

Janice Kerbel



Bank Job (detail), 1999. Digital inkjet prints, black and white photographs, aerial photograph, ordnance survey map, blueprint, city map, string, pins, cork, wood. 740 × 120 cm

Janice Kerbel is a meticulous and dedicated researcher. Central to her work is the future and its potential. This position is evident in the form her works take: scripts, proposals, plans and promotional materials such as posters and websites. Her early low-key projects were oriented towards stealing, cheating and, more generally, avoiding detection. *Bank Job* (1999) mapped out, through blueprints, photographs and timetables, a way to rob a specific London branch of Coutts & Co. *Three Marked Decks* (1999), if brought into play, would facilitate a dishonest cardplayer's win. The *Home Fittings* (2000–08) series of architectural drawings provided silent and shadow-free passages through various spaces, thereby encouraging deception and concealment.

Underwood (2006) is a series of four beautifully written love letters. Each letter focuses its attention on one of the seasons and uses a digital font that mimics a classic typewriter with a faulty key. Readers engage in a voyeuristic pleasure that is ever so slightly disturbed by the repetitive typographic error and the knowledge that this quaint mistake is lost to us with current technological advances.

While working on a garden for insomniacs featuring plants that only bloomed at night-time, Kerbel found that it would be difficult to provide the combination of necessary environmental conditions for the species selected. This inspired *Nick Silter Can't Sleep* (2006), a radio play for insomniacs. While much of Kerbel's work takes the form of plans for unrealised projects, this

play was produced live and broadcast on the radio. It enacts a story of unrequited botanical love between a nocturnal subtropical perennial and an exotic climbing perennial in sixteen minutes, the time it takes to drift off to sleep.

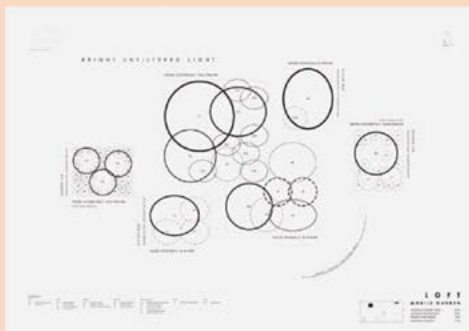
Kerbel's *Remarkable* series (2007) also departs from her characteristic tactic of defying the visible.

Fascination with the novel and extraordinary



Deadstar (Ghosttown), 2007. Digital copperplate photogravure etching. 140 × 300 cm

Defying the visible



Home Climate Gardens: Loft (Mobile Garden), 2004. Digital inkjet print on paper. 119 × 84 cm

These large unique digitally crafted silkscreen posters, originally installed at the Frieze Art Fair, are all about making visible a fictional cast of sensational but marginal and freakish performers. Each poster promoted a fairground act — The Human Firefly, Faintgirl, A One-Eyed

Soothsayer and the World's Shyest Person, The Regurgitating Lady and Temperamental Barometric Contortionist — using hyperbolic language and typefaces inspired by the nineteenth-century letterpress. Playing on the art fair's insatiable desire for spectacle, inflation and endless hype, these posters

are a gentle reminder of our continuing fascination with the novel and the extraordinary, whether in high culture or popular entertainment.

Kerbel's investigation of the spectacle shifted in 2008 from the fairground to the baseball diamond.

W E L C O M E
!! TO - N I G H T O N L Y !!
 A GREAT SPECTRAL AND METEORIC WONDER & NEVER BEFORE SEEN
IGGY FATUSE
 WILL MAKE A RADIANT APPEARANCE!
THIS EXPLOSIVE BEAUTY,
— “THE HUMAN FIREFLY” —
 Bound By Neither LAWS OF GRAVITY nor PRINCIPLES OF THERMOPHONICS
RIGHT BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES
 WILL TRANSFORM
RANDOM ENERGY into VISIBLE LIGHT
 TO RENDER HERSELF AT ONCE
WEIGHTLESS AND LUMINOUS.
NO ORDINARY ACT OF SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION!
NO SIMPLE FEAT OF LEVITATIONAL METAMORPHOSIS!
NO MERE TEMPERATURE-GRADIENT INVERSION MIRAGE!
 In a Brilliant Aura of Sublime Courage — WITH NO EXTERNAL SOURCE OF IGNITION — This Daring Maverick
WILL ELEVATE TO AN EMINENCE
 UPWARDS OF
FORTY-FOUR FEET
BY THE HEIGHT OF THIS POSTER!!
before disappearing into a glowing streak in the sky.

