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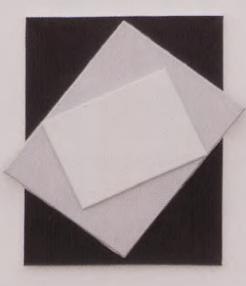
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below, left

Gelitin, Gelatin pavilion - some like it hot, 2011 Installation, performance, music, fire, wood, liquid glass, love, sweat, glass-melting furnace built out of bricks and heated with wood, dimensions variable

Installation view, 'ILLUMInations', 54th Venice Biennale, 2011 Courtesy the artists and the 54th Venice Biennale Photograph Franziska Bodmer and Bruno Mancia, FBM Studio

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Michael Zavros, Love's temple, 2006 Oil on board, 18.5 x 15 cm Private Collection, courtesy the artist

page 8, top Michael Zavros, Disappear here 2, 2011 Etching on paper, 15 x 16.5 cm Courtesy the artist and Sophie Gannon gallery, Brisbane

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From the Editors

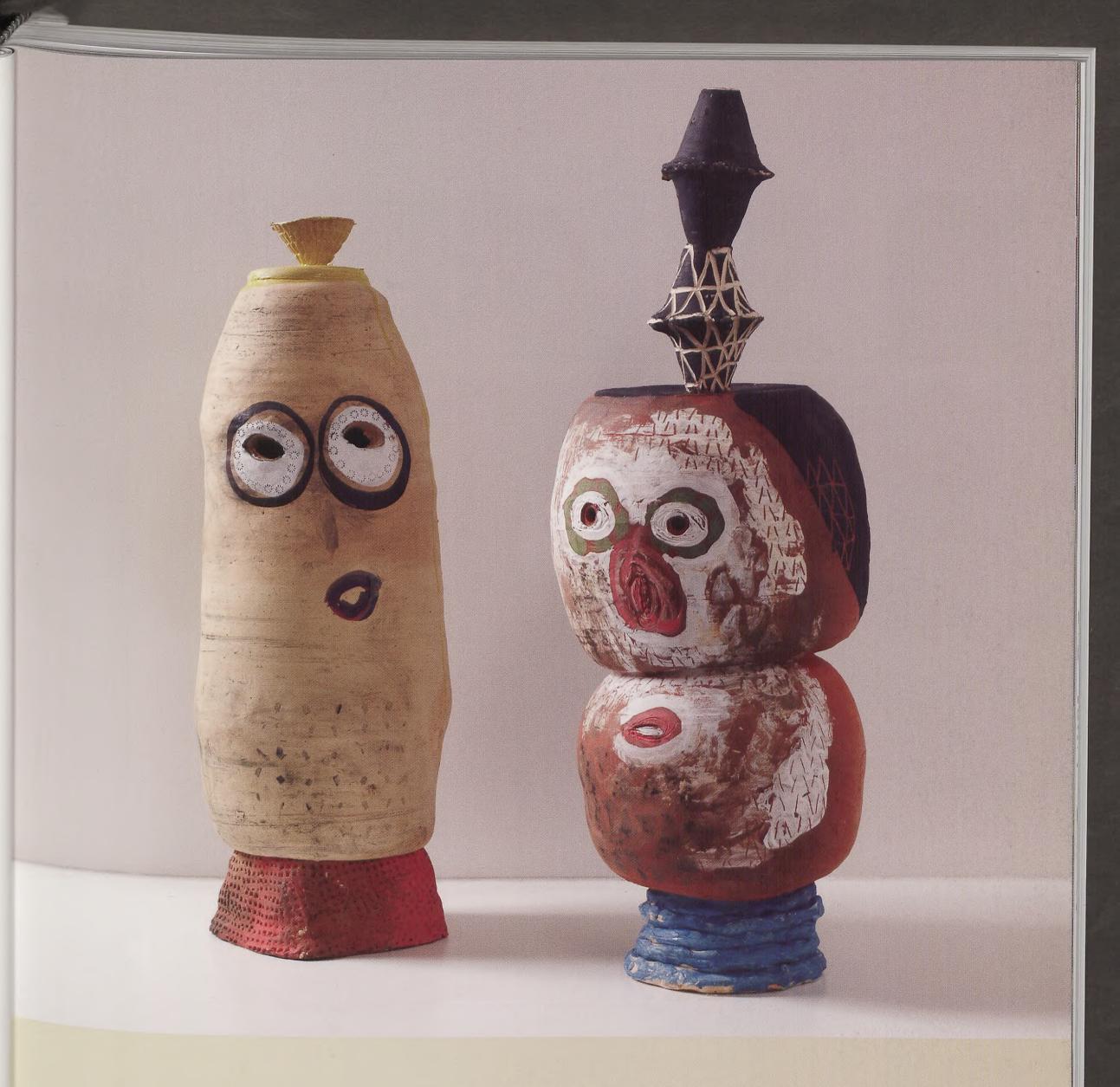
As you read this, no fewer than two international biennales — one in Lyon and the other in Dublin — have opened with the same title taken from a poem by Yeats: 'A Terrible Beauty is Born'. While the Irish poet was writing in response to the Easter Rising against British rule in 1916, nearly a century later his words powerfully evoke our contemporary ambivalence towards the idea of beauty, and the contradictory role it can play in our lives. While beauty has been central in the formulation of western thought for centuries, these days, as art addresses a multitude of conflicting realities, we ask: can such a simplistic notion hold sway?

Looking through this issue on beauty, the answer to such a question can be both straightforward and complex. As Barry Schwabsky writes in his essay on the British aesthetic movement: 'Beauty is its own argument. The only way to contradict it is to close your eyes. And yet often enough one is tempted to do just that, since beauty so often seems a lie, a lure, an alibi for something that might be ugly if you were to look at it straight.'

Instead, we approach beauty from a myriad of directions, realising it can be most truthfully appreciated when we're caught off-guard. And so we view that quintessentially post-critical of Australian artists, Michael Zavros, through the frame of criticality; an interview with the Russian collective AES+F uncovers their perhaps surprising core belief that 'commercial beauty is really ugly'; in his essay on the portraiture of Peter Stichbury, Justin Paton locates the anxiety of our Facebook age of appearances; Tessa Laird finds beauty to be unreal in the fragrant, hothouse work of Richard Orjis, Photoshopped beyond belief; and within the constructed spectacle of Tarryn Gill and Pilar Mata Dupont, Gemma Weston deconstructs the morality of beauty and its ability to dance with the devil.

Of course beauty can also reside on the side of the angels, and just as curator Bice Curiger placed a suite of Tintoretto paintings at the heart of this year's 54th Venice Biennale, so we value the lesson of history and its ability to cast an instructive light on the present. In this way Laurence Simmons's masterful unpacking of Zanobi Machiavelli's renaissance masterpiece *Madonna and child*, 1452–53, reveals the essential contemporaneity of painted beauty – its innate opacity 'that allows us to see something other than itself, through itself, while it is being viewed', Simmons writes. What better way, then, to behold beauty and all of its complexity?

In helping bring this issue to fruition, our thanks also go to artist Michael Landy for his generous contribution and, as an end note, we would like to offer our congratulations to artist Fiona Hall and visionaries Marc and Eva Besen, recipients of this year's Melbourne Art Foundation Awards.



BRENDAN HUNTLEY tolarnogalleries.com

Contributors



From top, left to right:

CAROLINE HANCOCK is a freelance curator and writer based in Paris.

Between 1998 and 2009 she worked at the Centre Pompidou in Paris,

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WES HILL is a writer and artist based in Hamburg, Germany. He is currently finalising his PhD thesis in Art History at the University of Queensland on the critical crisis of post-1990s art. As an artist he collaborates with Wendy Wilkins as Wilkins Hill.

Tessa Laird is a lecturer in contextual studies at Auckland's Manukau School of Visual Arts. A former general manager of The Physics Room, Christchurch, she was co-founder and editor of *Monica Reviews Art* and *LOG Illustrated* and has been a regular contributor to the *New Zealand Listener*, along with numerous other art publications.

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ROBERT LEONARD is Director of the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, where the exhibition 'Scott Redford vs. Michael Zavros' was staged in 2010. Robert was previously a curator in New Zealand, at the National Art Gallery, Wellington; Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth;

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JUSTIN PATON is Senior Curator at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu and Contributing Editor, New Zealand, for *Art & Australia*. He has curated, most recently, the exhibitions 'De-Building' and, for the Art Gallery of New South Wales, 'Unguided Tours: Anne Landa Award for Video and New Media Arts 2011'.

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MICHAEL FITZGERALD is Managing Editor of Art & Australia. From 1997 until 2007 he was arts editor of the South Pacific edition of Time magazine.

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JEFF KHAN is Associate Director at Sydney's Performance Space. From 2006 to 2010 Khan was artistic director of Melbourne's Next Wave Festival. He has a particular interest in interdisciplinary projects and socially engaged practices.

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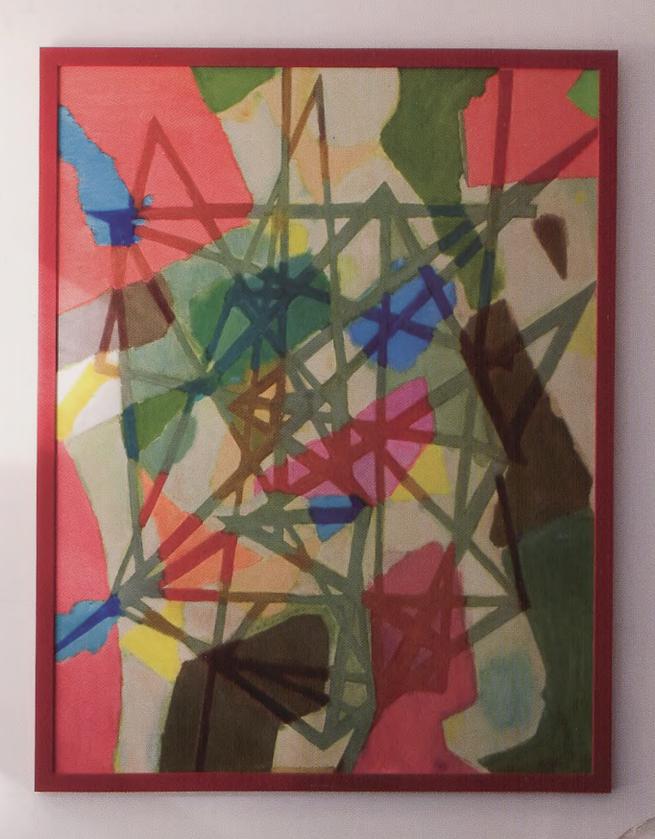
SUSAN REID is a Melbourne-based arts writer and cultural commentator with interests in the arts, design and law. Her career as a creative producer, curator and regional arts agency executive has spanned different contexts from Sydney to Cairns.

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MARNI WILLIAMS is Publication Manager and Assistant Editor of Art & Australia.

Souchou Yao is a writer and anthropologist based in the Department of Chinese Studies, University of Sydney. His books include Confucian Capitalism (2002) and Singapore: The State and the Culture of Excess (2007). He has written extensively on Chinese contemporary art, notably the work of Xu Bing.

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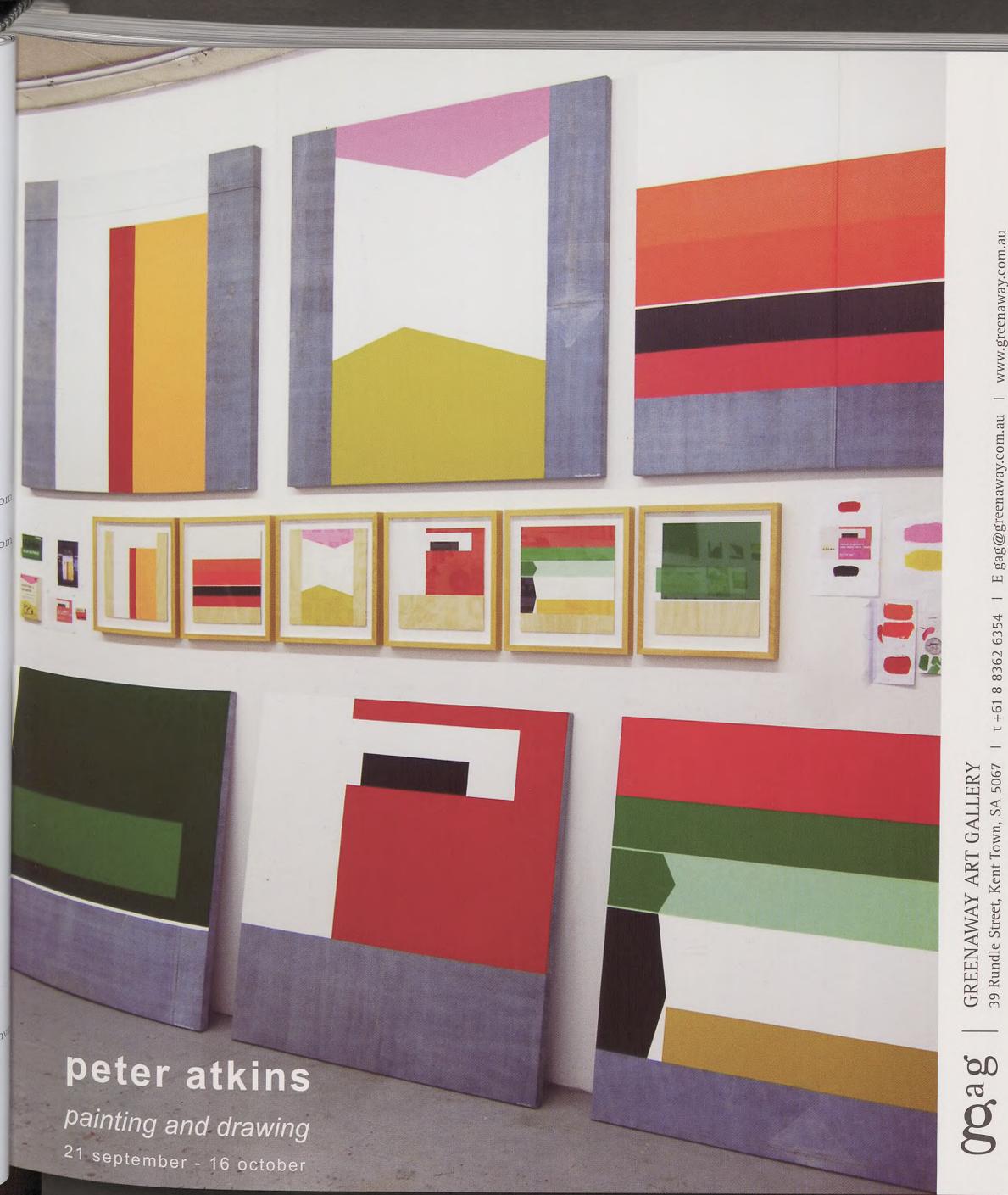
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Nana Ohnesorge

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detail: Maurizio Anzeri, Giovanni, 2009, photographic print with embroidery; Courtesy of the Saatchi Gallery, London © Maurizio Anzeri, 2011























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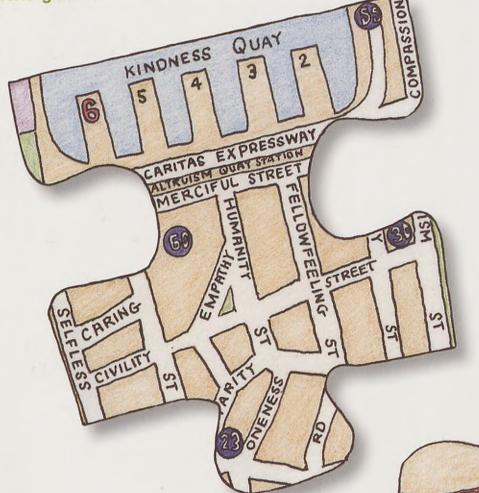
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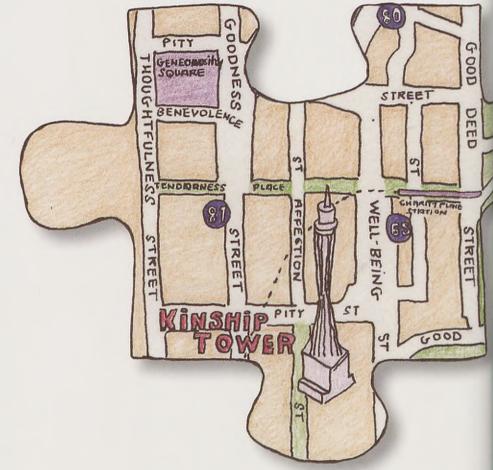
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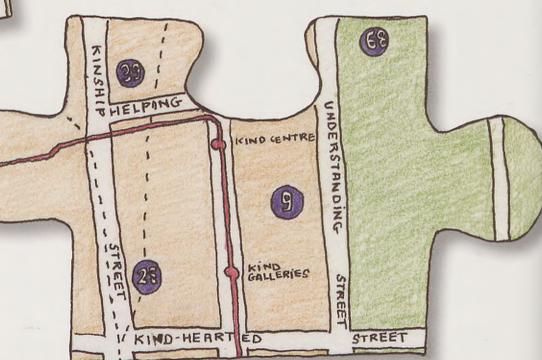


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Rebecca Baumann Improvised Smoke Device 2010 performance, Artists in Response to City Spaces, 2010 Image courtesy and © the artist Photograph: Bewley Shaylor



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Forum, Spring 2011

The 54th Venice Biennale

Max Delany

The portrait sculpture of Barry X Ball
Michael Fitzgerald

Twenty-one years of Galleria Continua Cathryn Drake

Surrealism and 'beauty'
Caroline Hancock

The forking paths of Gary Carsley
Wes Hill

Vienna comes to Melbourne
Terence Lane

Michael Landy's 'Acts of Kindness'
Marni Williams

A pair of artist books by Anne Graham and Allan Chawner
Ross Gibson

Reflections on 'ILLUMInations': The 54th Venice Biennale

Max Delany

The scenographic character of venetian architecture and its labyrinthine waterways present a compelling stage for the unfolding spectacle of an exhibition. Yet the prospect of navigating the 54th Venice Biennale – a rambling showcase involving eighty-three artists across the Arsenale and Palazzo delle Esposizioni in the Giardini, alongside no fewer than eighty-nine national pavilions, and a plethora of collateral exhibitions, projects, lectures and events in the city's many museums, private foundations and palazzi – is enough to strike trepidation into the most seasoned of cultural travellers, let alone reviewers.

The biennale's Artistic Director Bice Curiger presented 'ILLUMInations' – a clunky title which nevertheless telegraphed the biennale's twofold structure of curatorial exhibition and national representation, and the related thematics of enlightenment thinking and national identity. At a time when nationalist ideals are increasingly marginal to contemporary art production and discourse, it was perhaps surprising that a greater sense of the complexity and urgency prevailed, more often than not, in the national pavilions rather than in the principal curated exhibition. Collectively at least, the pavilions most fully elaborated the changing status and agency of art under the contemporary conditions of globalisation.

A good number of participating country pavilions sought to expand and complicate the enterprise of national representation, opening it up to wider global and discursive contexts. The Danish pavilion, curated by Brussels-based Greek curator Katerina Gregos, presented 'Speech Matters', which encompassed contemporary and historical painting, film, photography, animation, installation and architecture to address issues of freedom of speech, moral censorship, political correctness, social engineering, prejudice and taboo. Retrieving past debates and reflecting on present circumstances – with works by Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri, Robert Crumb, Han Hoogerbrugge, Taryn Simon and Jan

Švankmajer, among others – the exhibition moved deftly from the poetic to the polemic, reflecting a precarious balance.

Continuing in a more discursive approach, Norway's principal contribution to the biennale, 'The State of Things', took the form of a lecture series by renowned intellectuals focusing on equally pressing questions of human rights, peace, economy, ecology, migration, asylum, revolution and aesthetics. The inaugural lecture presented by Jacques Rancière, 'In What Time Do We Live?', identified ways in which artists activate temporal ideas of interval, interruption and disruption in order to intervene and expand existing knowledge and experience, developing new capacities for reinventing the present.

Located at Venice's UNESCO office, the Roma pavilion, entitled 'Call the Witness', served as an 'extra-national' intervention. With architecture by Aernout Mik based on Constant's unrealised 1956–58 Design for a gypsy camp, 'Call the Witness' took the makeshift form of a temporary exhibition collecting together artworks, performances and testimonies by artists, thinkers and activists of different cultural backgrounds. The pavilion addressed questions of justice and inequality, visibility and invisibility, migration and displacement, in solidarity with a specific cultural group whose situation can be linked to the fate of immigrants and refugees world-wide.

Forms of domination and emancipation were compellingly materialised in Thomas Hirschhorn's astonishing installation *Crystal of resistance* in the Swiss pavilion. One entered a reflective grotto-like space, with walls and ceiling covered in cardboard, packing tape and silver-foil, and all manner of consumer cargo – mobile phones, gym equipment, Persian rugs – entombed in foil and shrink-wrap. An intense material culture of magazines and mannequins unfolded as one navigated further into Hirschhorn's maze-like media landscape, with disturbing images of war and televisual violence embedded within a bombastic display of

celebrity and capital, sexuality and death – staples of tabloid media which have come to determine the truth of populist politics.

Along with issues of freedom of speech and information in the wake of WikiLeaks and the detention of Ai Weiwei, this year has been marked by the emancipatory ideals of pro-democracy movements as played out in the Arab Spring, and the conflicting rhetorics of security, order and control that continue to mark affairs in the West. The Egyptian pavilion's poignant multi-screen installation of Ahmed Basiony (1978–2011) exhibited footage of Cairo's Tahrir Square shot by the artist on his mobile phone and digital camera and, presented alongside an earlier performance from 2010, documented the uprising's prehistory and moment of revolution, which ultimately lead to the artist's tragic death as a martyr on 28 January 2011.

Art's capacity – and incapacity – for emancipation and liberation were also invoked in Dora García's exhibition in the Spanish pavilion. 'The Inadequate' took an archival, performative and polemical turn in its invocation of the figure of the artist as marginal outsider. The pavilion's large empty central space set the stage for artistic occupation and a series of forty-five performances, workshops and dialogues. In adjacent galleries, documentary fragments from the work of such diverse figures as Antonin Artaud, Lenny Bruce, James Joyce and Jack Smith were presented alongside video works on Franco Basaglia and the anti-psychiatry movement. An archive of remnants from García's past performances established a critical albeit ambiguous relationship between theory and practice, document and event, retrospective and reprisal, and the vital role of rehearsal for future action.

On display in the Italian pavilion were politics of an altogether different dimension, one curated by Vittorio Sgarbi, the maverick art critic, politician and television personality who also serves as adviser to the Minister of Culture under Silvio Berlusconi. Renowned for his hostility to the avant-garde, Sgarbi's exhibition

might be seen as symptomatic of the current state of Italian populist politics. A sensory overload, it included the work of over 200 artists and students selected by a committee of writers, poets, filmmakers and thinkers – but intentionally not art critics. Presented without irony, and with a leaning towards the amateurish and the exotic, not to mention the erotic and cavorting, the experience, for this viewer at least, was one of licentious excess and spectacle, akin to a 'bunga bunga' party on stimulants.

In the Australian pavilion, Hany Armanious presented 'The Golden Thread', a new series of cast sculptural forms which were at once archaic and modern, formal and informal, uncanny and concrete. With an interest in the relationship between the readymade and figurative traditions of sculpture, and by extension the real and illusory potential of art, Armanious is known for bringing into being mysterious works of art which unlock the energy, sensation and perversity embedded within inanimate things. Constructed as haiku arrangements of everyday objects, 'The Golden Thread' evoked a veritable history of sculptural form in an installation which was both skeletal and austere - a counterpoint to some of the bright lights, bells and whistles of neighbouring pavilions - yet full of existential drama and autonomy. Armanious's provisional assemblages achieve an impossible verisimilitude and luminosity while still retaining an ordinariness, humility and sense of reality in the here and now.

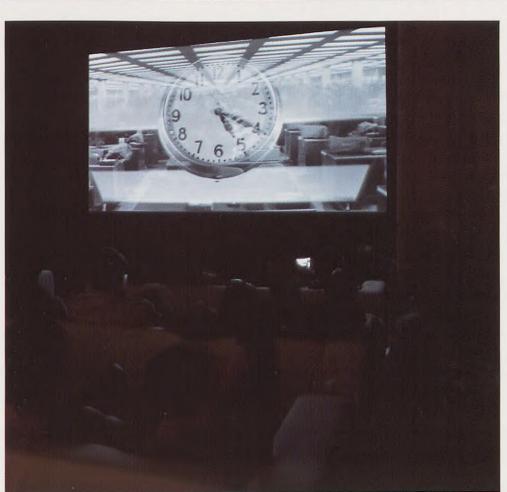
Another project which engaged in this realist and poetically evocative tradition was Mike Nelson's remarkable 'I, Impostor', in which the artist reconstructed a Turkish caravanserai apartment building within the confines of the British pavilion. Nelson's work served as a form of realist painting, stimulating memory and imagination with compelling material evidence and transporting the viewer to a different time and place.

According to the catalogue, 'ILLUMInations', the principal exhibition curated by Curiger, alludes to a wide range of reference









opposite, clockwise from top left

Hany Armanious, Azdeena persius, 2010

Bronze, 18 carat gold, plated sterling silver, tourmaline rubellite, blue Swiss topaz, almandine garnets, citrine, 278 x 60 x 120 cm

Courtesy the artist and The Australia Council for the Arts. Photograph Studio Comin

Thomas Hirschhorn, Crystal of resistance, 2011

Installation view, Swiss pavilion, 54th Venice Biennale, 2011

Courtesy the artist. Photograph Romain Lopez

Christian Marclay, The clock, 2010.

Single-channel video, edition of 6, 24 hours duration

Installation view, 'ILLUMInations', 54th Venice Biennale, 2011

Courtesy the artist and the 54th Venice Biennale. Photograph Francesco Galli

Gelitin, Gelatin pavilion - some like it hot, 2011

Installation, performance, music, fire, wood, liquid glass, love, sweat, glass-melting furnace built out of bricks and heated with wood, dimensions variable

Installation view, 'ILLUMInations', 54th Venice Biennale, 2011

Courtesy the artists and the 54th Venice Biennale

points: 'from the theme of light to the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud, from the writings of Walter Benjamin to the national pavilion structure of the biennale itself, and it is also intended to illustrate one of the characteristics of art: to be a unique and illuminating experience.' The figure of light became a recurrent motif through the exhibition, which opened with three sixteenth-century works by Tintoretto – The last supper, The stealing of the body of St. Mark and The creation of the animals – selected for their unorthodox experimentation, dramatic lighting and 'anti-classical' pictorial energy. Contemporary variations on this theme included James Turrell's Ganzfeld apani, 2011, Amalia Pica's impressive Venn diagrams (under the spotlight), 2011, and the marvellous paintings by Kerstin Brätsch for collaborative group DAS INSTITUT, which project a wild chromatic aura of space and luminosity.

Reflections on the legacy of the Enlightenment were apparent in the black-and-white 'File Room' photographs of New Delhi-based Dayanita Singh, which show archives and storerooms accumulating to the point of collapse. Elsewhere the demise of classical statuary was enacted in Urs Fischer's monumental figurative wax sculptures, slowly melting like candles into contemporary formlessness, and Klara Lidén's installation *Untitled (trashcan)*, 2011, which collapsed painting, sculpture, the readymade and the everyday in the most nonchalant and yet surprising ways.

References to nationhood can inevitably invoke conflict around borders, and 'ILLUMInations' was not immune to this in such work as Omer Fast's dramatic filmic recreation of technical surveillance, collateral damage and mediated military control, and David Goldblatt's extraordinary aerial views of South African urbanism and informal dwellings. In the exhibition itself, a series of 'Para-Pavilions' were commissioned by luminary artists – Song Dong, Monika Sosnowska, Oscar Tuazon and Franz West – to house their own and others' works, with a view to creating greater dynamism, collaboration and exchange between participants.

Despite this the exhibition overall remained as a relatively static and linear spatial narrative which, and while materially rich, lacked a sense of polemical urgency or experimentation.

There were excellent individual works, of course, from the libidinous inter-subjectivity of Frances Stark's video My best thing, 2011, and Nathaniel Mellors's anarchic soap opera Ourhouse, 2010–11, with its absurd contemporary riffing on Hogarth, Beckett and the English class system, and Maurizio Cattelan's The others, 2011 (repeating a work previously shown at Venice in 1997), in which taxidermied pigeons cast a wry, menacing Hitchcockian glance over proceedings, warping time and repeating history as farce. Christian Marclay's The clock, 2010, already considered a contemporary masterpiece, depicts the passage of time in an extraordinary twenty-four-hour montage of cinema footage of clocks and timepieces, exemplifying Rancière's idea of multiple temporalities – and the redistribution of time itself – all the while underlining the existential drama of time slipping away, which is a most keenly felt biennale experience.

At the end of the Arsenale, in a forest setting reminiscent of Hieronymus Bosch, Gelitin's anarchic performance *Some like it hot* perhaps best emulated the Venetian potential for carnivalesque liberation through chaos and humour. As a naked youth was subject to whipping, and sodomised by a banana, industrial artisans stoked a kiln from a mountainous wood-pile, while others fed it with glass sourced from the recycled bottles used to intoxicate the gathered audience. With American band Japanther providing a fat, throbbing sound full of samples and moog, and hot glass spilling into a glowing pile, the setting sun descended on the picturesque city as it sank, ever so slowly, further into the lagoon.

ILLUMInations: The 54th Venice Biennale, various venues, 4 June – 27 November 2011.

Conceptual beauty: The portrait sculpture of Barry X Ball

Michael Fitzgerald

AROUND 1770, AFTER A LONG AND SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN VIENNA, the neoclassical sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt moved back to his native Bavaria and began his extraordinary series of 'character' heads. The sculptor's starting point was the mirror, and by staring at his own reflection Messerschmidt would begin to play with his facial expressions, distorting them into sometimes unrecognisable shapes. Over 240 years later, New York-based sculptor Barry X Ball takes his cue from Messerschmidt, but in place of a mirror, the stepping-off point for his sublimely uncanny portrait sculpture is the computer. Over the last decade or so the artist has been digitally scanning faces of his friends and colleagues and, more recently, baroque statuary figures, and then, through the alchemy of 3D software, tweaking their forms before committing them to stone. The magic then begins. In choosing the most unpredictable of marble and alabaster for his computer-milled sculptures, Ball's figures are made to fissure and oxidise before the viewer's eyes, becoming and unbecoming. Observes the exhibition's curator, Laura Mattioli: 'The problem for Ball is not only technical and formal, it is also conceptual: [to ask] in what way can beauty come from the past and continue into the future.'

For his most recent project, on the occasion of the 54th Venice Biennale, Ball took as the subject of his sculptural shape-shifting the city's venerable art museum of the eighteenth century, Ca' Rezzonico. Among the baroque opulence of the palazzo's rooms, the artist singled out two sculptural treasures, Antonio Corradini's Dama velata ('The veiled lady'), c. 1720–25, and Giusto Le Court's La invidia ('Envy'), c. 1670, for his creative cloning. Together these famous female figures form a study in contrast – one purified by faith and the other engulfed in jealousy – and make for perfect sculptural vessels to test the limits of Ball's formal and conceptual games. Rendered with the rusted blooms of Mexican onyx, Ball's version of La invidia becomes truly consumed by envy, while, sheathed in white Iranian onyx and almost translucent, Dama

velata glows. Other modern touches become noticeable. With La invidia Ball fleshed out the back of the figure, creating a sculpture in the round, while he erased Dama velata's Latin Cross to suggest a more universal figure of faith. It's as if these baroque figures have been quietly subsumed by a new spirit. For Ball it's an exercise in creative control: 'It's basically testing the proposition of how much you need to do to make the sculptures new, to make them mine.'

Placing these figures within the baroque context of Ca' Rezzonico provides a further complexity in this game of artistic possession. As if in a hall of mirrors, viewers slowly discern other contemporary hybrids of Dama velata and La invidia in adjacent rooms, with the two figures even being brought together in golden honeycomb calcite to radiate jewel-like against the red salon walls. Soon they are joined by the benign but ghostly personages of Ball's other portrait sculptures, which have been drawn from private collections across Europe and the United States. A bust of Ball's friend, the artist Lucas Michael, faces the frescoed wall of Giandomenico Tiepolo's Il mondo nuovo, 1791, the mineral wounds of his head echoing the downfall of the Venetian Republic. And sprouting like a beautiful dark flower alongside Andrea Brustolon's ebony Ethiopian warriors (c. 1700) is Ball's staggering facsimile in Belgian black marble of the Roman Sleeping hermaphrodite from the Louvre in Paris.

Ball's slavish pursuit of beauty might seem strangely old-fashioned in this era of video and installation art, and the artist is the first to admit that the 'cabinet of wonders, where you left the world's concerns and moved into a world of pure beauty, where words fell away, has gone'. But strolling through the gilt-and-glass-mirrored interiors of Ca' Rezzonico, where baroque figures live on in their contemporary reflections, we can sometimes feel we're witnessing the future.

Barry X Ball: Portraits and Masterpieces, Ca' Rezzonico, Venice, 4 June – 11 September 2011.

installation view, right to left:

Barry X Ball, Purity, 2008–09, translucent white Iranian onyx, 61 × 41.9 × 28.6 cm;

Antonio Corradini, Dama velata (La purità), 1720–25, Italian marble; Sala del Ridotto o del Parlatorio, Ca' Rezzonico, Venice, 2011. Photograph Francesco Allegretto.



A contemporary renaissance: Twenty-one years of Galleria Continua

Cathryn Drake

MARIO CRISTIANI AND I ARE SPEEDING BY CAR FROM SAN GIMIGNANO to pick up some visiting Chinese collectors stranded in nearby Florence after a car-rental fiasco, when artist Kiki Smith calls to say she is waiting at the train station. 'This is our life', Cristiani says, while driving like a madman and talking on the speaker phone at the same time. Although the Tuscan hill town of San Gimignano is a popular tourist destination, with busloads of people swarming the quaint streets to see its iconic medieval towers, it has no train station. 'About three million people come here every year, so it was already a centre in another sense', Cristiani says.

Thanks to Galleria Continua, the contemporary art space Cristiani opened with friends Lorenzo Fiaschi and Maurizio Rigillo twenty-one years ago, when they were all about twenty-one, the art world has come to San Gimignano. Beginning in a tiny space with few resources and abundant energy, the three partners soon took over the town's former cinema theatre on the main thoroughfare, right next to a medieval torture museum. Although they are by now major players in the international art market, the dealers have stayed true to their roots: every exhibition opening is followed by a feast orchestrated by their mothers among the art installations in the enormous ex-auditorium, after which the tables are moved aside and a raucous dance party begins.

The three partners have distinct personalities which determine the roles they play in Continua's various projects. The only one with an art background is long-haired Fiaschi, who studied at Florence's Accademia di Belle Arti. Rigillo is a thoughtful, softly spoken artificial intelligence expert. Cristiani, who studied political science, has an exuberant personality – along with a similar fashion sense, featuring turquoise and white linen suits – and is the first one out on the dance floor, where his preferred style is the pogo.

Drawing the art world to the Tuscan hill town grew out of necessity: a lack of funds. So the partners founded the non-profit association Arte Continua to collaborate with local authorities

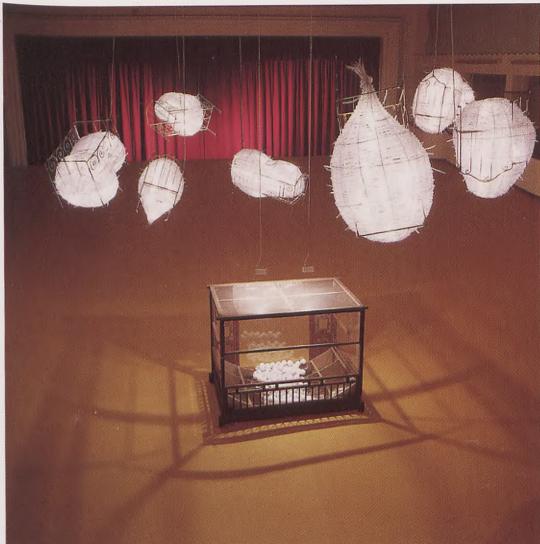
on cultural initiatives. The name is a declaration of their desire to continue the formidable historic legacy of the area. 'For us the past is the base for the future', Cristiani explains. 'And we wanted to do it here because this is where we are from, and because five hundred years ago they did great things here.' One of the first events, in 1992, was a Shozo Shimamoto performance curated by Giacinto Di Pietrantonio that featured a giant panel portraying a woman with legs open above her head. The performance had barely started when the police showed up to stop it, illustrating another good reason to do something in your home town: 'If we did that in Milan or Florence we would have had to get a lawyer, but they knew us so they let us go.'

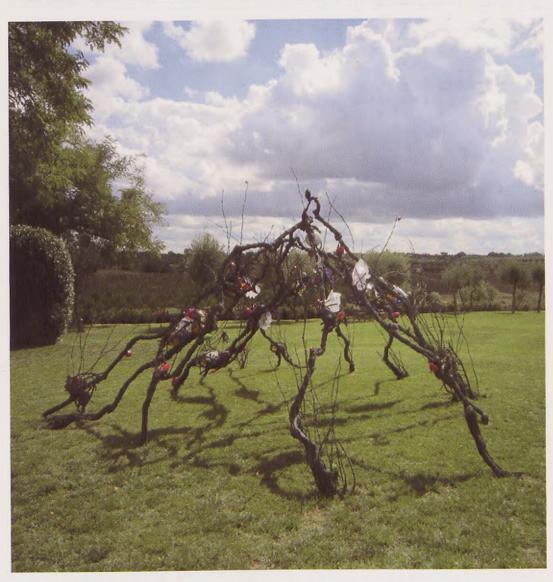
Arte Continua's annual 'Arte all'Arte' boasted an itinerary of site-specific exhibitions in Tuscan towns including Siena, Buonconvento, Poggibonsi and Colle di Val d'Elsa. By the end of its decade-long run in 2005, it had produced installations by eighty-four artists and left a legacy of eighteen permanent public artworks, including those by Joseph Kosuth, Ilya Kabakov and Jimmie Durham. 'We wanted to do something that made sense in Italy', Cristiani says, 'and there was really no public art in the country at the time.' But there was another benefit: not only did the program contribute an evocative layer of contemporary art to a picturesque landscape still dominated by ancient treasures, it also gained the for-profit Galleria Continua some international emerging artists, such as Mona Hatoum and Moataz Nasr, whom they could not have afforded to woo otherwise, and drew the attention of major collectors.

