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[ PRESS RELEASE ]



> **ECSTASY<sup>2</sup>X3**

**Part One: Virginie Barré & Joyce Pensato**

OCTOBER 21 – 24, 2005

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY OCTOBER 21, 6-9 PM

**Part Two: Tim Laun & Chris Miner**

OCTOBER 28 – 31, 2005

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY OCTOBER 28, 6-9 PM

**Part Three: John Bjerklie & Patrick Martinez**

NOVEMBER 4 – 7, 2005

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY NOVEMBER 4, 6-9 PM

with a performance by John Bjerklie as a part of The Williamsburg Gallery Association saluting

**PERFORMA05**: the first biennial of visual art performance.

**GALLERY HOURS: FRIDAY TO MONDAY 1 TO 7 PM**

BEER BY CARLSBERG

*That unmatched form and feature of blown youth Blasted with **ecstasy**.*  
William Shakespeare.

Dictionary definitions of ecstasy describe it as: *a feeling of intense delight, a mental state in which self-control and sometimes consciousness are lost, usually caused by intense religious experience, sexual pleasure, or drugs.*

The fact that Western society has built large sections of its foundations on the quest for personal fulfillment and achievement means that allusions to ecstasy are particularly rife in our society's marketing strategies. Advertising is the "vulgar" mouthpiece of this underlying constant, manifesting itself particularly in inflated claims of instant physical and/or spiritual ecstasy, automatically available through the purchase of advertised products, especially food, drink, cars, toiletries and medication. The artists in *Ecstasy<sup>2</sup>X3* exploit and explore notions and states of ecstasy particularly in relation to society's perceptions of it. Curiously a concurrent exhibition entitled *Ecstasy: In and About Altered States* is on view at the Los Angeles MOCA, and deals more specifically with artists' representations of states of ecstasy, or works that may offer changed states to the viewer; ([www.moca.org](http://www.moca.org))

Continued over/

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## **ECSTASY<sup>2</sup>X3**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

In **Ecstasy<sup>2</sup>X3 Part One** (Virginie Barré and Joyce Pensato), society's perversion of states of ecstasy is clearly an underlying subtext. Well known Brooklyn artist, **Joyce Pensato** famously transforms the familiar Cartoon Characters of America to reveal unpredictably extreme personae lurking under their comfortable surfaces. In Pensato's parallel universe, Mickey, Donald and Marge Simpson slide dangerously into crazed ecstatic delirium after toeing the line for too long as accessories to the American quest for fulfillment. Meanwhile, the young European star, **Virginie Barré** has developed her own cast of characters (in her drawings, mannequins and installations), whose search for satisfaction may or may not have back-fired. An unshakeable and ambiguous state of hyper(un)reality permeates Barré's work, apparently induced by French fries and donuts, science fiction and drugs, reality and dreams...

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines ecstasy as *a state in which the mind is entirely absorbed in the contemplation of one dominant idea or object*. This is, of course, the case in religious ecstasy, but it can also be so, in many other forms such as the spiritual experiences claimed by sports and music fans at significant moments in the presence of their idols. Parker's Box artist, **Tim Laun**, has been an avid observer of fandom and its mechanisms, both in the artist's studio and in the sports stadium (see *Forget Fauvism, this is Favreism*, Jaime Lowe on Tim Laun in *Sports Illustrated* August, 2005). In the piece he presents for **Ecstasy<sup>2</sup>X3 Part Two** Tim Laun explores further intriguing parallels with religious ecstasy and beatitude. In his most recent series of photographs, the artist focuses on the moment when time stands still in a football game as the ball hangs in the air and a player waits to catch it –eyes and arms straining heavenwards, (a far cry from that other moment when time stands still as the players wait for the commercial break to end in order to resume play). Laun has invited **Chris Miner** to accompany him in this episode of the Parker's Box project. Miner (currently preparing an upcoming solo show at Mitchell-Innes & Nash), has consistently returned to the religious component of ecstasy as a subtext of his practice, exploring his own conflicting experiences of ecstasy, guilt, physical and spiritual transcendence, as he swings between the sordid and the sublime.

