplace* (2006) by buying stock DVD footage of a burning fireplace and having it transferred to 16-mm film. It was projected on the wall at fireplace height. When he chose this ready-made, he said, he could hear his mother talking about the days before TV, when the fireplace was the centre of the home and the focus of dreams. Facing it, Snow placed a lit aquarium filled with fish of colours chosen to represent fire. Like both films, the fish presented a moving image and acted as brush strokes within a frame. If fire melts snow, water douses fire. In the give and take of "Back and Forth," the punning gamesmen came to a friendly draw.

Each was at his best in the other pairing. Snow's *34 Films* (2006) invokes the Russian constructivist avant-garde, Duchamp's *3 Stoppages-Étalon* (1913-14), Action painting and Snow's own works from the 1960s and 70s, such as *Wavelength* (1966-67) and *Painting (Closing the Drum Book)* (1978). Using old stock, Snow filmed 16 rectangular coloured gels falling onto a white surface, then flipped and reversed the film so that 16 gels or films fly back "into" the lens, making 32 gels. (The 33rd is the film in the camera; the 34th is the film in the projector.) Projected on the wall, the frame of light becomes like a painting, the random composition of which paral-

els the "total improvisation" technique Snow uses in musical performance. Entirely in keeping with his earlier work, it is a masterful summary—like other summations Snow has made.

Nearby, Monk's dyed floral bouquet, inspired partly by Snow's fish in water, slowly dropped its petals during the exhibition, echoing the falling gels of *34 Films*. The flowers, a reference to the flower works of Bas Jan Ader, also recalled painting—the memento mori—making the bouquet an homage to Snow and a fond farewell to modernism. NANCY TOUSLEY

Reece Terris

1763 MCSPADDEN AVENUE, VANCOUVER

Bridge (*Wooden Arch*), by the Vancouver artist Reece Terris, is exactly that—a bridge between the artist's back porch and a neighbour's. The work, sponsored by Presentation House Gallery, spans the gap between Terris the artist and Terris the contractor and defies artificial boundaries: between properties, between "yours" and "mine." From above, it describes a diagonal line. From the side, it makes an elegant arch, a rejection of the rectilinear grid of Vancouver's streets. Terris sees the right-angled pattern common to most modern cities as a restriction not only of movement but also of thought. He believes the grid conditions us, choking off alternative ways of thinking and being even before they arise.

Situated in the bohemian heart of Vancouver's East Side, *Bridge* crosses the fence separating two lots to provide a concrete metaphor that questions