Some of the 'Arte all'Arte' projects related to the region's gastronomy, such as Per Barclay's 2004 installation in the wine-producing town of Montalcino, where a transparent tube pulsing with red wine snaked through the decaying baroque interior of the deconsecrated San Francesco church. The gurgling of the wine, heard with the ear flush against the tube, powerfully evoked blood









Clockwise from top left: Carsten Höller, RB ride, 2007, carousel with 12 gondolas, 4 revolutions per hour, 1675 cm (diameter), 1050 cm (maximum height), Parco Nazionale del Pollino, 2009, courtesy Comune San Severino Lucano (PZ) and Arte Pollino: Another South. Photograph Angela Rosati; Anish Kapoor, Ascension, 2011, mixed-media, site-specific installation, dimensions variable, Basilica di San Giorgio, Venice, courtesy Galleria Continua, San Gimignano / Beijing / Le Moulin in collaboration with Illycaffè. Photograph Oak Taylor-Smith; Pascale Marthine Tayou, L'autel sacré, 2010, bronze, crystal, fiberglass, trinkets, 400 x 600 x 700 cm (approximately), courtesy Collezione Calabresi, Manzano, and Galleria Continua, San Gimignano / Beijing / Le Moulin; Chen Zhen, Field of synergy, 2000, iron children's beds, plastic tubes, wooden Chinese bed, lights, fan, motion-sensor, Polystyrene numbered balls, fabric, 2000 x 1330 x 900 cm, courtesy Galleria Continua, San Gimignano / Beijing / Le Moulin. Photograph Attilio Maranzano.

coursing through a vein, while wine collected at the entrance in a wooden barrel that was a sort of 'baptismal font'. Jannis Kounellis's permanent installation, *Senza titolo*, 2001, can be found nearby: a dried-up well filled with 16,000 pairs of eyeglasses, sophisticated instruments rendered as useless as the primitive container they have been thrown into. Late art critic and dealer Luciano Pistoi, whom the three dealers cite as a seminal mentor, was instrumental in forming the concept of 'Arte all'Arte'. An important figure in the Italian postwar art scene, he had organised a similar yearly exhibition in Tuscany's Castello di Volpaia.

An artist that has had a great influence on Galleria Continua is Chen Zhen, even though the partners only met him in 1999, the year before he passed away. He asked them to carry on his work, and since then they have worked closely with the Chinese artist's widow and former assistant, Xu Min, to produce major installations such as *Purification room*, conceived in 1991 and realised in San Gimignano last year. The stunning monochrome assemblage included industrially produced objects made out of an organic substance resembling clay, infusing them with a spiritual purity that belied their banal short-lived reality. The relationship with Chen Zhen led the partners to Beijing where, in 2004, Galleria Continua was the first western gallery to open in the now fashionable 798 Factory, in the Dashanzi Art District.

If Tuscany is an unlikely place to establish a contemporary art space, the choice of sites for Galleria Continua's foreign outposts seem equally unorthodox and unmotivated by commercial interest. 'We didn't go to Beijing to pursue the market for Chinese art like everyone else', Rigillo says. 'We went there to present artists with whom we already worked, to make an exchange.' In 2007 they inaugurated the sprawling exhibition space Le Moulin in an abandoned industrial complex on the foundations of a fourteenth-century mill at Boissy-le-Châtel, about an hour's drive east of Paris, which seemed like sheer folly. It hosts two events each year,

showcasing immersive site-specific environments such as Pascale Marthine Tayou's current *Transgressions*, an amazing array of sculptures and furniture invoking a provocative African fantasy world. Artists Lucy and Jorge Orta have conceived of a sculpture park whose creation will serve as an educational project meant to involve and benefit the local community. 'We have always worked with the idea of a relationship between the local and the global', Cristiani says. 'If you do something interesting, people will come.'

As if to test that theory, for the remote project 'Arte Pollino: Another South' the Arte Continua association collaborated with the southern Italian region of Basilicata in 2009 to install three permanent artworks in the mountainous Parco Pollino, a wild territory long known as a hideout for bandits. The idea here is to help revitalise the impoverished, largely forgotten area. Artist Giuseppe Penone has constructed a huge amphitheatre out of natural materials; Anish Kapoor's *Cinema di terra* is an underground passage with a viewing window from which you can see the layers of earth; and Carsten Höller has placed a surreal carnival ride on a mountaintop, a place where, coincidentally, some local children disappeared in the past. 'The presence of art can give you a sign for where you can go', Cristiani says.

At this year's 54th Venice Biennale, Arte Continua has mounted Kapoor's ethereal *Ascension* in the magnificent Basilica of San Giorgio Maggiore, designed by Andrea Palladio. It is certainly a spectacular embodiment of a common, even cliché vision of spirituality – an impossibly high column of smoke rising up into a gigantic flue. The ambitious undertaking was almost a feat of magic, with some nerve-racking technical glitches. But if anybody could overcome them with the required doses of madness and enthusiasm, it was our tireless Tuscan trio. 'We are a classic example of taking a step forward longer than our legs', Cristiani says with characteristic poetry. Or perhaps just a leap of faith – on six legs?

Defying imagination: Surrealism and 'beauty'

Caroline Hancock

IN 1941, ANDRÉ BRETON, THE 'POPE' OF SURREALISM, arrived in New York after escaping Europe and the direct trauma of the Second World War. He wrote an article for *Art in Australia*, as this magazine was known then, which acknowledged the universal necessity to re-examine all certainties:

Human thought, to-day, is greatly humiliated. Suddenly the book of history has opened wide before our eyes, and, with a rapidity which we can scarcely comprehend, its white pages are being filled with frenzied handwriting. Suddenly all of those past events, which we had been accustomed to consider purely from a speculative or theoretical standpoint – as wars, religious conflicts, crises in government, and the rise and fall of culture – all that which up to the present has been for us a beautiful but dim and misty revelation of the heroic past, has now become for us a living actuality, a poignant presence incorporated in our very being. Each one of us, from Paris to Sydney, from New York to the very depths of Asia, has an actual physical part in this world convulsion.¹

This year, a major collection of surrealist works directly experienced or narrowly missed disaster zones. The works stopped first in Tokyo at the National Art Center where 'Le Surréalisme' took pride of place from February until May. The exhibition comprised no less than 180 artworks of all sorts, masterpieces of surrealism from the Centre Pompidou's Musée National d'Art Moderne collection in Paris, curated by Deputy Director Didier Ottinger. It was a rare event, an escapade to the other side of the world. Then, starting on 11 March 2011, Japan was hit by an earthquake, a tsunami and a nuclear disaster. In June, with all its treasures intact, 'Surrealism: The Poetry of Dreams' opened in Brisbane at the Queensland Art Gallery's Gallery of Modern Art, where only a few months earlier devastating floods had brought

destruction to the city and region. One should not shudder at such near-disappearances of art, however valuable, when compared to the actual toll in human lives and livelihoods, but it may be appropriate to highlight the ridiculously ironic surreality of these situations. The shock of the real defies the imagination.

Formalised in Paris in 1924 by Breton, surrealism took the world by storm for decades. The Brisbane exhibition gives an expanded view of the surrealist movement, in terms of chronology and the geographies of its influence, beginning in 1918 with dada and ending in 1966, the year of Breton's death. International in its interests and connections, surrealism has an endlessly explorable and lasting legacy. Defining it is quasi impossible since the movement morphed over the years to be in or out of sync with historical and conceptual developments and created a plethora of sub-movements. Excommunicated members formed different groups or took separate individual routes. Initially embedded in poetry, the debates often occurred in magazines and pamphlets, as well as in the artworks.

Beauty is one concept where intense contention raged between factions. It could be said that Breton appropriated the word with a hysterical twist. At the end of his 1928 novel Nadja, he wrote: 'Beauty will be convulsive or will not be at all.' Léona Delcourt, known as Nadja, was a real person whose creative powers temporarily fascinated Breton. When considered alongside photographs by Man Ray, Jacques-André Boiffard and Henri Manuel, Nadja's drawings and collages illustrate Breton's Parisian dérive (drifting or meandering). For Breton, reality and dreams were communicating vessels. Found objects, such as a bronze glove, or chance encounters, as with Nadja, conjured up uncanny associations that potentially hovered in the realm of the sublime. The work of the surrealists, such as Man Ray's photograph in the Brisbane exhibition, famously referenced the Comte de Lautréamont's incongruous qualifier from Les Chants de Maldoror

(1868–69): 'Beautiful as the chance encounter on a dissection table of a sewing machine and an umbrella.' Meetings of the banal and the bizarre were encouraged in the surrealists' collective dream sessions, automatic writings and exquisite-corpse drawings. The recording of conscious or unconscious thoughts and visions after loss of control and emancipation was fundamental to this moment in pre-Second World War orthodox surrealism.

Any idealised poetic notion of beauty was collapsed by the group of dissident surrealists – such as Boiffard, Alberto Giacometti, Eli Lotar, Joan Miró, André Masson – who gathered in the 1920s around the writer Georges Bataille. Striving for 'beauty' in Breton's sense was highly problematic to them and they proceeded to give 'beauty' or 'aesthetics' a very different definition: that of a core, base reality, of big toes, abattoirs and spittle. Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's 1929 film *Un Chien Andalou* (An Andalusian Dog) was commented on and acclaimed by both camps. Can the iconic scene of the eye being slit be defined as 'beautiful'?

The dissidents' magazine *DOCUMENTS* became known as a war machine against received ideas and cancelled distinctions between high and low, ugly and beautiful, western and non-western. It attempted to show the other side of the coin: ethnography, anthropology, music, cartoons, arts, cinema, books and ideas, from all times and places, all given equal importance. The seventh issue of *DOCUMENTS* in 1929 reproduced two photographs: on top is the River Seine in Paris, iced over during the winter of 1870–71; on the bottom a movie still from *The Hollywood Revue of 1929*. On the opposite page is one of the best-known critical dictionary definitions that has inspired many artists and exhibitions: Bataille's 'L'Informe' (Formlessness). Just before this, and linked to the first image, is Michel Leiris's 'Debacle' which refers to the contemporary Wall Street Crash and

its worldwide devastating aftermath. The link between natural phenomena and economic crisis still has a detonating currency. Here one might pause and contemplate a painting in the Brisbane exhibition: Yves Tanguy's *A quatre heures d'été*, *l'espoir* ... (Four o'clock in summer, hope ...), dated 1929.

But what of other dreams? A collage published in the magazine *La Révolution Surréaliste* the same year shows photo booth portraits of members of the surrealist group – all men in suits with their eyes closed dreaming – circling around the reproduction of a painting by René Magritte of a nude woman in between the inscription 'Je ne vois pas la ... cachée dans la forêt' (I do not see the ... hidden in the forest). Unfortunately 'the ...' or 'woman' is often still hidden. In the history of surrealism, it is recognised that women were central as muses, objects of desire, monsters, 'other' or secretaries, but less so as creative forces. Indeed, at the time women surrealists didn't publish theoretical texts and manifestos but rather fantastical narratives or poems which have all too often been relegated as second rate or devoid of critical interest.

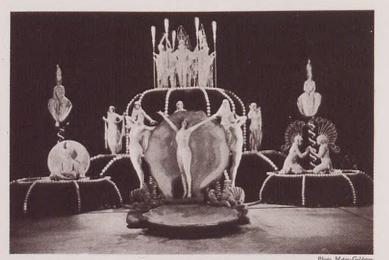
This near invisibility persists in the Brisbane exhibition: five artists out of fifty-six are women (not that exhibition-making should be about numbers and ticking boxes, but Guerrilla Girls tactics can have useful underlining impact). 'Surrealism: The Poetry of Dreams' includes works by Claude Cahun, Dora Maar, Judit Reigl, Dorothea Tanning (who lives in New York City) and Marie Toyen. What of Eileen Agar, Ilse Bing, Leonora Carrington, Ithell Colquhoun, Bona de Mandiargues, Maya Deren, Germaine Dulac, Leonor Fini, Kati Horna, Valentine Hugo, Frida Kahlo, Greta Knutson, Jacqueline Lamba, Lee Miller, Marcel Moore, Nadja, Mimi Parent, Méret Oppenheim, Grace Pailthorpe, Alice Rahon, Kay Sage, Remedios Varo and Unica Zürn, for instance? Admittedly, as in the case of many of the men, not all of these artists would have wanted to accept the 'surrealist' label and not







La Seine pendant l'hiver 1870-71 (cf. ci-contre).



Un des tableaux du film parlant "Hollywood review".



all of these artists are represented in the Pompidou collection. Of course it is probable that some potential loans were claimed by the exhibition 'elles@centrepompidou' during which (only) half of the Musée National d'Art Moderne's collection displays were devoted to creations by women.² Hugely publicised, the Pompidou's exhibition project has laudably enabled numerous new acquisitions for the collection – just the tip of the iceberg, one hopes. Indeed, a delightful surprise emerges in the new acquisitions of works on paper: several are by the aforementioned Nadja, having been reproduced in Breton's eponymous book, including the collage *Un regard d'or de Nadja*, dated 1926.³

This reflection is prompted by an urge to pay homage to the recent shell-shocking surrealist news that Leonora Carrington orphaned the planet on 25 May 2011 at the august age of ninety-four. One of her best-known paintings, probably because it is one of the rare ones that is in a major public collection, is the early 1937–38 Self-portrait (inn of the dawn horse), started in London and finished in France.⁴ Seated in trousers, with long hair flowing freely, she depicts herself glaring straight out of the picture towards the viewer, surrounded by white horses and a hyena in the corner. Undeniably a beauty, she was conquering her independence and had begun a relationship with Max Ernst. 'Max was a revelation', she said. Then their paths were separated. The Second World War led her to the Americas where she remained highly active for the rest of her life, primarily in Mexico:

The aesthetic presence of this object was not its only quality, the hearing trumpet magnified sound to such a degree that ordinary conversation became quite audible even to my ears.⁵

Such an instrument might be required to amplify the studies on women surrealists published by art historians such as Dawn Ades,

Mary Ann Caws, Whitney Chadwick, Georgiana M. M. Colvile, Renée Riese Hubert, Alyce Mahon and Penelope Rosemont, to cite just a few. Their academic research deserves more digestion and filtering into exhibitions worldwide as the dominant discourse begins to be challenged and art history is opened up to permit a broader cultural hybridity. Like Carrington, who up until her death continued to give visual or written form to unknown territories – human, animal, vegetable, mineral, ghost or demon – surrealism will nourish imaginations for centuries to come.

Surrealism: The Poetry of Dreams, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, 11 June – 2 October 2011.



- André Breton, 'Originality and liberty', Art in Australia, no. 4, December 1941, p. 11.
- 2 'elles@centrepompidou', Centre Pompidou, Paris, 27 May 2009 21 February 2011.
- 3 'Recent Acquisitions: From Antonin Artaud to Tatiana Trouvé', Centre Pompidou, Paris, 29 June 12 September 2011.
- This oil on canvas belongs to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Most works appear to be in private collections according to two recent publications: Susan L. Aberth, Leonora Carrington: Surrealism, Alchemy and Art, Lund Humphries, Farnham, 2010, and Stefan van Raay, Joanna Moorhead, Teresa Arcq (eds), Surreal Friends: Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo and Kati Horna, Lund Humphries, Farnham / Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, 2010.
- 5 Leonora Carrington, The Hearing Trumpet (1974), Penguin Classics, London, 2005, p. 1.

opposite, clockwise from top left

Je ne vois pas la ... cachée dans la forêt (I do not see the ... hidden in the forest), 2009

From La Révolution Surréaliste, no. 12, 15 December 1929, p. 73

DOCUMENTS, no. 7, December 1929, p. 383 Courtesy Caroline Hancock

Dora Maar, Sans titre – onirique (Untitled – hallucination), 1935
Palladium print embellished with crayon, 23.5 X 29.4 cm
Collection Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris, purchased 2004
© Dora Maar/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, Sydney, 2011

Into the trees: The forking paths of Gary Carsley

Wes Hill

Jorge Luis Borges's 'The Garden of Forking Paths' (1944) was the late Argentine writer's first short story to explore seriously the concept of 'infinite times', suggesting that humans are compelled to make innumerable decisions that shut them down from taking other potential paths that continue to exist regardless. Borges's story has been touted as a kind of hypertext novel that predates the way the internet and digital cultures have shaped contemporary thought, and it has been appropriated by Australian artist Gary Carsley as the title to his most recent solo exhibition in Germany, contextualising both his theoretical concerns and the artistic sensibility underpinning his own garden-themed work.

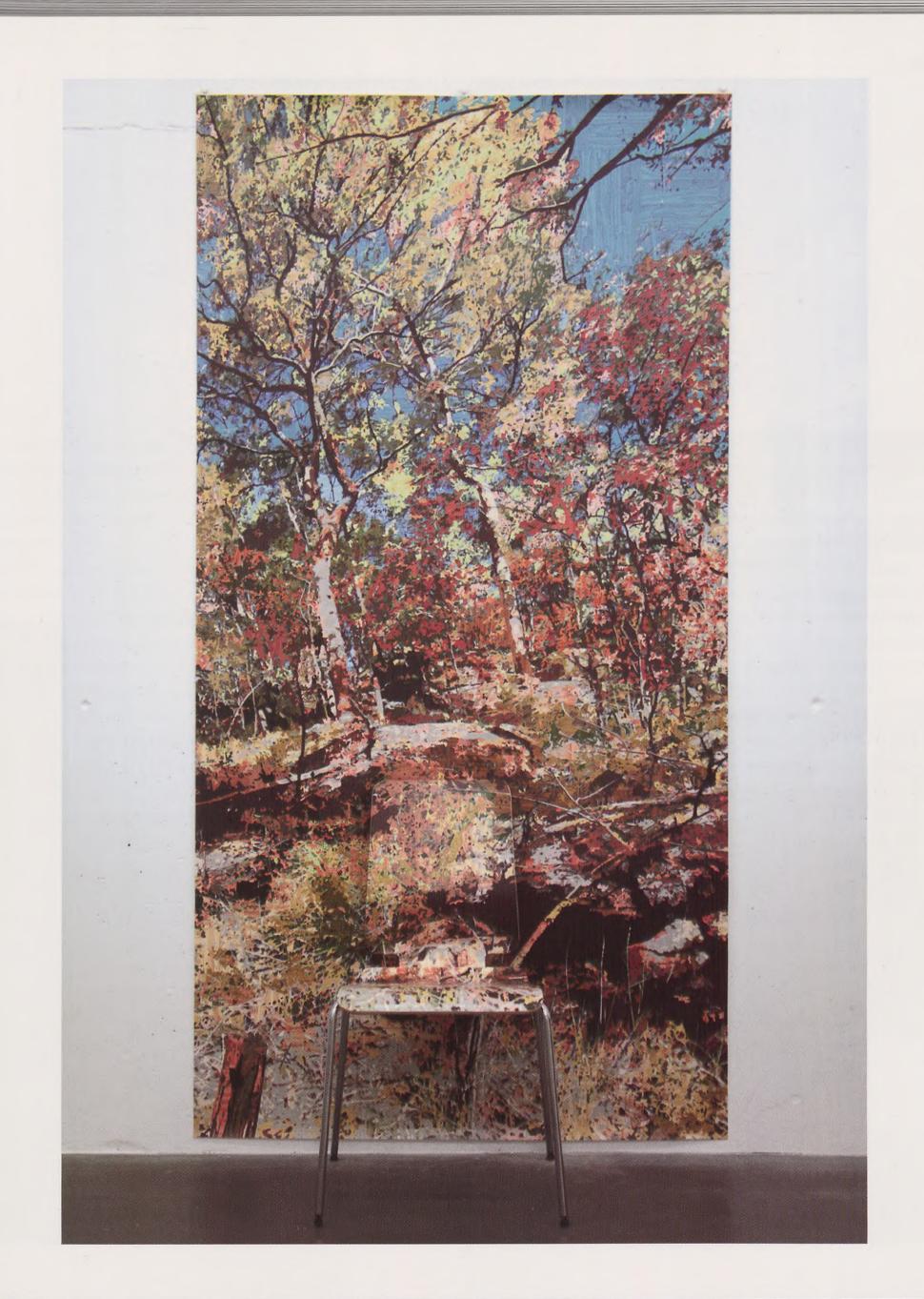
Carsley can be thought of essentially as a digital-media artist who has promoted himself principally in photography. Over the last few years he has created his work by scanning wood-grain laminates, available at any local hardware store, in order to create a library of digital 'surfaces' which are then used to emulate photographs of gardens. Curiously, Carsley calls the resultant prints 'draguerreotypes', referencing Louis Daguerre's midnineteenth-century technique of exposing iodine-sensitised silver plates to mercury vapour, a photographic process that requires no negative. One of the most intriguing aspects of Carsley's practice is his self-positioning in direct relation to traditional photography - as opposed to, say, a history of conceptualist practice. Through this strategy he seems intent on bringing into focus the political implications of his 'queer' or 'drag' identity, associating early modernist photography with the discriminatory socio-political values of western modernism in general.

Following on from last year's 'A Bush Knot: Karaoke'ed Photographs', which was a large-scale exhibition at Griffith University Art Gallery in Brisbane, 'The Garden of the Forking Paths' at Sabine Schmidt Galerie in Cologne consisted of ten landscape panels that were composite representations of Queensland's Toohey and Karawatha state forests and New South

Wales's Botany Bay National Park. In addition to this, most of the works featured a black painterly silhouette of a different Roman statuary figure that purported to be a copy of destroyed or lost Ancient Greek originals. This served to foreground each statue's absence and gave the exhibition a relationship to painting that Carsley has previously underplayed. Like many of his past motifs, the statue-silhouettes directly relate to postcolonialist ideals, whereby contemporary indigenous cultures attempt to reclaim their own lost cultural histories by means of re-creation or replication.

In an earlier commissioned project for the 2008 Singapore Biennale, Carsley applied his highly stylised and signature imagery onto IKEA products in a work titled *I.K.E.A.* or *Institute for Kontemporary Esthetic Arousal*. Aspects of this project featured again in 'The Garden of the Forking Paths', with two decorated IKEA chairs positioned in front of two empty landscapes, as if in camouflage. Carsley's earlier reflection on the phenomenon of the IKEA flat-pack was as a kind of mainstream version of relational aesthetics, but here the chairs were further abstracted, lending a vaguely surreal element to the exhibition. When read as a reverberation of Carsley's previous project, the chairs also figured as an aesthetic shorthand for the globalisation of capitalism, contextualising the artist's postcolonial ideals, perhaps ominously, under the spectre of multinational corporations.

Where Borges dealt predominantly with philosophical concepts in a rhetorical manner, Carsley's 'The Garden of the Forking Paths' centred on historicist, moralist and dialectical concerns. Juxtaposing notions of 'copy' and 'origin', 'indigenous' and 'western', 'queer' and 'straight', Carsley has consistently embraced the legacy of postmodern historicism, confidently handling the polemical frameworks that this mode of inquiry can sometimes generate. What makes his approach distinctive is the way in which he has fashioned an aesthetic that very clearly communicates nature as completely permeated by cultural values. By focusing on





areas of land that are in close proximity to urban environments (and often the sites of illicit activity), Carsley highlights the public garden as a fascinating phenomenon in which the relationship between nature and culture is under constant negotiation and reassessment.

Carsley's concentration on 'ersatz' or 'counterfeit' representations of nature raises the notion of the artist's practice as an act of citation. This performative approach appears to be influenced by the philosophical texts of identity theorists such as Judith Butler, however it has greater affinities with the artist Takashi Murakami who has elaborated on the Japanese term 'mitate' - the art of citation - with an awareness of how it presents a challenge to the post-Enlightenment traditions of western art. Stemming from the Japanese words mi, which means 'to see', and tate, which is 'to arrange', replication in Murakami's work does not devalue nor is it considered as a secondary expression of the original; rather, it is an inversion whereby the original follows the copy. In this scenario value is placed on the properties of the citation rather than on the object's originating presence. The notion of originality through replication is difficult to represent in contemporary art without coming across as forced or ironic. However, guided by the artist's critical signposts, Carsley's 'The Garden of the Forking Paths' provided sufficient opportunities for viewers to navigate their own way through its many meanings.

The growth of Carsley's technique is obvious when comparing recent work with his earlier exhibition in Cologne in 2008, 'Reorientalism: From Other to Another'. With its increasing proficiency in detail, colour and overall expression, the artist has in many ways set himself the task of learning an aesthetic language from scratch, emulating – with computer-aided detail – nature's seemingly random plays of light, shade and colour through a limited vocabulary of wood-grain JPEGs. It is through this process of manual compilation – rather than explicit cultural references –

that the Borgesian idea of aporia in translation is most applicable. Through this process Carsley aligns, juxtaposes and hybridises the particular qualities of light, foliage and cultural signage from various parts of the world, creating a pretty, uncomplicated yet complex 'cut-out' language that could also be read as an amplification of Henri Matisse's legacy of *papiers coupes*.

Most importantly, 'The Garden of the Forking Paths' portrayed Australian culture as having a solid presence on the world stage, with all these political and theoretical concerns floating around and within unassuming bush landscapes that seemed so far away.

Gary Carsley: The Garden of the Forking Paths, Sabine Schmidt Galerie, Cologne, 9 April – 2 July 2011.

opposite

Gary Carsley, The garden of the forking paths (D.98 Toohey State Forest/Botany Bay National Park/Karawatha Forest), 2010–11

Lambda monoprint overpainted with acrylic enamel, panels 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 10 of 10 separate panels, 238 x 125 cm each

Courtesy the artist and Sabine Schmidt Galerie, Cologne

page 49

Gary Carsley, The garden of the forking paths (D.98 Toohey State Forest/Botany Bay National Park/Karawatha Forest), 2010-11

Lambda monoprint overpainted with acrylic enamel, panel 3 of 10 separate panels, 238 x 125 cm each

Courtesy the artist and Sabine Schmidt Galerie, Cologne

From Good Living Street: Vienna comes to Melbourne

Terence Lane

Vienna 1900 Never seems to lose its freshness and power to delight, even though it is exactly forty years since the London Royal Academy's 'Vienna Secession' exhibition first took the English-speaking world by storm. In those four decades there have been Vienna blockbusters across Europe, North America and in Japan, and hardly a year goes by without a Vienna exhibition popping up somewhere around the globe. This year is Melbourne's turn with 'Vienna: Art & Design - Klimt, Schiele, Hoffmann, Loos', an exhibition of over 300 objects at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV). Also giving ample delight and surprise, and providing a local narrative to this historical story is a new book by the exhibition's curatorial adviser, Tim Bonyhady. Good Living Street: The Fortunes of My Viennese Family (2011) chronicles the life of Bonyhady's great-grandparents in fin-de-siècle Vienna, Hermine and Moriz Gallia. The couple mixed with artists such as Gustav Klimt, who painted the famous 1903 portrait of Hermine now owned by the National Gallery in London.

One of the movements vital to the development of modernism, the Secession's adage was 'to every age its art and to art its freedom', and among its supporters were Bonyhady's great-grandparents. Members of Vienna's 'second society', the wealthy upper middle class that emerged in the late nineteenth century, the Gallias were early patrons of the Secession and the arts and crafts movement that grew out of it, the Wiener Werkstätte. When the Werkstätte fell into financial trouble in 1914, Moriz became a major shareholder and, in 1915, chairman of the board.

The architect and designer Josef Hoffmann, one of the founders of both the Secession and the Werkstätte, was commissioned to create the interiors of the Gallia family apartment in 1913, many of whose contents were bought by the NGV in 1976. Which brings us back to the exhibition at hand. It was largely on the strength of the NGV collection (which also includes the contents of the Langer family apartment designed by Hoffman's opponent,

Adolf Loos, acquired by the NGV in 1994–96) that gave the gallery the bargaining power to secure so many top-quality international loans.

The exhibition is particularly strong in the design area, with fabulous ranges of furniture, metalwork, textiles, glass and jewellery. The pictorial side is thinner, but there are nine Klimts, including the famous portraits of Emilie Flöge and Fritza Riedler, and that of Frau Gallia, here reunited with her furniture. Sadly missed are Klimt's gold-ground femmes fatales and The kiss, 1907-08, which apparently never leaves Vienna. There are good Schieles, Kokoschkas and Molls, and plenty of exquisite drawings, including some erotica. The inclusion of facsimiles must be a first for the NGV with a full-size replica of Otto Wagner's aluminium facade of the 1902 Die Zeit building, and of Klimt's Beethoven frieze, 1901–02, from the Secession building. The exhibition closes with a tableau of furniture, c. 1920, by Dagobert Peche, a second-generation Viennese designer whose fantastical works once appalled the purists but suddenly, after postmodernism, look very interesting indeed.

The First World War saw the demise of the vast multicultural Austro-Hungarian Empire that spawned and sustained the art and design revolution in Vienna. But this is by no means the end of the story. As Bonyhady's book memorably recounts, when the former Viennese residents of the Wohllebengasse (or 'Good Living Street) moved to Australia in 1939, they not only brought with them one of the best private collections of art and design to escape Nazi Austria, but also the seeds of the NGV's 'Vienna: Art & Design'.

Vienna: Art & Design – Klimt, Schiele, Hoffmann, Loos, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 18 June – 9 October 2011.

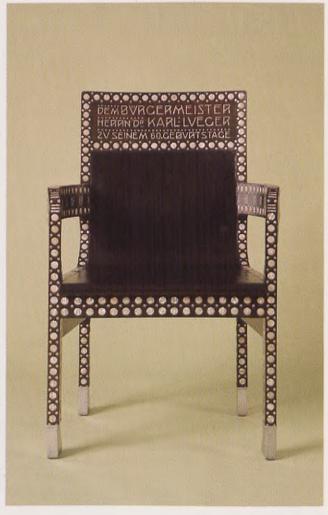
Tim Bonyhady, Good Living Street: The Fortunes of My Viennese Family, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2011, softcover, 456 pp., \$35.











Clockwise from top left: Otto Wagner, Reconstruction of façade for Die Zeit, designed 1902, made 1985, iron, aluminium, nickel-plated iron, glass, 450 x 332 cm, collection Wien Museum, Vienna. Commissioned by the Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, 1985; Gustav Klimt, Portrait of Hermine Gallia, 1904, oil on canvas, 170.5 x 96.5 cm, collection National Gallery, London, purchased 1976; Koloman Moser, designer, Portois & Fix, Vienna, manufacturer, The enchanted princesses, corner cabinet, 1900, padouk wood, nickel-plated white metal, copper, glass, 171 x 53 x 33 cm, private collection, Portola Valley, California; Otto Wagner, designer, Alexander Albert, manufacturer, Chair for Karl Lueger, 1904, rosewood, mother-of-pearl, leather, 98.5 x 63 x 59.5 cm, collection Wien Museum, Vienna, estate of Karl Lueger, 1910; Gustav Klimt, The Beethoven frieze: Central wall 1901–02, painted plaster, 216 x 3438 cm, collection Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna; all courtesy National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Puzzled plans: Michael Landy's 'Acts of Kindness'

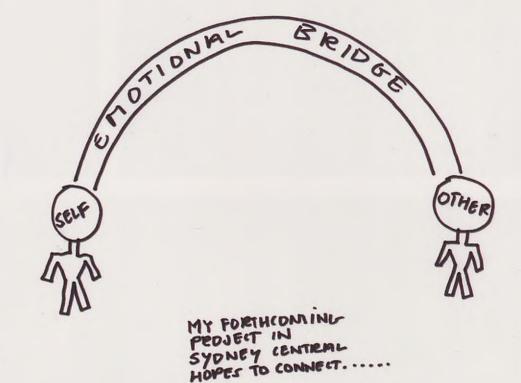
Marni Williams

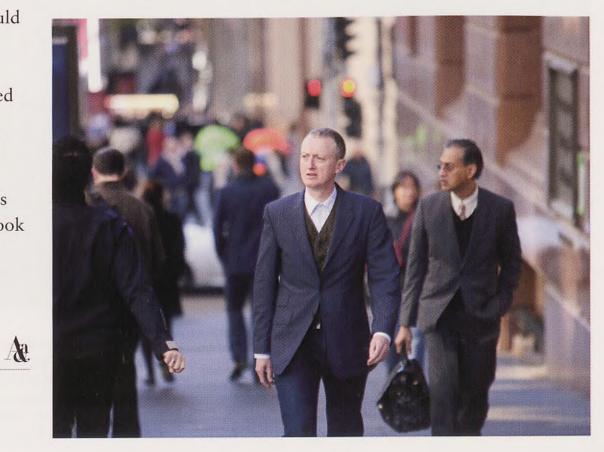
FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE once claimed that it was better to be an artwork than to be an artist, so he would have approved when Michael Landy catalogued and then destroyed all his worldly possessions to become a living, breathing conceptual masterpiece. A decade on from *Break down*, London-based Landy is giving Sydneysiders the opportunity to embody the roles of both artist and artwork in a collaborative project that promises to buff the edges of this diamond-hard city with a soothing balm of everyday anecdotes.

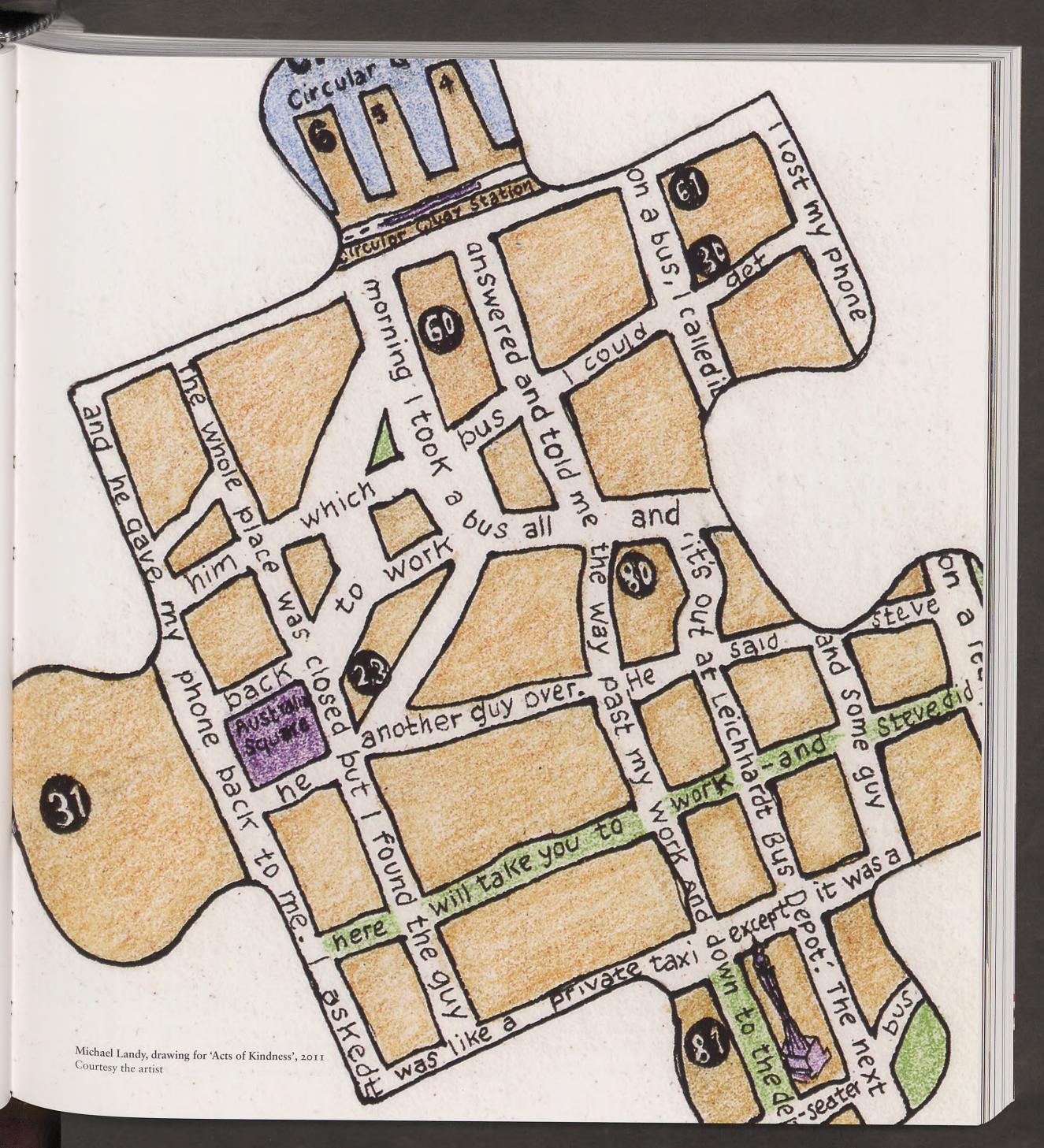
Landy's 'Acts of Kindness' was first staged in London this July following a public call-out to share heart-warming encounters from the city's underground rail network, the Tube. In its second incarnation, for Kaldor Public Art Projects and the City of Sydney's Art & About, the CBD will become a conceptual canvas for Landy's public storytelling, broadcast through a series of puzzle pieces that will loiter in various locations. Come September, tales of Sydney's Samaritans will undoubtedly abound, but what should we expect from this en-mass outpouring of altruism – a city flooded by the do-gooder vernacular of Oprah fans?

There is a provisional, light-handed appeal in Landy's puzzled plans that suggests not. Pastel pencil and deliberate lettering overlay non-places with a personal form of free mapping – as if the artist is confident that what's to be found will be beautiful, interesting or true enough to present without slick mediation. As Landy plans to softly crochet the city with our stories, we can look forward to a subtle humanisation of its glass and grids.

Michael Landy: Acts of Kindness, Kaldor Public Art Projects/ Art & About Sydney, various venues, Sydney, 23 September – 23 October 2011.







Back and forth: Examining a pair of artist books by Anne Graham and Allan Chawner

Ross Gibson

This is still what most artists do: they meddle with ordinary matter or moments, trying to winkle out ways to transform mundane stuff into something startling. Paper, for instance. What are its affordances? What can you make with it? A lamp? A shirt? A cup? A book? Art? All true. Now, what say you meddle with the book. Can you make something out of the ordinary? Or is it now an exhausted form, used up and outmoded?

There's a good argument for saying that paper-folio technology started in China. Which is where Anne Graham and Allan Chawner completed most of the work behind their large-format concertina books, Constructed Memories and Constructed Cities. (Published in 2010, each title is available in an edition of five.) Offering themes and approaches that include 'recto and verso', 'calligraphic and alphabetic', 'here and there', 'modern China and elsewhere', the Graham–Chawner books invite the reader to work back and forth within paradoxically robust yet delicate layouts. Or to be more precise, the reader gradually understands that these two books are objects focusing on objects – such as a millet-fibre broom or a tin toy devoid of scale – objects that are carefully chosen to focus our minds on the most subjective of all back-and-forth phenomena, namely our own oscillating impulses between memory and desire, between fate and hope.