In **Ecstasy<sup>2</sup>X3 Part Three** (John Bjerklie and Patrick Martinez), the two artists further conjugate a reflection on the various possible domains of ecstasy. **Patrick Martinez'** new film, *The Jesuses*, does this on a number of levels with considerable subtlety. Taking the simple idea of animating an archive of classical crucifixion paintings, Martinez' film retains the serenity of these images of Jesus on the cross, while simultaneously granting him with sensual life and movement. While Martinez takes up no position here, the critical intervention of **John Bjerklie** will deal directly and indirectly with many pertinent issues, including those that may be raised by Martinez' film. As painter, sculptor, budding critic, philosopher and TV presenter as well as erstwhile adviser to the art collection of the American Bible Society, Bjerklie is well-equipped to examine a wide range of related topics in his site-specific, critical, hands-on, hands-off installation/ performance/ broadcast. As a fine draughtsman and often boisterously physical painter/ sculptor, Bjerklie's TV persona will debate the fine lines between pleasure and pain, physical and spiritual ecstasy, ecstatic studio practice versus cold artworld strategy, ecstasy and the American Dream, painting by numbers as a road to fulfillment, ecstasy and incoherence, ecstasy and the loss of self-control, Bjerklie's hitlist of "ecstatic" artists, etc. etc...

Chris Miner's work appears courtesy of Mitchell-Innes & Nash ([www.miandn.com](http://www.miandn.com))

For further information, directions etc. please call Parker's Box on 718 388 2882 or visit [www.parkersbox.com](http://www.parkersbox.com)

1. Intense joy or delight.
2. A state of emotion so intense that one is carried beyond rational thought and self-control: *an ecstasy of rage*.
3. The trance, frenzy, or rapture associated with mystic or prophetic exaltation.
- 4.

MSN ENCARTA

**ec·sta·sy** (*plural* ec·sta·sies)

noun

**Definitions:**

**1. intense delight:** a feeling of intense delight

*an evening of pure ecstasy*

*went into ecstasies over the photos*

**2. intense feeling or activity:** a feeling or activity characterized by its extreme intensity

*an ecstasy of remorse*

**3. illegal recreational drug:** an illegal drug used as a stimulant and relaxer of inhibitions. C<sub>11</sub>H<sub>15</sub>NO<sub>2</sub>

**4. psychology loss of self-control:** a mental state, usually caused by intense religious experience, sexual pleasure, or drugs, in which somebody is so dominated by an emotion that self-control and sometimes consciousness are lost

[14th century. Via French < Greek *ekstasis* < *existanai* "displace, drive out (of your mind)" < *histanai* "put"]

## ecstasy

/ekstsi/

• **noun** (pl. **ecstasies**) **1** an overwhelming feeling of great happiness or joyful excitement. **2** an emotional or religious frenzy or trancelike state. **3 (Ecstasy)** an illegal amphetamine-based synthetic drug with euphoric effects.

— ORIGIN from Greek *ekstasis* 'standing outside oneself'.

### WIKIPEDIA

**Ecstasy**, from the [Greek](#) *ekstasis*, to be outside oneself, is a category of [trance](#) or trancelike states in which an individual transcends ordinary consciousness and as a result has a heightened capacity for exceptional [thought](#) or experience. These may include profound [emotional](#) feeling, intense concentration on a specific task, extraordinary physical abilities, and especially awareness of non-ordinary mental spaces, which may be perceived as [spiritual](#) (the latter type of ecstasy often takes the form of [religious ecstasy](#)). This heightened capacity is typically accompanied by diminished awareness of some other matters. For instance, if one is concentrating on a physical task, then one might cease to be aware of any intellectual thoughts. On the other hand, making a spirit journey in an ecstatic trance involves the cessation of voluntary bodily movement.

Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecstasy>

**MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine)**, most commonly known today by the [street name](#) **ecstasy**, is a synthetic [entactogen](#) of the [phenethylamine](#) family whose primary effect is to stimulate the secretion of large amounts of [serotonin](#) as well as [dopamine](#) and [noradrenaline](#) in the [brain](#), causing a general sense of openness, empathy, energy, euphoria, and well-being. Tactile sensations are enhanced for some users, making general physical contact with others more pleasurable, but contrary to popular mythology, it generally does not have [aphrodisiac](#) effects. Its ability to facilitate self-examination with reduced fear has proven useful in some therapeutic settings, leading to its 2001 approval by the United States [FDA](#) for testing in patients with [post-traumatic stress disorder](#).

