

Dancing figures, time it begs,
Moving works with fleeting legs

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Samantha Aquilino, Cheryl Donegan, Martine Gutierrez,
Hamish Halley, K8 Hardy, NIC Kay, Mark Leckey, Joe Moss
07.03–05.04.2025

marytwo proudly presents *Dancing figures, time it begs, Moving works with fleeting legs* featuring video works by Samantha Aquilino, Cheryl Donegan, Martine Gutierrez, Hamish Halley, K8 Hardy, NIC Kay, Mark Leckey, Joe Moss. To watch moving images is to engage in a durational encounter – one that demands time, attention, and a willingness to surrender to sequential unfolding. This exhibition presents video works by eight artists, projected in a carefully composed 50-minute sequence, each work follows the next in continuous flow. In contrast to the fragmented, on-demand nature of digital media consumption, this setting – large-scale projection, seating arranged for extended viewing – foregrounds the act of sustained spectatorship.

The selected works share a common interest in music, lyricism, and movement, evoking the long-standing relationship between sound and the moving image. The music video, as a form, emerged in the mid-20th century but gained cultural dominance with the rise of MTV in the early 1980s. More than just promotional tools, music videos became a space for experimentation – blurring the lines between cinema, advertising, and fine art, and drawing on avant-garde traditions of montage, abstraction, and performance. Many of the works in this exhibition echo that legacy, with some produced in collaboration with musicians in a manner reminiscent of music videos, while others take a more deconstructive approach: reworking found or archival footage, experimenting with the materiality of film, engaging with dance and cultural heritage.

Unlike mainstream music videos, where the artist is often separate from the creative or directorial process, video art has long been a space where artists take on multiple roles – simultaneously behind and in front of the camera, director and performer, author and subject. From early video pioneers using the camera as a mirror for self-exploration to contemporary artists blending choreography, storytelling, and personal history, video art resists the polished, commercial grammar of the music industry.

Binding these works together is a structural device borrowed from music itself. Interwoven between the videos are interludes by Samantha Aquilino, conceived specifically for the exhibition. Much like musical interludes, which serve as transitional passages between verses, choruses, or bridges, these segments create a rhythmic continuity between distinct works, offering moments of pause or anticipation.

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In *Nicky Tams*, we hear **Hamish Halley** learning the verses of the Scottish folk song 'Nicky Tams' from his grandfather on the family farm in Perthshire. Framed by this sonic memory, Halley dyes fabrics with vegetable dyes, creating a direct link to his textile practice. This multi-layered exploration of family, memory, and tradition weaves together personal moments and cultural heritage. Featuring Halley's family and everyday rural life, the work reconstructs a ballad through generational conversations and lived experience. Through these interwoven elements, *Nicky Tams* becomes more than a document of a place – it offers a way of seeing shaped by Halley's upbringing. It reflects on the transmission of knowledge within the family while inviting viewers to step into another's experience and share multiple perspectives through the work.

I Still Want to Drown by **Cheryl Donegan** combines music video aesthetics with personal and cinematic references. The ballad by Dionne Warwick, a masterpiece of angst-ridden pop, forms the musical basis and tells of deception and neurotic obsession. Donegan combines original material with appropriated film footage, including scenes from Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman* and 3D animations from the internet. The work shows both private spaces, such as her bathroom, and a live broadcast of her first TV appearance, in which she can be seen as a model in a segment entitled 'How to Shop Outlet Malls'. Donegan thematises the facade of perfect appearance and the tension between personal experience and media staging.

NIC Kay's *keep at it* opens with imagery of a concrete basketball coliseum and the sounds of crickets, cars, and the artist singing a line from Stevie Wonder's 1976 song 'Ordinary Pain'. The film then shifts to a handball court, where Kay appears, with a recurring refrain of 'it's not just an ordinary pain', a track from DJ PAYPAL, who sampled Wonder's original. *keep at it* builds on Kay's ongoing personal archive, #blackpeopledancingontheinternet, which explores the transcultural exchange of dance, movement, and music within Black online communities. It examines how these communities have claimed the internet as a space for visible, culturally coded play, political organisation, and innovation. With a focus on authorship and agency, Kay seeks to honour and frame the creative work of Black artists whose contributions to the internet are often overlooked or co-opted.

In *Head 2 Toe*, **Martine Gutierrez** performs her own music, which she produces under the name Martine, and embodies a pop star persona. The video, directed by Sisters Weekend (Angelo Balassone, Michael Fails, Kat Tedesco), plays with minimal clothing and exaggerated make-up and deliberately picks up on the clichés of hypersexualised representations of women in pop culture. Through her performance, which takes up the aesthetics of typical music videos, she questions the construction of femininity and sexuality in this genre. Her personal experiences from her youth in the Oakland 'Latino ghetto', where she experienced the dangerous but also seductive nightlife as fascinating and glamorous, flow into her work.