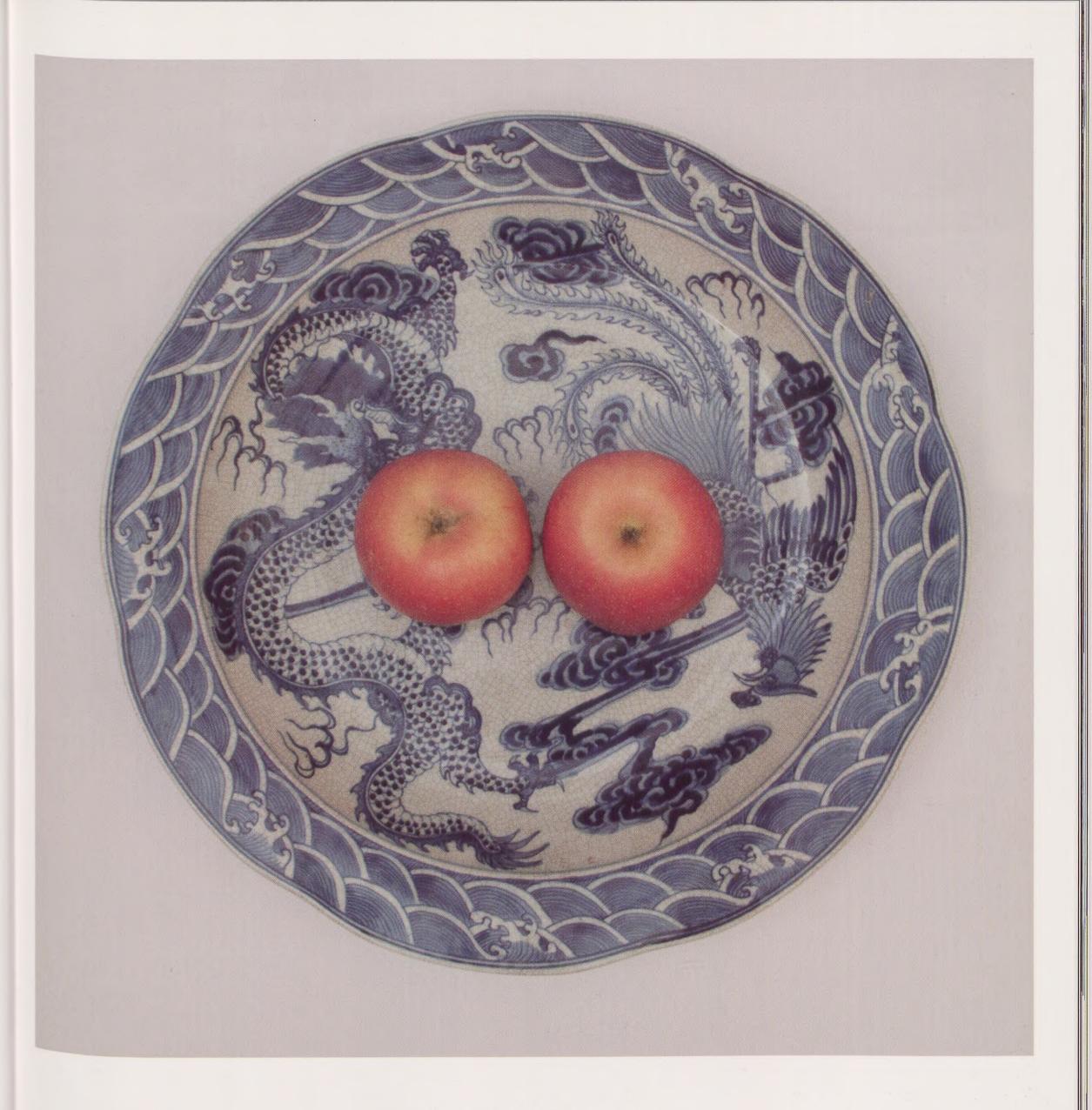
Here's how Graham and Chawner made their books – in China they interviewed a select group of people who are living there now but who carry a personal history from somewhere else. For these people the past is not necessarily troubling the present, but it strums within all the interviewees, affecting how they interpret their lives in the booming Chinese society that presently seems to be all future. From the transcripts, Graham and Chawner have selected and printed, in both Chinese and English, two batches of statements from each person: on the one hand something steeped in memory, on the other something marked by urban experience. The first batch guides us through *Constructed Memories*. The

second yields *Constructed Cities*. Each statement forms a caption for an image of an object afloat on the heavy lush paper. The authors suggest that we think of the images as 'impermanent sculptural assemblages which now exist as photographs'. Depending on which book we're examining, each assemblage is a talisman that holds potent memories or an intensified sense of the urban experience. To appreciate a page, we need to delve into the three-dimensional intricacy of the concertina book so as to toggle cognition between the transcribed snippet of text and the alluring two-dimensional image of the ultra-resonant 3D assemblage. Of course, if we view the two books together, we can also counterpose each interviewee's remembrance against his or her urbanism.

Which returns me to the deft balancing act that Graham and Chawner perform. Their artistry comes from the endless shuttling that is afforded by these books. We can go from one edition to the other. Or we can confine ourselves to a single page and go from text to image and back to text and then over to our imagination where we strive to construe the hefty three-dimensionality of the object that has been flattened on the paper. There's a self-propelling endlessness in our aesthetic and semantic encounters with the books: we flit between pages; flick our eyes up and down, from image to text, from left to right. Just as yin and yang jostle each other without ever resting, so the books encourage a cognitive flow that is oddly soothing even as it can be gently befuddling – encouraging, perhaps, a little tai chi gesture with our wrists and hands as we negotiate the concertina folds and allow our senses and sense-making to expand and entwine.

Anne Graham (sculpture) and Allan Chawner (photography), digital prints from the book Constructed Memories, 2010

Traditional Chinese folding book, rice paper, rice glue, 23 x 32 x 2.3 cm Book printing and mounting by ME Photo Art Gallery, 798 District, Beijing











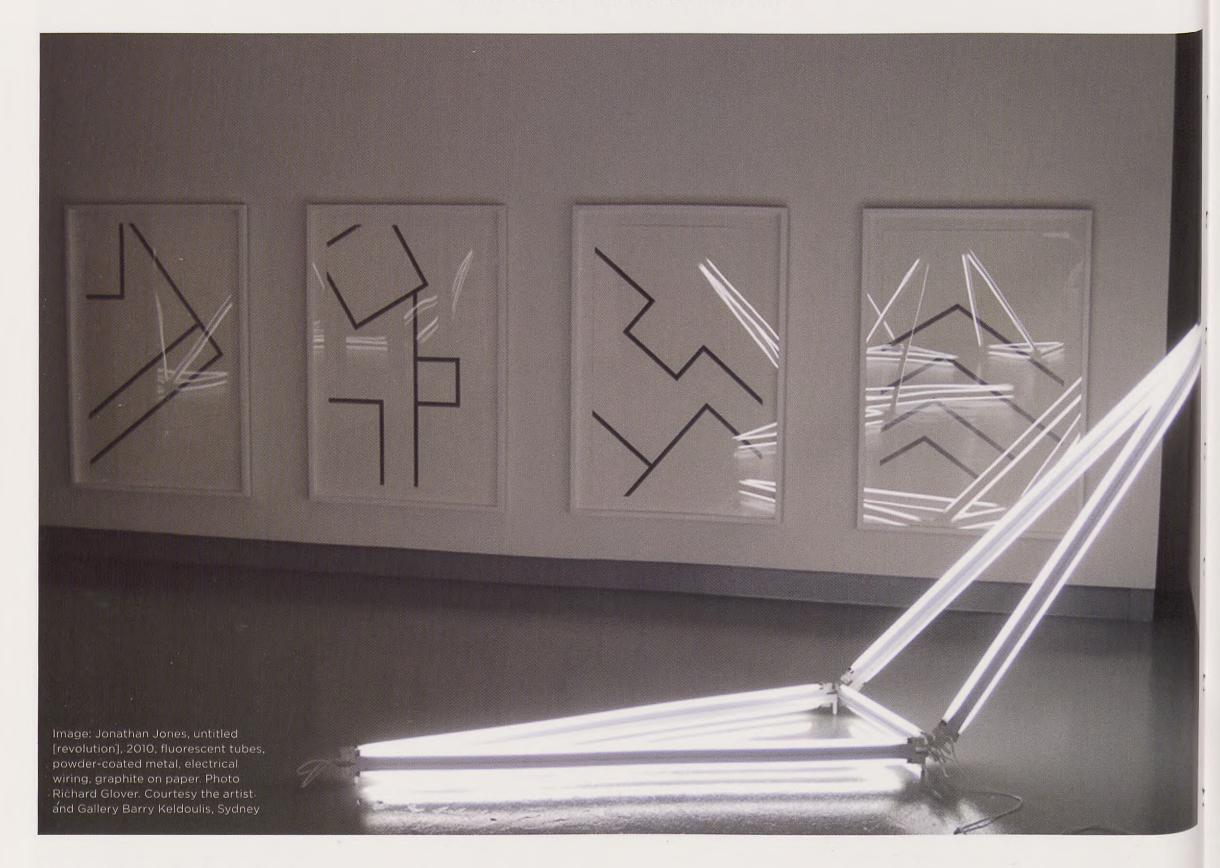
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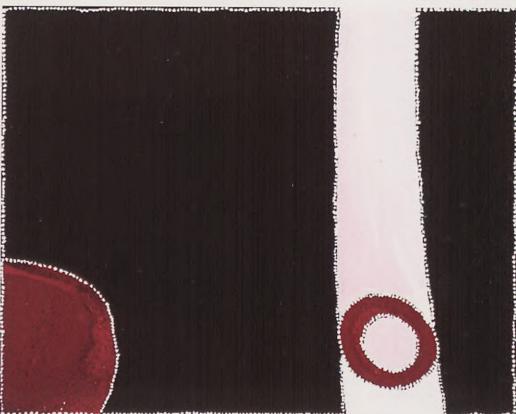


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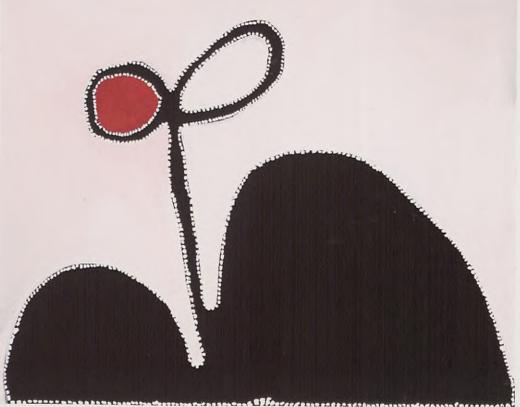












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William Delafield Cook *Tree* 1999, acrylic on canvas, 136 x 136 cm. Private collection. © William Delafield Cook



Jacqueline Mitelman *Miss Alesandra* 2010, digital print, 48 x 38 cm. Winner of the 2011 National Photographic Portrait Prize. Courtesy of the artist.



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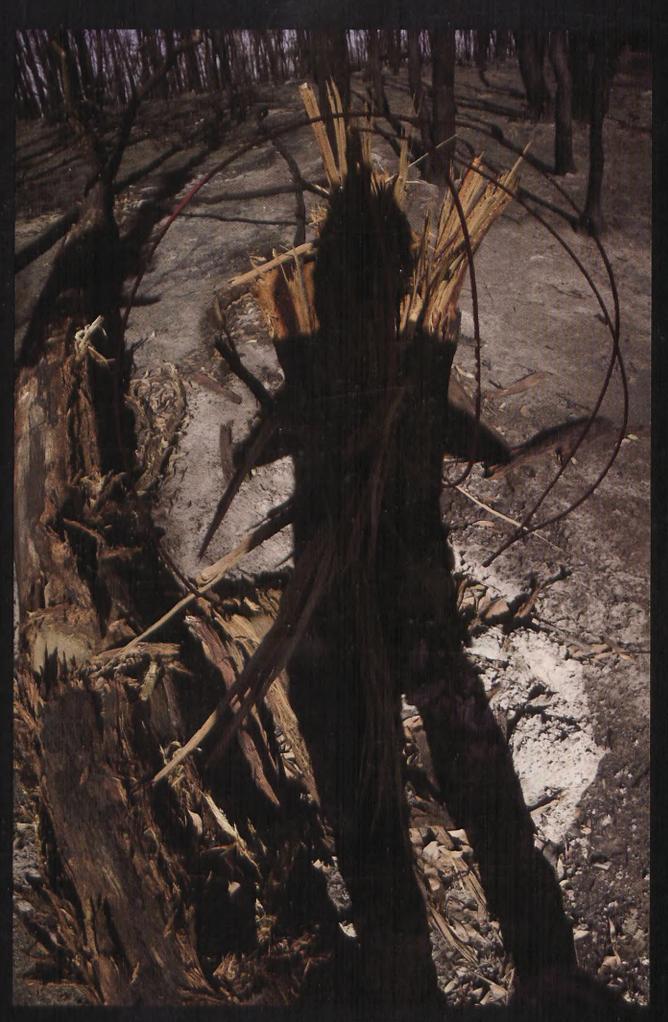
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drought

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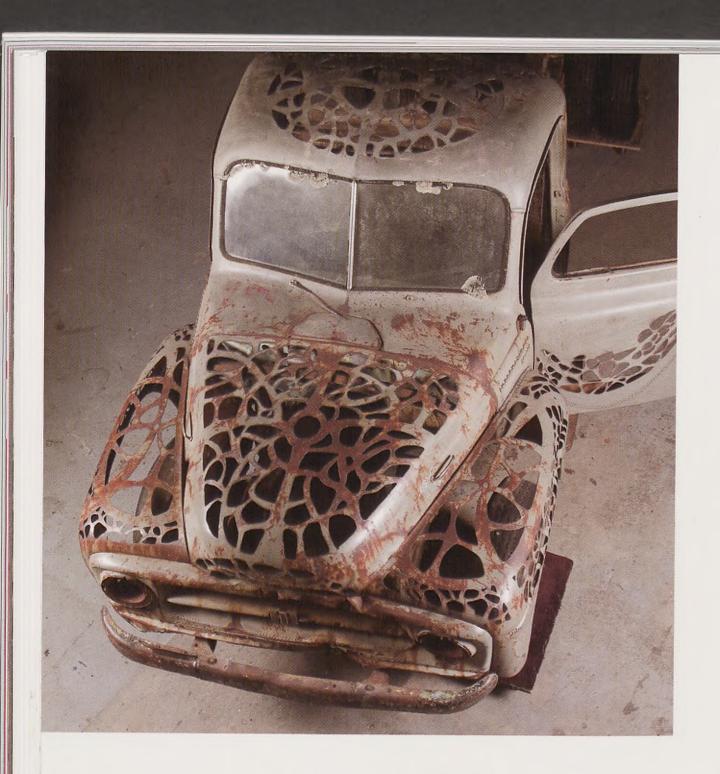
self portrait in landscape (fire), 2009-2010, digital print on paper, 150 x 100cm

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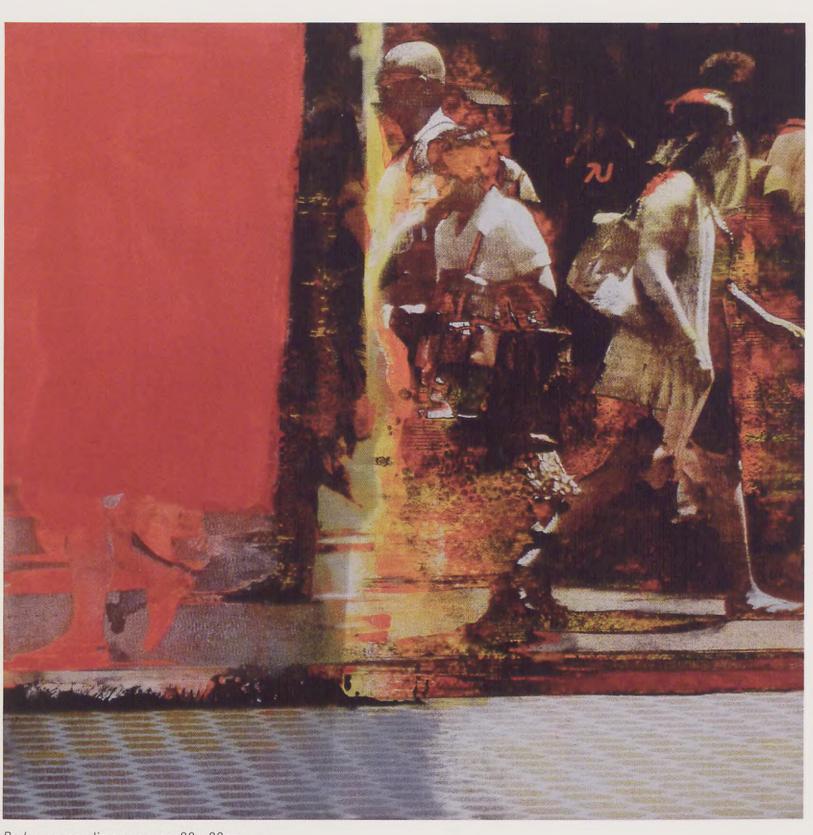
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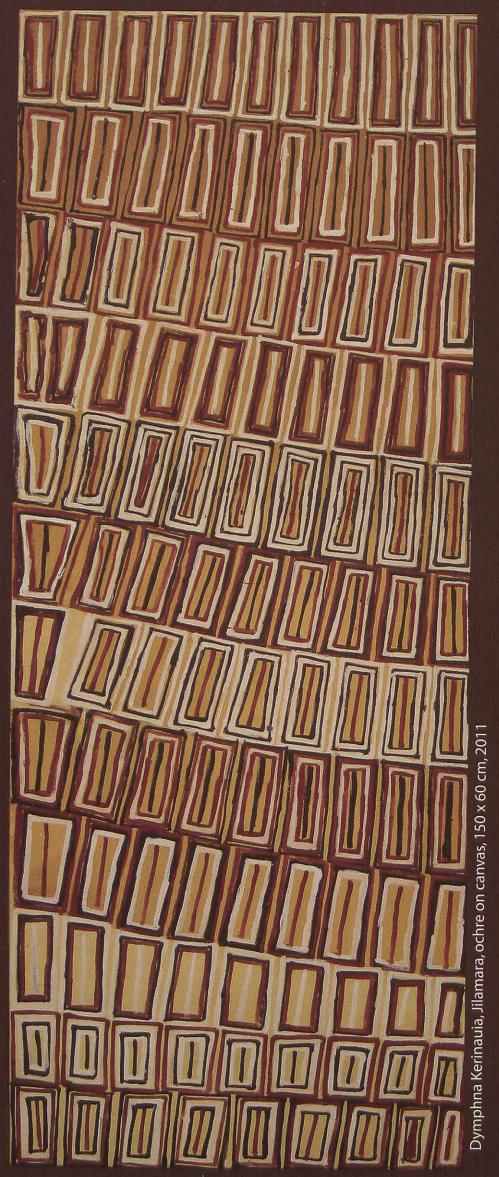
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IMAGE: Sir Anthony Caro, erl king, Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi 2011. Photo Matthew Stanton.





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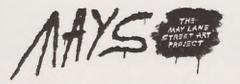
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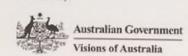
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Image: Mini Graff, Suburban Roadhouse no. 5, 2010, acrylic, stencilled aerosol on primed board, 235 x 160 cm. © the artist. Photo by Sharon Hickey

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Patrick SNELLING, 8.9 (Japan), 2010-2011, hand-printed & digital textiles, image courtesy the artist

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Jeffrey Smart (Australia, b.1921) Truck and trailer approaching a city, 1973 (detail). Painting Collection: Art Gallery of New South Wales © Jeffrey Smart

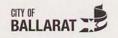
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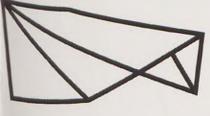




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Essay, Spring 2011

On beauty Barry Schwabsky

Michael Zavros
Robert Leonard

Zanobi Machiavelli Laurence Simmons

AES+F Michael Fitzgerald

Peter Stichbury
Justin Paton

Richard Orjis Tessa Laird

Tarryn Gill and Pilar Mata Dupont Gemma Weston

> Yang Fudong Michael Fitzgerald



Lilies, peacock feathers & ladies with succulent lips

BEAUTY IS ITS OWN ARGUMENT. The only way to contradict it is to close your eyes. And yet often enough one is tempted to do just that, since beauty so often seems a lie, a lure, an alibi for something that might be ugly if you were to look at it straight. Isn't the misplaced passion for beauty the essence of idolatry? So centuries of religious iconoclasm would have us believe, and likewise the political and ideological iconoclasms that are more purely modern phenomena.

Modernist aesthetics (or anti-aesthetics) have never had much truck with beauty. Thierry de Duve was historically if not philosophically on the money when, in his book Kant After Duchamp (1998), he suggested that the effect of the readymade was to replace the Kantian paradigmatic judgment of taste - 'This is beautiful' – with a new one: 'This is art.' At this point the essential connection between art and beauty had been severed - to all appearances permanently. And yet beauty never stopped being a sort of shadow cast by the work of art, and if beauty tended to excuse itself from the formal discourse of art, it never disappeared from the vernacular conversation about it. How often have I heard someone speak of a beautiful exhibition of, say, Carl Andre or Gustav Metzger, or heard a collector admiring another's beautiful piece by Joseph Beuys or Joseph Kosuth. Nor would anyone bat an eye were you to mention a beautiful concert of Cornelius Cardew or Lightning Bolt. Even the most resolutely anti-aesthetic art, it seems, has its beauty - at least for those who look at it with admiring eyes. The problem is that there seems to be nothing further to say about this beauty. Perhaps it's just that indefinable vestige that abides there in silence when all the analytics have been talked through.

And yet, here and there, over the last couple of decades, there have been attempts to raise the issue of beauty – to make it speak. Thinkers as diverse as Dave Hickey, Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, Elaine Scarry, Alexander Nehamas and Arthur C. Danto

- artists, philosophers, critics - have all addressed themselves to the topic. This is not the occasion to explain, case by case, why beauty has not answered their various advances. And no account of contemporary beauty has established itself even to the extent of being seen as the one worth attacking. But the recurrence of the attempt is striking: the felt need to re-establish the connection between art and beauty will not be denied. The desire may be all the more inflamed for remaining unrequited.

To understand how to reconcile art and beauty, we need to understand how and why the split came about; and to comprehend that, we need to understand not so much the period in which their divorce was declared final - the era of futurism and dada around the time of the First World War, when European civilisation, as Paul Valéry later put it, came to realise that it was mortal – as that of their honeymoon, when art had moonlight in its eyes and was full of sweet illusions about beauty. An opportunity to begin doing just that was recently offered by an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, 'The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860–1900'. The copiousness and quality of its displays were extraordinary; it would be hard to imagine a better presentation of the subject. 'Prizing the importance of art and the pleasure of beautiful things above all else', as the V&A's press release had it, 'aestheticism was the first artistic movement to inspire an entire lifestyle'. Consider the dates in the exhibition's subtitle: the aesthetic movement in Britain was contemporary with the art of Manet, Cézanne, Seurat and Van Gogh - that is, with the sacred monsters of the first waves of modernism in France. Having borrowed the idea of art-for-art's sake from France, the British used it to underwrite what in many ways was, if not an antimodern movement, then at least a counter-modernism - despite the notable presence among them of a more ambivalent figure such as James McNeill Whistler, an American whose art was at home in Paris as much as in London. Still, aestheticism leapfrogged over its





opposite

Edouard Manet, The reading, c. 1865

Oil on canvas, 74 x 61 cm, legacy gift of Princess Edmond de Polignac

Courtesy and © Musee d'Orsay

page 92
Frederic Leighton, Pavonia, 1858–59
Oil on canvas, 53 x 41.5 cm, private collection
Courtesy Christie's and Victoria & Albert Museum, London. © Christie's Images

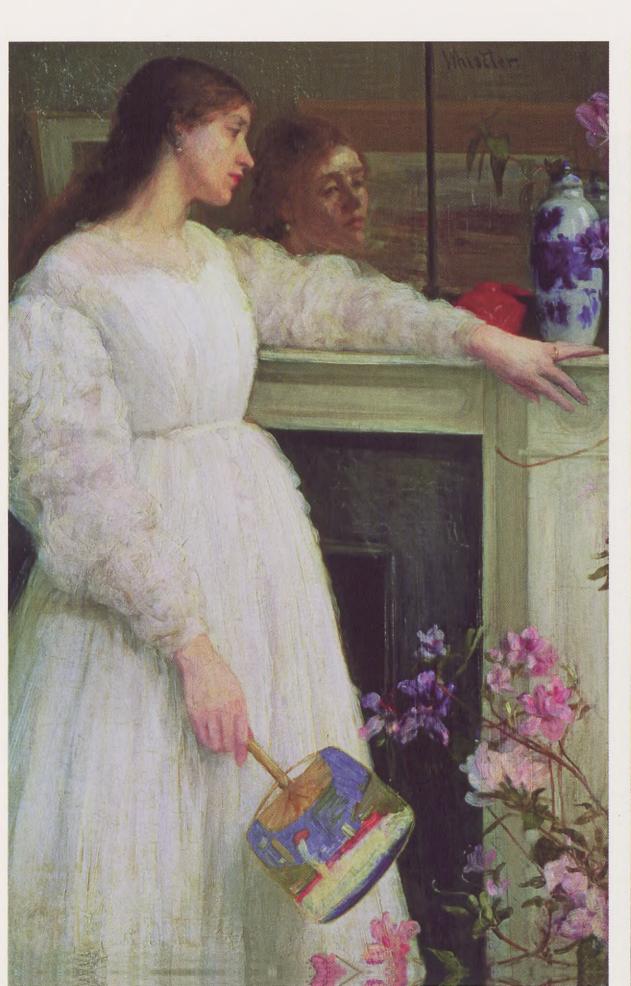
Page 95
Albert Moore, Reading aloud, 1884
Tempera or oil on canvas, 107.3 x 205.7 cm
© Culture and Sport Glasgow (Museums)

contemporary modernist counterparts at least in that it anticipated the Russian constructivists, De Stijl and even the situationists in advocating the abolition of the gap between art and everyday life. And unlike impressionism, it was far from a movement of painters only; its adherents were also writers and poets, sculptors, photographers, architects and designers. In other words, the aesthetic movement, which curator Stephen Calloway depicts as (at least in its early stages) a pugnacious avant-garde 'more united in their opposition to prevailing orthodoxies ... than in any comfortable shared vision or precise definition of the beautiful', encompassed the fine and applied arts as well as the realms of pure thought and imagination.

So what's not to like? Hadn't we better start revising our histories of early modernism to give equal time to William Morris, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones alongside Gustave Courbet, Claude Monet and Paul Gauguin? Should we rephrase Clement Greenberg to say that someday the story will have to be told of how anti-academicism, which started out more or less as art-for-art's sake, turned into formalism and thereby cleared the way, heroically, for what was to come? Well, not so fast. For one thing it depends on how many lilies, peacock feathers and ladies with succulent lips you need to see in one lifetime, for while the aestheticists may not have shared a single definition of beauty, they had a fairly limited imagery with which to represent it. It would seem that the great point about almost everything was that it wasn't beautiful, and should be quietly deleted from both art and life. While as an aside I'd like to point out that the poetry of Algernon Charles Swinburne (whom Calloway credits as 'the first to promote such daring and attractive French ideas' in England as art for art's sake) deserves to be more widely read than it is today, his painter and sculptor colleagues warrant no such praise, and the designers may often still seem brilliant but remain historically distant. Aestheticist photography still has some life to it - the

nature of the medium made it hard to blot out the real entirely – but for the most part, it's hard to see any way back into the world view of British aestheticism unless it's through the ultimately corrosive sideways glance of camp.

This almost extravagantly profuse exhibition at the V&A - but in the spirit of its subject, could it ever have been otherwise? - was laid out in four broadly chronological sections under the rubrics 'The Search for a New Beauty', 'Art for Art's Sake', 'Beautiful People and Aesthetic Houses' and 'Late-flowering Beauty', reflecting a familiar narrative, though more nuanced in the telling, of the movement's vigorous origins, consolidation, popularisation and decadence. What beauty might be, and whether it could be detached from the hearty moralism that reigned in the public culture of mid-Victorian England, were surely questions well worth asking. But whether the bohemians of Cheyne Walk were ever quite as antagonistic to the dominant cultural attitudes of their day as Calloway makes out - or rather, whether the dominant cultural forces were ever quite as antagonistic to them as a number of stinging attacks might lead us to believe - is doubtful. Writing in The Cult of Beauty catalogue, Lynn Federle Orr calls attention to the wilful eclecticism cultivated by the painters who worked in the wake of the Pre-Raphaelites - their delight in concocting 'unique anachronistic combinations'. It's all that anachronism, of course, that now seems so misguided - the disinterest in forging what some of their neighbours across the Channel were calling 'the painting of modern life'. On the other hand, one can only wonder at Federle Orr's contention that these 'artists were interested in only the most limited narrative, preferring rather to evoke a mood or prompt vague associations', which 'unnerved a public set adrift from the traditional signposts of content'. Again, Whistler is the odd man out here, sharing much more in common with his great French counterparts than any of the other painters at work in mid-to-late nineteenth-century London. But as for the rest of them, well, their





opposite, left to right

James McNeill Whistler, Symphonie en blanc n°2: La petite fille blanche (Symphony in white, no. 2: The little white girl), 1864

Oil on canvas, 76 x 51 cm, collection Tate Gallery, London, gift of Arthur Studd, 1919 Courtesy Musée d'Orsay, Paris. © Tate, London, 2011

James McNeill Whistler, Symphonie en blanc n°1: La fille blanche (Symphony in white, no. 1: The white girl), 1862

Oil on canvas, 214.6 x 108 cm, Harris Whittemore Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington

Courtesy Musée d'Orsay, Paris. © National Gallery of Art, Washington, Harris Whittemore Collection

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downplaying of narrative may have been notable in comparison with other British painting of their time, but in comparison with what was going on in France, they were only taking baby steps away from literary, idealising and even moralistic meaning.

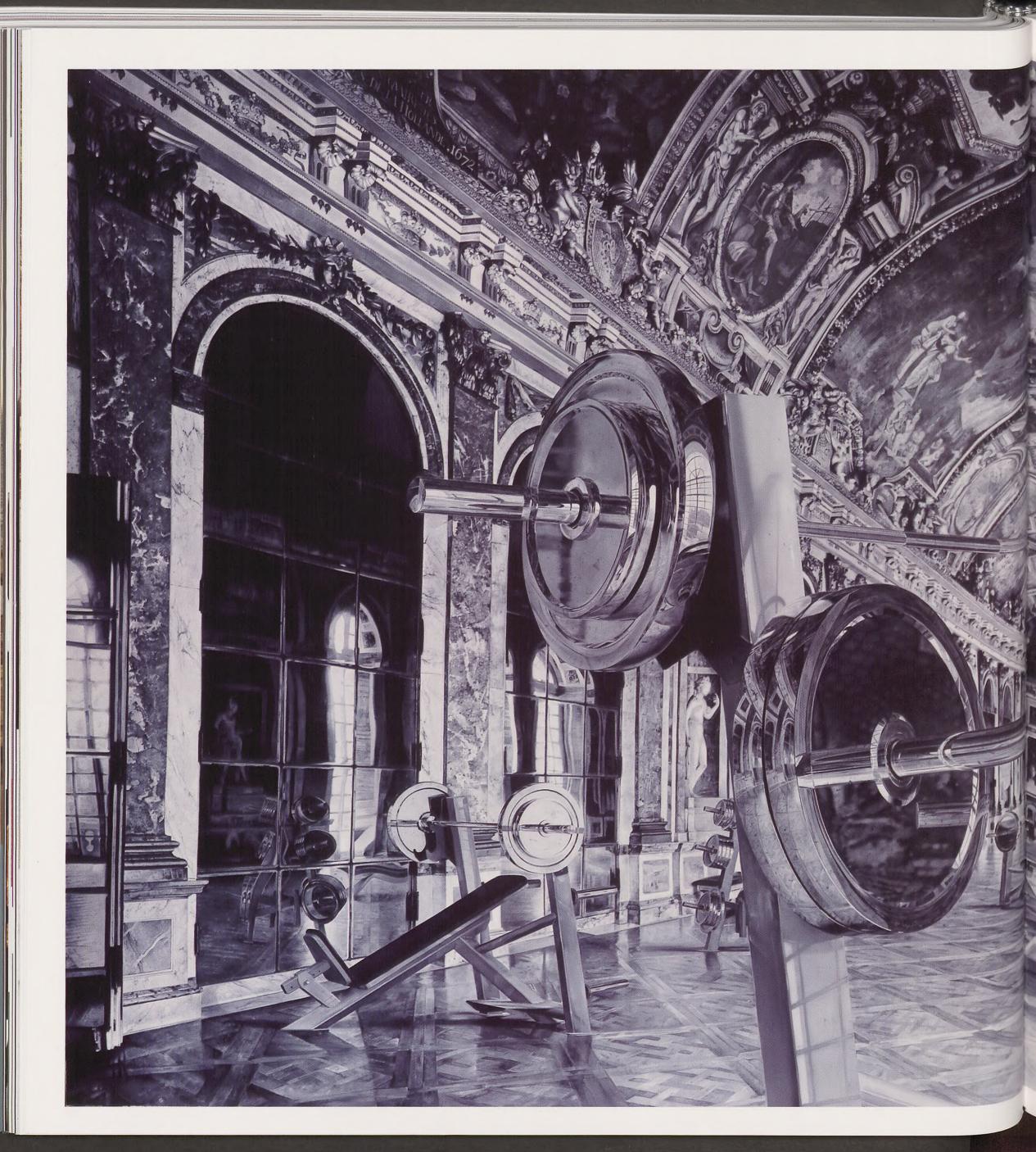
In Paris, after all, the critics were tearing out their hair and complaining, of no less a painting than Manet's Le déjeuner sur l'herbe, 1863: 'I search in vain for the meaning of this unbecoming rebus.'1 The most advanced French artists were making paintings their contemporaries felt they didn't know how to read. Yet what activity is more ordinary than reading? In the nineteenth century reading was just as likely to be done aloud as silently to oneself. Recall Manet's treatment of the motif in The reading (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), his 1865-73 portrait of his wife at home being read to by her son, or of silent reading in the 1879 Reading l'illustré (Art Institute of Chicago) showing a woman alone at a public café - and then consider, in 'The Cult of Beauty', Albert Moore's Reading aloud, 1883-84, with its absurdly classicised beauties draped languidly around their exquisite furniture. One reads - but so demurely her mouth is barely open, one listens with intent melancholy, and the third seems to be dozing off. In one sense all these paintings, the two Manets as well as the Moore, are (with more or less knowing irony) both literary and anti-literary, since they all evoke reading as a social activity when it is essentially private, inward, while at the same time they efface the texts that are being read. But Moore, unlike Manet, is also literary in a different sense; although his painting certainly insists on its purely formal character - its emphasis on flat linear patterning might even be seen as incipiently modernist, though not by me - it really does have a very obvious meaning in that the dream world it pictures is so evidently a flattering, romanticised version of the cloistered, purely private realm that well-to-do women were supposed to inhabit. Moore's excessively dry touch does not hide his implicitly

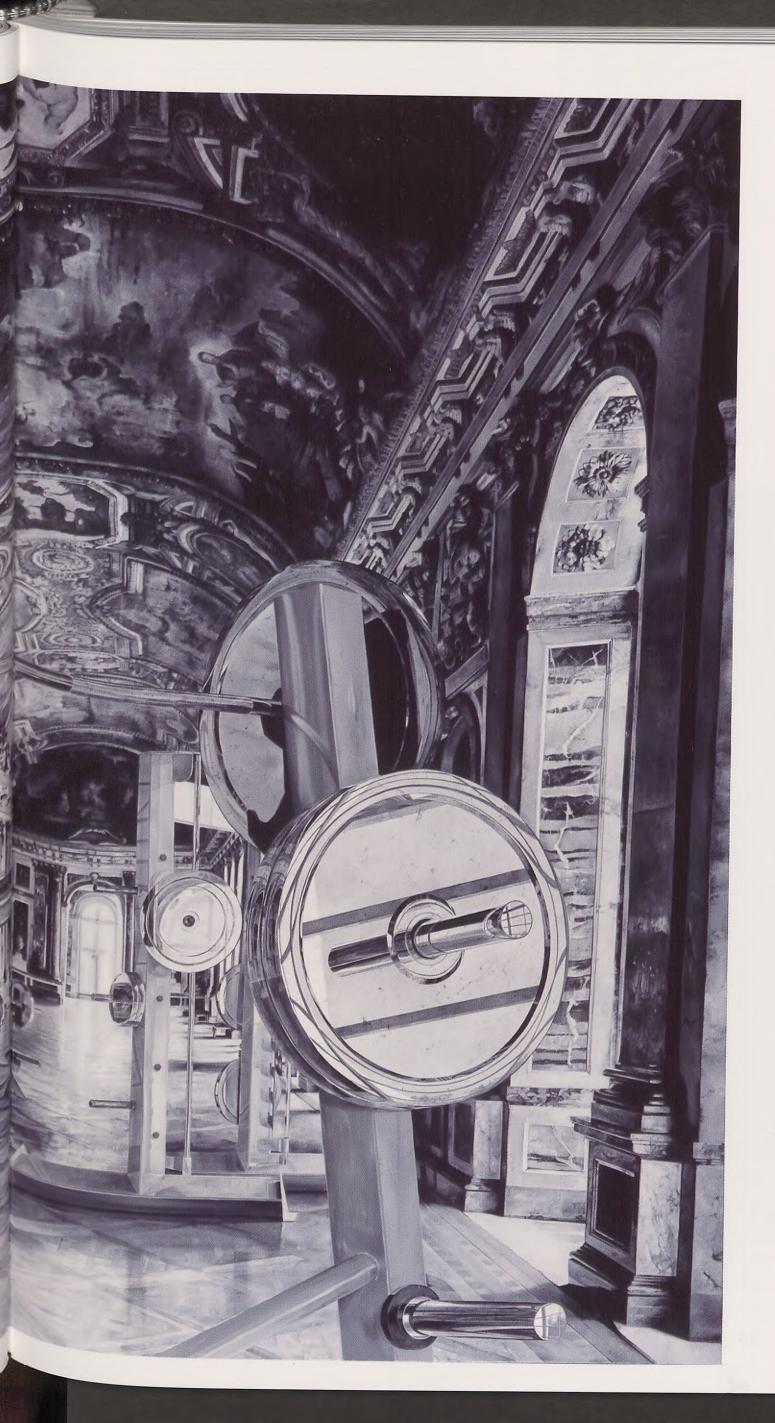
steamy subject matter – what do those languid ladies get up to when the book is eventually closed? Manet, by contrast, used images of leisure all the better to highlight that his act of painting was labour not embarrassing to show – and the understanding of this entails just as much imaginative labour on the part of the viewer. Likewise, the women readers and listeners Manet painted are shown as actively engaged in the reading – mentally productive, you might say, even as consumers.

Despite the fact that some of its adherents - most famously William Morris - were passionate socialists, the aesthetic cult of beauty remained mainly about consumption and domestic life. They were obsessed with beautiful houses, not beautiful factories. Though it was normal for Victorian men, women and even children to work fourteen-hour days, the 'entire lifestyle' envisaged by the aesthetic movement, as far as one can tell from its imagery, was utterly detached from any form of production other than that of art itself - as if beauty could be consumed without having been produced; inhabited without having been built. The problem with aestheticism is that it gave beauty a bad name by pretending that it was rare, fragile and demanding of no effort on the part of those who enjoyed it - the special preserve of those who could pay to enjoy and shield it from everything that might be trivial, destructive, ugly or real. From that injury it has yet to recover. I'm not sorry that the twentieth century let all those peacocks keep their feathers.

The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860–1900, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 2 April – 17 July 2011; Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 13 September 2011 – 15 January 2012; the de Young Museum, San Francisco, 18 February – 17 June 2012.

Louis Etienne, 'Le jury et les exposants', 1863, quoted in George Heard Hamilton, Manet and His Critics, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954, p. 45.