There have been several fatal overdoses of MDMA, resulting in [hyperthermia](#) and [serotonin syndrome](#). Acute [dehydration](#) is a risk among users who are highly physically active and forget to drink [water](#), as the drug may mask one's normal sense of exhaustion and thirst. Also the opposite, "[water intoxication](#)" resulting in acute [hyponatremia](#) has been reported. By far the biggest danger comes from the fact that other, more dangerous chemicals (such as [PMA](#), [DXM](#) or [methamphetamine](#)) are either added to ecstasy

tablets, or more often simply sold as ecstasy. Long-term effects in humans are largely unknown and the subject of much controversy —particularly with regard to the risks of severe long-term [depression](#) as a result of a reduction in the natural production of serotonin.

MDMA is also known by many other street names, including *Adam*, *Beans*, *Candy*, *Disco Biscuits*, *E*, *Eccies*, *Googs*, *MaDMAn*, *M&Ms*, *Mollies*, *Pills*, *Rolls*, *Scoobies*, *Smarties*, *Tabs*, *Vitamin E*, *Vitamin X*, *X*, *XTC*, *Yaotou* (in East Asia) and *Yokes*. MDMA is also often pronounced "Mud-Ma" on the street.

**Religious ecstasy** is a trance-like state characterized by expanded mental and spiritual awareness and is frequently accompanied by visions, hallucinations, and physical euphoria. Such an experience usually lasts about a half-hour. However, there are many records of such experiences lasting several days, and some people claim to have experienced ecstasy over a period of over three decades, or to have recurring experiences of ecstasy during their lifetime.

Religious ecstasy can be distinguished from [spirit possession](#) and [hypnosis](#) in that ecstasy is not accompanied by a loss of [consciousness](#) or [will](#) on the part of the subject experiencing it. Rather, the person experiencing ecstasy notices dramatic changes in his or her physiological responses and psychological perceptions. In some instances, ecstasy is induced accidentally or spontaneously, thereby creating intense fear and doubts about the mental health of those who experience it.

Religious ecstasy can be deliberately induced using a variety of techniques, including [prayer](#), [meditation](#), [Gospel music](#), breathing exercises, [dancing](#), [sweating](#), [fasting](#), [thirsting](#), and the consumption of [coffee](#), [wine](#), or [psychotropic drugs](#). The particular technique that an individual uses to induce ecstasy is usually one that is associated with that individual's particular [religious](#) and [cultural traditions](#). As a result, an ecstatic experience is usually interpreted within the context of a particular individual's religious and cultural traditions.

Achieving ecstatic trances is a major activity of [shamans](#), who use ecstasy for such purposes as traveling to [heaven](#) or the [underworld](#), guiding or otherwise interacting with [spirits](#), [clairvoyance](#), and [healing](#). Some shamans use [drugs](#) from such plants as [peyote](#) and [cannabis](#) (also see [cannabis \(drug\)](#)) in their attempts to reach ecstasy, while others rely on such non-chemical means as [ritual](#), [music](#), [dance](#), [ascetic practices](#), or visual designs as aids to mental discipline. The rituals followed by some athletes in preparing for contests are dismissed as superstition, but this is a device of sports psychologists to help them to attain an ecstasy-like state.

[Kriya yoga](#), a type of [yoga](#) popularized in the West by [Paramahansa Yogananda](#), provides techniques to attain a state of ecstasy called [Samadhi](#). According to practitioners, there are various stages of ecstasy, the highest of which is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

In the [monotheistic tradition](#), ecstasy is usually associated with [communion](#) and [oneness](#) with [God](#). Indeed, ecstasy is the primary vehicle for the type of [prophetic visions](#) and [revelations](#) found in the [Bible](#). However, such experiences can also be personal mystical experiences with no significance to anyone but the person experiencing them.

In [Buddhism](#), especially in the [Pali Canon](#), there are 8 states of [trance](#) also called [absorption](#). The first four of these states are called Rupa or materially oriented. The next four are called Arupa or non-material. These eight states are preliminary trances which lead up to final saturation which upon return to the phenomenal world manifests as [enlightenment](#). It takes great effort and years of sustained [meditation](#) to reach even the first [absorption](#), when the meditator characteristically notices the sustained lucidity of a non-material light enveloping him/her.

In [Christianity](#), the trance experiences of the [Apostles Peter](#) and [Paul](#) are recorded in [Acts](#) 10:10, 11:5 and 22:17.