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In *Horror Flick*, **Joe Moss** gives the final stage directions in the background before the music starts and a tap dancer begins to dance in a rustic-looking studio. It is clearly a choreographed, staged video. The word 'flick' is a casual term for a film or movie, often used to describe genre films in an informal way, making the title itself a playful nod to the conventions of hollywood horror. Moss plays with the expectations of the horror genre by telling us what is going to happen in advance in quietly spoken instructions and then making it happen. This technique taps into the tension between predictability and surprise that is typical of the genre. The audience is placed in a position of expectation, which, through the actual implementation of the prompts, both reveals the formulaic nature of the genre and plays with the disillusionment over the lack of surprise.

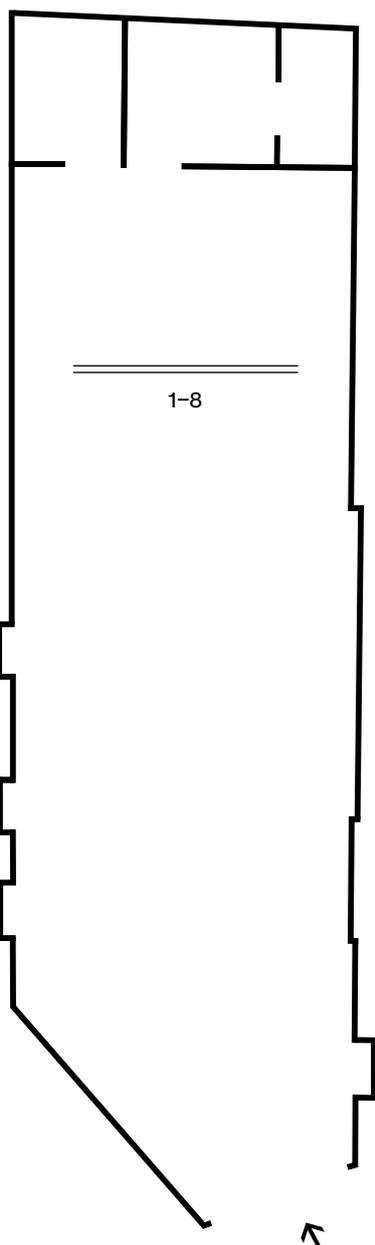
K8 Hardy's *Party in the U\$A* is available in its entirety on YouTube, reflecting both the usual distribution of music videos and Hardy's punk attitude to making her work accessible to a wide audience. The song is a 'smash-up' cover of two Miley Cyrus songs, created in collaboration with Le Chev. The video combines elements of Manhattan, the working woman, fashion, lesbian identity and 'realness'. Hardy stages herself as the leading actress and plays with cultural and social codes to thematise different identities and role attributions.

Mark Leckey's 1999 famed club culture docu-hallucination *Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore* combines altered archival footage from British dance clubs (1970s–1990s) with a layered soundscape of fragmented music, disembodied cheers, and hyped-up MCs to examine countercultural nightlife. By splicing together these scenes, Leckey highlights shifting fashion and attitudes while exposing the socio-economic aspirations of clubgoers. Despite their differences, the film unifies these cultural moments into a collective expression of youthful euphoria. The ironic title references Fiorucci, an Italian fashion brand that shaped Leckey's late 1970s youth. While styles change throughout the film, brand loyalty and material symbolism remain constants in this three-decade remix of dance subcultures. A portrait of people, parties and fleeting highs, it is above all a reminder that nothing lasts, a warning of fading freedom where the lights always come on in the end.

Samantha Aquilino's stylised animation *der salzmann kommt* (transl. the salt man is coming) depicts the Salzmann, an anti-hero of the Sandman invented by the artist. The character combines the concept of dreaming with the phenomenon of celebrity as the Salzmann mimics choreography from Britney Spears' Instagram videos throughout the animation. Britney, once a classic pop star, became a kind of anti-hero through her tragic story. The Salzmann's dance, which increasingly blends with her performance, is reminiscent of an endless dream in which fame and its complex, dark side become blurred.

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1. Hamish Halley
Nicky Tams, 2021
16:9 (colour, sound), 10:09'
Courtesy of the artist
2. Cheryl Donegan
I Still want to Drown, 2010
4:3 (colour, sound), 03:19'
Courtesy of the artist
3. NIC Kay
keep at it, 2021
16:9 (colour, sound), 5:27'
Courtesy of the artist
4. Martine Gutierrez
HEAD 2 TOE, 2015
Video collaboration with Sisters Weekend
16:9 (colour, sound), 06:50'
Courtesy of the artist
5. Joe Moss
Horror Flick, 2022
4:3 (colour, sound), 01:47'
Courtesy of the artist
6. K8 Hardy
Party in the U\$A, 2021
Song collaboration with Le Chev
16:9 (colour, sound), 05:02'
Courtesy of the artist
7. Mark Leckey
Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore, 1999
4:3 (colour, sound), 14:45'
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz
8. Samantha Aquilino
der salzmann kommt, 2025
Pencil on paper, found footage
4:3 (colour, sound), 00:49'