Michael Zavros

CHARM OFFENSIVE

Robert Leonard

We have inherited the idea that artists should be critical; that they should reject received ideas, shock the bourgeoisie, rock the boat. This avant-garde cliché is ingrained in the way we talk about art; every aspiring art-school student is trained to cast their work as a critique of something or other. And yet, these days, some prominent art seems to be on an entirely different track, preferring instead to be appealing, entertaining and affirmative. We are experiencing what art historian Rex Butler has described as a 'post-critical' turn.²

Jeff Koons, Damien Hirst and Takashi Murakami exemplify the change. They produce spectacular, crowd-pleasing, high-concept art. Their works involve high production values, necessitate armies of fabricators and publicists and are only possible because they have access to budgets, methods and platforms more typically associated with the entertainment industry than with art. They are post-pop artists operating out of the legacies of Salvador Dalí and Andy Warhol, who showed that the abrasive avant-garde artist could mellow into the mainstream showman. Immersed in the business of art, the post-critical trio court column inches and embrace the idea of the artist as brand. They are helping to fudge the once-presumed divide between high-minded art and entertainment, as art is sucked deeper into what Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer dismissed as 'the culture industry'.³

The post-critical turn increasingly informs the conditions under which artists work, changing terms of reference, changing expectations. Michael Zavros not only feeds into the post-critical moment, in the Australian context he exemplifies it, but in a unique way – one which reframes the distinction between critical and not-critical.

Zavros is an aesthete: he paints beautiful things beautifully. His subjects include fairytale palaces, gardens and follies; upmarket men's fashion, luxury cars and jewellery; Lipizzaner dressage horses, Japanese pedigree onagadori chickens and pretty boys.

Because he extends his sophisticated aesthetic across all areas of his life, from his art to personal dress and that gives him a complete signature style. Because he understands that just because you're an artist doesn't mean you can't dress well. Because he likes to stand out from the crowd and because he continues to be inspired by fashion.

Catherine Caines¹



Zavros's subjects seem interchangeable; they are analogous to one another. For instance, his businessmen in bespoke suits and shiny shoes echo his overbred chickens with their extravagant, impractical tails. His subjects' quality and classiness is also mirrored in his impeccable, refined, photo-realistic rendering of them.

It is often said that Zavros's subject is beauty itself, but it is, more generally, symbols of status. His canon of beauty is aspirational – keyed to notions of privilege, tradition and the faux-aristocratic taste of luxury brands. Zavros's work speaks to a desire for status, and therefore also to our fear of not having it – what television-philosopher Alain de Botton famously called 'status anxiety'. Consequently, Zavros has become a shibboleth. People either love him or loathe him, admire him or resent him. Those who love him think his work epitomises precisely what art should be (which is what they have or want, like and are); those who loathe him think it is everything art should not be (class, ideology). The strength and clarity of Zavros's project lies precisely in his ability to polarise his audience.

By picking subjects that seem prime candidates for deconstruction and critique but not deconstructing or critiquing them, Zavros foregrounds and flaunts his lack of criticality. Nevertheless, some writers argue that there is something inherently ambivalent in his hyper-aestheticism. For instance, curator Jason Smith has written:

Over the past decade Michael Zavros has produced super-real, highly seductive images that have elaborated a contemporary culture of narcissism, and that have scrutinised and deconstructed popular concepts of beauty and physical perfection . . . Another political strain and a predominating theme in Zavros's work is the interrogation of ideals of male beauty and physical flawlessness . . . Zavros's works tackle the vexed nature of marketing . . . 6

While such readings find support in the artist's own statements, they are misleading. Rather than capture our experience of the work, they reflect our inability to discuss any art without resorting to the default-setting language of criticality, wherein a work can't simply express something, it has to *elaborate*, *scrutinise* or *deconstruct* it. For me, what is so sharp about Zavros's art is how utterly, rigorously and deliberately uncritical it is. In its sheer affirmation, it calls for a different kind of reading.

Zavros does not apologise for his subjects, or for those who identify with them. But as much as his works eschew criticality, they epitomise self-reflexivity. Zavros has painted hunting trophies, playing on the way his paintings have themselves become trophies for collectors. He has painted beautifully styled interiors (that look like they could be based on images from glossy interiors magazines) that can then be hung in collectors' homes (where they can be photographed for glossy interiors magazines). He even staged an exhibition of paintings of Balenciaga handbags in Jean Brown, the Brisbane luxury retail shop. The term mise-en-abyme is used to name the uncanny effect of nested representations, where paintings exist within paintings and interiors within interiors, where a picture of a trophy is a trophy, and where a painting of a handbag is displayed on the very shop shelf where you would expect to find the handbag. While the mise-en-abyme is routinely understood as a vortex that renders meaning unstable, in Zavros's case it has the opposite effect. It reinforces associations, as if there were no outside from which to view things differently.

Zavros welcomes his audience into the enclosure. In the small painting, V12 Narcissus, 2009, he admires his reflection in the bonnet of his Mercedes Benz SL600 sports car. The title refers to the Greek myth of a beautiful boy who, spurning the affections of Echo, preferred his own reflection. But Zavros's painting does not spurn lovers; it beckons them to join in. If the painting shows

pages 100–1
Echo, 2009
Oil on canvas, 210 x 320 cm
Private collection, courtesy the artist and Grantpirrie Gallery, Sydney

page 103 V12 Narcissus, 2009 Oil on board, 22 X 29.5 cm Courtesy the artist and Grantpirrie Gallery, Sydney

Zavros enjoying his good person reflected in the bonnet of his prized car, it invites the painting's self-satisfied owner-viewers to enjoy their own selves similarly, metaphorically reflected in their prized painting.

Mirror imagery is recurrent in Zavros's work. In *Echo*, 2009, new chrome weightlifting equipment is stationed somewhat incongruously in the famous mirrored hall at Versailles. Back in the seventeenth century, mirrors were prohibitively expensive, and the extravagant hall was Louis XIV's investment in his own power and magnificence – its mirrors reflecting paintings that celebrated his life and personage. Zavros's painting suggests that this gym gear – symbolising the widespread desire for the body beautiful – is the contemporary echo, reflection or heir to aristocratic vanity.

Of course, *Echo* is also an echo of the art world's own Sun King, Jeff Koons – Zavros's patron saint. When Zavros painted it, Koons had just had his big vanity show at Versailles. Zavros and Koons both emphasise traditional craftsmanship (although Zavros does the work himself). Zavros's shiny barbells can be seen as a nod to Koons's stainless-steel sculptures such as *Rabbit*, 1986, which similarly sucked in its surroundings at Versailles. However, the differences between Koons and Zavros are more telling. Throughout his work, Koons plays on and scrambles the space between high and low in order to address kitsch – the dissipation of old forms of aristocratic high culture in the sentimental bad taste of the masses. But that's exactly what Zavros isn't interested in. He suppresses kitsch associations, so beautiful ideology can be enjoyed at face value.

While uninterested in kitsch, Zavros does inject taints of negativity into his works. In *Man*, 2009, a skull is suggested by a still-life arrangement of luxury products that Zavros owns – Carrera sunglasses become eye cavities and Prada shoes nasal ones, while a line of fragrance bottles (including Calvin Klein's

'Man' cologne) stands in for grinning teeth. *Man* could be seen as a vanitas or *memento mori*, but really it's a stretch to understand it as a warning against worldly trappings; it's more an advertisement for them. Similarly, *Phoebe is dead/McQueen*, 2010 – where Zavros imagines his demised daughter shrouded in an Alexander McQueen skull-patterned scarf – is not really belittling fashion, even if the depressed designer had just committed suicide. It's no 'Et in Arcadia Ego'; more the opposite: 'Fashion, even in death!' it pledges.¹⁰

When Zavros makes reference to conventional moralities, it is usually to invalidate them. V12 Narcissus may refer to a myth that warns us against vanity, but the painting embraces vanity. And although the erasing of the faces of male models in the 'Debaser' drawings, 2007-, could remind us that we are fashion victims, actually it makes its subjects seem even more sublimely remote and beautiful (in the process suggesting that they actually had identities to rub out). On a similar note, in a 2011 set of photoetchings, Disappear here, Zavros's monogram 'MZ' is written, apparently in cocaine, on the black non-reflective face of a hand mirror. The monogram disappears as the powder is chopped into lines and consumed, leaving no monogram and no reflection. A nod to American writer Bret Easton Ellis, here Zavros suggests that the high life may come at the cost of one's very self. However, being more stylish than scary, these images enable us to entertain this possibility without being too put off. Perhaps loss-of-self is just collateral damage.

Recently Zavros has been upping the ante by incorporating politically contentious references into his works. The first eyecatching feature of his painted interior *The lioness*, 2010, is a Bill Henson photograph in which a young girl plaintively eyes us from the darkness. We are initially compelled to assume she is the lioness of the title, only later noticing a lion skin draped over the sofa. In

The heart wants what it wants.

Woody Allen¹¹

the wake of the witch-hunt over Henson's sexualised depictions of underage girls, there's something creepy in associating a doe-eyed ingenue with skinned wildlife.¹² A study in endangered species and isomorphism, the interior *Body lines*, 2011, juxtaposes a striated painting by the late Emily Kame Kngwarreye with striped animal skins (from a tiger and its possible prey, a zebra). While we recognise the Kngwarreye as blue-chip trophy art (like Zavros's own paintings), it's hard to forget the dispossession of Australia's traditional owners – the fact that these works were produced in a situation of abject poverty. As the striped Kngwarreye was based on ceremonial body painting, the juxtaposition also suggests a distasteful link between Aboriginal skins and trophies of the hunt.¹³

The apolitical might simply enjoy these interiors as stylish arrangements of self-evidently nice things. But those who make political connections will do so quickly. However, beyond prompting these political points, the paintings have nothing to actually say about them. The politics are quickly done-and-dusted; they sit in parentheses. After recognising them, we are left to disconnect from them and simply marvel at the works' skilful rendering of diverse and luxurious textures. In such works, Zavros isn't denying politics so much as overriding them. It's like those fashion-house window displays that present beautiful clothes on blindfolded, dismembered, trussed-up female mannequins - not because they haven't heard of feminism, but to show that they have and yet prefer to argue their preference for a higher principle. It seems pointless to subject them to a critique they have already absorbed. The presence of critical references in Zavros's works similarly serves to inoculate his work against critique. 14

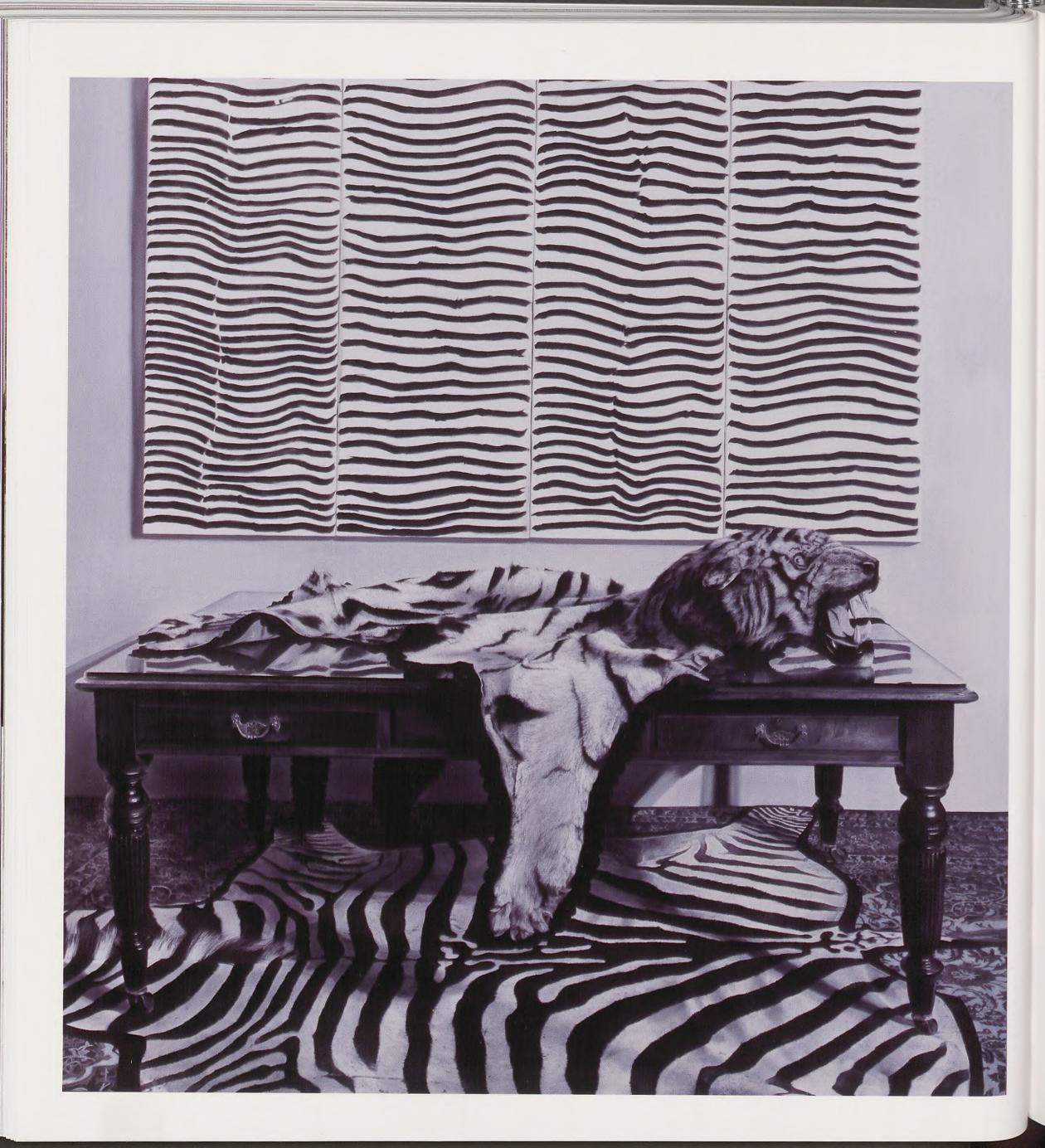
This principle is also at play in Zavros's video We dance in the studio (to that shit on the radio), 2010. Here we find the artist painting in his studio, while his young daughter Phoebe

– wearing sunglasses, Mouseketeer ears and a tutu – watches herself in the mirror as she lip-syncs and strikes poses to the Lady Gaga hit 'Paparazzi'. Gaga – herself a paragon of inoculation – is routinely demonised as a 'bad example', a pernicious influence on impressionable tweens, schooling them in coquettish sexuality and consumerism. However, the girl is not admonished, but encouraged in her pursuits by her proud father – and her innocent performance is truly captivating. She is, of course, a stand-in for the artist himself.

Zavros's project encompasses references to his life - his love of horses and chickens, his children, his possessions and pleasures. But more than this, it encompasses his life itself. While some rail against the false consciousness created by advertising, pointing to the gulf between its representations and life as lived, Zavros's real life proves them wrong by catching up with his fantasy. Zavros is increasingly able to enjoy the lifestyle he depicts, to become what he paints - life imitates art. He is his own consummate artwork. The handsome, well-groomed and well-heeled artist has become a staple of stage-managed personality profiles, bestdressed lists and VIP rooms. This charming man enjoys a symbiotic relationship with lifestyle magazines. The admiration is mutual: the magazines affirm the artist that affirms them (Zavros was GQ) magazine's 'Artist of the Year' in 2009). Zavros's media visibility is currently so high that we cannot see the work 'in itself'; we must read it in relation to the life (albeit a life totally mediated by the media). Thus, for all its appeal to the old-school virtues of fine draftsmanship and patient rendering, Zavros's work could also belong to a lineage of conceptual-art projects that explore the collapse of art into life. 15 It is a performance. But is it a performance that opens out art or closes down life?

In the consistency, coherence and cunning of his post-criticality, Michael Zavros cuts an unusual figure. Other artists are postcritical. Other artists make likeable art. Other artists are rated,





opposite

Body lines, 2011

Oil on canvas, 210 X 195 cm

Courtesy the artist and Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne

Debaser/ Kopenhagen fur, 2010
Charcoal on paper, 122 x 86 cm
Private collection, courtesy the artist and Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane

curated and collected. Other artists are profiled in the glossies, are well connected and live the good life. Other artists nag the boundaries between life and art. But Zavros has tied these thoughts together and granted them the force, clarity and self-consciousness of a project – a paradigm. In doing so he has become a reference point in Australian art that other positions must be read against. Because of this, his art is as much about what it is not as about what it is. It can be read both in itself, as a self-contained system (a hall of mirrors), and in terms of its relation to other work. The art world looks different with Zavros in it.

Perhaps we could understand this better if we swapped the terms 'critical' and 'uncritical' for 'neurotic' and 'pervert'. Neurotics don't know what they want; they are repressed, ambivalent, conflicted. They don't know whether to have an affair or stay faithful, whether they are gay or straight, whether it would be fun to have sex in a raincoat or not. They spend all their time dithering. Most of us are neurotics – it's quite normal. However, perverts are exceptional: they have no ambivalence; they know exactly what they want; they are focused. These days, when we speak about criticality in contemporary art, we are essentially talking about ambivalence – neurosis. Within the art system, criticality and conservatism are intertwined, making the standard art-worlder shamefully complicit. By contrast, as a proud pervert, Zavros is *shamelessly* complicit. He knows exactly what he's into: this type of sports car, this kind of horse and his own reflection. ¹⁶

The Zavros Effect occurs when you throw a well-heeled, high-functioning pervert (whose desire is paradoxically aligned with what we are all supposed to want) into an art world stacked with envious, bitter neurotics. The neurotics are not only shocked by his shamelessness, sooner or later that also forces them to confront their own shame. Which is why Zavros – without being in the least bit critical – accidentally engenders a critique of criticality.

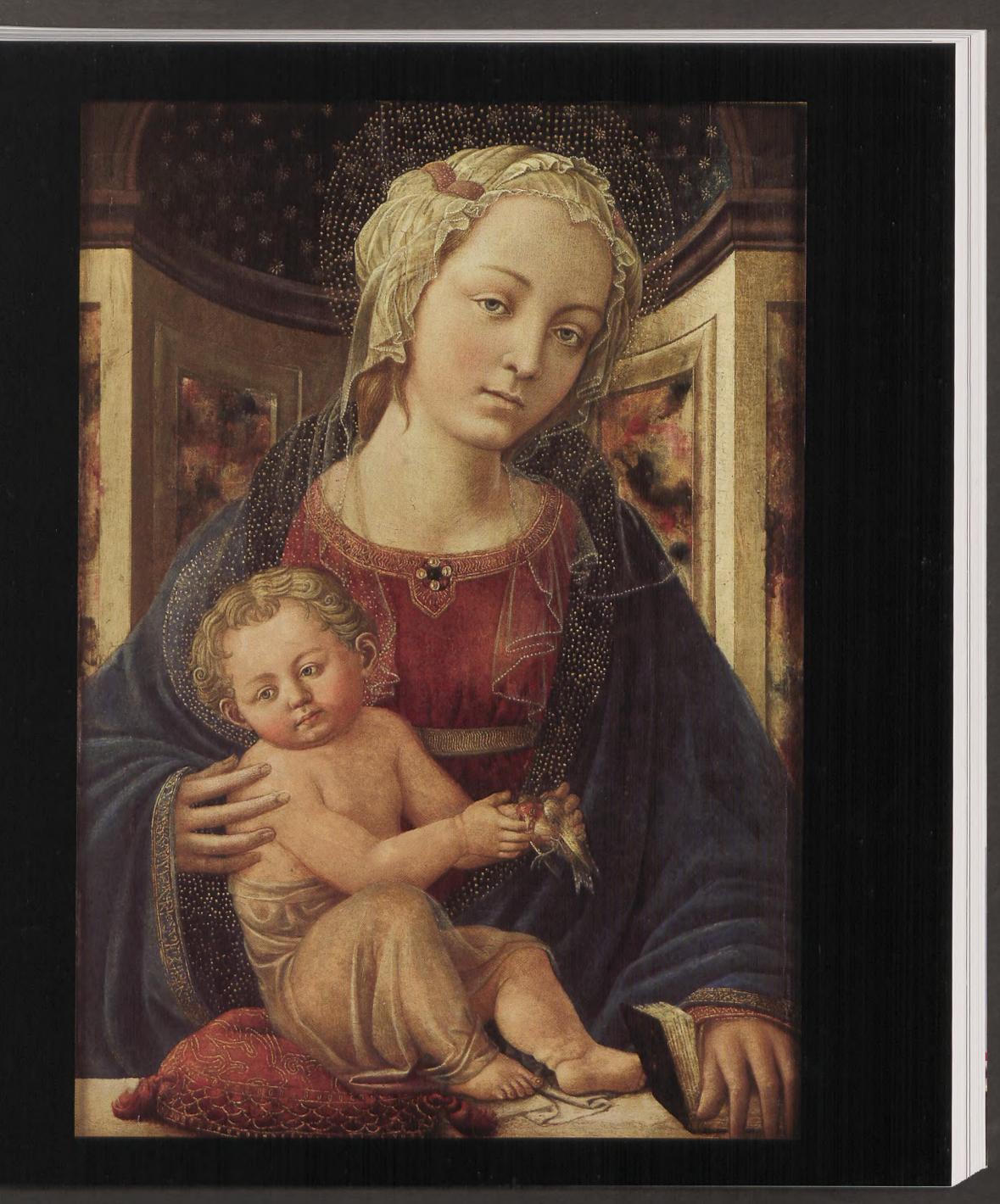
Catherine Caines, 'Best dressed 2011', The Australian's Wish Magazine, 1 July 2011, p. 30.

- See Rex Butler, 'GOMA, the APT and the contemporary', Eyeline, no. 63, Winter 2007, pp. 32–34; and 'Candide in Brisvegas', Broadsheet, vol. 38, no. 1, 2009, pp. 31–33. See also Jack Bankowsky, Alison M. Gingeras and Catherine Wood (eds), Pop Life: Art in a Material World, Tate Publishing, London, 2009, and Isabelle Graw, High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture, Sternberg Press, New York, 2009.
- 3 Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, 2002.
- 4 Alain de Botton, Status Anxiety, Hamish Hamilton, London, 2004.
- Zavros gets overwhelmingly positive press, both in the lifestyle glossies and in art's trade magazines. But for an indication of the resentment that his work provokes, you can't go past the 2009 special issue of Brisbane's bitchy art broadsheet *The Incontinent Goat* devoted to him. 'Lifestyles of the rich and famous artists special: Wankers edition' parodied a Matthew Condon profile on Zavros ('Glitter stripped', *Qweekend*, 1–2 August 2009, pp. 14–17), to imagine a parallel world in which he was a VB-drinking bogan.
- 6 Jason Smith, 'Calling in the fox', in *Michael Zavros: Calling in the fox*, exhibition catalogue, Grantpirrie, Sydney, 2009, n.p. My emphases.
- Balenciaga has cult status for fashionistas. Considered works of art, their bags are the subjects of blogs and obsessive collecting.
- 8 Koons's show ran from 10 September 2008 to 4 January 2009. Before that show opened, Zavros had already made works about Versailles.
- 9 The closest Zavros gets to Koonsian kitsch is *I* ♥ *Versailles*, 2007, in which a flock of birds flies in a heart formation above the picture-perfect palace.
- This painting won Zavros the prestigious Doug Moran National Portrait Prize in 2010 and \$150,000.
- Woody Allen on his relationship with Soon-Yi Previn, in an interview with Walter Isaacson. 'The heart wants what it wants', *Time* magazine, 31 August 1992. www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,976345,00.html.
- In Vladimir Nabokov's 1955 novel, Humbert Humbert first bedded Lolita in a hotel named the Enchanted Hunters.
- Of course, tiger-skin trophies are a reminder of the British Raj period of imperial rule in India prior to independence.
- 14 I borrowed the idea of inoculation from Roland Barthes's Mythologies (1957).
- I think of American dandy artist James Lee Byars and, at the other end of the style spectrum, his friend Joseph Beuys.
- Thanks to Edward Colless for drawing my attention to the relevance of the neurotic/ pervert dichotomy.

Zanobi Machiavelli in Dunedin

When a minor artist becomes major

Laurence Simmons



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Zanobi Machiavelli, Madonna and child, 1452–53
Egg tempera on gesso on wood, 57 x 40 cm
Gift of Mary, Dora and Esmond de Beer, 1975
Courtesy Dunedin Public Art Gallery

According to the Catalogue note to the exhibition 'Beloved', the Dunedin *Madonna and child*, 1452–53, 'remains unparalleled in any other New Zealand public art collection'. In Mary Kisler's recent account of European paintings in New Zealand public collections, *Angels and Aristocrats* (2010), the Auckland curator named the work as one of 'two very fine examples of Florentine paintings of the Madonna and child from the second half of the fifteenth century, both of which demonstrate the influence of a major Florentine painter of the time, Fra Filippo Lippi (1406/7–1469)'. Viewing this painting today would seem to confirm the intriguing idea expressed by Carmelo Bene and Gilles Deleuze in their 1979 essay 'Superpositions' that 'it is the minor artist who offers the true masterpiece'.³

Zanobi Machiavelli was born in Florence in either 1418 or 1419. We know that he died in Pisa on 7 March 1479 and belonged, therefore, to the same artistic world as Lippi, Benozzo Gozzoli, Sandro Botticelli, Andrea del Castagno and Piero della Francesca. However, despite being a native of the city of Florence, Machiavelli worked mainly outside the city and is not mentioned in the records of the Arte dei Medici e Speziali, the Florentine painter's guild. There is scant documentation of his artistic activity: he received payment for three lunette paintings for the Badia at Fiesole in 1465; produced a signed Coronation of the Virgin in 1473 for the Church of Santa Croce in Fossabanda just outside Pisa, and later another painting, a Virgin and child with four saints, for the same church; a painting was commissioned for the Monastero di Fregionaia near Lucca; and we know that he was paid four times between 1476 and 1477 by the administrators of Pisa Cathedral for blue pigment. A Madonna and child is believed to have been completed in the mountain church of Sant'Angelo a Cetica in Casentino.

For much of his life Machiavelli seems to have moved in a nomadic fashion around small provincial Tuscan towns producing

commissioned works for their churches. Giorgio Vasari's Lives of the Artists (1550-68) devotes little more than a footnote to him, noting that he was a pupil of Gozzoli.5 The late nineteenth-century art historians Joseph Crowe and Giovanni Cavalcaselle recorded that Machiavelli had to face the sheer brilliance of his competition, although they begrudgingly acknowledge his Virgin and child with saints (today in Dublin's National Gallery of Ireland) as an example of 'how an artist of no great powers can at times approach other masters'.6 Machiavelli was awoken again from the long sleep of critical obscurity, if only briefly, in 1950 by the fierce critic and connoisseur of Italian renaissance art Bernard Berenson writing in The Burlington Magazine. In a typically backhanded compliment Berenson believed Machiavelli 'was at his best when working with or for his superiors', although he grudgingly acknowledges of the Dunedin Madonna and child that 'the head of the Madonna has a beauty, a graciousness, a look worthy of a real artist, which Machiavelli seldom was'.7 This is the point where the Machiavelli trail seems to go cold, and where we should return to the work itself.

The painting appears divided in two – a division that is at once oddly fascinating and unsettling. Light from an unseen source to the top left of the painting is graded very subtly across the face of the Madonna, down her neck and over the face and near-naked body of the child. It catches the exposed folds of the Madonna's mantle sleeves and bounces off the right-hand curved interior panel of the niche. This duality of light and dark – dark mantle/light skin; dark ceiling vault/light niche – is further enhanced by the symmetries in the composition: the two halves of the background niche, the two hands of the Madonna, the two legs of the child, the two gazes. It is as if the four axes of the Madonna's brooch at the painting's very centre is emblematic of an attempt by Machiavelli to hold all these dualities together, just as her girdle (*cintola virginale*) holds not only her costume but the two sides of the

composition together.

Machiavelli created a hinge between two spaces and two times at the centre of his painting. These are marked compositionally by the heads of mother and child that turn away from each other and yet are joined in their being. There is something about the mirrored directions of these gazes that draws us in. The Madonna is deeply, exquisitely alive, her expression demure yet introspective, with suggestions of a rich and complex inner life. Her eyes are painted more emphatically than anything else and seem so present and near to us that one could believe that they are real and everything else is painted. It appears that her son, or his future, is what she is looking at so intensely and the child solves the pictorial problem of the intensity of his mother's attention by not meeting our gaze. These two figures perform; they, like us, are observers and little escapes them.

The painting's mysterious effects begin with spatial breaks, but the foregrounded parapet signals another break: time. The child is carefully placed on a cushion in a space that opens to the future, while behind the parapet, in the territory of the mother, the space remains that of a church. Having marked out these two spaces, Machiavelli's bird then flutters and mediates between them to signal the different temporalities. The cover of a book leans back (too small for a Bible so perhaps a book of hours – time again), the pages lightly separating as if they too might flutter. These are another emblem of what I have called the painting's 'hinge'.

The hinged spaces allow the painting to suggest both the time of painting and the time of prophesy. The male goldfinch clutched awkwardly by the child is associated with the crucifixion – the red mark on its head is taken as a drop of blood that fell on it as it drew a thorn from Christ's Crown of Thorns. Here the goldfinch represents the foreknowledge of Christ's future violent death. As well as symbolically, Machiavelli worked technically to create a sense of continuity between the viewer's space and

that of the painting and here the surface appears to have been brought up close to us. On the one hand, the parapet enhances the sense of the open window of renaissance theoretician Leon Battista Alberti's most famous perspectival metaphor: 'I draw a rectangle of whatever size I want, which I regard as an open window through which the subject to be painted is seen.'9 But on the other, Machiavelli paints himself in close proximity to this devotional image, drawing us into an intimate relationship with the Madonna. This dichotomy of distance is then bridged by a focus on the bodily nature of the child - his flesh is lightly veiled, his left leg exposed. For Machiavelli, the use of tactile humour is a way of circumventing the symbolic absence of the future adult Christ. The child's hair, its crinkled and bundled corkscrew folds and meticulous middle parting, and his protruding ears and chubby calves are a sort of joke that offers another kind of life to the painting - a diversion akin to the fluttering goldfinch, or the way the pages of the book stand up and fan open. The painting needs this light diversion because of the inertia of the main figure of the Madonna. She is not a portrait of someone alive in real time who has merely been captured in paint. Rather, Machiavelli's Madonna has been moved by paint into another realm. In part what the Madonna must be watching is the painter paint her child. Her face displays implacability yet an individuality; in its melancholy it is bereft of easy hope for the future. We could say that she faces a disappearance. The visible (this painting) thus aims to produce some faith in the reality of the invisible (Christ's sacrifice). The strangeness of the child and his companion bird provides pleasure and psychological immediacy within the limits of the portentous absence to come.

As we gaze at this painting we become aware of a further significant absence: that of bright and varied colours. The Madonna's dress is the colour of pomegranates, as is the cushion on which the child sits and which displays an embroidered

pomegranate motif (a symbol of fertility and Christ's resurrection); the same hue finds its way back into the stone panels of the niche, and in the two red clasps that hold together the Madonna's elaborate headdress. This play of monochromes surprises, especially when one considers the vibrant use of colour in the Magi Chapel of the Palazzo Medici Riccardi by Machiavelli's supposed mentor Gozzoli. Despite the subtlety and tactile intensity of Machiavelli's paint, this austerity of colour suggests the otherworldly (rather like a black-and-white movie does for us today). The Madonna's mantle, a pure and rich indigo blue, also finds echoes in the ceiling vault and stone panels. As present as the Madonna is, the expression of her eyes shows that she is elsewhere. That 'elsewhere' also lies buried in the darkness of the mantle that envelops the figures - there are shadows in its gathered folds. The mantle frames the visibility of the Christ child as if somehow his presence has emerged from the darkness like a message - for this painting is all about the foreshadowing of messages to come.

As Kisler has written, the painted veil: 'is one of the great delights of renaissance painting, and even today causes the spectator to stare in fascination at the artist's skill, for while logic tells us that the veil is made up of delicate strokes of white paint, we also accept the illusion of something solid yet transparent. As such, the veil serves as a metaphor for painting itself.'10 If painting is like a veil, then this is a painting of veils. Veils are light, feminine, transparent: note the exquisitely light veil around the Madonna's face and shoulders; the complexity of layered, tucked and clasped veils that cover her hair; the transparency of the loose swaddling cloth around the child revealing the naked form of the lower half of his body. The dotted haloes and turned-back lining of the mantle, too, are veil-like. This may explain the superimposition of the dots of the Madonna's halo on the painted stars of the niche vault: they meld and share and hence bring together the forwardness of her figure and the recession of the niche behind

her. The painted veil is the painterly intimation of what Louis Marin, writing of quattrocento art, has called 'the reflexive opacity of painting', that process whereby every painting is like a pane of opaque glass that allows us to see something other than itself, through itself, while it is being viewed. This opacity of painting does not mean, however, that painting designates something that is always beyond, something above, something spiritual and immaterial, a substance beneath its attributes, or that it designates the indefinite vacuity of belief. On the contrary, for the viewer, seeing is no longer the accessing of a substance beyond the present setting, but of something being designated now, here in the flesh. The painting fills the foreseen ideal moment of its being looked at; indeed the painting is the process of constructing such a moment. Of course, a painter and a painting cannot entirely foresee its future moment-of-being-looked-at; nevertheless the painting addresses this futurity. Is it that the stillness of this particular painted image speaks not only of the prophesy of Christ's death, which is the foreseen ideal moment of its future, but of a general timelessness itself? It speaks broadly of this in a combination of the sensuous (the delicate alabaster skin of mother and child), the particular (the pointillism of their haloes), and the ephemeral (that fluttering goldfinch).

The sense of calm vibrancy, spatial experimentation, opacity and the foregrounding of an affective, intensive quality in Machiavelli's Madonna and child – qualities that seemed uninteresting to his contemporaries – appear to match something in our present critical sensibility. While Berenson, as we have seen, was dismissive of or ambivalent at best about the work of those artists, such as Machiavelli, whom he identified as minor painters, more recently the valorisation of 'great masters' has been questioned. According to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their book on Franz Kafka, Towards a Minor Literature (1975), a minor art pushes up against the edges of representation, forcing it to the limits, and provides

fertile ground for new signifying regimes to emerge. It generates new forms from the manipulation of those in place, and the minor artist operates from within the major using the same elements but in a different manner. This is achieved in the sense that a minor key in music may be said to chromaticise and destabilise the harmonic order of the major key. Deleuze and Guattari maintain that the language of a minor writer no longer just designates, it 'stops being representative in order to now move towards its extremities or limits'.10 When viewing an influential painting of the past the audience encounters not only the work itself but the aura of its reputation and its position within a tradition. A minor work, such as Machiavelli's Madonna and child, has a different resonance: it summons its audience forth with a 'futurity' as opposed to the 'pastness' of great masters. The task of the minor work, as Deleuze maintains, 'is not that of addressing a people presupposed as already there, but of contributing to the invention of a people', aiding the production of new subjectivities.13 Like a major one, a minor artwork speaks to an already constituted audience but at the same time speaks from a future place in order to draw forth its audience, with a subjectivity still to come, a subjectivity in progress.

A successful artwork has the character of an event that always arrives too soon at that future moment to which it is being addressed. Whether the painter is a simple practitioner or a 'master' makes no difference to this address of the painting. What matters is whether the painting delivers: in how closely the moment of its being looked at, as foreseen by the painter, corresponds to the actual moments of its being looked at by others; indeed when the very modes of looking (fashion, ideology, formal language) may have changed dramatically. Is it possible, then, to read this painting in part, perhaps even ultimately, as being about the process of constructing this special moment?

The last word on Machiavelli's Madonna and child belongs

to one of its most passionate respondents, contemporary New Zealand artist John Reynolds, to whom this text is dedicated, and who in his own work is fascinated by the apparently random and shimmering mysteries of abstraction, opacity and dotted patterning:

One of the sustaining mysteries of visual art is that quality whereby work advances and recedes in our individual and collective conscience. Telescoping time and distance, surprising works whisper to us, exerting a hypnotic pull often completely at odds [with] current practice or celebration ... Artists, of course, are poised on that bevelled edge where history, culture and the present move unevenly ... the living in thrall to the dead.¹⁴



- Jim Barr and Mary Barr (et al.), Beloved: Works from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, exhibition catalogue, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2009, p. 30.
- Mary Kisler, Angels and Aristocrats: Early European Art in New Zealand Public Collections, Godwit/Random House, Auckland, 2010, p. 52.
- Carmelo Bene and Gilles Deleuze, Superpositions, Minuit, Paris, 1979, p. 96.
 For the archival details see Giovanni Poggi, 'Zanobi di Jacopo Machiavelli pittore', Rivista d'Arte, vol. 9, no. 1, 1916–18, pp. 67–9.
- Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects, 1550-68, vol. 3, trans. Gaston de Vere, Macmillan, London, 1912-14, p. 126.
- Joseph Crowe and Giovanni Cavalcaselle, A History of Painting in Italy, vol. 4, p. 364.
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 Herbert Friedmann, who has written a volume on this symbol in painting, has counted
- Herbert Friedmann, who has written a volume on this symbol in painting, has counte at least 486 devotional paintings of the Renaissance containing a goldfinch: Herbert Friedmann, *The Symbolic Goldfinch: Its History and Significance in European Devotional Art*, Pantheon Books, Washington DC, 1946.
- 9 Leon Battista Alberti, On Painting, 1435, trans. Cecil Grayson, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1991, p. 54.
- 10 Kisler, op. cit., p. 55.
- Louis Marin, Opacité de la Peinture: Essais sur la Représentation au Quattrocento, Usher, Florence and Paris, 1989, p. 10.
- Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1986, p. 23.
- Gilles Deleuze, Cinema 2: The Time Image, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, Althone Press, London, 1989, p. 217.
- From email correspondence between Mary Kisler and the artist quoted in Kisler, Angels and Aristocrats, p. 331.

AES+F

Welcome to the pleasure dome

Michael Fitzgerald





Comprising artists Tatiana Arzamasova, Lev Evzovich, Evgeny Svyatsky and Vladimir Fridkes, the Moscow-based collective AES+F is much more than the sum of its heterogeneous parts. Producing multi-screen digital works, photography and sculptures which are saturated in nouveau-riche luxury, art history and contemporary irony, AES+F's most recent immersive video work *The feast of Trimalchio*, 2009, constitutes a veritable feast for the senses. During its showing at the 2010 Biennale of Sydney, when the piece held court on Cockatoo Island, Michael Fitzgerald spoke with Arzamasova and Evzovich about the group's take on Petronius, Perestroika and the principle of pleasure.¹

Michael Fitzgerald: What drew you to Petronius's Satyricon and his mythical Roman slave figure Trimalchio?

Tatiana Arzamasova: A former slave, Trimalchio became even richer than the emperor.

Lev Evzovich: In Satyricon, the feast became more than just a symbol of the life of this very rich society. We also see some other Ancient Roman customs in the story, such as the celebration of Saturnalia, the one day of the year when aristocrats and slaves changed their roles. That was also a source of inspiration.

TA: During the Saturnalia it was even possible to punish your master, so it was psychologically interesting ... Relationships are very fragile between master and slave.

LE: At the same time our project is about a luxurious hotel.

TA: As a metaphor.

LE: And so we could show some kind of contemporary situation in a geopolitical sense and in some social senses. For example, we are now seeing the economic explosion of Asia, and these developing countries becoming more and more powerful.

MF: *Satyricon* was written during Nero's reign. Do you see interesting parallels between the fall of Rome and contemporary western society?

LE: I think that these parallels are very obvious and so we play

with them with some irony ... We have some digital paintings [photographic stills from *The feast of Trimalchio*] and we took their names from famous paintings – for example, *The triumph of Asia* and *The sunset of Europe* [both 2010]. These are ironic parallels.