In [hagiography](#) (writings on the subject of Christian [saints](#)) many instances are recorded in which saints are granted ecstasies. According to the [Catholic Encyclopedia](#), religious ecstasy (called **supernatural ecstasy**) includes two elements: one, interior and invisible, in which the mind rivets its attention on a religious subject, and another, corporeal and visible, in which the activity of the senses is suspended, reducing the effect of external sensations upon the subject and rendering him or her resistant to awakening.

The Catholic Encyclopedia also asserts that there are a number of false views on the question of religious ecstasy:

1. That during an ecstasy there is a lessening of intellectual power.
2. That ecstasies are solely a product of violent emotions.
3. That ecstasy is an entirely natural phenomenon, and that others such as [Archimedes](#) and [Socrates](#) achieved these natural ecstasies.
4. That religious ecstasy is another form of lethargy or catalepsy.
5. That ecstasy is related to the [hypnotic](#) state.
6. That ecstasy is related to [somnambulism](#) or the trances of spirit [mediums](#).
7. That ecstasy is equivalent to the states produced by the use of [narcotic](#) drugs.

[\[edit\]](#)

## Notable individuals or movements

- \* St. [Teresa of Avila](#), [Roman Catholic mystic](#), first entered states of ecstasy while studying religious texts when taken ill in a [Carmelite](#) cloister.
- \* St. [Thomas Aquinas](#) experienced an ecstasy during a church service towards the end of his life that caused him to stop writing.
- \* [The Toronto Blessing](#) - an example of religious ecstasy in the [Charismatic](#) Christian church.

WEBSTER

**Ecstasy** (Page: [470](#))

**Ec"sta\*sy** (?), n.; pl. Ecstasies (#). [F. extase, L. ecstasis, fr. Gr. , fr. to put out of place, derange; = out + to set, stand. See Ex-, and [Stand](#).] [Also written extasy.]

**1.** The state of being beside one's self or rapt out of one's self; a state in which the mind is elevated above the reach of ordinary impressions, as when under the influence of overpowering emotion; an extraordinary elevation of the

spirit, as when the soul, unconscious of sensible objects, is supposed to contemplate heavenly mysteries.

Like a mad prophet in an **ecstasy**. *Dryden*.

This is the very **ecstasy** of love. *Shak*.

2. Excessive and overmastering joy or enthusiasm; rapture; enthusiastic delight.

He on the tender grass Would sit, and hearken even to **ecstasy**. *Milton*.

3. Violent distraction of mind; violent emotion; excessive grief of anxiety; insanity; madness. [Obs.]

That unmatched form and feature of blown youth Blasted with **ecstasy**. *Shak*.

Our words will but increase his **ecstasy**. *Marlowe*.

4. (Med.) A state which consists in total suspension of sensibility, of voluntary motion, and largely of mental power. The body is erect and inflexible; the pulsation and breathing are not affected. *Mayne*.

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**Ecstasy** (Page: [470](#))

**Ec"sta\*sy**, *v.* *т.* To fill ecstasy, or with rapture or enthusiasm. [Obs.]

The most **ecstasied** order of holy . . . spirits. *Jer. Taylor*.

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1911 ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA

ECSTASY (Gr. ~Kcrrao-Lc, from Lon-,~iu, put out of its place, alter), a term applied to a morbid mental condition, ~in which the mind is entirely absorbed in the contemplation of one dominant idea or object, and loses for

the time its normal selfcontrol. With this there is commonly associated the prevalence of some strong emotion, which manifests itself in various ways, and with varying degrees of intensity. This state resembles in many points that of catalepsy (q.v.), but differs from it sufficiently to constitute it a separate affection. The patient in ecstasy may lie in a fixed position like the cataleptic, apparently quite unconscious, yet, on awaking, there is a distinct recollection of visions perceived during this period. More frequently there is violent emotional excitement which may find expression in impassioned utterances, and in extravagant bodily movements and gesticulations. Ecstasy usually presents itself as a kind of temporary religious insanity, and has frequently appeared as an epidemic. It is well illustrated in the celebrated examples of the dancing epidemics of Germany and Italy in the middle ages, and the Convulsionnaires of St Medard at the grave of the Abb Paris in the early part of the 18th century, and in more recent times has been witnessed during periods of religious revivalism. (See also INSANITY and NEUROPATHOLOGY.)

## DICTIONARY OF SLANG

**ecstasy**     *Noun.* The drug Methylenedioxymethamphetamine, MDMA. Popular in Britain from the late 1980s and was essential in the early development of the British 'House' and 'Techno' music scene.