

# Thomas Erben Gallery

Press release



Ashok Sukumaran. *Glow Positioning System*, Mumbai, 2005. Video still.

Glow Positioning System  
and Other Forms of Address

**Ashok Sukumaran**

March 20 – April 19, 2008

Opening reception: Thursday, March 20, from 6 - 8:30

Information: [www.thomaserben.com](http://www.thomaserben.com)

Thomas Erben Gallery presents the first US solo exhibition of Ashok Sukumaran, an artist increasingly recognized for his conceptually oriented new-and-old-media interventions into urban infrastructure. Over the past years, Sukumaran has produced work in a variety of contexts, including self-initiated projects in Mumbai and Bangalore, commissioned public art in the US, on the media art festival circuit, and at art-world venues including the 2006 Singapore Biennale. His work has received major honors, such as the *Golden Nica* at the Prix Ars Electronica, 2007, and the First Prize of the UNESCO Digital Arts Award, 2005.

On view is the video documentation of *Glow Positioning System*, a seminal work from 2005, as well as two other works on video: *Two Poles* and *One Agreement*, from the artist's ongoing *Recurrencies* series.

***Glow Positioning System*** (large projection, duration 5:50):

A crank-driven panorama of lights, mostly cheap "chinese" decorative lights, in a giant and oddly shaped loop around the GPO/ Kabutarkhana Chowk in Fort, Mumbai. The project was realized as a large collaboration between the artist, street-decorators, and over forty neighborhood agents. The panorama refers to various traditions of imaging and "tourism", from crank-driven scrolling canvases to cinema itself.

***Two Poles*** (right monitor, duration 4:45):

A modification of a decorator's pattern box, resulting in a half-kilometer long line of light, that could be activated by a switch at each end. Because of this size, the "decoration" exceeds its original site on the Bandra promenade, disappears over the horizon, and ends up in a no-man's land at the edge of the Danda fishing village. With time, the smooth back and forth of a

./.

526 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street  
floor 4  
New York, NY 10001  
212.645.8701  
[www.thomaserben.com](http://www.thomaserben.com)

proto-signaling system is disturbed by boys on the Danda end, who engage in tactics of refusal, jamming, and the occasional auto-rickshaw trip to spy on the other end.

**One Agreement** (left monitor, duration 3:45):

An agreement of electrical "sharing" between two consumers, the owner of an apartment on the Bandra promenade, and a sandwich vendor on the street below. The vendor can control the current distribution from a set of dimmers. The vendor's light is exactly inversely proportional to a light in the owner's living room, and the speed of his fan is exactly the inverse of the speed of her fan. In this way the vendor draws electrical power when required, while the system maintains the total energy consumption at the original level. There is no physical cable between the two (their electricity comes from separate sources, the control is wireless), which makes sharper the provocation within this para-legal arrangement: that such micro-contracts can be potentially made by any parties, from anywhere.

Sukumaran presents the title "Forms of Address" as a way to consider the point of "address" as a separate moment from the act of "communication". "Address" marks a potentiality because it is the point at which communication can occur, or can fail, be refused. As the artist puts it, "The address, apart from its meaning as a physical locator, marks the point in communication where the distance between the addresser and the addressee is expressed, is not yet collapsed. "

The catalog accompanying the exhibition contains essays by Nancy Adajania and Erkki Huhtamo.

Ashok Sukumaran, born 1974 in Sapporo, Japan, holds degrees in both architecture (B.Arch., the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi), and media art (MFA, University of California, Los Angeles). He currently lives and works in Mumbai, India. He is a co-initiator of CAMP, a platform for cross-disciplinary practice including the arts, based in Mumbai.

*Gallery hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10-6*

*For further information and visuals, please visit our website [www.thomaserben.com](http://www.thomaserben.com) or contact the gallery at 212-645.8701*

*This exhibition is part of*



March 16- March 24, 2008