MF: In my time watching *The feast of Trimalchio* I followed the journey of a golf ball through your fantasy resort world, then a strutting peacock.

TA: If you have a chance to look again, you will see that Asian chefs are playing golf; they never cook.

LE: There is the idea that golf is a very European, high-society game, and now it's extremely popular in Asia.

MF: As a symbol of aspirational lifestyle.

LE: Prosperity.

TA: And the game's very slowness fits with Oriental philosophy.

MF: At 19 minutes, and viewed across nine screens at the Biennale of Sydney, is *The feast of Trimalchio* your longest, most complex work so far?

LE: I think so, because there were 120 models – some of them professional actors, some of them just friends. And also because of the duration of the film. [The total footage] is more than one hour. The shooting of the models and actors was in Moscow, but for the backgrounds we used [animated] 3D landscapes and architecture that were made not only in Moscow but also in India.

TA: It was a real global production.

MF: The work debuted at the 2009 Venice Biennale as part of 'Unconditional Love'. When I watched some of the footage on YouTube, I noticed the opulently dressed audience appeared very much like extras from the film.

LE: It was especially nice to show the work among all these huge cruise ships which we also have in the film.

TA: Where the spectators became participants.

MF: The same happened here in Sydney, with the work being

shown in the round on Cockatoo Island ... Speaking of the harbour, I was looking online at your 'Islamic Project', a fictional travel agency of digital images, and noticed the Sydney Opera House sprouting Islamic minarets.

TA: That was done in 1996.

LE: After 9/11 the idea was more or less to finish the project, but we made three or four images after 9/11 and then we decided to stop.

MF: This seems a particularly prophetic work. Were you aware of the global anxieties about fundamentalism back in 1996?

LE: We thought about the tensions, for example, between immigrants in Europe, and that was the time of the war in Chechnya, all those events in Israel, and so on. We thought about the paranoia from both sides, in western and Islamic culture, and how the media works with this paranoia, increasing it. Our idea was to make some kind of parody but reality became very similar. It was very interesting how the 9/11 catastrophe was very similar to Hollywood films. Maybe Osama bin Laden looked at Hollywood movies to invent this kind of terrorist attack.

MF: Is there a big Islamic presence in contemporary Moscow? LE: There are a lot of construction workers from Central

Asia on very low salaries and also, as you know, there were these terrorist attacks recently in the subway.

TA: Sometimes it's a very friendly and positive presence, sometimes it's not ... In the 'Islamic Project' we also included different faces, sometimes smiley and sweet, for example in Graz or in Oxford.

LE: With the Sydney Opera House it was important for us to have this modern icon of western architecture and to remake it from the point of view of another culture. We also did the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, in New York, and so on. As Tatiana and I are architects, that was a very pleasant game for us, just to question these modernist icons.

MF: Collectively, AES+F is a marriage of complementary talents and skills.

LE: Evgeny [Svyatsky] is a book designer and illustrator; Vladimir [Fridkes] is a photographer.

TA: We've been lucky with our training as architects, and Evgeny as a book designer, because our disciplines have been quite international.

LE: We're part of the first Russian generation who started out in the open world, who began to make art in the late 1980s, early 1990s.

MF: What is the reality for artists working in Russia today? For example, are there any particular issues to do with censorship?

LE: There is no official censorship from the government, but sometimes there are some very exotic and unusual scandals. For example, some [conservative] organisation from the Russian Orthodox Church may suddenly decide that an exhibition is not good for them ... Maybe they are supported by some persons from government, but censorship as it was in the Soviet Union doesn't exist in [relation to] art.

MF: There is the perception that Russian contemporary art is very free, even transgressing some areas not permissible elsewhere. For instance, you may have seen the Bill Henson controversy here in Australia in 2008.

TA: Morality, morality. Children. We have almost the same problems in Russia because society is nervous just to show anything. So it is possible to create a mountain [out of a molehill].

MF: When did you first begin working with children?

LE: The first was the [1997] project 'Suspects: Seven Sinners and Seven Righteous'. We took photographs of seven girls in their privileged Moscow private school, and then we took photographs of seven girls of the same age in prison, from nine to thirteen or fourteen years. So the [viewer] must recognise who is innocent and who is guilty. And of course that is absolutely impossible.

MF: When you first showed these works did you get a sense of people's anxieties about the depiction of children?

LE: Our ideas are very well received, but of course some people feel uncomfortable. We work with subjects with whom we ourselves feel uncomfortable, [with subjects] that irritate us.

MF: Your next major work involving children, King of the forest, 2001–03, seemed to anticipate the terrible events of Beslan in 2004, and yet I was interested to read that the work was inspired by Michel Tournier's book, Le Roi des Aulnes (1970).

TA: Yes, and Tournier was inspired by pre-Christian mythology, by a king of the forest who was kidnapping beautiful children. I think in those times it was a metaphor for death.

LE: The king of the forest kidnaps the most beautiful children and hides them in his castle and then kills them. Goethe wrote a poem about this ['The Erl-King', 1782], so this is very old European mythology. But in our case we took the king of the forest as the contemporary media which takes beautiful children for advertising and so on for commercial gain.

Children are in-between – something separate from us, but at the same time they're not. They are a part of society and they are themselves a metaphor for society, because you can see in the behaviour of children much more than you can see in the behaviour of adults.

MF: This work, in turn, led to the video *Last riot*, 2005–07, which involved not so much children as warring teenagers. What was the idea behind this?

TA: The idea was virtuality and the big world of video games, where you can express your cruelty as much as you like but without any drop of real blood. In our version they don't even touch each other.

LE: We considered the contemporary culture of violence as entertainment, in films and games, where you can kill thousands of people and you don't have any punishment. This is a very specific

morality of contemporary society. You can be this hero, but at the same time the heroism is somehow similar to that of baroque painting, which is very beautiful and formal.

TA: With great expression.

LE: So somehow we connected this internet culture and Old Masters, baroque paintings.

TA: In this project our heroes are immortal but, like Stanley Kubrick's very human computer HAL in 2001: A Space Odyssey [1968], we have small digital toys, cars, ships and trains that are trying to commit suicide because they find it impossible to stay any longer in this universe of vulgar virtuality, which is beautiful and awful.

MF: Some of the poses seemed drawn from famous pietàs in art history.

LE: Using these religious motifs is our way of connecting with art history. You can also see many allusions to the Crucifixion in *The feast of Trimalchio*. For example, one of the key images is where a character is carrying a surfboard like Jesus on his way to the cross. I think this speaks about the contemporary religion of leisure and sport, this cult of health, this cult of youth.

MF: Is this very much a part of contemporary Russian society? LE: Absolutely. I think it's quite international. Russia is not excluded.

TA: [There's] a fresh passion.

LE: Maybe in Russia everything is more visible ... All this love of luxury and pleasure, pleasure, pleasure.

MF: There does seem to be an insatiable hunger for contemporary art in Russia today – witness all the new art museums and foundations popping up in Moscow.

TA: Not as quickly as in China.

LE: We now have several new institutions, such as The Garage Center for Contemporary Culture [where *The feast of Trimalchio* had its Russian debut in June 2010].









TA: It's the masterpiece of Konstantin Melnikov, the really great Russian architect.

MF: Speaking of luxury, another interesting series of yours is 'Défilé' (2000-07), in which corpses photographed in a city morgue were digitally dressed in high fashion.

LE: This is an important project for us, shown for the first time in Russia at the 2009 Moscow Biennale. In English 'defile' means [to make] disgusting but in French *défilé* means catwalk. Photographed for the series were the dead bodies of unknown people – usually homeless, with no names or relatives, but the garments have very famous *Vogue* names. So for us it is a contemporary game but at the same time it's very traditional for European culture – take those frescoes, for example, in the churches about danse macabre.

MF: To what extent did Vladimir Fridkes influence the group's interest in fashion and advertising when he joined AES+F in 1995?

LE: I think Vladimir changed and developed the group but not our interest in fashion and advertising. This is a very contemporary common language that we loved to play with, even before our meeting with Vladimir, but he has of course very much developed the language of the group.

MF: Fashion is a language that can draw new audiences in.

TA: In Russia the word 'art' means temptation, seduction ... In Ancient Greek, it's *techné*, [meaning] craft and skill. But in Russia it's straight seduction.

MF: Other international artists also touch on fashion, yet your work maintains its own aesthetic and critical distance.

LE: With each work we're trying to position ourselves on the border of aesthetic meanings and between beauty and ugliness.

TA: Because commercial beauty is really ugly.

LE: On some kind of edge. To be on the edge is very important for us.

MF: What's next for AES+F?

LE: We've already started a new project, 'Allegoria Sacra'.2

TA: It's the name of the Giovanni Bellini picture in the Uffizi, and the picture is about purgatory. Of course we will play with Bellini's heroes – Saint Peter and Saint Sebastian – but our purgatory will be the contemporary airport, where very different people can meet and at the same they're waiting. In purgatory you are waiting to go up or go down.

1 This interview took place at the Sofitel Sydney Wentworth hotel, 14 May 2010.

To be launched later in 2011, a sneak preview of the 5-channel video work was presented by Moscow's Garage Center for Contemporary Culture in 'Commercial Break', a collateral event for the 54th Venice Biennale, 1-5 June 2011.

opposite
Allegoria sacra, 2011, still
Single-channel, HD digital video

Courtesy Triumph Gallery, Moscow, and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Sydney pages 116–7

Le roi des aulnes/King of the forest, 2001, still
Video, 9 hours, 31 mins, 20 secs duration
Courtesy Triumph Gallery, Moscow, and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Sydney

The feast of Trimalchio, allegory #2, triumph of Asia, 2010
Digital collage, C-print on paper, Diasec, 205 x 180 cm
Courtesy Triumph Gallery, Moscow, and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Sydney

pages 122–3

Last riot 2, panorama #3, 2006

Digital collage, lambda print on paper, 84 x 240 cm

Courtesy Triumph Gallery, Moscow, and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Sydney

Skin-deep

Peter Stichbury and the art of appearances

Justin Paton





opposite
Estelle, 2010
Acrylic on linen, 83.5 x 164 cm
Courtesy the artist and Tracy Williams Ltd., New York

page 127
Mark Zuckerberg, 2010
Acrylic on linen, 50 x 60 cm
Courtesy the artist and Tracy Williams Ltd., New York

WHAT'S THAT NOISE YOU HEAR? It's the sound of the human face, multiplying.

This very second, on the social networking website Facebook, more than a thousand images are being uploaded. Before you've finished reading this paragraph, another 15,000 or so will be added. Four million more will join them in the next hour. Estimated total for the next month: a cool 3 billion. Of course the subjects of these images will vary. There will be unidentified sunsets, pets asleep in odd places, someone's new sneakers, and much much more: a colossal digest of stuff that humans think is interesting or, at the very least, not *totally* uninteresting. But there are no prizes for guessing what most of these photographs will portray: faces, faces, faces,

In Peter Stichbury's 2010 exhibition 'The Proteus Effect', viewers encountered an exquisitely rendered painting of an unexpected face: that of Facebook's founder, Mark Zuckerberg. Stichbury is best known in New Zealand as a painter of the blank and the beautiful – of people who are, as Ben Stiller's hilariously clueless male model Zoolander puts it in the 2001 film of the same name, 'really, really ridiculously good-looking'. Indeed his characters are so dedicated to looking good that they're clearly no longer good for much else. By contrast, what seems to fascinate Stichbury about Zuckerberg is that – like another soft-featured titan of the information age, Bill Gates – he doesn't *look* famous. In the portrait Stichbury has made of him, Zuckerberg has an indoor tan, doughy asymmetrical features and an expression that seems to say: 'I'm a zillionaire, no big deal.'

It's a face that might belong to anyone – but it doesn't, it belongs to *someone*. And that flicker from anyone to someone is what Stichbury is trying to capture: the suddenness, in the internet age, with which global fame can settle on a single person, a single face. Though 'Zuck' looks composed enough at a distance, up

close you notice how Stichbury has subtly unsettled his features, nudging mouth, nose and eyes just far enough from their 'proper' places to make the mood of the portrait hard to place. It's as if this face is still composing itself, still learning how to be 'Mark Zuckerberg'. In a real-life twist that is too perfect for anyone to have scripted, an electronic image of Stichbury's painting found its way to Zuckerberg himself, who replied with two short lines (he's a busy guy): 'Haha, interesting. Does that even look like me?'

This is not just a very good question for Zuckerberg to ask about his portrait. It's a question that goes to the heart of Stichbury's strange and singular mission as a portrait painter. He is an artist obsessed by looking, likeness and the play of appearances - by the way portraits, far from simply looking like their subjects, can take on artificial lives that seem to eclipse the real lives and real faces of their subjects. With 'The Proteus Effect', he locates these anxieties firmly in what we might call the Age of Appearances: the age, that is, of cosmetics, plastic surgery and, above all, of social media - when everyone, it seems, has become an artist of their own identity and appearance, frantically tweaking, re-touching and amplifying their online identities. This new online life is hailed by advocates as a triumph of democracy through technology, with the internet granting awesome powers of 'connectivity' and self-realisation to the formerly groping and cut-off citizens of the world. But to confront the other portraits in 'The Proteus Effect' was to encounter a very different point of view.

Hung alongside Zuckerberg's mild and imperfect fizzog were faces of nearly oppressive flawlessness. There was a chiselled Donald Draper type called 'Roman', a waif-model named 'Bregje Heinen' and a riveting youth called 'Bernard M.'. They all have hair like sable, clear veinless eyes and skin that doesn't sweat. As you might guess from those details, Stichbury is an awed admirer





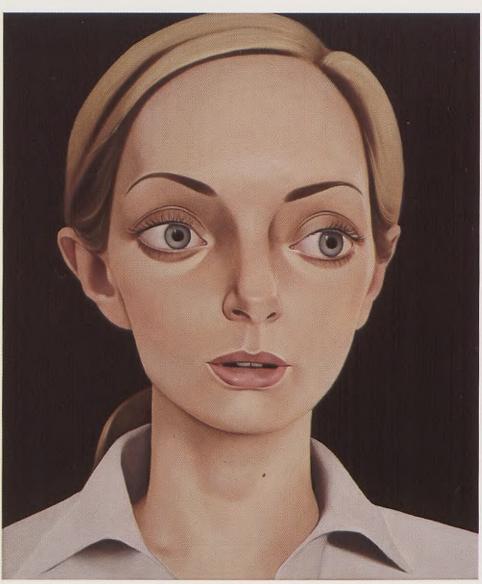


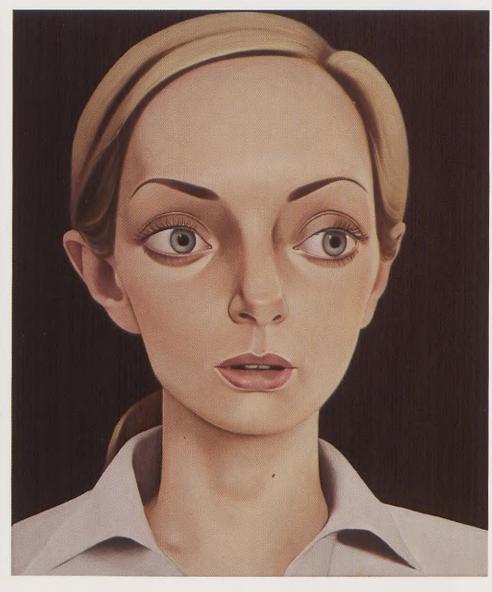
of the portraits of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres ('halfway through making a show his book always makes its way onto my table to mock me', Stichbury told me recently), and he sets down his new characters with extraordinary patience and technical cunning. Every contour is razor-sharp, every tone fastidiously graded. Each brush mark conceals the traces of the one before it, like a criminal backing out of a crime scene. On first appraisal the resulting paintings exude clarity and a kind of calm. The longer one looks, however, the odder everything becomes. Very quickly one registers, for instance, the preposterous size of Bregje's head and eyes, as if they are robbing nutrients from the inconsequential body hanging below. Rather more slowly, the play of shadow and light around Roman's eyes discloses the shape of his skull beneath the skin, a device Stichbury might have borrowed from the formidable German new objectivist Christian Schad. Meanwhile Bernard M., whose name comes from a character in Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel Brave New World (1932), has a face as burnished, symmetrical and tyrannically unyielding as a

Tutankhamun mask; if eyes are windows to the soul then his are creepily empty. (Surely there's also a nod here to disgraced New York banker Bernie Madoff.)

In Greek mythology Proteus is a shape-changing god of the sea, an allusion which makes perfect sense in an exhibition about surrogate selves. But what exactly is Stichbury getting at with the show's full title, 'The Proteus *Effect*'? It sounds like the title of a movie – a thriller almost certainly – about genetic modification and corporate skulduggery. And bearing this in mind, it's hard to return to the Zuckerberg portrait without feeling vaguely suspicious. Is Stichbury insinuating some less-thanbenign connection between Zuckerberg and his well-groomed companions, all of whom, as it happens, seem to share the same chilly grey-blue eyes? Is Zuckerberg, perhaps, the 'Proteus' of the title, a new god of self-creation and identity change – the man responsible for unleashing a tsunami of self-obsession on the world? Is it possible, even, to see something kelpy and sea-swirled in Zuckerberg's boyishly curly hair – a hint of the titular sea-god?







No doubt I'm over-reaching here, hatching a conspiracy theory of my own; but that doesn't dilute the larger point, which is that Stichbury's new faces are strange and strong enough to make a viewer go looking for connections and backstories, whether they are there or not.

Whatever exactly it is, 'the Proteus effect' is clearly at its most virulent in a series of five seemingly identical digital prints, based on a portrait painting (also in the show) of one of Stichbury's favourite models. *Estelle 5.1* introduces this face: blonde hair, flawless skin, huge anxious eyes. And *Estelle 5.2* appears to be a straightforward repeat. Yet something's different, and a close inspection reveals the subtlest of alterations. One of the freckles on her throat has migrated to her cheek, the 'proper' position for a beauty mark (think Cindy Crawford, Marilyn Monroe), and what looked tall and patrician in the first Estelle's face becomes squatter and more conventional in the second's. At the same time, the second Estelle brings out what was unusual in the first: something extra-terrestrial in the thinness of her neck; something rabbity in

her shocked expression; something slightly gawky in the tilt of her ears. And so it goes, through three more versions, all the way to the blandly even-featured 5.5 – as if 'Estelle' is a software program undergoing progressive improvements and de-buggings.

The obvious thing to say of this series is that it's a commentary, a kind of distrustful gloss, on a cosmetically obsessed culture. With its succession of subtly adjusted faces, the series hints that fashion's dreams of the 'perfect face' can easily slide towards darker fantasies of human 'improvement', such as cloning and eugenics. Yet to leave things there is to overlook something that is, quite literally, staring us in the face – namely the fact that *Stichbury did this*. By duplicating his own work and then adjusting it digitally (creating a material 'clone' of his own original painting), Stichbury does something much more revealing and chewy than merely 'commenting' on the wider culture. He owns up to his own place in the 'appearance business' – his role as an inventor and fabricator of faces. Stichbury concedes that, far from being a disinterested observer of today's online shape-changers and



opposite

Roman, 2010

Acrylic on linen, 50 x 60 cm

Courtesy the artist and Tracy Williams Ltd., New York

pages 130–1 Estelle 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5, 2010 Digital print on Ilford Galarie Smooth Pearl 290 gsm, 44.45 x 53.34 cm each Courtesy the artist and Tracy Williams Ltd., New York

On first appraisal the resulting paintings exude clarity and a kind of calm. The longer one looks, however, the odder everything becomes. Very quickly one registers the preposterous size of Bregje's head and eyes, as if they are robbing nutrients from the inconsequential body hanging below. More slowly, the play of shadow and light around Roman's eyes discloses the shape of his skull beneath the skin. Meanwhile Bernard M. has a face as burnished, symmetrical and tyrannically unyielding as a Tutankhamun mask; if eyes are windows to the soul then his are creepily empty.

self-fabricators, the portrait painter may in fact be the prototype for them all: in other words, part of the problem. Perhaps 'the Proteus effect', ultimately, is just the power of portraiture – the seductive, uncanny and undying capacity of painting to make people look the way they don't.

What Stichbury is playing with here - what he is tapping into and testing - is our hardwired responsiveness to the human face, which we are no more capable of resisting than we are of shaking off our own shadows. Despite the repetition, the extreme artifice and the unrelenting emphasis on surface in the 'Estelle' series, there's a part of me (and, I suspect, of every viewer) that insists on reading these portraits traditionally - imputing thoughts and feelings to the ever-multiplying Estelle, hazarding guesses about her (or their) inner life. And the key to this life, as so often with Stichbury, lies in the treatment of her huge clear eyes - the way they press outward from her drum-taut features and look off to our right, as if distracted by something we can't see. Needless to say, when all five prints are placed in order on a wall, these sideways glances have a fascinating cumulative effect - one that dramatises Stichbury's anxieties about his own considerable gifts as a face-maker. It's as if the subject of each image, fictional though she is, can see what the artist is making of her in the next image. She is changing before her own eyes, and she's half-frightened, half-hypnotised by the sight: Does that even look like me?

Peter Stichbury: The Proteus Effect, Tracy Williams Ltd., New York, 10 September – 30 October 2010.





The botany of desire

RICHARD ORJIS'S GARDENS OF EARTHLY DELIGHT

Tessa Laird





Mud-smeared young men, choked by wreaths of hellebore and phallic pitcher plants, orchids issuing from their mouths like Mayan speech bubbles; a black hoodie vomiting lilies and gorse; a gleaming black car packed with hothouse bromeliads, Spanish moss and pink penile anthuriums; more young men, smeared in coal dust this time, holding up lighters while one of them sings in piercing falsetto around the 'shrine' of a shining car – these are just some of the arresting images Richard Orjis has produced within the last half decade.

Working primarily in photography, with occasional sorties into installation and performance, Orjis's evolving cache of iconography includes flowers, candles, Alsatian dogs, baguettes and more flowers. Almost always, the nature/culture (false) dichotomy is what animates these gorgeous portraits, for portraits they are, whether or not a human subject is involved. But Orjis has no desire to capture with his camera that highly contested notion called 'reality'; instead, he constructs worlds teeming with dramatic rituals, in which arcane interrelationships play out.

Like the images of hothouse orchids whose pixels he preens with Photoshop, Orjis thrives in artificial environments. Flowers bloom exponentially under his expert touch, candles illuminate the strangest of places, and testicular-shaped kumara and burning bushes hover against an ever-black cosmic backdrop of biblical import. Mining the original meaning of the word 'glamour', old Scottish for magic and enchantment, Orjis creates scenarios of

savage beauty. That he has been a sometime collaborator with Cuban–American photographer Anthony Goicolea is unsurprising: witness the unabashed use of cutting, splicing and superimposition in order to create a whole narrative within a single frame. But whereas Goicolea's manically maladjusted self-portraiture pushes narcissism to its limits, Orjis's project is to beautify the world around him. His imaginative photographic reworkings turn the raw materials of suburbia – boys, potplants, dogs, dumbbells – into clandestine cult objects for the elect of what he once termed 'My Empire of Dirt', the title of his graduation show from Auckland's Elam School of Fine Arts.

Orjis might be more fruitfully compared with the late great Robert Mapplethorpe, whose photographic lexicon oscillated between floral still lifes and graphic sadomasochism. Orjis, however, marries Mapplethorpe's extremes in a package that is more about symbiosis than contrast, more implicit than explicit, more open-ended than in-your-face. Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that Mapplethorpe worked primarily in black and white, while Orjis delights in all the complicated hues of the spectrum, in particular a royal, or even papal, purple. If cultural critic Dave Hickey located Mapplethorpe as a modern classicist, returning to the timeless and supposedly universal characteristics of beauty, then Orjis must be post-classical with his software-assisted remixes; Mapplethorpe's perfect lilies are out-perfected by Orjis's Photoshopped orchids. Both artists, however, use photography as a





magical tool to capture Beauty before s/he is ravaged by Time.

A recent development in Orjis's practice veers away from propagated hyper-beauty and into the realm of fabulist funerary art. Mimicking the language of the tomb, Orjis has created a triptych of faux-pharaonic golden vistas that are jaw-dropping for their sheer bling. In the artist's recently published monograph Park (2011), performance poet David Eggleton dubs this direction 'computer-age vanitas'. The triptych's centrepiece is Bed in, 2010. Like Tutankhamun with a bed pal, the title nods to a John and Yoko-like duo entertaining paparazzi for eternity in the afterlife. Other great moments in 'couple art' spring to mind, such as in 1983 when Linda Montano and Tehching Hsieh tied themselves together with a 2.4-metre rope for a year. Only in this case, it's for all time. Mostly, though, Bed in reminds me of Felix Gonzalez-Torres's Untitled (perfect lovers), 1991, two identical clocks that are forever in sync, because Orjis's golden couple are almost exactly the same as each other. This is not a case of opposites attracting, but of like attracting like. In the 1990s married performance artists Genesis P. Orridge and Lady Jaye underwent multiple body modifications in the hope of creating one 'pandrogynous' being, and the figures in Bed in are similarly neither male, female, human nor android but contain elements of all of these. Mostly they are just fabulous, with their shaggy golden manes and grinning diamond grills, their silver noses and almondshaped sapphires for eyes.

On Bed in's left, Hope it's not too late, 2010, features a

second robot creature, wounded and lying prone in a field of bejewelled irises. Or rather, the irises are growing *through* the chinks in his golden chain-links, like tree roots through the ruins around Angkor Wat, while silver snakes and skinks nibble at his extremities. He does resemble a twenty-first-century version of a golden reclining Buddha, though, being wounded as he is, he's more likely to have dropped out of a fable akin to the Technicolor fantasy of *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), as when Dorothy and her friends succumb to sweet lethe and fall asleep in a field of poppies. If anything, his lassitude recalls the work of another New Zealand artist, Peter Madden, and his work *Sleeps with moths*, 2008, a sculpture of a black skeleton, prone yet sprouting twigs which are covered in moths and mushrooms; each artist portrays decay and death (respectively) as exquisite moments of introspection and regeneration.

The third image in this series, *Beehive*, 2010, is more abstract. There are no personified robot creatures, although a large phallic amethyst crystal operates as a kind of strap-on to a furniture-like assemblage of white tabletops and metal chair legs. Two golden bees feed on what resembles a honeycomb, but is more likely a fugitive from a coral reef. Everything takes place against a backdrop of golden plastic sheeting, so shiny you can almost hear it squeaking on your teeth. The high-key metallics of this entire series seem to have a rather dental *affect* – here the golden honeycomb is sweet enough to taste, you can imagine it sticking to your precious pearly-whites like a good old Violet Crumble (that





opposite, top to bottom

Like a flame, 2008

Photographic print, 122 x 116 cm

Courtesy the artist, Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland, and McNamara Gallery, Whanganui

Ever, 2009
Photographic print, 99 x 120 cm
Courtesy the artist and Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland

page 134
Flower idol, 2006
Photographic print, 98 x 84 cm
Courtesy the artist and Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland

page 135 A kind of hush, 2008 Photographic print, 90 x 90 cm Courtesy the artist and Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland

chocolate bar could easily bequeath its poetic name to *Hope it's* not too late with its decaying, honey-coloured robot in a field of purple flowers).

Orjis's works are open to reshuffling like tarot cards, whose meanings shift depending on the interrelationships of the parts. Bed in made an appearance as the centrepiece of a different series displayed in Auckland's Bledisloe Walkway Light Boxes from July to October 2010. Designed as a visual palindrome to be walked past, Bed in was flanked by flowers and, at either end, by two pedigree Alsatian dogs, archetypal canine protectors called Ever and Forever (both 2008). These guardians referred to Cerberus or Chinese temple lions, underscoring the fact that Bed in is indeed talismanic art for the underworld. Between Bed in and the trusty canines, a series of four photographs of a 'garden' unfolded. At first, you noticed the pastel-perfect tulips (and yes, an iris and a poppy or two) and, of course, the omnipresent candles that Orjis, the ex-altar boy, delights in so much. Then appeared the bones of a skeleton nestled among the flowers and, again, I thought of Madden's Sleeps with moths, even though this skeleton was gleaming white and not the blackened bones of Madden's creation. Finally, whitish lumps emerged as raw bread dough, rising among the tulips as perhaps a reference to Christ's resurrection, though more likely just because Orjis likes to play with unruly substances, namely mud, coal and candle wax.

The bizarre light-box ensemble finds resonance in a description in Michael Pollan's book *The Botany of Desire* (2001) of a Turkish sultan who took such pride in his tulip garden that it became a multimedia extravaganza. On special evenings, the cultivated bulbs were supplemented by thousands of cut stems in glass bottles, with strategically placed mirrors effectively doubling the impact. Guests were required to wear colours that would complement those of

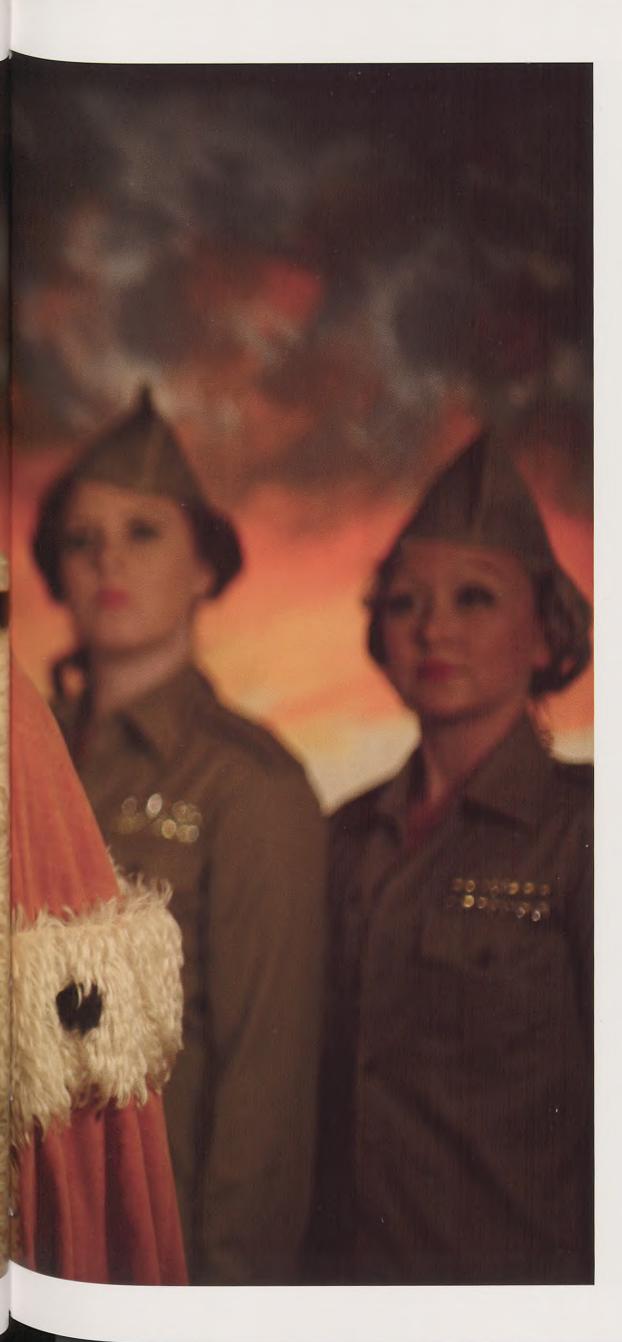
the tulips, and candles were placed between the flowers and on the backs of hundreds of giant tortoises, which became mobile lighting units for nightly performances featuring courtesans, eunuchs and songbirds. Orjis shares this penchant for luxe, not just with the Blue Mosque's Sultan Ahmed, but with Des Esseintes, the anti-hero of J. K. Huysmans's 1884 novel *Against Nature*. Des Esseintes is an aesthete who owns a jewel-encrusted turtle and keeps an extravagant collection of artificial flowers because, like Orjis's Photoshopped florals, they surpass the real thing.

Even as Orjis revels in the control the computer bestows, there is still something of the nature baby in him. Readers of the artist's monograph might discover the double-page spread of a photo simply called Meadow, 2010, full of glorious wildflowers and weeds. Orjis's interest in this unruly space of untamed nature has led him, paradoxically, to construct a space in which it might occur. Outside Auckland's Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts in September 2010, Orjis designated a circle on the lawn to remain uncut for twelve months – Grass circle, 2010–11. In the middle of the suburban enclave of Pakuranga, this amounts to aesthetic terrorism - illustrated by the fact that a well-meaning lawnmower mistakenly 'did the gallery a favour' by ridding them of this eyesore, despite the circle's clear demarcation with bricks. While Grass circle is once again wild and unruly, Orjis knows that the duel between the untamed forces of nature and our desire to control, to perfect and even to replace these forces with artificial counterparts is eternal - and eternally in the balance. Orjis asks At. us to watch this contested space.

pages 136-7, left to right:

I hope it's not too late, 2010, photographic print, 65 x 150 cm, courtesy the artist and McNamara Gallery, Whanganui; Bed in, 2010, photographic print, 11 x 160 cm, courtesy the artist and McNamara Gallery, Whanganui; The golden beehive, 2010, photographic print, 20 x 20 cm, courtesy the artist and Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland.





Fictitious beauty & beautiful lies

TARRYN GILL & PILAR MATA DUPONT

Gemma Weston

Perhaps the Quote's continued reappearance, mostly in truncation, speaks more than its content: 'Australian history ... does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies.' Mark Twain, conjurer of his own national character, famously weighed in on Australian stories just a few years prior to the colonies' slow coagulation into nationhood. With most nations' stories reading at least sometimes like fictions, the phrase is borrowed frequently, repeated like an incantation in collections of words, like this one, seeking something truly home-grown.

There is another key word, not quite as flattering as 'beautiful', in the longer, less pithy version of Twain's assessment that often also sticks: 'picturesque'. In 1960 architect Robin Boyd came from the opposite direction to a similar conclusion. His vitriolic book *The Australian Ugliness*, a critique of the nation's architecture and the populace it represents, lamented a national love of camouflage and concealment, of the literal and symbolic application of veneer – a tradition of beautifying rather than of beautiful lies. While the attitudes of Twain and Boyd towards this picturesque are in direct opposition, what both perceived was that at the core of Australian myth and experience is a fundamental sense of contradiction, an aesthetic and ideological ambivalence.

It is with this ambivalence that Tarryn Gill and Pilar Mata Dupont dance. They invent histories in order to critique real ones, employing seductive nostalgia to coat contemporary issues in deceptive sugar. Charismatic friends are enlisted as models or performers, for professionals have too much formality – the artifice created must appear authentic. This artifice manifests primarily as photography or performance, but these labels disguise the multitude of processes and personnel involved in their orchestration. A project may require choreography and dancers; graphic, set and costume design; location scouts; dramaturgy, lyricists and composers. The roles that Gill and Dupont play within these networks are closer to the producer/director model than that

opposite

Never Was So Much Owed By So Many To So Few, 2007 From 'Heart of Gold Project 3', type-C photograph, 50.8 x 76.2 cm Courtesy the artists and Goddard de Fiddes, Perth

pages 140–41 Heart of Gold, 2009, promotional photograph Theatrical musical, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2009 Courtesy Hold Your Horses. Photograph Hold Your Horses

of the classic or mythic 'studio' artist; they do not have assistants but a collaborative team.

The most complex feat this team has orchestrated so far has been a full-length piece of musical theatre. Having been developed by Gill and Dupont with their long-time collaborator, Thea Costantino, since 2004, *Heart of Gold* was a clever and comic gothic narrative of 'Westralian' secession, familial deception and isolation-induced Busby Berkeley-esque madness that played as part of the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts's 2009 performance season. Between conception and execution, Gill and Dupont staged five projects under the 'Heart of Gold' banner, each acting as both a succinct autonomous outcome and as research for the final, total artwork.

In The Australian Ugliness, Boyd described with woe the golden hue then popular in Australian interior decoration as 'more brilliant than any alchemist dreamed of in rolls of plastic'. In 'Heart of Gold', the efficacy of Gill and Dupont to both seduce and subvert is directly reliant on their kitsch glitter. They drip with their title metal; girl-soldiers' buttons gleam with it and lipsticked surf lifesavers wear it like a second skin, frozen against painted backdrops or dancing in unison on parade floats or gallery floors. The regimented sentimentality of these warriorathletes – for the two become interchangeable – applies a vintage Hollywood veneer to 'classic' Australian motifs. From 'Heart of Gold Project 3', the type-C print Never was so much owed by so many to so few, 2007, depicts Gill and Dupont smeared in dirt yet immaculately made up, staring with bright hope into the middle distance with hearts glowing on their helmets. Within this image we see the characteristics Boyd so explicitly resented put on trial. The absorption of motif into cliché and the coercive power of sentimentality are knowingly enacted by Gill and Dupont as both subject and method. The artists exaggerate to absurdity postwar

American influence on Australian consciousness and the prosaic romanticism of a popular identity often written as a series of contradictions – kindness and cruelty, the love of justice and the tendency to lynch the umpire, the simultaneity of pride and cringe.

Recent work continues this methodology of adding a contradictory aftershock to a familiar emotional trip switch. Shot in black and white and dispensing with accoutrement in favour of clean lines, the 2009 photographic series 'Stadium' and the 2010 video piece *Gymnasium* step away from pin-up retro-glamour while retaining the visual prompts of Australia's formative years. As with the 'Heart of Gold' projects, the semiotic similarities between the hero-worshipping of soldiers and sports people are emphasised. The crucial barb is a deliberate likeness, in composition and costuming, to the propaganda films of German director Leni Riefenstahl (1902–2003), perhaps best known for her documentary of the 1934 Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg, *Triumph of the Will*, in which she mythologised the rise of Adolf Hitler with heroic camera gestures.

Gymnasium and the 'Stadium' works, which are individually titled with a segment of hyperbolic commentary, are partially a homage to Riefenstahl, who 'made such beautiful and groundbreaking films in a time when many women would have found her achievements near impossible'. At the same time the artists acknowledge the problematic nature of this appreciation, utilising the baggage of the original to address contemporary concerns surrounding national identity.

These days the visual tropes of Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* and the graphic dynamism which it helped immortalise in National Socialist design are inevitably employed by Hollywood to connote the dangerous and seductive power of any anti-individualist force. However, the spectacular rallying of good or evil in any sphere – whether for political or entertainment purposes







opposite, top to bottom Under Blue Skies, In Golden Sunlight, All Spectators Have Eyes Riveted On No. 306, 2009 From 'Stadium' series, giclée print on aluminium, 95 x 180 cm Courtesy the artists and Goddard de Fiddes, Perth

Gymnasium, 2010, production photograph HD film, 4 mins 7 secs duration Courtesy the artists and Goddard de Fiddes, Perth Photograph Tarryn Gill and Pilar Mata Dupont

- obviously belies the messy nature of ideology as it operates in daily life. The terms 'mass' or 'the masses' have been used so often, even in democratic societies, that in studying such propagandist imagery one can easily forget that mass is composed of individuals responsible for their actions.

