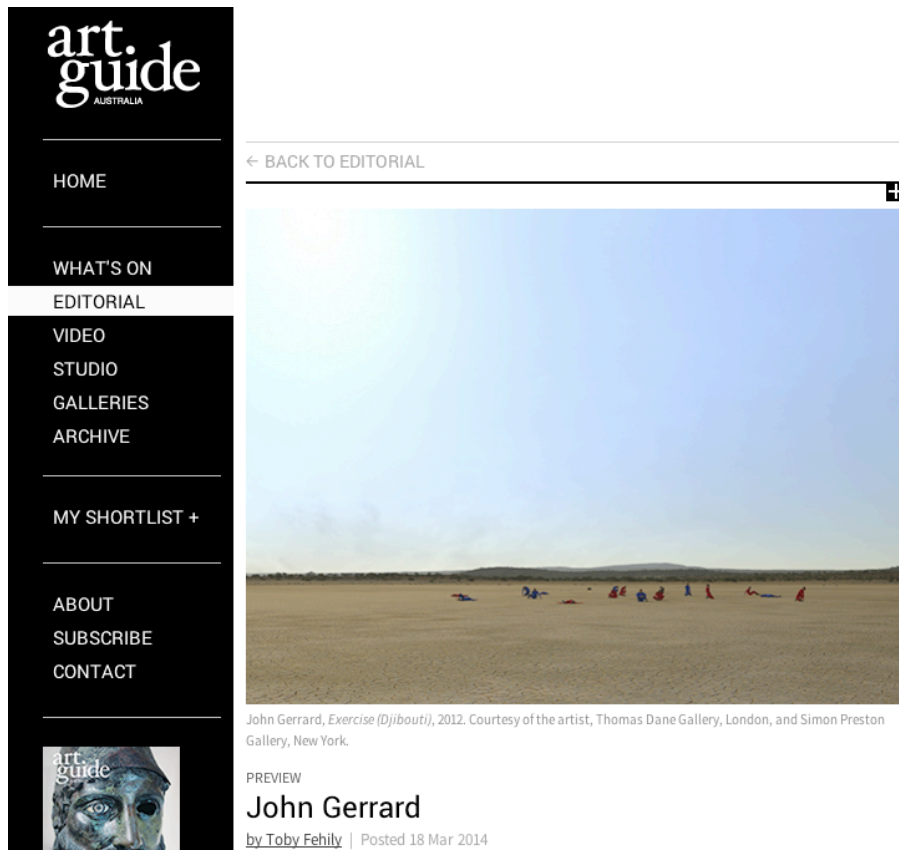


## THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Toby Fehily, 'John Gerrard'. *Art Guide Australia*, 18 March, 2014  
<http://artguide.com.au/articles-page/show/john-gerrard/>



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John Gerrard, *Exercise (Djibouti)*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist, Thomas Dane Gallery, London, and Simon Preston Gallery, New York.

PREVIEW

**John Gerrard**

by [Toby Fehily](#) | Posted 18 Mar 2014

While scouring through the US Army archive DVIDS, Irish artist [John Gerrard](#) was struck by the theatrical, almost fictive qualities of a real US military exercise. Carried out on a barren mud flat in Djibouti, the exercise had the feel of a game taking place in a virtual space. For *Exercise (Djibouti)*, 2012, the Irish artist has reinterpreted the scene in a simulation so rigorous that it approaches then surpasses reality, presenting a world that is at once more real and more constructed than its original.

The work consists of figures dressed in the traditional gaming team colours of red and blue, running in a figure-eight configuration on that barren mud flat in Djibouti. Using photographs and satellite imagery, Gerrard stitched together the landscape, right down to each unprepossessing shrub. Through 3D-scanning and motion-capture technology, he borrowed the alien yet graceful movements of elite athletes for his figures. Each screening is in real time, taking into account the time of day in Djibouti and even the sun's position in the sky as the earth makes its yearly orbit.

A game engine runs the simulation, churning out Gerrard's world anew and bit by bit in a seamless stream at 60 frames per second.

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Gerrard's terminology is instructive: *Exercise (Djibouti)* isn't a video work, but rather a system or a sculptural image in formation. His figures aren't copied, but rather instanced. And the work, when it's screened, isn't looped, but rather iterated. In a world where games and simulations have seeped into everyday existence, where war games and simulations have the potency of an explicitly stated threat, it's important that Gerrard's version is faithful to reality – or whatever is left of it.

John Gerrard  
Screen Space  
14 March - 26 April 2014



John Gerrard, *Exercise (Djibouti)*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist, Thomas Dane Gallery, London, and Simon Preston Gallery, New York.



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