

# V GLOW IN THE DARK!

BLAST FROM  
THE PAST

SHOCK OF  
THE NEW

AND THE SEVEN  
DEADLY SINS  
OF SPRING

# 58

SPRING 2009

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# HIGH VOLTAGE

## FULLY CHARGED SPRING FASHION

NATALIA VODIANOVA  
IN DOLCE & GABBANA  
AND LUKE GRIMES IN D&G  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY  
MARIO TESTINO

# WEIRD SCIENCE

IF IT MELTS, SPINS, BURNS, EXPLODES, OR SIMPLY STAYS STILL, CURATOR PETER ELEEY HAS FOUND A WAY TO INCLUDE IT IN HIS UPCOMING SHOW AT THE WALKER ART CENTER

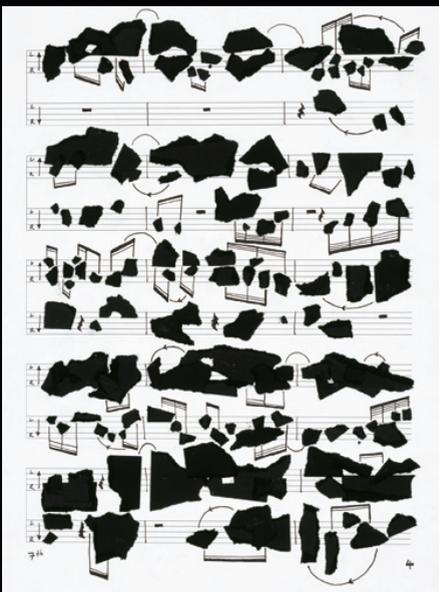
Contemporary art, as seen through the mirror-ball vision of postmodernism's wake, is often less a vocal, individuating entity than capitalism's prized wallflower: mute and broadly ineffective, with a sense of self-worth based solely on the market's fickle heart. But perhaps there is another way through. "The Quick and the Dead," an exhibition opening this April at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, attempts to redefine what the experience of art could mean by shattering—in the 1933 photographs by electrical engineer Harold Edgerton, quite literally—the notion that avant-garde practices exist solely within the rarefied realms that claim them. The show features offerings from scientists, engineers, and contemporary and historical artists. The works meditate on space and time, while asking viewers to engage in the present concerns around forward-thinking creativity.

In 1963, artist George Maciunas wrote that, "Fluxus art forgoes distinction between art and nonart." In 1973, Joseph Beuys, another member of Fluxus, echoed this sentiment by stating: "Every human being is an artist." As fine art museums open up their exhibition spaces to those outside their immediate field, notably with the recent showing of Buckminster Fuller's architectural designs at the Whitney in New York, the eye-opening dictums of Fluxus are increasingly being made manifest. Is this new form of exhibiting a throwing up of hands at the state of contemporary art, an indiscreet nod toward the ever-winning line between culture and product, or simply a new way of looking? The eighty-five works featured in the Walker exhibition, which was conceived by the museum's visual arts curator, Peter Eleey, pose these questions. Eleey, who came to the Walker in 2007 after serving for five years as the curator and producer for Creative Time, seems intent on bringing art's true power, divorced from dollar signs, back to life.

"When conceiving the exhibition, I thought about how important science was to a lot of artists," he says. "George Brecht was a research chemist before he became an artist, and it was hard for him to think about an object and not think about it also as an event." And, on the other side of the coin, there are those whose visual work in the fields of science and engineering transcends its practical application. "There's a mathematician in the exhibition, Anthony Phillips, and my decision to include him was not about whether I would or wouldn't consider him an artist. Rather, I wanted to involve a different kind of empirical sensibility that isn't necessarily about proving something, but one that tries to model the world in a different way. I've included a schematic drawing he did in 1966, to illustrate an article he wrote for *Scientific American* that talked about how one would turn a sphere inside out without breaking it. It's a topological problem, and there's a fascinating symbolic value in this drawing that exceeds our ability to understand what it depicts." This piece has something of a kinship with the work of artist Giuseppe Penone, says Eleey. "A year after Phillips made his drawing, Penone did a piece, as a public performance, where he walks around Torino wearing mirrored contact lenses. Depending on how you translate the Italian, the work is called *To Turn One's Eyes Inside Out*."