If Gill and Dupont dance with ambivalence, it is a dance that shouldn't be confused with apathy, as ambivalence in fact denotes a conflict of ideologies rather than indifference. Instead, the artists assume an equivocal position from which both 'Austerican' kitsch and Riefenstahl's aesthetic 'purity' can be approached with 'an equal measure of devotion and irony'. And it is precisely this position that allows Gill and Dupont to explore so successfully the manipulation of beauty, both physical and aesthetic, as it plays out in the service of ideology. Their subjects perform the traditional task of framed female bodies - they are repositories for desires and ideas beyond the frame, Disney-baroque avatars for beauty, bravery, innocence. They are subversive, however, because they know it. Camp, pantomime affectation prohibits any unquestioning indulgence; the mechanisms are too clearly visible. The pageantry – of both the satire and its object – must be acknowledged, and in doing so we are drawn into its creation, into what those beautiful lies have perpetrated and concealed. It is not national identity itself that the choreographed tableaus explore, but the methodology of its creation and exploitation.

Images have long provided the beautifying veneer for coercive ideologies, as American cultural critic Dave Hickey has pointed out. In his 1993 book *The Invisible Dragon: Four Essays on Beauty*, Hickey cites as an early reference point the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Revival, during which the role of emotive imagery on the ideological battlefield was made an official business. In this way art histories are inherently loaded, and having now been updated by advertising culture, and its awareness of the

semiotics of physical beauty, they automatically generate suspicion. Boyd, discussing the literal application of veneer to physical surfaces, noted that this often had the contradictory result of exposing the true shape and substance of what it sought to conceal. Yet doubt can be as powerful as faith when wielded knowingly. And aesthetic ambivalence can often yield unexpected truths.

If Gill and Dupont entertain contradiction, it is a contradiction that doesn't simply lead to inertia, but is the conscious acknowledgment of that inertia – the use of it as a medium. Implicit in this is the idea that ambivalence can act as a powerful destabilising force, exposing the distance between the desired effect and the real one. Active ambivalence inserts uncertainty into ideologies that seek to totalise, undermining the dehumanising tendencies of fundamentalisms and allowing for the hybrid – for the grey area – that is necessary when confronting a history such as ours in a climate such as this one. It is within this grey area that the artists dance.

We may wish to read Australian history as a series of beautiful lies. But it is true that since General MacArthur was granted temporary control of the Australian military in 1942, Australia has followed the United States into every one of its international conflicts, one of which currently looms in the news. It is true that Australia chose voluntarily, until 1973, to label its immigration policy with a particular shade, and that the Western Australian secessionist movement occasionally regains its voice. And it is true that ideological wars in Australia have lately been fought on the beaches, and that no-one appears to be winning. However, among the ugliness it is also true that Australian identity has often been best articulated and critiqued through opulent satire rather than polemics; the lure best disguises the sting.

^{1.} The artists in conversation with the author, June 2011.







pages 146–7 and opposite No snow on the broken bridge (Duan qiao wu xue), 2006 Production stills, 35 mm black-and-white film transferred to DVD, multi-channel, 8 screens, 11 mins duration Courtesy the artist and Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney

At Robert Storr's 2007 venice biennale exhibition, 'Think with the Senses – Feel with the Mind: Art in the Present Tense', the Chinese artist Yang Fudong provided the filmic vehicle for the most sustained act of contemplation. Across five discrete booths dispersed through the vast dragon-shaped Arsenale, Yang's fivepart, five-hour masterpiece *Seven intellectuals in bamboo forest*, 2003–07, played out in dreamy black and white.

In the film we follow 'a future, unknown collective' of young people as they journey from the mountains to the city, from the country to an island utopia and then back to urban reality – all with a faint echo, perhaps, of China's Cultural Revolution, while foreshadowing the country's current search, post-boom, for its cultural identity. Paradoxically philosophical yet modern, *Seven intellectuals* provides an antithetical experience to that normally required by the lightning speed of globalised life.

The film's recent Sydney screening as part of the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation's presentation of 'Yang Fudong: No Snow on the Broken Bridge' provided an opportunity to meet with Yang and, in the spirit of his work, to ask the artist seven questions, open-ended in nature, which explore the many journeys within his evolving film practice.²

Michael Fitzgerald: In view of Seven intellectuals, and now having seen the eight-channel No snow on the broken bridge, 2006, I wanted to ask you about the multiple narrative threads within your films, and how you see them as co-existing.

Yang Fudong: No snow on the broken bridge is different from Seven intellectuals because the stories unfold in a different space. You move in the one room and catch glimpses of the film; you're not watching the narrative all the time from beginning to end. In this way the artist is first a director, but the audience can also be a director. They can build the narratives of the story in the order that they like rather than the artist forcing them to follow the storyline. I sometimes say that in watching a film your imagination can go

somewhere else; you're not watching a movie, you're dreaming of something else.

In recent years there has been a discussion between artists, spectators and critics about whether moving-image and video art should be displayed in a cinema or art space. Furthermore, people have been asking me: Would you prefer to be a film director or just a visual artist? For me, I prefer being an artist because there is more creative freedom, a wider imaginative boundary within which I can move.

MF: Seven intellectuals adapts some of the stories of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, a third-century group of scholars, musicians and writers. Can you talk about the shift in influences within your work between these ancient storytelling techniques and those of western cinematic auteurs such as Jim Jarmusch.

YF: I didn't know Jim Jarmusch before 2004, but in recent years I have seen magazine articles about him, and also have a DVD of the recent movie he made. His early film was called *Stranger than Paradise* [1984] and my first film was called *An Estranged Paradise* [1997–2002]. I thought to myself, that's a very similar name, and then I looked at Jim's film, which was also in black and white, and I thought his film was much better than mine. I like his works very much.

From the beginning I didn't think about what my film style would be. With *Seven intellectuals* I was interested in the influence of traditional stories on contemporary society. I was interested in a group of young people and how they develop under contemporary conditions but at the same time don't know their future. They're in a sort of stasis. It's an unknown future, particularly for the young people. That's my main focus. The characters in *Seven intellectuals* are like actors, because they represent certain characteristics and the clothes show who they are.

I've often been asked about how the seven intellectuals are dressed. The clothes they're wearing look like those of early

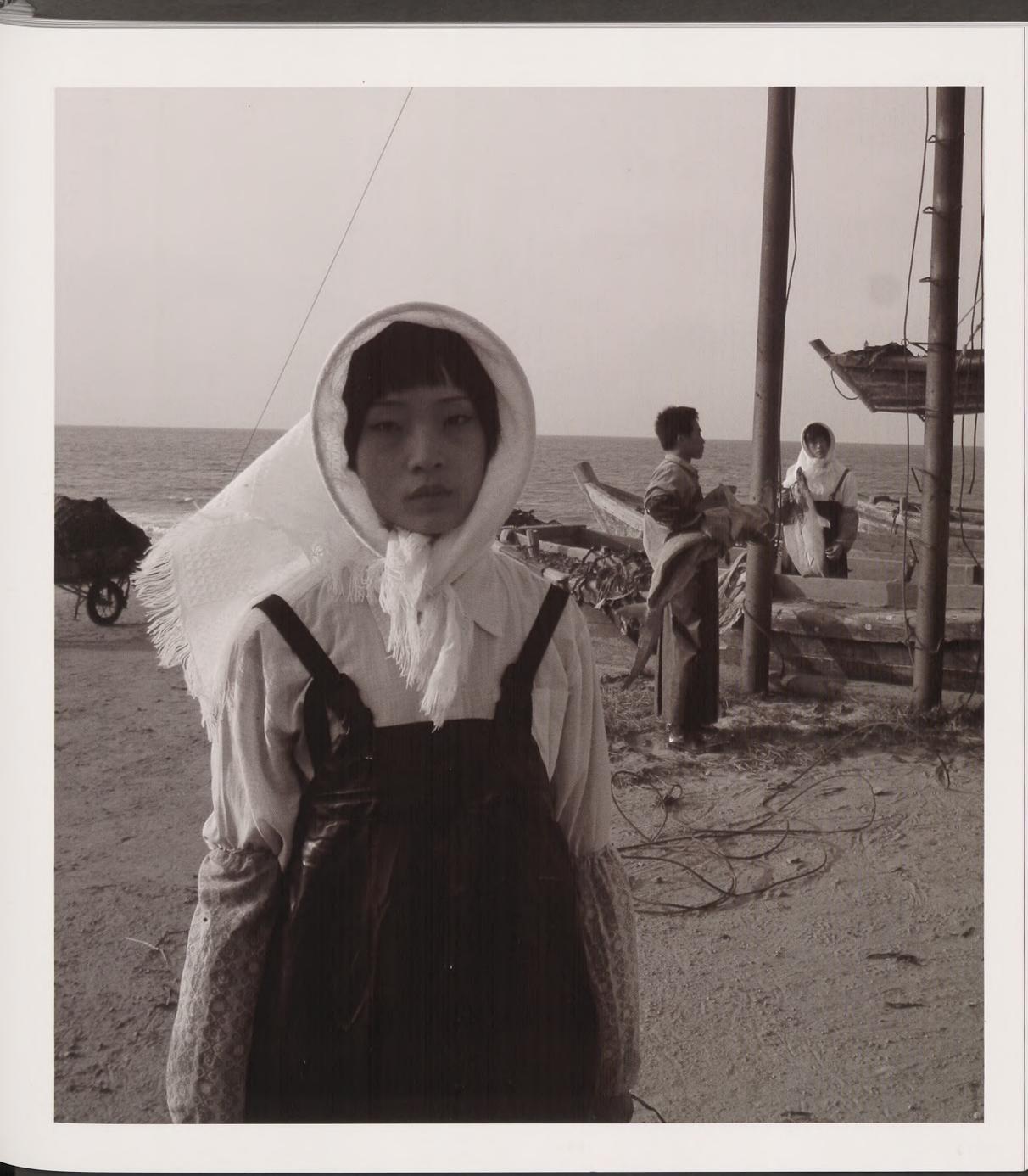
twentieth-century China, the fashion of the 1930s, but this is not quite accurate. The images of the young intellectuals are from photographs of Europeans such as Jean-Paul Sartre, for example, standing in front of a cafe or a bookshelf, so they fit those kinds of stereotypes. These photographs are always in black and white.

MF: Can you talk a little about your initial move from painting to film, and what prompted this artistic transition.

YF: When I was in an art college in Beijing I was trained to be a good painter, and then I went to the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, very close to Shanghai. During this time the academy had many artists experimenting in new media. I also found I had a lot of energy I wanted to express, but it couldn't all be on canvas. A frustration started to emerge. When I made contact with the contemporary artists around me, I became interested and went to the library to find out more information about new media art, and gradually, in my second or third year, I began experimenting myself. I found film suited me as an artistic expression. There's a Chinese saying or proverb, *yi qu tong gong*, that there are different roads or means to achieve the same goal.

As a student my first project wasn't recorded on film, but was very influential on my later art practice. For three months I refused to speak, then after these three months I got into trouble because I hadn't spoken to my friends, my colleagues or instructors. I had some sympathy from teachers and friends, but the officials from the university imposed a punishment on me. This was influential in different ways. The project enlightened me. I found the two crucial things were following my beliefs and honesty. During the day and being in the public eye I couldn't get away with talking, though when alone I could whisper in different ways. Those three months were really valuable for my career, because they taught me how to be honest with myself and also how to keep my beliefs and pursue what I wanted to do, because it's too easy to be false to yourself.

Unfolding with sublime slowness – and with a faint echo, perhaps, of China's Cultural Revolution, while foreshadowing the country's current search, post-boom, for its cultural identity – Seven intellectuals in bamboo forest provides an antithetical experience to that normally required by the lightning speed of globalised life.





MF: I was also interested to read about how your love of drawing began after you suffered a sports injury as a young boy.

YF: When I was young I was more interested in soccer than drawing and painting. But I had an accident, an eye injury, and so was advised to be quiet and not to run around so much, so I started drawing and painting more. After I finished college and went to university I started playing soccer again. But then I had another accident and broke my leg. That injury was quite severe and I still have the after-effects.

MF: Can you talk a little about the cultural differences for you as an artist working first in Beijing and now in Shanghai?

YF: The way Shanghai artists practise and also their lifestyle is very different from those in Beijing. They are very individual, independent. In Shanghai you have your own life, you have an artist's life and you have a public life as well. In Beijing artists like living and working together like a commune, which can also cause some problems. There is a joke in talking about Beijing artists that you have lunch with a group of artists and then in the afternoon you meet with another group of artists and then at dinner time you meet in a restaurant with another group.

MF: The sense of slowness in your work seems to unfold in sharp contrast to the rapid pace of development as witnessed in Shanghai and China more generally.

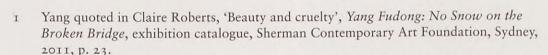
YF: For my work I'm interested in looking more at my own feelings, not necessarily at the larger picture. I'm not interested in interpreting the current state of society. I think people's feelings will be the same wherever you are around the world. For example, the way that you feel about missing somebody – that kind of feeling has got nothing to do with the pace of development and what's happening in a particular place.

MF: Some people have remarked on the movement of your recent work from the poetic beauty of *Seven intellectuals* to the stark violence of *East of Que Village*, 2007, shown at the most

recent Biennale of Sydney. Is this a deliberate move away from ethereal beauty to a darker vision?

YF: As an artist I don't think about the set-up or direction of style; it just follows how I feel. I'm now getting more mature in age³ and I'm interested in looking at different aspects of life and following my own feelings. When I was filming *Seven intellectuals*, which was a long production over four years, I was always feeling like I was hanging in the air. Because you're always shooting, you feel like you're floating. *East of Que Village* is more on the ground. Everything is real so you feel your footing. I'm also referring to my childhood memory of my hometown village. This is in contrast to *Seven intellectuals* and that period of time making films that were really utopian in feeling. *East of Que Village* is about a dog. It looks real, but in some ways its reality is even more utopian.

Yang Fudong: No Snow on the Broken Bridge, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney, 18 March – 4 June 2011; Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2 July – 13 August 2011.



This conversation took place at Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney, 16 March 2011. Yang's words were translated from Mandarin by Zhang Lansheng.

3 Yang was born in Beijing in 1971.

opposite

Seven intellectuals in bamboo forest (Zhu lin qi xian), Part 3, 2006 Production still, 35 mm black-and-white film transferred to DVD, single channel, 53 mins duration

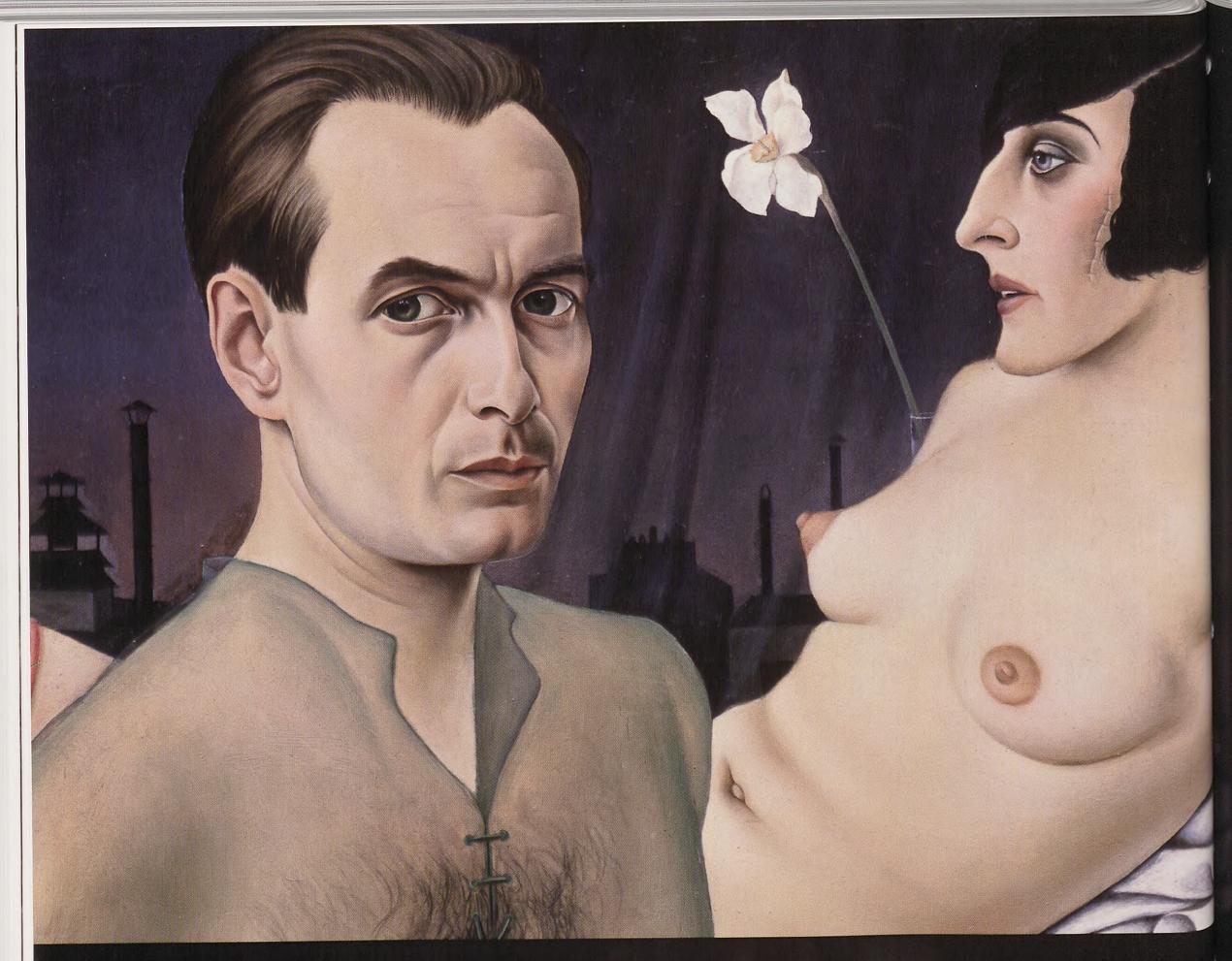
Courtesy the artist and Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney

page 151

Seven intellectuals in bamboo forest (Zhu lin qi xian), Part 4, 2007 Production still, 35 mm black-and-white film transferred to DVD, single channel, 70 mins duration

Courtesy the artist and Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney

AQ.



ristian Schad Self-portrait 1927 (detail), oil on wood rate collection, courtesy Tate London Christian Schad Stiftung Aschaffenburg. Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Licensed by Viscopy, Sydney

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HAD SQUARE

MODERNITY IN GERMAN ART 1910-37

Review, Spring 2011

Exhibition reviews

Social Sculpture, Naked & The Rehearsal of Repetition; Unguided Tours; ART#2;
Michael Ramsden: The Last Decade; Troika; The Black Pram Project; Frank's Flat; Laverty 2;
David Wadelton: Icons of Suburbia; Experimenta: Utopia Now

Book reviews

Writer's choice: Michael Cunningham on beauty; The Revolutionary Century: Art in Asia, 1900–2000; No Name Station

Tributes

Ann Lewis; Ian W. Abdulla; John Barbour

Gertrude Contemporary and Art & Australia Emerging Writers Program

Marian Tubbs

Art & Australia / Credit Suisse Private Banking Contemporary Art Award

Peter Nelson

Social Sculpture, Naked & The Rehearsal of Repetition

Anneke Jaspers

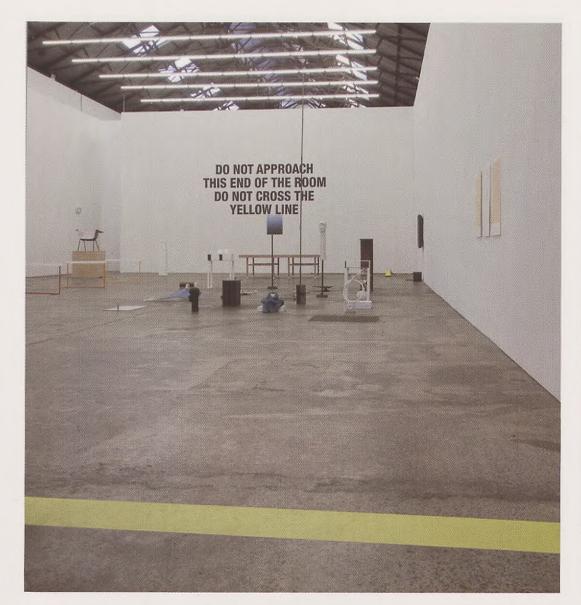
A CLUSTER OF EXHIBITIONS in Sydney's commercial spaces recently disrupted the predictable run of solo exhibitions by represented artists, creating an unexpected convergence of curatorial ventures outside the not-for-profit realm. The most dynamic among these was 'Social Sculpture' at Anna Schwartz Gallery. Curated by Charlotte Day, the exhibition referenced the notion of 'social sculpture' devised in the 1970s by conceptual artist Joseph Beuys to convey his radically expanded vision of the social and political functions of art. The first work encountered was a particularly sharp response to this citation, framing the gallery as a site for agency and action; for *Text work*, 2011, Agatha Gothe-Snape painted a line across the entry threshold and installed a brash demand to visitors on the opposing wall at the far end of the space: 'DO NOT APPROACH THIS END OF THE ROOM DO NOT CROSS THE YELLOW LINE'.

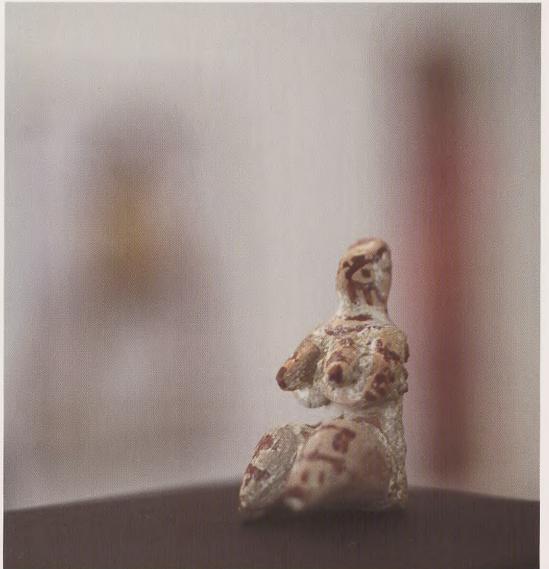
For the most part, Day's curatorial logic centred on the aesthetic implications of 'social sculpture' as a turn of phrase, rather than its ideological legacy. Within this schema, the most compelling contributions focused on embodied transactions rather than the production of physical objects. Laresa Kosloff's video *Agility drill*, 2011, for instance, shows the activation of her sculpture *Race shape*, 2011, through a choreographed sequence that reads like a set of diagrammatic instructions. Reflecting on the potential of objects to condition behaviour, it worked nicely in dialogue with Lauren Brincat's absurd performance in her video *Hear this*, 2011, which plays on the connection between form and function. Here we see Brincat engaging with slices of watermelon as though they are a telephone, pressing them up against her face until the flesh disintegrates and drizzles, its potential utility expended.

'Social Sculpture' was a refreshing enterprise to see in a commercial context – not least because none of the artists are in Schwartz's stable. In a variation on this approach, the exhibition 'Naked' at the recently opened Sydney offshoot of Auckland's Jensen Gallery, contextualised the practices of several gallery artists within a curated exhibition that addressed the corporeality of the human body. Impressively international in purview, the selection of works traversed art-historical periods and, notably, included loans from private collections. A diminutive Syrian figurine from 6000 B.C. conversed with a 1930 photographic print by Man Ray, Carolee Schneemann's video *Body collage*, 1967, and more recent works by, among others, Louise Bourgeois, Thomas Ruff and Tracey Emin that added an erotic dimension.

In stark contrast to the fleshy realism of 'Naked', 'The Rehearsal of Repetition' shown simultaneously at Grantpirrie Gallery was a coolly conceptual undertaking. Responding to the recent proliferation of practices engaged with re-staging and iteration, curator Anja Isabel Schneider's tightly calibrated selection of works by international artists ranged across scripts and scores, live and documented performances. While necessary to the premise, projects that functioned like textual prompts or latent performance residues were less engaging than those that presented unfolding action. The latter included Mel O'Callaghan's mesmerising video *To the end*, 2007, which follows the enigmatic movement of a lone figure through an almost lunar landscape.

In scope and curatorial intent, all these projects align reasonably readily with what viewers might expect from an institutional exhibition, which prompts interesting questions about the function of such activities – and reasons this style of programming looks to be gaining momentum – within a commercial context. It is easy enough to see how these ventures can lend critical weight to a dealer's program, attract new audiences and sustain (even grow) the interest of a collector base. But could it be that they also fill a niche within the larger ecology of Sydney's contemporary art scene, where modestly scaled but critically ambitious, tightly focused and adequately resourced curated group exhibitions are in short supply?







Clockwise from top left: Social Sculpture, installation view, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Sydney, 2 April – 18 June 2011, including Agatha Gothe-Snape, Text work, 2011, vinyl letters, vinyl, dimensions variable and Laresa Kosloff, Race shape, 2011, powder coated steel, wood, acrylic paint, five parts, 60 x 100 x 40 cm each, courtesy the artists and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Sydney; Naked, installation view, Jensen Gallery, Sydney, 28 April – 1 June 2011, including Syrian Tel-Halif figurine of fertility, 6000 B.C., courtesy Jensen Gallery, Sydney; The Rehearsal of Repetition, Grantpirrie Gallery, Sydney, 31 March – 7 May 2011, including Mel O'Callaghan, To the end, 2007, video still of HD video, continuous loop, edition of 3, courtesy the artist and Grantpirrie Gallery, Sydney

Unguided Tours

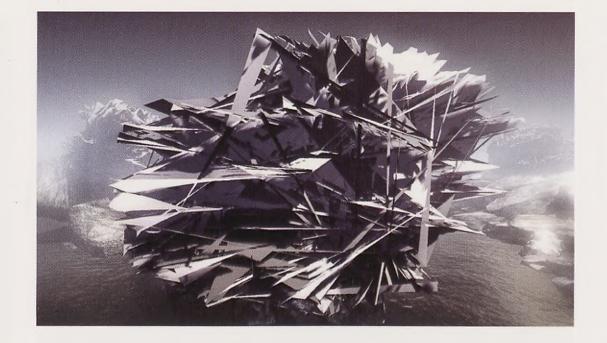
Jeff Khan

Strangely, the art gallery of New South Wales's Biennial Anne Landa Award has always been squeezed into a small and oddly proportioned temporary exhibition space. Given the calibre of artists and the scale of works presented since the award's inception in 2004, and the often complex spatial demands of new media work, this seems like an odd decision. This year, however, guest curator Justin Paton turned this spatial conundrum into an advantage. 'Unguided Tours' transformed the poky space into an immersive labyrinth that celebrated not only sideways journeys and unexpected discoveries, but the capacity of artists to redirect today's defining technologies towards a more adventurous engagement with the world at large.

The exhibition's threshold provided a striking contrast. Jae Hoon Lee's composite video and photographic works are an amalgam of images taken across various tourist destinations and, rendered large on the outer walls, they spoke powerfully of the wonder and perversity proffered by our exhaustive contemporary global tourism. Inside, Charlie Sofo directed gazes downwards and inwards. *Fields*, 2010–11, was installed on the floor of the first of a series of intimate gallery 'chambers'. The installation comprised video and sculptural works that probed the quotidian suburban world to reveal a secret vocabulary of small wonders. Catalogued by Sofo with camera in hand while wandering Melbourne, *Fields* was refreshingly light-handed and disarming.

In the next chamber, Arlo Mountford's *The lament*, 2010–11, took the artist's animated interventions into art history a step further, digitally recreating two versions of Jean-Antoine Watteau's 1717 painting *Pilgrimage to Cythera* in order to speculate on the painting's mythical setting and the ambiguous narratives of the protagonists' journey. Playfully cheeky but also full of awe at the painting's mysteries, *The lament* marked a softer treatment of its subject than some of Mountford's recent satirical works.

In the passageways, Ian Burns's marvellous sculpture-and-video

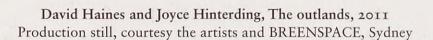


assemblages confronted visitors with their kitsch-but-intriguing kinetic ramblings. These works were a delight to encounter within the exhibition's twisting trajectory, but Burns's enormously scaled From orbit, 2011, lay outside of the gallery space at the building's main entrance. Through a series of cheap tricks and cheaper materials, the work reached up to generate an illusory projection of a space walk on the lofty neoclassical dome above. As with much of Burns's work, the schlocky materiality belied a truly captivating feat of engineering and cause-and-effect kinetics, treading a compelling line between wonder and folly.

The penultimate work, David Haines and Joyce Hinterding's *The outlands*, 2011, won this year's award and was the only truly interactive work in the exhibition. Navigated by a delicate pair of twigs, the work utilised the technology and aesthetics of video game engines to take participants on an altogether different kind of journey from those typically encountered in the world of commercial gaming culture. The multi-directional, hallucinatory complexity of the on-screen worlds and the fragility of the stick-interface were a compelling and very contemporary innovation in the far-reaching tradition of landscape art.

Given the intricacy of the previously encountered works, Rachel Khedoori's floating installation was an oddly muted conclusion to this otherwise fantastical journey. Comprising a single-channel projected tracking shot through a darkened forest that was reflected by an intersecting angled mirror, *Untitled*, 2010, offered a contemplative conclusion to the exhibition, however the work's linearity felt somewhat deflating given the surprising twists and turns provided by the other participants.

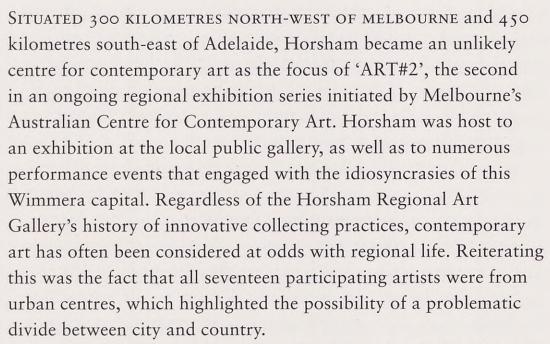
Unguided Tours: Anne Landa Award 2011, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 5 May – 10 July 2011.



Ae.

ART#2

Emily Cormack



Guest curator Hannah Mathews used the gallery's Horsham Collection as the starting point for the exhibition component, drawing on photographic themes of collage and image construction in the work of Max Dupain, Carol Jerrems and Matthew Griffin. This was complemented by her selection of another ten artists (including Bianca Hester, Damiano Bertoli and Justene Williams) whose works further explored these ideas. A month after the exhibition's opening, a Queen's Birthday weekend program of events was designed to tap into what Mathews identified as naturally occurring points of activity in country-town life – weekend sports, Sunday church, the school-bus ride home – which all became subjects for artists to explore in various degrees of collaboration with locals.

Helen Johnson chose the much-maligned Horsham Post Office, despised by locals who have campaigned for its demolition, as the site for her temporary mural. By embedding local rural mythologies, symbols and stories into what was commonly perceived as an entirely alien architectural edifice, Johnson sought to establish intersections between modernism and the everyday. In a collaboration with the Natimuk Brass Band, Nathan Gray



performed the theme song from the film A Beautiful Mind (2001), employing the analogy of the band as a microcosm for the way people relate to each other in a country town. Gray played a home-made sound system that reprocessed the brass band in real time, offering a compressed and nostalgic audio backdrop to passing audiences attending the Saturday afternoon football match. Sydney-based Agatha Gothe-Snape was determined to understand the Horsham community by gaining an insight into its inhabitants' daily lives and opinions. Each night for eight weeks Gothe-Snape conducted phone interviews with community volunteers, whose lives and ideas she encapsulated into single headlines that were then printed as full-page banners in the local newspaper.

As with any event where one culture is overlaid with another, there were inevitable points of confluence as well as moments of dissonance. The green text, 2011, a piece by Laresa Kosloff and Andy Thomson, highlighted this oscillation by employing the naturally occurring metaphors found at the Natimuk Bowling Club. The artists recorded a fictional bowling commentary which they then played from portable MP3 speakers on a tournament day. Kosloff and Thomson's concertinaed narrative shifted from being a close commentary on a bowling match - complete with serendipitous moments of cohesion between the recording and real life - to a broader metaphorical exploration of ideas to do with philosophy and the solar system. This diegetic work could be seen as analogous to the outcomes of 'ART#2' as a whole. As each moment of collision and cohesion occurred between artist and subject, or city and country, so too did an awareness of the ever more present points of divergence.

ART#2: ACCA Regional Tour, Horsham Regional Art Gallery and other venues, 7 May – 3 July 2011.

ART#2, Horsham Regional Art Gallery, 2011, installation view Courtesy the artists and Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne

Michael Ramsden: The Last Decade

Christine France

Survey exhibitions of mature artists have increasingly become the prerogative of regional galleries. This valuable service enables us to assess changes and inconsistencies within an artist's oeuvre rather than viewing isolated works based on a curatorial theme or chronological period. Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, which, to its credit, has produced a number of survey exhibitions, recently presented the work of Michael Ramsden.

Ramsden's work first came to my attention at the Clytie Jessop Gallery in the heady days of 1960s London. After returning to Australia in 1972 Ramsden exhibited in Melbourne and Sydney, and in 1986 he and ceramicist Graham Oldroyd were commissioned to produce, for Canberra's new Parliament House, six monumental glazed-tile murals – a medium that was to influence his present technique. During the 1990s Ramsden moved to Berlin where he held five successful exhibitions before returning once more to Australia. 'The Last Decade' concerned itself with Ramsden's more recent work in which he has used the memory of landscape to explore his own history, emotions and social values.

The multi-panel *Pretty poison: The eel and the bowl*, 2001, was inspired by the work of an American artist who photographed napalmed lotus ponds in Vietnam. Ramsden's sinuous lotus stalks reach upwards from a molten mass while the soft celadon colour of their leaves suggest either slow death or regeneration, as does the carefully painted Japanese tea bowl to the right of the work – a motif used frequently by Ramsden as a metaphor for the human body. This work and *Secret stretch – Fish River*, 2000, best illustrated Ramsden's referencing of Japanese screen painting, both comprising seven panels, each measuring nearly 2 metres in height. They also demonstrated the artist's innovative technique of setting alight pools of paint and shellac, baking pigment into the surface to convey an ancient and timeless atmosphere, suggesting that tiny sources of life were waiting to be found. Painted in Berlin, *Secret stretch – Fish River* grew out of an intense period of homesickness.



Longing to be by a river in Australia, Ramsden experimented spontaneously with pigment, allowing the image of a stream to flow over the panels. Mounted beside the work was a carefully constructed tea bowl also made of canvas, shellac and pigments. Filled with water, its presence was suggestive of an innermost kernel of knowledge.

After Ramsden returned to Australia, he embarked on a series of landscapes inspired by his memory of the high country. These were always viewed without horizons, a perspective which probably owes much to the many hours Ramsden has spent fly fishing and his intense interest in the seventeenth-century writer and angler Izaak Walton.

Where landscape probes at different levels of consciousness, Ramsden's approach is holistic. For him the sea awakens memories of his father who sailed around the world as a young man and with whom Ramsden has claimed a difficult relationship. The 2009 sculptural series 'Drift II' paid homage to the journey's stages by mounting ten crafted wood and paper skiffs in front of light-filled watercolour landscapes, evoking a feeling of fragility and suspension quite apart from the grounded earthiness of Ramsden's earlier work.

Curator Jonathan Turner's sensitive hang and excellent catalogue essay offered many insights into Ramsden's work. However, the strength of this exhibition lay in its contemporary and unrelenting inquiry into a traditional subject matter. It spoke of a landscape reflective of our lives, revealing decline and renewal, bleakness and beauty, and the emotional terrain which lies within.

Michael Ramsden: The Last Decade, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, 18 March – 1 May 2011.



Troika: Annie Aitken, Sarah Newall and Ali Noble Installation view, 24HR Art, Darwin, 2011 Courtesy the artists and 24HR Art Photograph Fiona Morrison

Troika

Anna Holan, Watch your step, 2010
Cement fondu, wire, vermiculite, digital print, cotton fabric, dimensions variable, installation view, KickArts, Cairns, 2011
Courtesy the artist and KickArts, Cairns
Photograph Michael Marzik

The Black Pram Project



Susan Reid

Sarah Pirrie

How does the work of three female artists from Sydney translate to the gallery-going community of Darwin? Annie Aitken, Sarah Newall and Ali Noble are from the stable of Sydney's James Dorahy Project Space – a fact implicitly punned by the exhibition's title 'Troika'. Playfulness was inherent in the colours and forms used by each of these artists, making their works immediately accessible for visitors to Darwin's 24HR Art Northern Territory Centre for Contemporary Art.

24HR Art's main gallery was capably filled by an impressive group of twenty-four works by Aitken that traversed its long cinematic wall. These works, made from polypropylene, nylon nets and stainless steel wire, protruded out to cast delicate shadows which resonated with Aitken's vessel forms. Fish nets and woven pandanus baskets are familiar sights in the Top End and afford an intriguing link between Aitken's vessels and Darwin's aesthetic vernacular.

Less playful but equally successful were Newall's fourteen works that variously placed and substantiated the colour orange. The works drew and absorbed the audience's gaze, giving the singular colour a form and function unique to itself and automatic of the artist's hand. This apparent separation ultimately belied the accuracy and skill needed to execute the works.

Colour also dominated in Noble's *Stupa stack city*, 2008–11, and 2010–11 'Totemiser' wall pieces. Felt gave a sensual dimension to the artist's circular colour swatches which were stacked and overlaid in cell-like clusters of saturated colour, reflecting 1960s interiors or sacred mandala patterns.

'Troika' asserted a material-based art practice which has a certainty of reading. However, each repertoire of materials was courted and refined by the three artists, successfully engaging the viewer to look and recognise or to look and see.

In 'THE BLACK PRAM PROJECT' artists Robyn Baker, Barbara Dover and Anna Holan explored concepts of contemporary childhood in a lively and thoughtful exhibition of digital photography, installation, sculpture and collaborative video. The exhibition's success was marked by spirited audience engagement and the strength of individual works.

For her digital photographic series Dover appropriated photographic images of naked children from a 1930s drawing manual unlikely to make it onto today's art supply shelves. In each image, Dover's child subjects were set in an expansive field of darkness. With an elegant stroke of fine pink tissue paper, the artist covered parts of their anatomy that might otherwise have been seen as too explicit by a public gaze. The series reflected on the use of children in contemporary art and the limitations cast by censorship.

Baker's photographic series celebrated the childhood ritual of dress-ups, subtly questioning the sexualisation crafted by marketing and the popular media. The artist worked with her granddaughter to produce an enchanting collection of frocked-and made-up images. Despite the adult accoutrements and poses, each figure's 'childness' was seemingly unadulterated – dirt under fingernails, shoes and clothes a little too big and make-up a little uneven around the edges.

As an appropriation of Pierre Mignard's painting *Time clipping Cupid's wings*, 1664, Holan's digital photographic work was both witty and disconcerting. Switching constantly from Mignard's original, Holan's version saw Time in a business suit and Cupid now de-winged. In the Christian world of the original work, young children on the laps of naked angels couldn't have seemed safer, but in Holan's alternative universe satire challenged the menace of our assumptions.

Troika: Annie Aitken, Sarah Newall, Ali Noble, 24HR Art, Darwin, 25 March – 30 April 2011.

The Black Pram Project, KickArts, Cairns, 11 March – 21 May 2011.

