

KIERSTEN PUUSEMP

THE BOX GALLERY - LOS ANGELES



KIERSTEN PUUSEMP, *Whole Wide World*, 2008. Performance and multi-media installation. Courtesy The Box, Los Angeles. Photo: Sarah Beth Puusemp.

Kiersten Puusemp abandoned her earthly possessions and spent the course of her solo show navigating a course to the exact opposite point on the globe. Her half-circumnavigation is as much an ambitious drawing in space as an attempt to understand the Earth as an object and that body's relationship to her own.

Recalling attempts by Amelia Earhart to fly around the world,

Puusemp confronts the Western travelogue with her gesture, which ultimately failed. This is primarily due to the fact that she could not get buy-in, no matter the cash she had, from residents of Régión, a small island off Madagascar from where she had to depart by boat or helicopter. Anyone with a computer can see the point with Google Earth; the Cartesian mapping of sub-orbital space makes for easy access. Her desire to get closer than that to an invisible point on the ocean floor points to the absurd ease with which we see and understand depths of outer space, conceptually enabled by the history of optics, dominance of vision as primary source of knowledge, and the mind/body split. Puusemp's gesture locates knowledge back in the body and recognizes how little we see about our place on the planet.

Carrie Paterson