In Eleey's exhibition, ruminations on temporality are as important as those devoted to space. Acting as the show's metaphysical timekeepers are five of On Kawara's date paintings, which are scattered throughout the museum. "There's something similar to the Kawara pieces happening in the work of Jason Dodge," says Eleey. "Dodge created eight different 'photographs,' where he sent unexposed photo paper to eight friends in different parts of the world. He asked his friends to rip open the photo paper and expose it on the vernal equinox, and then to put it back in its box and return it to him. He never developed the photo paper, so the works continue to absorb light every time they're exhibited. So they're almost cinematic in a way—they're not really photographs, they're more like objects that serve as an index of a particular light at a particular location." The melancholy and nostalgia endemic to time gone by give the show a certain psychic and emotional weight, and this is felt prominently in the work of Roman Signer, with whom Eleey has recreated a piece that involves a bicycle tire standing upright in a block of ice. "The work was originally a photograph, but I wanted to actually realize it in the exhibition," says Eleey. "So that's what we're doing. Each day, as the ice melts and the wheel falls over, it will be replaced by another one that we're keeping in the freezer in the basement. It's an object and an event, simultaneously." **Aimee Walleston**

"The Quick and the Dead" runs April 25–September 27, 2009, at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota



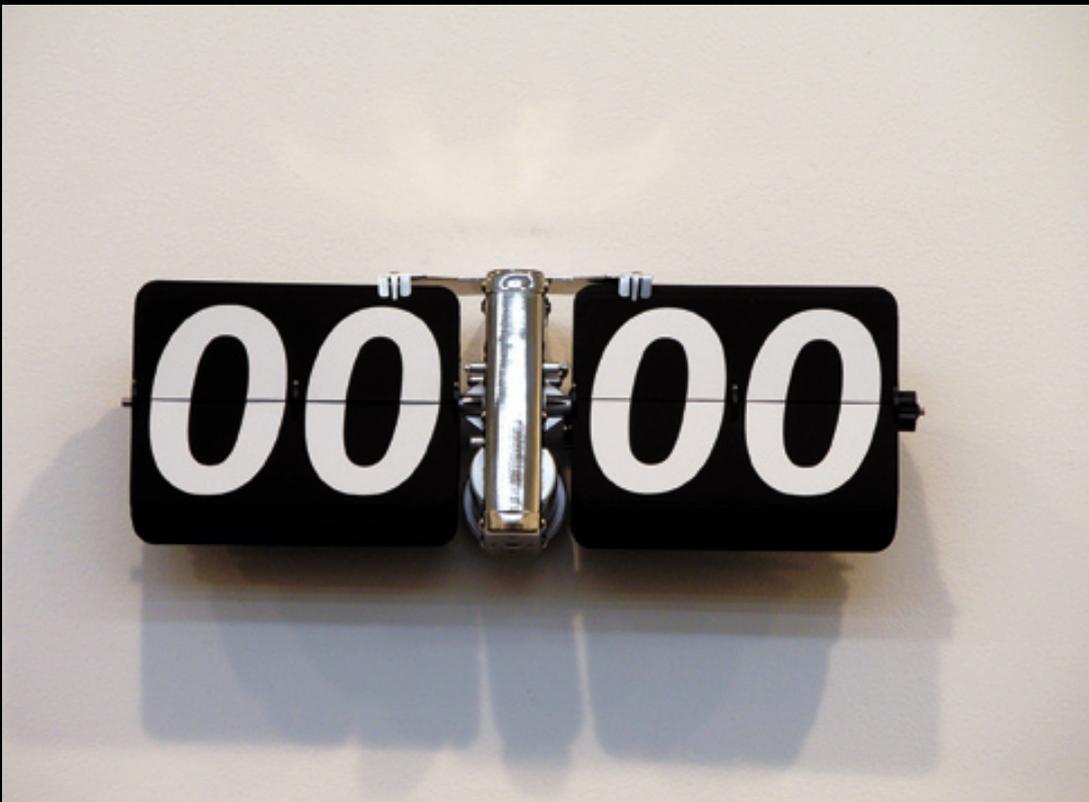
Paul Chan, *Score for 7th Light*, 2007



Harold Edgerton, *Spilt Milk*, 1933



Harold Edgerton, *Atomic Bomb ca 1952 (Joshua Trees)*, 1952



Rivane Neuenschwander, *00:00*, 2007