Frank's flat, 2011 Courtesy Watters Gallery, Sydney Photograph Gilbert Bel-Bachir

Frank's Flat

Installation view, from left:
Tjungkara Ken, Ngayuku ngura – my
country, 2010
Acrylic on linen, 152.5 X 101.5 cm;
Taylor Cooper, Malara, 2010
Acrylic on Belgian linen, 152 X 101 cm
Both Laverty collection, Sydney

Laverty 2



Joe Frost

'Frank's flat' gave more than 200 works from the home of the Watters Gallery Director their first public showing. While only a portion of Frank Watters's entire collection, the exhibition filled the walls of the Maitland Regional Art Gallery to the point of overflow, prompting the question of how he has been able to house so many artworks in the apartment above his East Sydney gallery and live within such aesthetic diversity.

Watters has mainly collected the work of artists he has represented, so it wasn't surprising to find significant paintings by Tony Tuckson (Four uprights, red and black, c. 1965), John Peart (Blues for Frank, 1988) and Richard Larter's dazzling Five in a row show, 1969, the 6-metre-long extravaganza of pop imagery around which Frank's flat was designed. Among such diversity it was hard to define Watters's guiding taste precisely, but his first acquisition, Weaver Hawkins's Paul and Nan Beadle, 1949, offered clues with its modernist forms and everyday subject matter painted with a combination of honest inquiry and lyricism.

Collections acquired mainly for private enjoyment can appear exposed in a public realm, and the one thing missing from 'Frank's Flat' was the home that has given shape to the work. With extra space, the collection might have been shown in a more formal light, exploring the evolution of a gallery director's taste and how his independence of fashion has seen him play very different roles, from 1960s radical to respected elder. But the curators, fellow Watters Gallery directors Geoffrey Legge and Sonia Legge, resisted this, opting for an egalitarian presentation of individual artists with an eye for the visual and expressive affinities between them. More celebration than dissection, 'Frank's Flat' demonstrated a gallery director's passion for the artists he has championed for nearly half a century.

Christine France

The extraordinary generosity of Colin and Elizabeth Laverty in lending artworks to both Australian and overseas galleries is well known, but the opportunity to view whole aspects of their collection in a museum environment has been rare. In 2008 the Newcastle Region Art Gallery presented 'Paintings from Remote Communities', and such was the enthusiasm for the exhibition that, three years later, Director Ron Ramsey mounted a sequel.

'Laverty 2' not only enabled us to see the breadth and diversity of the collection, but to appreciate the differences in taste between the two collectors. While both are attracted to Indigenous art and the works of artists such as William Robinson and Richard Larter, Elizabeth's claim to be more drawn to figurative painting was well supported by the inclusion of works by Noel McKenna and Louise Hearman. Colin's interest in colonial sporting and animal painting was represented with works of Frederick Woodhouse, while his early interest in 1960s abstraction gave us splendid work by Dick Watkins, Tony Tuckson and William Rose.

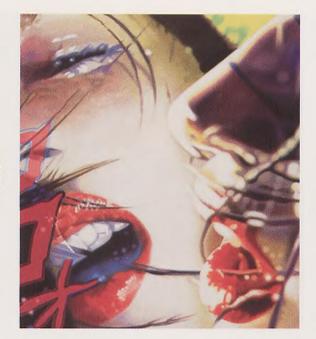
One of the most important aspects of this exhibition was that it produced a strong argument for recent Aboriginal art to take its place within the broader category of Australian contemporary art. Hung in close proximity to each other, the work of Ildiko Kovacs and Paddy Bedford revealed a common concern for form in space, while Mornington Island's Sally Gabori shared broad gestural strokes with fine expressive works by Tuckson and Aida Tomescu.

Subdued general lighting and spotlit paintings added much to the general impact of the exhibition. And as an important further resource there is the second edition of the Lavertys's book *Beyond Sacred* (2011), which has been expanded to include works by fifteen new artists and offers an informed discussion on the position of Aboriginal art in our contemporary world.

David Wadelton, Starcrazy, 2002, detail Oil on canvas, 91 x 198 cm Collection of McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park, The Fornari Bequest, 2003 Courtesy the artist and McClelland Gallery

David Wadelton: Icons of Suburbia

Anusha Kenny



Cao Fei, Whose utopia, 2006 Video still, SD video, audio, 20 mins duration Courtesy Vitamin Creative Space, Guangzhou

Experimenta: Utopia Now

Matthew Shannon



Walking through david wadelton's mid-career survey, a near-forgotten memory came to mind of eating McDonald's in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Biting into what I thought I knew (a cheeseburger), I felt the unexpected burn of chilli on my tongue. Like Wadelton's vivid paintings of recent years, that burger reminded me of a particular reality of our globalised age: specifically, that the products of late-capitalism can never escape local influences and, wherever the 'global' lands, it is invariably infected by its surroundings to become something else.

'Icons of Suburbia' presented a cross-section of Melbourne-based Wadelton's paintings from the 1980s through to the present alongside his fascinating collection of photographs dating from the mid-1970s. Across both mediums Wadelton's eye seemed to be drawn to uncanny interactions between images and curious plays with scale. In a 1989 painting, for example, a statue of Venus rises from a giant seashell with an oversized potato peeler reaching her thigh. A photograph taken by Wadelton ten years later shows a man leaning back-to-back with a monster toy prawn at Sea World on the Gold Coast. The 2002 painting *Starcrazy* surreally links a Dior perfume model's face and a glowing male silhouette with a cartoon-eyed hotdog – each hyper-coloured image blending seamlessly into the next and, finally, into a background of planets and stars.

Were it not for the inclusion of Wadelton's work as a photographer, it may have been hard to see beyond the myriad of art-historical allusions that his paintings conjure, including Giorgio de Chirico, pop art and even the still-life tradition. Here the observant, wryly humorous eye of the photographer gave insights into Wadelton the painter, providing further proof that as an artist he is never not himself.

Experimenta, the international biennial of media art, is launched every two years in Melbourne before embarking on a farranging tour. The fourth edition, entitled 'Utopia Now', stopped in at the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery (MPRG) before travelling on to Hobart's Museum of Old and New Art and the Albury Library Museum. The touring exhibition is an abridged version of the full program of thirty-five works (from as many artists including Hans-Peter Feldmann, Angelica Mesiti and Stuart Ringholt, to name just a few), and at the MPRG was installed across the two main galleries as well as in the entrance gallery and foyer. The exhibition saw these spaces thrown into darkness, with the existing and newly commissioned works each proving to be illuminating in their own right.

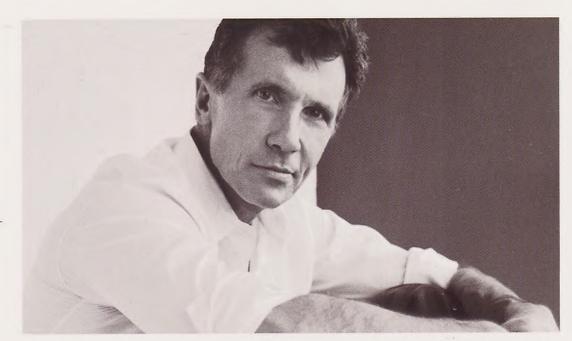
The standout in this electro-illuminated context was Cao Fei's relatively early video *Whose utopia*, 2006. A kind of creative documentary made in collaboration with the workers at an OSRAM lighting factory in China, this work sees filmed fragments of anonymous workers at every part of the manufacturing chain, from the operators of the giant chemical stores to the lightning-speed micro handiwork of components sorters. The film reveals the unified and repetitive rhythm of workers right down to the tiniest of elbow movements and pedal pushing, detailing the extreme demands placed by technology on the human body and reminding us of a secret lurking in all the illuminated screens within the gallery space.

The work's presence in an exhibition based on the artistic application of technology was made even more poignant by the pressing theme of 'Utopia Now': inside the near invisible technology of modern media devices is a world far more human and less perfect than we may have ever imagined.

David Wadelton: Icons of Suburbia, McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park, Langwarrin, 6 March – 15 May 2011.

Experimenta: Utopia Now, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, 12 May – 19 June 2011.

Writer's Choice: Michael Cunningham on beauty



I was brought up in a conservative, lukewarm episcopalian home where the few pictures on the walls were mass-produced floral still lifes, but even in beauty for beauty's sake there is inevitably a resonance of something else. I'm a romantic so, yes, I believe in the power of the sublime.

I fixated on religious art from an early age. When I was seven, a pietà would make me weep and want to reproduce it in a dried-rice mosaic. I equated seriousness with beauty and religious art – images of Madonnas and Christs. As a child I appreciated the flatness of images by Giotto. The lack of perspective struck me as something I could do.

Later, on visits to museums, I responded to Brueghel and Dürer. Seeing the Sistine Chapel resulted, if not in an episode of Stendhal syndrome, then at least a conviction that beauty and morality went together. When I gave up on emulating Old Masters while at college, I started creating Rousseau-like jungle-scapes filled with demons lurking in the underbrush – my version of the Garden of Eden, very moral and idealistic.

I grew up in the 1960s. There was no such thing as hippie art. I went all conceptual at college and tried abstraction. Rothko spoke to me profoundly of mysterious beauty, the intimation of soul, of life and death. Similarly, I found the unnameable spiritual dimension in Robert Ryman and Agnes Martin.

At home in New York, the aesthetic of the loft I share with my long-time partner Ken¹ is minimalist – more Zen master than Portuguese widow. At first, I was still buying taxidermy from various markets but Ken refused to let me have it on show.

When I had a good couple of years and earned a lot of money, I did not squirrel it away; I spent it on a couple of pieces of Big Deal Art. One is a photograph by Gregory Crewdson. I like his elaborately staged, slightly surreal interiors and landscapes set in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. They are beautifully lit – light matters a great deal to me – and Julianne Moore² appears in some of them.

I also purchased four drawings by Terry Winters. I like his funny, spiky organic forms and dust bowls.

Everything else on the walls is by friends. I know people who make art but have no public reputation. One friend found a collection of photographs taken by an old man in the 1970s who skulked the beaches of Northern California taking pictures of surfers as they undressed behind their cars. He blew up these images of briefly naked guys and suddenly they became god-like Greek heroes. I like them for their curves and shadows, their erotic forms.

As I get older I am more available to a wider range of monstrous beauty – for example, the work of Richard Serra. I was not so fond of it ten years ago, but now I see the gaunt beauty of his pieces. The same with Carl Andre. Now I get the point of symmetry in a line of bricks. The turning point for me was visiting the gardens in Kyoto. Suddenly I understood. I also like the work of James Turrell very much and Andy Goldsworthy's ephemeral installations.

I lack the courage to be flamboyant – I once bought a skirt by Comme des Garçons but lacked the nerve to wear it – but clothes matter enormously to me. I find it embarrassing to love fashion, but on seeing 'Savage Beauty', the recent Alexander McQueen show at The Met, I thought: if a twelfth-century reliquary can be art then this can be too.

As told to Caroline Baum on the occasion of Cunningham's visit to the Sydney Writers' Festival in May 2011 for his latest novel, By Nightfall (Fourth Estate, 2010). Cunningham appeared with Betty Churcher and Rowena Danziger in a panel discussion entitled 'The Pursuit of Beauty'.

I Ken Corbett, psychoanalyst and author of Boyhoods: Rethinking Masculinities (2009).

2 Moore starred in the 2002 film adaptation of Cunningham's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel The Hours (1998).



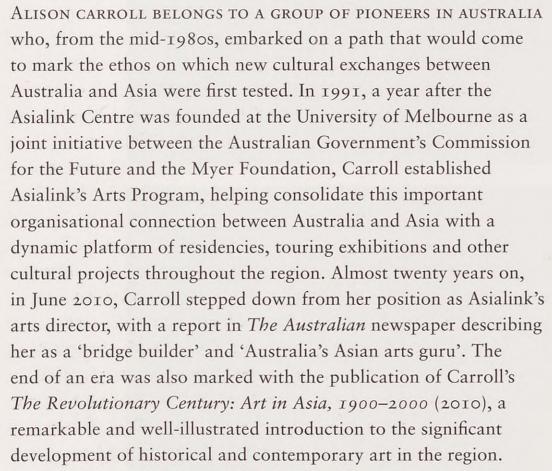


from top Gregory Crewdson, Untitled, summer, 2006 Archival inkjet print, printed on Epson Premium Luster Paper, 148.6 x 227.3 cm Courtesy the artist and Gagosian Gallery, New York. © The artist

Gregory Crewdson, Untitled, 2002 Digital C print, 73.66 X III.76 cm Courtesy the artist and Gagosian Gallery, New York. © The artist

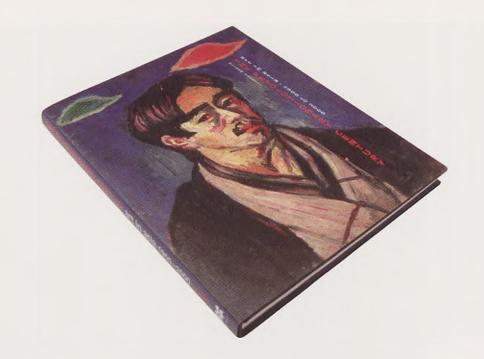
The Revolutionary Century: Art in Asia, 1900–2000

Thomas J. Berghuis



Overall, careful attention has been paid to the 180 colour plates, and for anyone unfamiliar with Asian art, this is a book that brings our focus to some important works. These include those by Tetsugoro Yorozu (1885–1927) whose 1912 self-portrait graces the cover. His work connected the local to the universal in modern Japan, as has become clear from recent research by American art historian Alicia Volk. *The Revolutionary Century* will indeed serve a noble purpose if it helps address new audiences who may only be aware of an Asian art produced over the past few decades or years.

For those with an existing knowledge, however, *The* Revolutionary Century could sometimes be read as an exercise in note-taking. While it generates much useful information and draws broadly from a range of sources, it could have considered more carefully a number of alternative viewpoints which would have



informed the wider picture that is being shared. This is especially true in the case of such large and much-discoursed topics as the Asian diaspora which, in the case of *The Revolutionary Century*, is unfortunately confined to a single-page note on 'dispersion'.

As our interest in the historical development of modern and contemporary art in Asia continues to grow, it becomes all the more important to connect new viewpoints to existing ones. It is therefore somewhat disappointing to read in Carroll's introduction to The Revolutionary Century that 'there has not been a view before of these 100 years across the whole region'. In this context, John Clark's Modern Asian Art (1998) would have been an obvious precedent to mention, as well as other important groupings of essays and ideas, such as Modernity in Asian Art (edited by Clark) and Tradition and Change: Contemporary Art of Asia and the Pacific (edited by Caroline Turner), two 1993 titles which coincided with the inaugural Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art at Brisbane's Queensland Art Gallery. These provided important watersheds in drawing new insights on modern and contemporary art across Asia. (While listed in the 'Selected Bibliography', such titles could have been acknowledged with a clearer endorsement.)

For Australia to engage meaningfully with Asia, attention needs to be directed to the many challenges of perception as Asia and Australia and their histories are redefined and reassessed. One obstacle seems to be the way Australia continues to see itself as something separate from Asia. As Carroll herself noted in *The Australian* last year: 'We are basically a western nation in the middle of this Asian treasure-trove.' With *The Revolutionary Century*, Carroll hopefully brings us a little closer to our understanding of art in Asia.

Alison Carroll, The Revolutionary Century: Art in Asia, 1900–2000, Palgrave MacMillan, Melbourne, 2010, hardcover, 210 pp., \$99.95.

No Name Station

Souchou Yao

In these globalising days, cultural exchange – a term that used to be allied with Cold War programs that sent American writers, artists and musicians on tours behind the Iron Curtain – has taken on a promiscuous new vitality. 'No Name Station', so the catalogue declares, is a project about contact. The brainchild of Jacqueline Doughty and Alexie Glass-Kantor, it is a collaboration between Melbourne's Gertrude Contemporary, Beijing's Iberia Center for Contemporary Art and Warmun Art Centre in Western Australia's remote East Kimberley. Ten participating artists (six from Australia and four from China) were joined by Melbourne historian Maria Tumarkin, with the resulting works presented in Beijing in late 2010, and scheduled to be shown at Gertrude Contemporary in early 2012.

The project began with a week-long residence at the Warmun Aboriginal community in June 2010. As a place still resonant with Australia's colonial past, Warmun was to confront the artists and prompt them to examine their practices. It was a bold curatorial vision. The catalogue records in captivating detail, and from a number of perspectives, the excitement and emotional scuttle of the social encounters over the ensuing days.

The Australian artists – Brook Andrew, Newell Harry, Mabel Juli, Rusty Peters, Rammey Ramsey and Sally Smart – were on familiar ground in Warmun; two of the Aboriginal artists actually came from there. The place's blistering significance touched them, and they knew how to act and conduct themselves. But less so the Chinese artists – Gao Shiqiang, Liang Shuo, Wang Wei and Zhao Zhao – or so it would seem. Though the curators were too polite to say so, some Chinese artists brought with them a surliness, a churlish cluelessness to the place to which they had been invited.

The highlight of the Warmun residency was a visit to nearby Yarrunga (Chinaman's Garden). In the nineteenth century, as oral history tells us, some twenty or thirty Chinese found a home there, and Aboriginal locals sold them dingo scalps in return for



food, tea and tobacco. The Europeans soon came and killed some of the Aboriginal population, and a Chinese farmer helped the survivors cremate the bodies; he wept with them. As *No Name Station* recounts, the Chinese artists said they felt no connection with the place; it meant nothing to them. They were so absolute in their denial that perhaps they were being ironic. When one Chinese artist intruded on the ritual area of Aboriginal dancing to take photos, it upset many and for a moment the nimble ambition of cultural exchange hung on a thread.

Some would say it's presumptuous to think that a place like Chinaman's Garden would mean something to the Chinese artists in the first place. The connection of blood and ethnicity between young men and women of post-Deng China and the Chinese settlers of colonial Australia is tenuous. Yet one is also tempted to scratch at the dust and discover something of the ambivalence of postcolonial politics behind all this. Is it too much to detect among the Chinese guests a thumbing of noses at a First-World nation with a history of white racism, a nation whose modern progress and contemporary opportunities they may want for themselves? Cross-cultural traffic is the to-and-fro of ideas and people; it is also about relationships of power and envy, attraction and repulsion.

The curators responded with grace and civility, refusing to cast blame. As a Malaysian–Chinese, though, I say they let my 'fellow ethnics' too easily off the hook. In an age of Google, Australia is no longer a distant country. Perhaps the Chinese artists should have been asked to read D. H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo* (1923) or Robert Hughes's *The Fatal Shore* (1987), both available in Chinese translations. *The Fatal Shore*, in particular, mentions the colonial trade of sea cucumber to China as a food and aphrodisiac. Surely that would have connected in ways the Chinese garden couldn't.

Jacqueline Doughty (ed.), No Name Station, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, 2010, hardcover, 244 pp., \$45.

Ann Lewis

1934-2011

Peter Fay



IT'S A TRUISM TO SAY the Lord broke the mould when He made Ann Lewis (nee Livingston). But if you look at a map to see where she was born, the town no longer exists. It was as if in providing an Ann they decided that Dareel had made its contribution to the life of the country and could pack up shop early.

Ann had an encyclopedic knowledge of Australian and international art which she developed from her days running Gallery A Sydney (1964–83) and the numerous trips she made with the International Council of New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Anyone who knew Ann for a brief moment would have felt her extraordinary hospitality and zest for living. Curator Robert Storr, a dear friend of Ann's, wrote: 'In times of trouble she offered refuge and a room with a view so that I could find solace in the water and the wind' – words and sentiments that speak for many. I feel that what Ann did was remind us gently that we exist not for nation or ambition or power or money or comfort but primarily for the good we can do each other.

For over fifty years, Ann held court beneath a John Olsen-painted ceiling at her home in Sydney's Rose Bay, while her New York apartment has welcomed hundreds of guests. Virginia Cuppaidge, who managed Ann's loft for thirty-two years, wrote: 'Many artists come through the front door after that long flight from Australia, smiling with relief saying: "This is just like home".' Ann gave life to the hidden gifts of everyone around her, but for her, visual artists were special. Maybe we can trace this to the two fly-blown prints by Van Gogh that hung in her childhood home. Maybe it could be attributed to the great delight she received when, aged about six, she painted her father's car with red paint, or years later when painting the walls of her house in the most outrageous of colours. Ann possessed flawless judgment, and this was all framed by an energy that sent her out into the open waters off Bondi beach at 6 a.m. every morning.

As her life in the arts took shape Ann was tireless and focused.

On top of Gallery A and MoMA, there would be positions on countless boards – the National Gallery of Australia, Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art and the Australia Council for the Arts Visual Arts and Crafts, to name but a few. Indeed, there's hardly a state or regional gallery across the land that does not have her name etched in its walls in recognition of her extraordinary service or benefaction. 'Not bad for a girl from Moree', as she was wont to say of herself.

I was privileged to work with Ann as she supported the curatorial team for the 2009 exhibition 'Gallery A Sydney: 1964–1983' and this afforded me a chance to see Ann's integrity shine. She insisted the curator John Murphy have complete licence with the Gallery A archive and the works that he selected for the exhibition. Her financial support for the catalogue came without any strings attached.

In the final months of her life Ann had set out on another mighty project: a new ceiling work by Shaun Gladwell. Ann's brief was open-ended but with one proviso: it had to be more than just a replacement for the Olsen painting that had been gifted to the Newcastle Region Art Gallery. Shaun was truly inspired by this commission and rose to the challenge. His initial thoughts required a projection onto a painted ceiling but there was one problem: there would need to be a power source in the centre of the dining-room table. In Shaun's mind this meant snaking power cords, but Ann's solution was swift and easy: drill a hole through the centre. End of problem. Shaun's completed commission will be another lasting legacy, and as long as there are art galleries and biennales the name of Ann Lewis will never fade. She has entered the DNA of the cultural and artistic life of this country.

Anne Zahalka, Portrait of Ann Lewis, 1999

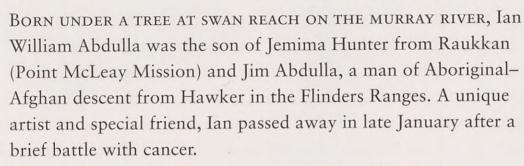
Type-C photograph from 'The Innovators' series, 74 x 64 cm, commissioned by the S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney

Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Ian W. Abdulla

1947-2011

Stephen Fox



In 1988 I met Ian along with six other budding artists at a screen-printing workshop in Glossop in South Australia's Riverland. Ian sorted you out fast. Being a young working-class kid from Adelaide I had spent a lot of time up the river, picking fruit, fishing and having holidays. I thought I knew a bit about the river. But after talking with Ian I realised I had just been a visitor. Throughout his career Ian continued talking about country and his place in that country, the place he grew up in, where life was not always an easy ride, but was still filled with moments of great humour and joy.

The art Ian brought to our world was a revelation to many, with its stories written across the sky of each painting. It also gave a great sense of pride and delight to Ian's life. At the very start of his career a new Aboriginal cultural centre was forming in Adelaide, Tandanya, and its then curator, John Kean, saw Ian's work and recognised its intrinsic value. A great friendship began and Ian's paintings were shown across the country. When Kean moved on in around 1992, Paul Greenaway took on Ian's work at his Adelaide gallery and another friendship was formed. Ian held one-man shows almost every year with Greenaway Art Gallery, which also helped to arrange great shows at Melbourne's Niagara Galleries and to take his work to Madrid for 'ARCO'93'. Ian's work is now included in the collections of Canberra's National Gallery of Australia, most state galleries and many museums and universities. For a man who started out just wanting to share the stories of his life and country with his children, he went on to share these stories with all Australians.



I love many of Ian's paintings dearly, but one stands out for me. Like many it talks with humour about family, and the following is written on the painting:

One day in my early years, my family and myself used to go fishing near the sand bars along the river near Loxton, so while my sister was waiting for the fish to take the bait I swam out in the middle of the river, I dived down to the bottom and then grabbed the hook and my sister thought I was a fish so when she seen me she got really mad with me.

Another dream was realised when, in 1993, Ian's book As I Grew Older was published in Adelaide. I remember Ian being so proud at that moment for he had achieved something he had always wanted – a book about his life and art, and one dedicated to his children Tracey, Owen and Joseph. Ian was a good dad. He would ride his pushbike from Barmera to the workshop in Glossop, making sure his kids got to school and back home. As time went by he said it was his kids who checked his paintings and their stories.

Ian made us all sit up and take notice of what could have been considered the practice of an 'outsider', for sometimes in Australia, and in Aboriginal art particularly, there was a very narrow focus. Ian's art gave us an understanding of what it was like to grow up on the river and, as Janet Maughan has written, he has done a great deal towards reconciliation through his painting. He has left his children and all of us a wonderful legacy – a visual and narrative feast documenting a slice of history, a way of life that could easily have passed us by.

Ian W. Abdulla on the Murray River, 2003 Courtesy Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide Photograph Mick Bradley

John Barbour

1954-2011

Ian North



THE ARTIST JOHN BARBOUR DIED IN APRIL THIS YEAR of pancreatic cancer. His death has impacted heavily on the Adelaide art community and, no doubt, his considerable audience elsewhere.

It happened that I was instrumental in bringing John from Melbourne to take up a position at the South Australian School of Art (SASA) when I was Head of School from 1984 to 1993. SASA was then part of the South Australian College of Advanced Education (the University of South Australia having been established in 1991). The staffing position was tightly bound, but we achieved some moves that yielded long-term benefits. These included creating postgraduate degrees, upgrading artists' residencies, kick-starting the Anne & Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship program and what became the Samstag Museum of Art, and above all hacking a path through a jungle of scepticism for SASA's return to the city.

In 1988, amid this melee, a small miracle occurred: the chance to appoint two new tenurable staff members. John's application suggested an experimentally oriented artist on the way up, trained at both La Trobe University (English Literature) and the Philip Institute of Technology (Sculpture). Once in Adelaide John found a congenial clutch of artists and theorists (including Anton Hart, Paul Hoban and Linda Marie Walker) and an intellectual home in the Australian Experimental Art Foundation.

After spells in Foundation Studies and Sculpture, John was a natural to work in Postgraduate Studies, eventually taking charge of the area as well as becoming Head of School. In both roles he proved to be a very able, if reluctant, administrator. Postgraduate studio seminars can easily collapse into risibility in careless hands, but John was simply the best facilitator of such activities I have encountered. He regarded student work with interest and respect while always maintaining a critical edge. I believe that SASA's Postgraduate Studies came of age under John's tutelage and I hope I can speak for his colleagues in saying that, with all his talents,

John was truly an ornament to the school.

So much for a mud map of John's outward career. There are more important reasons for feeling grateful to have known John. They may be summed up, and I hope this doesn't sound mawkish, with the word 'love'. What do I mean, talking about an austere man in such terms? Something of what I have in mind was indicated by the British journalist Malcolm Muggeridge. I recall him stating on television sometime in the 1980s, not long before his own death, that at a certain point in one's life we must choose between power and love.

Let us cut to the quick and accept that studio work on the part of a driven artist like John is tantamount to a manifestation of love. This he expressed repeatedly, emerging from the hidden corners of dusty Adelaide studios – with the help of his Sydney gallerist Kerry Crowley – to become a nationally significant artist. Hence a heartfelt comment from his friend Samantha Small in the hospice a few days before he died: 'It was not the rainforest for John, nor the beach, it was the studio.'

It would be appropriate now to expatiate on John's work, from his earlier existentialism to his later somewhat lighter poeticism, but I have written about it elsewhere (*Art & Australia*, vol. 47, no. 3, Autumn 2010), and I would not want to traduce it through brevity. Suffice it to note that John's practice moved towards a quasi-shamanistic investment in objects whereby their truth, in some effable sense, was liberated from the patina of their history and use value. For him the fundamental meaning of objects was a contradiction, for it lay in their very meaninglessness. His paraphrase of Rimbaud is telling: 'The bugle sleeps as brass.'

John is survived by his mother, Penelope Barbour, his former wife, Susan Fraser, and their children – Guy, Ellen and Harriet – and by his sisters Sally Anne, Rapsodie and Melissa.

John Barbour with *Inherent vice*, 2006, during the exhibition 'Parade' at Yuill/Crowley, Sydney, 2006. Photograph Samantha Small.

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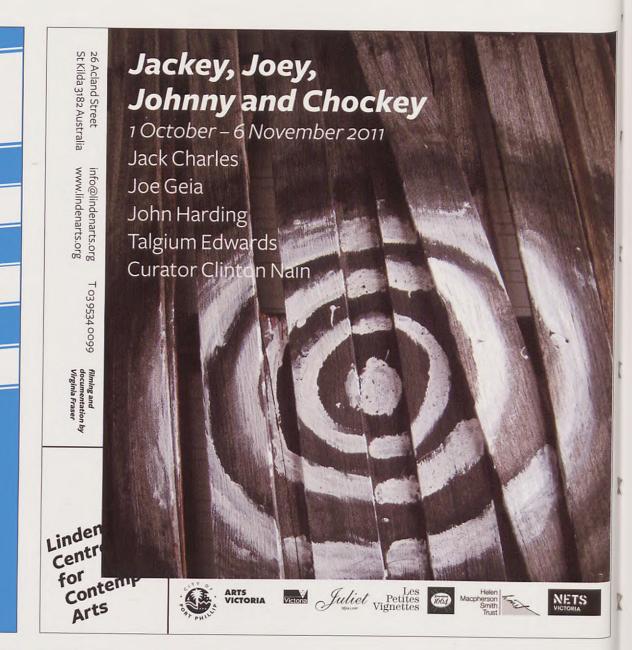
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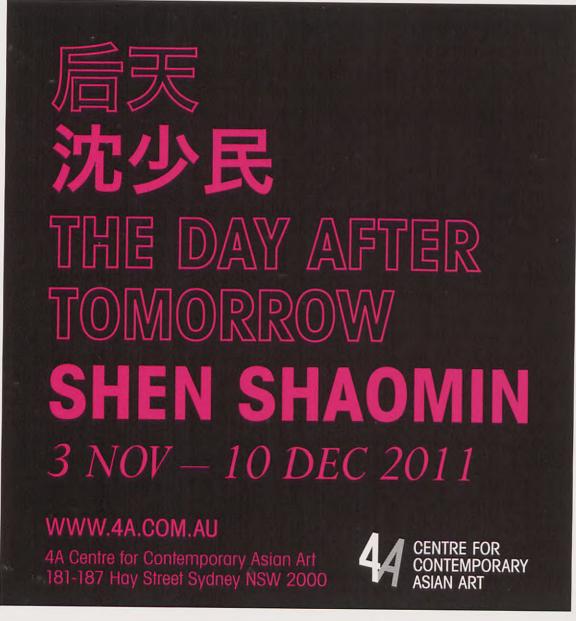
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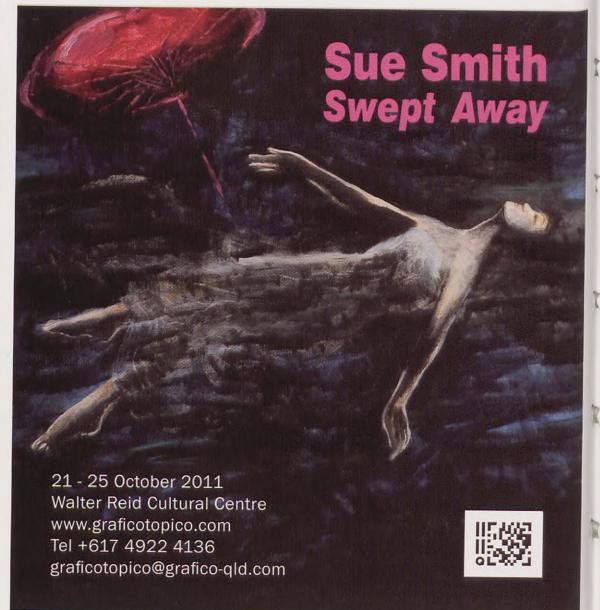
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Vince Vozzo

Subject of a film to be screened at the Italian Pavilion, Venice Biennale June 2011

Apocalyptic paradigm shift 2008 acrylic on canvas 92 x 771 cm (detail)

Past, Present, Future 2004 sandstone 25 x 400 x 25 cm (detail)

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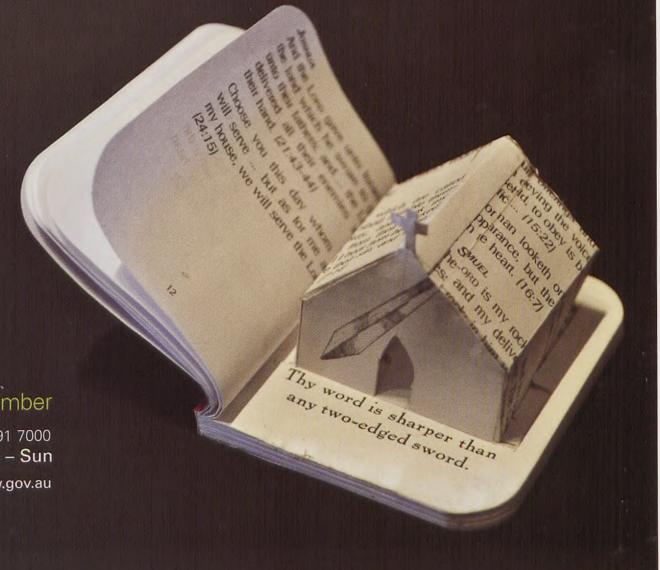
www.evabreuerartdealer.com.au

The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize 2011

Exhibition of Finalists: 22 October – 6 November

536 New South Head Road Double Bay NSW Australia Tel +61 2 9391 7000 Exhibition hours: 9am - 6pm Mon - Fri, 10am - 4pm Sat - Sun http://sculptureprize.woollahra.nsw.gov.au sculpture@woollahra.nsw.gov.au

Image: Humpy Goona by Archie Moore, winner 2010 Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize.





Inaugural Indigenous Art Centre Award

2011 Shalom Gamarada Ngjyani Yana Indigenous Art Fair

PROCEEDS FUND RESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ABORIGINAL MEDICAL STUDENTS

17 - 25 SEPTEMBER 2011 DAILY 11 - 7 111 QUEEN STREET WOOLLAHRA



A Survey of the best new art works from Australia's remote Indigenous communities submitted for the Xstrata Art Centre Award.

Featured Community: Yulparija Artists of Bidyadanga (near Broome), represented by guest Artist Lydia Balbal and Art Centre Manager Emily Rohr.

Also on display will be recent art from the communities of APY and NPY Lands of Northern SA and Central WA.



GRACE

The Sydney Morning Herald smh.com.au

ART FORUM

Sunday 18 September 3 - 4.30pm

HEALTH PANEL

Sunday 25th September 3pm

For further information and online catalogue www.shalomgamarada.org

Sales enquiries contact Jenny Hillman 0410 648 859 General enquiries contact 02 9663 1366

Call for entries

Adelaide Perry Prize for Drawing 2012

\$20,000 acquisitive

For entry forms and further information email AdelaidePerryGallery@plc.nsw.edu.au or go to:

www.plc.nsw.edu.au/page/events

Exhibition of finalists in March 2012 at

Adelaide Perry Gallery

Celebrating 10 years 2001 - 2011

Corner of Hennessy and College Streets, Croydon, NSW. Telephone: (02) 9704 5693.







Karen Barbouttis The Weekly Reports - Drawings from the Museum of Life (details). Winning entry 2011.



Entries close 13 January 2012

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This three-part documentary series from directors Chris Bennie and Nicola Chatham is a rich resource for collectors, educators, curators, artists and the general public. Offering a unique insight into the personal lives and art practices of over twenty Queensland artists, the series captures a time in the state's history when the Gallery of Modern Art has put Brisbane firmly on the international art map. Exposure sets about recording the lives and processes of award-winning, established and emerging artists working in video, painting, installation, new media and photography.

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Cairns Regional Gallery

2 September - 16 October

Strike a Pose: Lee Lin Chin

This vibrant, colourful and quirky exhibition from the National Archives of Australia is guest curated by Lee Lin Chin, SBS TV's World News Australia presenter and host of Fashionista. She gives her unique insight and idiosyncratic commentary in an exhibition that explores not only the fashion of the 1960s and 1970s but also the social and cultural changes that occurred in those dynamic decades. Great for fashion students.

A National Archives travelling exhibition

23 September – 24 November

Exotic Queensland: The Nature and Wonder

Paintings by Anne Marie Graham and Tania Heben.

These two artists are united in their love for the rich diversity of the botanic gardens of Cairns and its surrounds. This exhibition of painted works focuses on the abundant vegetation and daily life in the tropical garden that is North Queensland.

A Cairns Regional Gallery curated exhibition

Cairns Regional Gallery cnr Abbott and Shield Streets Cairns QLD 4870 Tel 07 4046 4800 Fax 07 4031 6410 www.cairnsregionalgallery.com.au info@cairnsregionalgallery.com.au



NOOSA REGIONAL GALLERY

UNTIL 11 SEPTEMBER

Noosa Regional Gallery Travelling Scholarship

A national contemporary 3D art prize of \$12,000 presented by the Sunshine Coast Council and principal partner: Friends Noosa Regional Gallery Inc. Forty finalists have been selected with this year's winner selected by Dr Maura Reilly, Professor of Art Theory at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University.

16 SEPTEMBER - 30 OCTOBER

Creative Generations

The Creative Generation Excellence Awards in Visual Art and Design 2010–11 touring exhibition features forty inspiring artworks by senior visual arts students from throughout Queensland.

4 NOVEMBER - II DECEMBER

Official opening: 3 November, 6pm

GALLERIES 1 & 3: Tour De Force: In Case of Emergency Break Glass An exhibition that highlights the work of eight progressive Australian artists who breach the traditional ideas, methods and materials of glass making. The exhibition brings new focus to the medium of glass, particularly the conceptual branch of the practice. Curated by renowned glass rebel Megan Bottari.

GALLERY 2: Point

Point is the culmination of personal investigations by eight South East Queensland metal smiths – Eric Griffin, Gerhard C. Herbst, Lyn Guthrie, Valerie Bennett, Chantelle Fisher, Christine O'Reilly, Kathleen Hunt, Keith Swan – who together present a body of works addressing the very personal question of what is it that sustains and enables their practice.

Noosa Regional Gallery Riverside, Pelican Street Tewantin Qld 4565 Phone: 07 5449 5340 Wednesday – Sunday 10am – 4pm, free entry www.noosaregionalgallery.org gallery.noosa@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au



GEELONG GALLERY

Until 11 September 2011

Reflections of the Soul – Chinese Contemporary Ink-wash Painting

A special exhibition from the National Art Museum of China, Beijing

17 September – 20 November 2011

2011 Geelong Acquisitive Print Awards

26 November 2011 - 12 February 2012

Nicholas Chevalier – Australian Odyssey A Gippsland Art Gallery travelling exhibition

Geelong Gallery's outstanding collection traces the story of Australian art from the colonial period to the present day.

Geelong Gallery

Little Malop Street, Geelong, Victoria 3220
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geelart@geelonggallery.org.au
www.geelonggallery.org.au
Monday - Friday 10am - 5pm
Guided tours of the permanent collection from 2pm Saturday
Free admission



Bendigo Art Gallery

UNTIL 6 NOVEMBER 2011
The White Wedding Dress:
200 years of Wedding Fashions

26 NOVEMBER 2011 – 26 FEBRUARY 2012 The Lost Modernist: Michael O'Connell

Bendigo Art Gallery 42 View Street, Bendigo VIC 3550 Tel 03 5434 6088 Fax 03 5443 6586 www.bendigoartgallery.com.au Daily 10-5 Entry by donation



GERALDTON REGIONAL ART GALLERY

10 SEPTEMBER - 20 NOVEMBER

LET THE COUNTRY COME IN

Exhibiting the results of an artist development program delivered inside the Geraldton Regional Prison over 18 months. Indigenous artists (who cannot be named by law) engaged in weekly workshops with an experienced mentor. Devised by cultural body FORM with the support of the Department of Corrective Services, the program responds to

rehabilitation research. By painting, these artists ensure their connection to country is kept strong from the inside.