Remarkable: Iggy Fatuse, *The Human Firefly*, 2007. Silkscreen on campaign poster paper. 107 x 157 cm

ON THIS DAY ONLY. Welcome with *Disbelief*—
LIKE THE TRUEST OF SCALES
AND FAIREST OF BEAUTIES,
THIS POLYGRAPHIC WONDER
 PERFORMS THE MOST DELICATE BALANCING ACT,
SWOONING
 IN THE FACE OF ANY UNTRUTH!
WHY? LIES, BRACK LIES, COMPLEX AND ELABORATE LIES — LIES TOLD TO PROTECT, LIES TOLD TO ENCHANT,
 LIES TOLD IN PURSUIT — FANTASIES, EXAGGERATIONS, EQUIVOCATIONS — FALSE ADDRESSES, INSINCRITIES, SELF-AGGRANDISEMENTS
 — HARMLESS LIES AND HURTFUL LIES — LIES TOLD BY OMISSION, LIES TOLD TO ONESELF —
INDEED, ALL FORMS OF
FALSEHOOD!
 Compensating With EQUAL & OPPOSITE Measure For EACH & EVERY Deception
HER HEARTBEAT SLOWS, HER BREATH SHALLOWS;
HER VISION DIMS, HER PALLOR ASHENS
 AND HER DIVINE, SOOTHSAIYING BODY
 crumples to the ground.
A HEROINE
 OF THE SINCEREST BENEVOLENCE AND MOST INFALLIBLE COMPASSION
 WITNESS THIS INCREDULOUS SPECTACLE OF STAGGERING
!! EQUILIBRIUM !!
FAINTGIRL

Remarkable: *Faintgirl*, 2007. Silkscreen on campaign poster paper. 107 x 157 cm

HOME	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	HBP	SH	SB	CS	AVG	OBP	SLG
White (10), p	307	23	52	9	2	1	25	13	69	1	21	2	1	.368	.395	.261
Jones (3), c	529	67	143	26	3	14	79	54	48	3	14	4	3	.271	.333	.491
Garcia (25), 1b	654	76	177	33	6	20	97	65	71	4	6	12	4	.289	.357	.555
Wright (17), 2b	550	77	148	24	5	6	59	60	51	5	14	14	6	.269	.338	.427
Young (16), 3b	597	88	166	31	6	16	87	66	72	5	9	9	5	.277	.349	.538
Bell (26), ss	605	84	164	28	7	7	63	55	49	4	15	16	6	.272	.330	.447
Davis (7), lf	543	84	151	28	6	16	81	64	80	3	6	11	5	.278	.354	.532
Smith (2), cf	561	89	162	31	8	13	76	56	56	4	11	15	7	.288	.351	.535
Sullivan (14), rf	626	95	183	33	8	14	89	60	66	5	8	12	6	.293	.355	.526

Ballgame: Team Stats (Home), 2009. Silkscreen on paper. 59 x 84 cm

VISITORS	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	HBP	SH	SB	CS	AVG	OBP	SLG
Anderson (12), p	273	20	50	6	1	1	20	9	63	1	19	1	0	.183	.208	.252
Clarke (9), c	524	59	140	24	4	5	68	38	59	3	7	5	2	.267	.336	.410
Walker (13), 1b	560	80	159	30	7	16	88	51	65	6	7	11	3	.284	.346	.542
Wilson (6), 2b	586	90	162	29	7	9	71	61	40	2	10	20	6	.276	.341	.472
Brown (11), 3b	573	84	157	27	5	13	76	61	54	3	9	12	5	.274	.342	.485
Williams (6), ss	588	78	158	27	7	8	58	45	58	3	10	19	3	.266	.319	.450
Martinez (19), lf	569	95	156	31	7	23	96	75	74	4	6	17	5	.291	.374	.599
Johnson (2), cf	567	88	163	25	7	13	63	62	68	3	8	18	5	.288	.355	.504
Baker (22), rf	574	84	160	28	11	17	48	48	70	1	20	5	4	.270	.325	.552

Ballgame: Team Stats (Visitors), 2009. Silkscreen on paper. 59 x 84 cm

Ballgame is a script for a baseball game that uses statistics generated over the last 100 years of the sport to create the perfectly average game. Written in the form of a play-by-play announcement, and still incomplete, the script's early

innings have been performed live and presented as an audio piece, via a lone speaker in an empty space. Unlike a game of chess, a baseball game generated through a script is impossible to play, since every game depends on chance. It is not

only this impossibility of the narrative that makes the work so compelling, but also its divergence from excitement, extreme feats, crowds, spectacle — almost everything that sport is purported to be.



Ballgame (Innings 1–3), 2009. Audio recording, loudspeaker, stand. 74 min.