

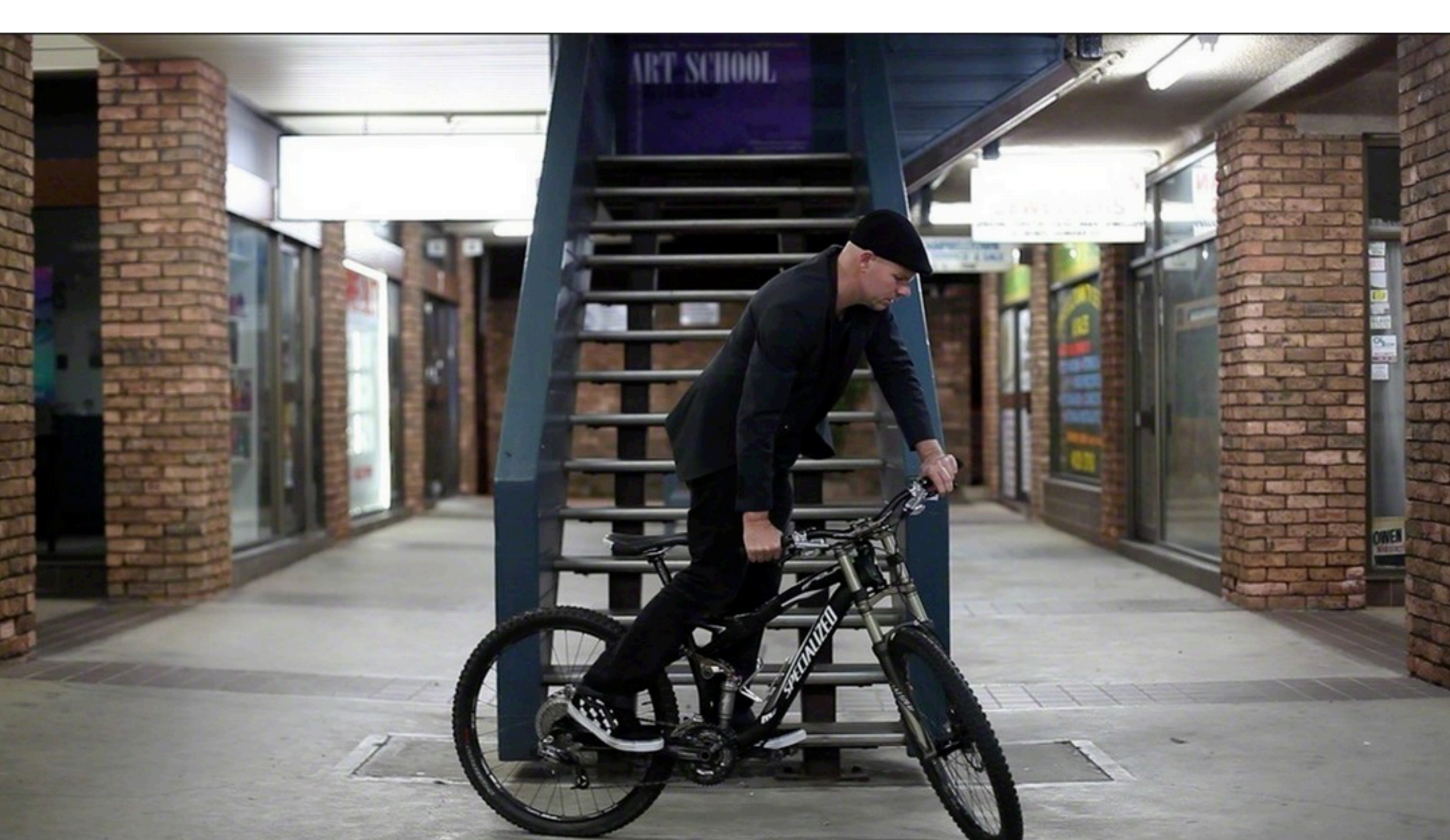
# “Spinning and Falling” in Video Art from Australian Skateboarder Shaun Gladwell

ARTSY  
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Shaun Gladwell  
*Self-Portrait Spinning and Falling in Paris*, 2015  
Mark Moore Gallery

Former professional skateboarder Shaun Gladwell creates conceptual pieces—“performance landscapes,” he calls them—that explore movement and stillness, flux and stability, and the details of a good fall.



Shaun Gladwell  
*Study of Stillness and Balance*, 2014  
Mark Moore Gallery

In *Study of Stillness and Balance* (2014), for example, Gladwell uses a bicycle—an object meant to facilitate movement—as an instrument in a Zen-like study of motionless tranquility. He balances atop the bike for sustained periods of time in front of different locations, such as street corners and subway stops.



Shaun Gladwell  
*Storm Sequence (still)*, 2000  
Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA)

In 2007, his video work *Storm Sequence* (2000) was auctioned for a record-breaking amount. The eight-minute video features Gladwell spinning on his skateboard, a gathering storm and the rough seas of Bondi Beach behind him.



Conversely, his collapses help foreground the liberating possibilities of failure. In *Self-Portrait Spinning and Falling in Paris* (2015), the London-based Australian spins precariously on a skateboard in front of four distinct and highly recognizable public spaces in Paris. The backdrops—including the Louvre’s Cour Napoleon and the Bastille—aren’t exactly known for pratfalls. Nevertheless, Gladwell tumbles in front of each as passersby look on. His “misuse” of public space is a gesture of defiance practically synonymous with freestyle skateboarding.



The slow-motion video, at Mark Moore Gallery in Culver City, California, is based on a 15-year-old series of photos taken of Gladwell skateboarding across various Parisian arrondissements. The video is thus an embrace of old failures and, for Gladwell, a coming to terms with the past. His performance asks us to consider what happens when we let go of control and welcome the inevitability of cycles coming to an end.

—Grace-Yvette Gemmell

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