

16 April 2019

## Michael Stevenson *Serene Velocity in Practice: MC510 & CS183*

Michael Stevenson is one of New Zealand's most acclaimed artists.

His solo exhibition, *Serene Velocity in Practice: MC510 & CS183*, is one of his most significant large-scale installations. It opens at Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA) on Wednesday 22 May until Saturday 6 July 2019.

*Serene Velocity in Practice: MC510 & CS183* is commissioned by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki with commissioning partners the Biennale of Sydney 2018 and Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA).

Stevenson is known for his rigorous and forensic approach to art making. His ambitious sculptural practice has, over many years, mapped historical narratives from certainty to ruin, mathematics to miracles, and secrets and exchange.

Transforming the galleries of MUMA, this major installation is based on two seemingly unrelated academic courses, MC510 and CS183, which were modules taught for a short time in Californian higher-learning institutions.

'This is the perfect project to present in our university context as it tests many of our assumptions around pedagogy, and the world views that inform *what* and *how* we teach' says Charlotte Day, Director, MUMA.

*Serene Velocity in Practice: MC510 & CS183* takes the form of an imagined tertiary institution of two classrooms, each of which represents one of these courses.

Both academic courses referenced in the exhibition were transformative in their respective fields, and each quickly developed a mass following globally, resulting in best-selling books and a multitude of spin-off courses.

Mission Class 510 or MC510 was the code used by the Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena for a course taught for four years from 1982. John Wimber, then leader of the Vineyard Ministries, an evangelical Christian movement, became synonymous with this program, using it as a testing ground for his radical ideas in the experiential realm of miraculous healing and exorcism.

CS183 was the course code for 'Startup' at Stanford University's Computer Science faculty, which Silicon Valley entrepreneur and venture capitalist Peter Thiel taught in 2012. CS183 provided a platform for Thiel's new intellectual framework in which he analysed case studies of failure in the tech industry and modelled a future of exponential progress where technological miracles take place.

While previously unrelated, Stevenson brings these two courses together in *Serene Velocity in Practice* as an installation of two conjoined structures.

Commissioning Curator Natasha Conland explains, 'since much of the content is inscribed and imbedded, the material itself becomes the host or narrator, and as such asks to be experienced directly:

'One is constructed from airline blankets and elevated on large aircraft tyres; the other is built from radiating black anodised aluminium heat sink. A walkway based on the passageways of post-war educational institutions unites the two rooms and simultaneously disorients the viewer.

'For Wimber and Thiel, the teachers, in order to be open to future possibilities and real change – or what Thiel calls "vertical progress" and Wimber terms "paradigmatic shifts" – old ways of thinking had to be left behind and new ways of thinking adopted and practiced. Both MC510 and CS183 taught the abandonment of past (failed) models and old foundations of knowledge in favour of full participation in the mission for a radical future.

Conland says that Stevenson investigates these ideas and their impact and objectives.

'The historical legacies of these courses are united by this artist in a fictitious analogy of what can only be described as an "accelerated learning environment", something we could consider as an extension of their ideas ... Stevenson's hybridised visual language models an addled pathway within this new "learning facility" from daily practice to wonderment', she says.

The exhibition will be officially opened by Natasha Conland, Curator Contemporary Art, Auckland Art Gallery on Wednesday 22 May with the opening also featuring special screenings of Ernie Gehr's 16mm film *Serene Velocity* 1970, from which Stevenson has drawn the title of his work.

An accompanying publication, designed by acclaimed Brussels-based typographer/writer/designer Will Holder, will also be launched. This 128-page publication brings together material relating to the courses MC510 and CS183, folded in with other found writing imagining student experiences of these courses.

Michael Stevenson (born 1964, New Zealand) has lived in Berlin for over 15 years. Significant recent projects have been seen at 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018); Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland (2017); Art Basel, Basel (2016); Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2015); Dojima River Biennale, Osaka (2015); Sculpture Center, New York (2015); Liverpool Biennial (2014); Berlin Biennale (2014); Michael Lett Gallery, Auckland (2013); Portikus, Frankfurt am Main (2012); and Museum Tamayo, Mexico City (2012).

Michael Stevenson is available for interview.

***Serene Velocity in Practice: MC510 & CS183* by Michael Stevenson opens Wednesday 22 May until Saturday 6 July 2019 at Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA) Ground Floor, Building F, Monash University, Caulfield Campus, 900 Dandenong Road, Caulfield East. Entry Free. Tuesday-Friday, 10am – 5pm; Saturday 12-5pm [monash.edu/muma/](http://monash.edu/muma/)**

**Media information: Magda Petkoff, Purple Media, 0409 436 473, [magda@purplemedia.com.au](mailto:magda@purplemedia.com.au)**