10 SEPTEMBER - 27 NOVEMBER

YEAR 12 PERSPECTIVES 2011

A yearly taste of art by the best, brightest and most talented graduating high school artists in the State, 'Year 12 Perspectives' is a barometer of what our youth are thinking and feeling and is also a rich celebration of the role of the arts in the development of individual identities. This selection of works from the exhibition held earlier this year at the Art Gallery of Western Australia proves entertaining, diverse and challenging, and continues the fine legacy of this popular exhibition.

10 September – 27 November

MORAN PORTRAIT PRIZE AND MORAN PHOTOGRAPHIC PRIZE

Featuring works from two of Australia's most prominent portrait and photographic competitions; The Doug Moran National Portrait Prize and The Moran Contemporary Photographic Prize. Judges for the Portrait Prize were Louise Doyle, Director of the National Portrait Gallery and artist Michael Zavros. The judge of the Photographic Prize was esteemed photographer and writer, Robert McFarlane. The Moran prizes, along with their sponsors the Commonwealth Bank and PricewaterhouseCoopers, award \$300,000 annually to Australian artists, photographers and students. CommonwealthBank PRICEWATERHOUSE COPERS

Geraldton Regional Art Gallery 24 Chapman Road Geraldton WA 6530 Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday 10-4, Sunday and Public Holidays 1-4 For further information please contact the Gallery on 08 9964 7170 or via email: grag@artgallery.wa.gov.au





Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum

17 SEPTEMBER - 22 OCTOBER

Tour de Force: In Case of Emergency Break Glass An exhibition of glass works by eight progressive Australian glass artists. Developed by Artisan and Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, with support from the Queensland Government, the Australia Council, the Australian Government Visual Arts & Craft Strategy and QANTAS. Toured by Museum and Gallery Services Queensland with the Australian Government's Visions of Australia assistance

4 - 29 OCTOBER

OUR PRICELESS PAST 2011: ORAL HISTORIES AND PHOTOGRAPHS Featuring the stories of local seniors, prepared and presented by Gladstone State High School students, to celebrate National Seniors Week. A Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum initiative, held in conjunction with The Observer and Ergon Energy

5 NOVEMBER - 8 DECEMBER

2011 RIO TINTO ALCAN MARTIN HANSON MEMORIAL ART AWARDS & EXHIBITION

The 36th Annual Art Awards supported by local industry and the community. Entry forms available from the Gallery/Museum

Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum Cnr. Goondoon & Bramston Streets GLADSTONE QLD 4680 Monday - Saturday 10-5, free entry

P: (07) 4976 6766 F: (07) 4972 9097

E: gragm@gladstonerc.qld.gov.au

w: www.gladstonerc.qld.gov.au/gallerymuseum

A community cultural initiative of the Gladstone Regional Council



Caloundra Regional Gallery

Until 11 September

SUNSHINE COAST ART PRIZE 2011

The 2011 Sunshine Coast Art Prize (SCAP '11) is a national acquisitive painting and 2D art prize valued at \$25,000 and includes an artist residency in Maleny on the Sunshine Coast Hinterland. The exhibition of forty finalists is a showcase of contemporary 2D practice by leading local and national artists.

14 September - 23 October

SQUEEZE 2011

A biennial art educator exhibition, 'Squeeze' encourages art educators out of their classrooms and into their studios to expand their arts practice. 'Squeeze' challenges the artists to explore 'fresh' work.

26 October - 4 December

LINEAGE: DAVID FAIRBAIRN SELECTED PORTRAITS 1998-2010

This Campbelltown Arts Centre touring exhibition is a 12-year retrospective exhibition of the work of David Fairbairn, illustrating the artist's dedication, skill, and insight into portraiture.

Caloundra Regional Art Gallery 22 Omrah Ave, Caloundra QLD 4551 tel: (07) 5420 8299 fax: (07) 5420 8292 email: artgallery@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au www.caloundraregionalgallery.org Wednesday-Sunday 10-4 Free Entry Creative Communities, a Sunshine Coast Council arts initiative

Sunshine Coast Council

MOSMAN ART GALLERY



10-23 September

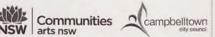
COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS: RECENT DONATIONS This exhibition features a variety of works, donated over the past decade.

10 September – 19 October

26 September - 23 October

LINEAGE: DAVID FAIRBAIRN SELECTED PORTRAITS 1998-2010 Fairbairn creates large architectural portraits using bold layers and angular lines that often combine printmaking, drawing and painting.

A Campbelltown Arts Centre travelling exhibition



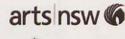
ZHONGJIAN: MIDWAY Fifteen of China and Australia's most significant contemporary artists, including Guan Wei, Kate Beynon and Guo Jian explore the implications of finding oneself 'midway' between cultures through drawing, painting, collage, sculpture and

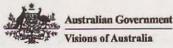
A Wollongong City Gallery touring exhibition

29 October - 20 November

BALNAVES COLLECTION

A sneak peek at highlights of the \$1 million donation of artworks to Mosman Art Gallery from Neil Balnaves AO. Works by Arthur Streeton, Conrad Martens, Will Ashton, Henry Fullwood, Elioth Gruner, Ethel Carrick Fox and Margaret Preston. Presented as part of the 2011 Festival of Mosman





Mosman Art Gallery cnr Art Gallery Way and Myahgah Road Mosman NSW 2088 Tel (02) 9978 4178 Fax (02) 9978 4149 www.mosman.nsw.gov.au Daily 10-5, closed public holidays Free admission



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www.herveybayregionalgallery.org.au
Director: Marj Sullivan
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Mon–Sat 10–4, Free admission

Jan Murphy Gallery 486 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley 4006 Tel 07 3254 1855 Fax 07 3254 1745 jan@janmurphygallery.com.au www.janmurphygallery.com.au Director: Jan Murphy Representing contemporary Australian artists including Kim Buck, Danie Mellor, Rhys Lee and Leslie Rice. Until 10 September: Liu Zhuoquan 21-26 September: Ben Quilty - KIAF 4-22 October: Jason Fitzgerald 25 October - 12 November: James Guppy 15 November – 3 December: Marina Strocchi Tues–Sat 10–5

Andrew Baker Art Dealer 26 Brookes Street, Bowen Hills 4006 Tel 07 3252 2292 info@andrew-baker.com www.andrew-baker.com Director: Andrew Baker Artists include: Lincoln Austin, Mostyn Bramley-Moore, Leonard Brown, Sam Bullock, Tony Coleing, Michael Cook, Fiona Foley, Ian Friend, Samantha Hobson, Stephen Killick, Rosella Namok, Sean Phillips, Pamela See, Kenji Uranishi, Katarina Vesterberg, Deborah Walker, Kim Westcott and William Yang. Tues-Sat 10-5, or by appointment

Institute of Modern Art at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts 420 Brunswick Street (entrance Berwick Street), Fortitude Valley 4006 Tel 07 3252 5750 Fax 07 3252 5072 www.ima.org.au Director: Robert Leonard Tues-Sat 11-5, Thurs until 8

Jenni Gillard Art Dealer
1/37 Wyandra Street, Newstead 4006
Tel 07 3852 5582 Mobile 0409 900 578
jenni@glowaustralia.com.au
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Logan Art Gallery cnr Wembley Road and Jacaranda Avenue, Logan Central 4114 Tel 07 3412 5519 Fax 07 3412 5350 artgallery@logan.qld.gov.au www.logan.qld.gov.au/artgallery Logan Art Gallery celebrates the diverse practices of visual artists, craft workers and designers, presenting a dynamic exhibiting program for residents and visitors to the region. Until 17 September: Jay Younger; Michelle Van Eps; Braidy Hughes; Chrys Zantis; Rivermount College From 9 November: Contemporary Miniatures, a Queensland Art Gallery touring exhibition Lisa De Leon MacGregor State High School Tues-Sat 10-5, Free admission

Anthea Polson Art 18-20 Mariners Cove Seaworld Drive, Main Beach 4217 Tel 07 5561 1166 info@antheapolsonart.com.au www.antheapolsonart.com.au Director: Anthea Polson Specialising in contemporary Australian art and sculpture. Representing some of Australia's top emerging artists as well as exhibiting major investment works. Also specialising in sales from the secondary market and a gift registry is available for special occasions. Mon-Sun 10-5

Ipswich Art Gallery d'Arcy Doyle Place,
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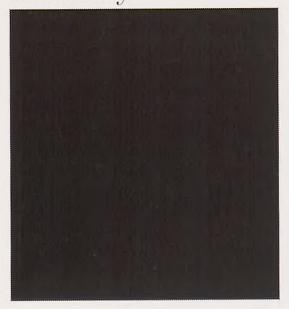
Heiser Gallery 90 Arthur St, Fortitude Valley 4006 Tel 07 3254 2849 Fax 07 3254 2859 bh@heisergallery.com.au www.heisergallery.com.au Director: Bruce Heiser Representing leading Australian artists and dealing in modern Australian works of art. Until 10 September: Group Exhibition from Australian Tapestry Workshop 13 September - 8 October: Arryn Snowball - recent works 11 October - 5 November: Fiona McMonagle 8 November - 3 December: Alun

Leach-Jones

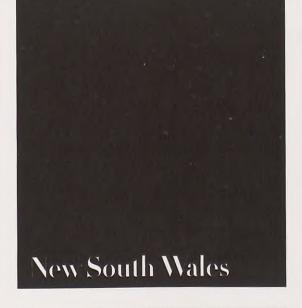
Tues-Fri 10.30-6, Sat 10.30-5

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Philip Bacon Galleries 2 Arthur Street, Fortitude Valley 4006 Tel 07 3358 3555 Fax 07 3254 1412 artenquiries@philipbacongalleries.com.au www.philipbacongalleries.com.au Director: Philip Bacon Artists include Davida Allen, Charles Blackman, Arthur Boyd, Rupert Bunny, Cressida Campbell, Criss Canning, Peter Churcher, Robert Clinch, Charles Conder, Grace Cossington Smith, Ray Crooke, Lawrence Daws, Ian Fairweather, Donald Friend, Sam Fullbrook, James Gleeson, Peter Godwin, Gwyn Hanssen Pigott, Nicholas Harding, Barry Humphries, Philip Hunter, Michael Johnson, Robert Klippel, Norman Lindsay, Sidney Nolan, Justin O'Brien, Margaret Olley, John Olsen, Lloyd Rees, William Robinson, John Peter Russell, Wendy Sharpe, Garry Shead, Gordon Shepherdson, Jeffrey Smart, Tim Storrier, Arthur Streeton, June Tupicoff, Roland Wakelin, Tony White, Brett Whiteley, Fred Williams, Philip Wolfhagen, John Young and Michael Zavros. Tues-Sat 10-5



Stanthorpe Regional Art Gallery
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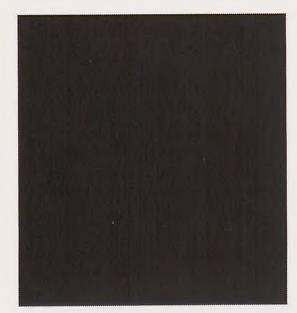


QUT Art Museum
2 George Street, Brisbane 4001
(next to City Botanic Gardens)
Tel 07 3138 5370 Fax 07 3138 5371
artmuseum@qut.edu.au
www.artmuseum.qut.edu.au
Until 16 October: Dreaming of Chanel
Until 23 October: Remarks on Colour –
Australian Watercolours
25 October – 23 December: Union
with Reality – The Art of Leonard
Brown
28 October – 23 December: The 60th
Blake Prize
Tues-Fri 10-5, Wed until 8,
Sat-Sun 12-4



4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art 181-187 Hay St, Haymarket 2000
Tel 02 9212 0380 Fax 02 9281 0873
info@4a.com.au
www.4a.com.au
Director: Aaron Seeto
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through its innovative program of
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ArtiFacts Art Services and Aboriginal Art Consultancy PO Box 1522, Double Bay 1360 Tel 02 8084 1829 Mob 0404 835 921 jraffan@artifacts.net.au www.artifacts.net.au Director: Jane Raffan Accredited valuer, Australian Government Cultural Gifts Program; Aboriginal and Australian art adviser; valuation services: superannuation, corporate asset validation, insurance; European market and Australian auction sales agent; collection management services; member Art Consulting Association of Australia and Auctioneers and Valuers Association. By appointment



Suzanne O'Connell Gallery 93 James Street, New Farm 4005 Tel 07 3358 5811 Fax 07 3358 5813 Mob 0400 920 022 suzanne@suzanneoconnell.com www.suzanneoconnell.com Director: Suzanne O'Connell, ACGA Papunya Tula Artists (Kintore), Warlukurlangu Artists (Yuendumu), Warlayirti Artists (Balgo Hills), Waringarri Artists (Kununurra), Mangkaja Arts (Fitzroy Crossing), Jilamara Arts, Munupi, Tiwi Design and Ngaruwanajirri Arts (Tiwi Islands), Maningrida Arts and Culture (Maningrida), Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre (Yirrkala) and Girringun Artists (Cardwell,). Wed-Sat 11-4, or by appointment

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www.annaschwartzgallery.com
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The artistic program focuses on
large-scale installations and curated
exhibitions.
Tues-Fri 10-6, Sat 11-5

Bathurst Regional Art Gallery
70–78 Keppel Street, Bathurst 2795
Tel 02 6333 6555
brag@bathurst.nsw.gov.au
Director: Richard Perram
Visit our website for updates on
exhibitions, education programs
and to view the entire permanent
collection.
Tues-Sat 10-5
Sun and public holidays 11-2

Redland Art Gallery
cnr Middle and Bloomfield Streets,
Cleveland 4163
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gallery@redland.qld.gov.au
www.redland.qld.gov.au
Director: Emma Bain
The Redland Art Gallery showcases
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specialises in a varied program that
looks to define the cultural identity of
Redland City.
Mon-Fri 9-4, Sun 9-2, Free admission

Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery 531 Ruthven Street, Toowoomba 4350 Tel 07 4688 6652 art@toowoombarc.qld.gov.au www.toowoombarc.qld.gov.au Curator: Diane Baker Established in 1937, Toowoomba has the oldest public art gallery in regional Queensland. Housing the Lionel Lindsay Art Gallery and Library, the Fred and Lucy Gould Collection, and the City Collection (including the Dr Irene Amos OAM: Amos Bequest and the Cay Gift), the gallery displays historical and contemporary artwork. Tues-Sat 10-4, Sun 1-4, public holidays 10-4, Free admission

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media@breenspace.com
www.breenspace.com
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Until 3 September: Simryn Gill
8 September – 8 October: Tim Silver
14 October – 12 November: Emma
White
18 November – 17 December:
Group ShowTues–Sat 11–6, and by
appointment

Brenda May Gallery
2 Danks Street, Waterloo 2017
Tel 02 9318 1122 Fax 02 9318 1007
info@brendamaygallery.com.au
www.brendamaygallery.com.au
Director: Brenda May
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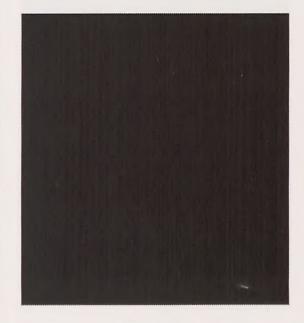
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www.gallery9.com.au
Until 3 September: Michelle Hanlin;
What
7 September – 1 October: Jake Walker
5 – 29 October: Peter Alwast
2 – 26 November: Simon Kennedy,
David Lawrey & Jaki Middleton
Wed-Sat 11-6pm, and by appointment

Harrington Street Gallery
17 Meagher Street, Chippendale 2008
Tel 02 9319 7378
ra.coady@bigpond.com
www.harringtonstreetgallery.com
Artists' cooperative established in
1973. Most exhibitions show the
work of two to four artists. A new
exhibition every three weeks from
March to December. Openings on
the first Tuesday of each exhibition
6 – 8.30
Tues—Sun 10–4



Cooks Hill Galleries
67 Bull Street, Newcastle 2300
Tel 02 4926 3899 Fax 02 4926 5529
mail@cookshill.com
www.cookshill.com
Representing Arthur Boyd, Sidney
Nolan, Fred Williams, Charles
Blackman, John Olsen, John Perceval,
Russell Drysdale, Norman Lindsay,
Brett Whiteley, Tom Roberts, Arthur
Streeton, Frederick McCubbin, Ray
Crooke, Jeffrey Smart and Charles
Conder.
Fri, Sat and Mon 11–6, Sun 2–6, and
by appointment

Gallery Barry Keldoulis
285 Young Street, Waterloo 2017
Tel 02 8399 1240
gallery@gbk.com.au
www.gbk.com.au
Director: Barry Keldoulis
GBK presents an eclectic stable
of artists and a diverse exhibition
program, focused by Barry Keldoulis'
preference for work that combines
intellectual rigor, ideas and aesthetics.
Tues—Sat 11—6

Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre
782 Kingsway, Gymea 2227
Tel 02 8536 5700 Fax 02 8536 5750
hazelhurst@ssc.nsw.gov.au
www.hazelhurst.com.au
Director: Belinda Hanrahan
A major public and community
gallery with changing exhibitions,
comprehensive arts centre, theatrette,
gallery shop, café and artist-in-residence
space.
Daily 10–5, closed Good Friday,
Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New
Year's Day

Dominik Mersch Gallery 11/2 Danks Street, Waterloo 2017 Tel 02 9698 4499 info@dominikmerschgallery.com www.dominikmerschgallery.com Director: Dominik Mersch Representing contemporary European and Australian artists, including Stephan Balkenhol, Isidro Blasco, Marion Borgelt, Jon Cattapan, Peta Clancy, Giacomo Costa, Elger Esser, Tim Johnson, Locust Jones, Clemens Krauss, Berit Myreboee, Helen Pynor, Norbert Schwontkowski, Stefan Thiel, Mariana Vassileva, Thomas Weinberger, Philip Wolfhagen and Beat Zoderer. Tues-Sat 11-6



Iain Dawson Gallery
443 Oxford Street, Paddington 2021
Tel 02 9358 4337
gallery@iaindawson.com
www.iaindawson.com
Director: Iain Dawson
A boutique micro-gallery focused on
showcasing the best emerging artists
from across the country and region.
Painting, photography, sculpture and
new media.
Tues-Sat 10-6

Macquarie University Art Gallery Building E11A, North Ryde 2109 Tel 02 9850 7437 Fax 02 9850 7565 artgallery@mq.edu.au www.artgallery.mq.edu.au Until 14 October: Song of Earth & Sea: Shay Docking 1955 - 1996 major survey exhibition focused on the life and work of one of Australia's foremost landscape artists. 26 October - 15 December: Arboreal An exhibition about the significance of trees to our environment, in celebration of the International Year of the Forest. Mon-Fri 10-5, Free admission

Maitland Regional Art Gallery 230 High Street, Maitland 2320 Tel 02 4934 9859 Fax 02 4933 1657 artgallery@maitland.nsw.gov.au www.mrag.org.au 17 September: Opening celebration Until 2 October: Euan McLeod Portraits Until 16 October: Riparian Rites - A Williams River Valley artists' project 22 October: Opening celebration Until 6 November: Pat Corrigan -Collector, curated by Cheryl Farrell 7 October – 4 December: John R Walker – Space and Time, 10 years in the landscape 21 October - 4 December: Stuart Scott: Up Late Ron Royce: Through My Eyes Face 2011 - self-portraits by Hunter and Central Coast K-10 students 10 December: Opening celebration 11 November 2011 - 19 February 2012: Lucy Barker Tues-Sun 10-5, closed Mondays and public holidays

Menzies (formerly Deutscher~Menzies) & Lawson~Menzies
Menzies Art Brands Pty Ltd
12 Todman Avenue, Kensington 2033
Tel 02 8344 5404 Fax 02 8344 5410
sydney@menziesartbrands.com
www.menziesartbrands.com
Australia's Leading Fine Art
Auctioneers and Valuers
Specialists: Andrew Crawford and
Tracy Le Cornu
Mon-Fri 9-5.30; free appraisals Wed
2-5 (no appoint. necessary)

Miles Gallery
Shop 17 Dural Mall, Kenthurst Road,
Round Corner, Dural 2158
Tel 02 9651 1688
sales@waynemilesgallery.com
www.waynemilesgallery.com
Directors: Kelly and Wayne Miles
Digital artworks of Wayne Miles,
emerging artists, Tim Storrier,
Reinis Zusters, Robert Dickerson,
works on paper by Barbara Bennett,
Anne Smith, Judy Cassab and Frank
Hodgkinson.
Daily 9–5, closed first Sunday of each
month and public holidays

Museum of Contemporary Art 140 George Street, Circular Quay, The Rocks, Sydney 2000 Tel 02 9245 2400 Fax 02 9252 4361 www.mca.com.au The only museum in Australia dedicated to exhibiting, interpreting and collecting contemporary art from across Australia and around the world. Until 25 November: The MCA building is closed with a range of offsite projects hosted throughout Sydney. See www. mca.com.au for details. 9 September - 13 November: MCA Offsite in The Rocks: Primavera 2011, the MCA's annual exhibition for young artists aged 35 and under. Free admission

Rex Irwin Art Dealer 1/38 Queen Street, Woollahra 2025 Tel 02 9363 3212 Fax 02 9363 0556 rexirwin@rexirwin.com www.rexirwin.com Directors: Rex Irwin and Brett Stone Established in 1976, the gallery continues to mount an ambitious exhibition program which combines important Australian and international art and emerging artists. For thirty years the gallery has been committed to specialist shows of prints and drawings, which have included Frank Auerbach, Lucian Freud, Francisco Goya, Pablo Picasso and Fred Williams. Tues-Sat 11-5.30, and by appointment

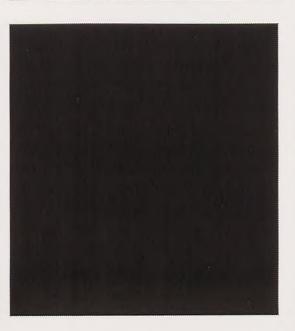
Rex-Livingston Art Dealer
59 Flinders Street, Surry Hills 2010
Tel 02 9357 5988 Fax 02 9357 5977
art@rex-livingston.com
www.rex-livingston.com
Director: David Rex-Livingston
Specialising in dealing quality
investment art and the exhibition of
professional, emerging and mid-career
artists.
Tues-Sat 11-6, Sun 12-4

Moree Plains Gallery
25 Frome Street, Moree 2400
Tel 02 6757 3320
moreeplainsgallery@bigpond.com
www.moreeplainsgallery.org.au
Moree Plains Gallery in north-western
New South Wales features solo shows
by artists from the region and the
gallery's collection, especially the
recent Ann Lewis gift of 70 works by
Australian Aboriginal artists.
Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-1, Free
admission

Newcastle Region Art Gallery
1 Laman Street, Newcastle 2300
Tel 02 4974 5100 Fax 02 4974 5105
artgallery@ncc.nsw.gov.au
www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/go/artgallery
The gallery exhibits over 25 exhibitions
annually, reflecting the diversity of
contemporary art practice and the
breadth of the gallery's significant
collection of Australian art and
Japanese and Australian ceramics.
Tues—Sun 10–5, closed Good Friday
and Christmas Day

Richard Martin Art
98 Holdsworth Street, Woollahra 2025
Tel 02 9327 6525
info@richardmartinart.com.au
www.richardmartinart.com.au
Director: Richard Martin
Regular exhibitions of paintings and
sculpture by prominent and emerging
contemporary Australian artists.
Also buying and selling quality
investment pieces.
Tues-Sat 11-6, Sun 1-5

Martin Browne Contemporary 15-21 Hampden Street, Paddington 2021 Tel 02 9331 7997 Fax 02 9331 7050 info@martinbrownefineart.com www.martinbrownefineart.com Director: Martin Browne Specialising in contemporary Australian and international art. Representing Peter Atkins, Israel Birch, Robert Brownhall, Liyen Chong, Michael Cusack, Paul Dibble, McLean Edwards, Neil Frazer, Guan Wei, Brent Harris, Linde Ivimey, Ildiko Kovacs, Tim Maguire, Karl Maughan, Alexander McKenzie, Kirsteen Pieterse, John Pule, Simon Strong, A.J. Taylor, Simon Taylor and the estate of Colin McCahon. Tues-Sun 11-6



Peloton
19 and 25 Meagher Street,
Chippendale 2008
Tel 02 9690 2601
info@peloton.net.au
www.peloton.net.au
Directors: Matthys Gerber, Lisa Jones
A program of exhibitions and
exchange projects of national and
international contemporary art and
artists.
Thurs-Sat 1-6

278 Liverpool Street, Darlinghurst 2010
Tel 02 9331 6692 Fax 02 9331 1114
robin@robingibson.net
www.robingibson.net
Ballan Bolton, Stephen Bowers, Gina
Bruce, Robert Clinch, Lawrence
Daws, Marian Drew, David Eastwood,
Erwin Fabian, Catherine Fox, Guy
Gilmour, Steve Harris, Geoff Harvey,
Elwyn Lynn, Clement Meadmore,
Phillip Piperides, Avital Sheffer, Terry
Stringer, Mark Thompson, Bryan
Westwood, Maryanne Wick.
Tues-Sat 11-6

Robin Gibson Gallery

Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation
16-20 Goodhope St, Paddington 2021
Tel 02 9331 1112
info@sherman-scaf.org.au
www.sherman-scaf.org.au
Sherman Contemporary Art
Foundation is a not-for-profit
exhibition and cultural space.
Until 10 September: Dinh Q. Lê: Erasure
A multi-media installation and online
archive – erasurearchive.net
7 October – 17 December: Tokujin
Yoshioka
Wed-Sat 11-5, Free admission

Sullivan + Strumpf Fine Art
799 Elizabeth St, Zetland 2017
Tel 02 9698 4696 Fax 02 9698 7607
art@ssfa.com.au
www.ssfa.com.au
Directors: Ursula Sullivan, Joanna
Strumpf
Specialising in contemporary
Australian art including painting,
sculpture, photography and new media
by emerging and established artists.
Extensive stockroom.
Tue-Fri 10-6, Sat 11-5, and by
appointment

UTS Gallery Level 4, 702 Harris St Ultimo 2007 Tel 02 9514 1652 utsgallery@uts.edu.au www.utsgallery.uts.edu.au/gallery Presenting a diverse program focusing on innovative exhibitions of art, design and critical inquiry. Accompanying public program details available online. Until 2 September: Incidental Data 13 September – 14 October: The Fall Before Fall 25 October – 25 November: Creative Accounting Mon-Fri 12-6, Free admission

Western Plains Cultural Centre
76 Wingewarra Street, Dubbo 2830
Tel 02 6801 4444 Fax 02 6801 4449
info@wpccdubbo.org.au
www.wpccdubbo.org.au
Recognised as a cultural icon of inland
NSW, the Western Plains Cultural
Centre combines Dubbo Regional
Gallery – The Armati Bequest,
with the Dubbo Regional Museum,
the Outlook Cafe and extensive
community arts centre.
Wed-Mon 10-4, Free admission

S.H. Ervin Gallery
National Trust Centre
Watson Road, (off Argyle Street),
Observatory Hill, The Rocks,
Sydney 2000
Tel 02 9258 0173
www.nationaltrust.com.au
Until 18 September: Up Close and Personal:
works from the Elliott Collection
23 September – 6 November: Portia
Geach Memorial Prize
11 November – 18 December:
Elemental Reckoning: The art of Tim
Storrier
Tues-Sun 11-5

Tim Olsen Gallery 63 Jersey Road, Woollahra 2025 Tel 02 9327 3922 Fax 02 9327 3944 ellie@timolsengallery.com www.timolsengallery.com Directors: Tim Olsen and Katrina Arent A cultivated stable of artists that presents a comprehensive and poignant view of the contemporary arts in Australia. Exhibiting the work of both emerging and established artists with a continually changing calendar. Representing John Olsen, one of Australia's most esteemed living artists.

Tues-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5

Wagner Art Gallery 39 Gurner Street, Paddington 2021 Tel 02 9360 6069 Fax 02 9361 5492 wagnerart@bigpond.com www.wagnerartgallery.com.au Director: Nadine Wagner Gallery Manager: Megan Dick Proudly exhibiting the work of Australia's emerging, established and elite artists for over thirty years. Exhibitions change monthly and there is always a great variety of artwork held in the stockroom. Until 15 September: Boyd Sanday -Squall 17 September - 13 October: Susan Sheridan - Coastline Charlotte Boyd - Youth 15 October - 10 November: Patrick Carroll - New Paintings 12 November – 8 December: Small Images - Grand Visions, 40 x 40 cm paintings

Mon-Sat 10.30-6, Sun 1-6

Wollongong City Gallery cnr Kembla and Burelli Streets, Wollongong East 2500
Tel 02 4228 7500 Fax 02 4226 5530 gallery@wollongong.nsw.gov.au www.wollongongcitygallery.com
One of the largest regional art museums in Australia, with a major collection of contemporary Aboriginal, Asian and Illawarra colonial art.
Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat-Sun 12-4, closed public holidays, Free admission

SOHO Galleries
104 Cathedral Street, Sydney 2011
Tel 02 9326 9066 Fax 02 9358 2939
art@sohogalleries.net
www.sohogalleries.net
Director: Nigel Messenger
Innovative contemporary art including
paintings, sculpture, glass and works
on paper by contemporary Australian
artists.
Tues-Sun 12-6

Stills Gallery 36 Gosbell Street, Paddington, 2021 Tel 02 9331 7775 Fax 02 9331 1648 info@stillsgallery.com.au www.stillsgallery.com.au Representing contemporary Photomedia artists, including: Paul Adair, Narelle Autio, Roger Ballen, Pat Brassington, Merilyn Fairskye, Anne Ferran, Petrina Hicks, Megan Jenkinson, Mark Kimber, Ricky Maynard, Anne Noble, Polixeni Papapetrou, Trent Parke, Michael Riley (est. of), Robyn Stacey, Stephanie Valentin and William Yang. Tues-Sat 11-6

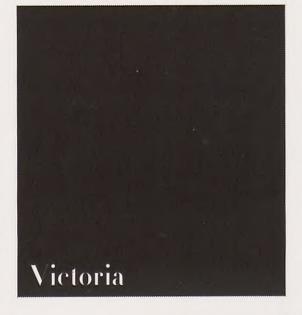
Utopia Art Sydney
2 Danks Street, Waterloo 2017
Tel 02 9699 2900 Fax 02 9699 2988
utopiaartsydney@ozemail.com.au
Representing John Bursill, Liz Coats,
Tony Coleing, Helen Eager, Marea
Gazzard, Christopher Hodges, Emily
Kame Kngwarreye, Peter Maloney,
Makinti Napanangka, Walangkura
Napanangka, Ningura Napurrula,
Gloria Petyarre, Lorna Napanangka,
Angus Nivison, Kylie Stillman,
Ronnie Tjampitjinpa, Warlimpirrnga
Tjapaltjarri, George Tjungurrayi,
George Ward Tjungurrayi, John
R.Walker and Papunya Tula artists.
Tues-Sat 10-5, and by appointment

Watters Gallery 109 Riley Street, East Sydney 2010 Tel 02 9331 2556 Fax 02 9361 6871 info@wattersgallery.com www.wattersgallery.com Directors: Frank Watters, Geoffrey Legge and Alex Legge Until 10 September: Tony Tuckson; Paul Bacon 13 September – 1 October: Evan Salmon; James Rogers 4-22 October: Ken Whisson; Fiona Fell 25 October - 12 November: Rob Greer; Group Show 16 November – 3 December: Rew Hanks Wed-Fri 10-7, Tues and Sat 10-5

Yuill | Crowley 5th Floor, 4–14 Foster Street, Surry Hills 2010 Tel 02 9211 6383 Fax 02 9211 0368 yuill_crowley@bigpond.com www.yuillcrowley.com Contemporary art. Wed-Fri 11–6, Sat 11–4.30



Chapman Gallery 1/11 Murray Crescent, Manuka 2603 info@chapmangallery.com.au www.chapmangallery.com.au Tel 02 6295 2550 Fax 02 6295 2550 Director: Kristian Pithie Established in 1976, Chapman Gallery has built its reputation on providing high-end contemporary Australian art, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Wed-Fri 12-6, Sat-Sun 11-6



Anna Pappas Gallery 2-4 Carlton St, Prahran 3181 Tel 03 8598 9915 Fax 03 8598 9914 info@annapappasgallery.com www.annapappasgallery.com Director: Anna Pappas Representing a diverse selection of established and emerging international and local artists in all contemporary mediums. Tues-Fri 10-6, Sat-Sun 12-6

ANU Drill Hall Gallery Kingsley St (off Barry Dr), Acton 2601 Tel 02 6125 5832 Fax 02 6125 7219 dhg@anu.edu.au www.anu.edu.au/mac/content/dhg The gallery presents a changing program of exhibitions of national and international artists developed in conjunction with the university's academic interests. Until 25 September: Abstraction 29 September - 6 November: Triptych -Mais Mais Wright Wright 10 November – 18 December: Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrula

Wed-Sun 12-5, Free admission

National Gallery of Australia Parkes Place, Parkes, Canberra 2600 Tel 02 6240 6411 information@nga.gov.au www.nga.gov.au Director: Ron Radford AM Until 6 November: Fred Williams -Infinite Horizons The first major retrospective of Williams' work in over 25 years. Until 1 April 2012: Out of the West Art of Western Australia from the national collections. Daily 10-5

National Portrait Gallery

www.portrait.gov.au

King Edward Terrace, Parkes 2600

Tel 02 6102 7000 Fax 02 6102 7001

Until 6 November: Beyond the Self -

Contemporary Portraiture from Asia

Daily 10-5, Closed Christmas Day

Free admission, Disabled access

Alcaston Gallery 11 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy 3065 Tel 03 9418 6444 Fax 03 9418 6499 art@alcastongallery.com.au www.alcastongallery.com.au Director: Beverly Knight, ACGA member Exhibiting contemporary Aboriginal art: paintings, works on paper, limited-edition prints, sculpture, ceramics and artefacts. Until 9 September: Clinton Nain 13 – 23 September: New work from Mornington Island Art, QLD 22 – 26 September: Korea International Art Fair 2011 featuring Sally Gabori, Paula Paul and Clinton Nain 27 September – 14 October: New work from Hermannsburg Potters, NT 18 October – 11 November: Lindsay Harris James Iyuna & Melba Gunjarrwanga 15 November - 2 December: Judy Maniny New work from Tjungu Palya, SA Tues-Fri 10-6, Sat 11-5

Alison Kelly Gallery

1 Albert Street, Richmond 3121

Mob 0417 542 691 ak@alisonkellygallery.com www.alisonkellygallery.com

Director: Alison Kelly

Tues-Sat 11-5

Tel 03 9428 9019 Fax 03 9428 9049

Exhibiting contemporary Indigenous

art from art centres across Australia.

Anna Schwartz Gallery 185 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000 Tel 03 9654 6131 mail@annaschwartzgallery.com www.annaschwartzgallery.com Established in 1982, Anna Schwartz Gallery exhibits the ongoing practice of represented artists and presents projects by international guest artists. Tues-Fri 12-6, Sat 1-5, groups by appointment

Beaver Galleries 81 Denison Street Deakin, Canberra 2600 Tel 02 6282 5294 Fax 02 6281 1315 mail@beavergalleries.com.au www.beavergalleries.com.au Directors: Martin and Susie Beaver Canberra's largest private gallery. Regular exhibitions of contemporary paintings, prints, sculpture, glass and ceramics by established and emerging Australian artists. Until 13 September: Wayne Viney. monotype prints; Lucienne Rickard,

15 September – 4 October: Dianne

20 October – 8 November: Robert Boynes, paintings; Kevin White,

Tue-Fri 10-5, Sat-Sun 9-5

Fogwell, works on paper; Nikki Main,

Virginia Kaiser, studio glass and fibre

10 Schlich Street, Yarralumla 2600 Tel 02 6285 2218 Fax 02 6282 5145 sales@solander.com.au www.solander.com.au Bringing the best of Australian art to the national capital. Canberra investment gallery, Advice on collecting, large stock of significant Australian artists, gazetted valuer.

Arc One Gallery 45 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000 Tel 03 9650 0589 Fax 03 9650 0591 mail@arc1gallery.com www.arcone.com.au Directors: Fran Clark and Suzanne Hampel Located in the heart of the arts precinct in Melbourne, Arc One Gallery represents some of Australia's most highly respected contemporary artists across a spectrum of disciplines that include painting, sculpture, photography, video and electronic media. Tues-Sat 11-5

Solander Gallery established 1974 by Joy Warren OAM. Fri-Sun 10-5, and by appointment

Arts Project Australia 24 High Street, Northcote 3070 Tel 03 9482 4484 Fax 03 9482 1852 info@artsproject.org.au www.artsproject.org.au Director: Sue Roff Arts Project Australia is a centre of excellence that supports artists with disabilities, promoting their work and advocating for inclusion within contemporary art practice. Mon-Fri 9-5, Sat 10-5, and by appointment

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drawings

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art 111 Sturt Street, Southbank 3006 Tel 03 9697 9999 Fax 03 9686 8830 info@accaonline.org.au www.accaonline.org.au Executive Director: Kay Campbell Artistic Director: Juliana Engberg The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) operates as a kunsthalle, a temporary exhibitions space delivering the very latest and best of Australian and international artistic practice. Located in a landmark rust-red monolith within the new contemporary arts precinct in Southbank, ACCA is Melbourne's premier contemporary art space presenting a changing program of exhibitions, events and education programs. Please visit the website for updated information about exhibitions and other events. Summer Hours: Tues-Sun 11-6 Winter Hours: Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat and Sun 11-6 Mon 10–5 by appointment only Open public holidays except Christmas Day and Good Friday, Free admission

Deakin University Art Gallery Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood 3125 Tel 03 9244 5344 Fax 03 9244 5254 artgallery@deakin.edu.au www.deakin.edu.au/art-collection Presenting a vibrant and contemporary exhibition program, check website Tues-Fri 10-4, Sat 1-5 during exhibition period, Free admission

Gallerysmith 170-174 Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne 3051 Tel 03 9329 1860 Mob 0425 809 328 marita@gallerysmith.com.au www.gallerysmith.com.au Director: Marita Smith Three spacious galleries. Exceptional early and mid-career Australian and South-East Asian artists. Also offering corporate/private art consultancy. Thurs-Fri 11-6, Sat 11-5

dianne tanzer gallery + projects 108-110 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy 3065 Tel 03 9416 3956 dtanzer@ozemail.com.au www.diannetanzergallery.net.au Director: Dianne Tanzer Giles Alexander, Roy Ananda, Natasha Bieniek, Dale Cox, Sebastian Di Mauro, Daniel Dorall, Marian Drew, Vincent Fantauzzo, Juan Ford, Neil Haddon, Matthew Hunt, Donna Marcus, Harry Nankin, Shaun O'Connor, Helen Pynor, Victoria Reichelt, Reko Rennie, Charles Robb, Natalie Ryan, Yhonnie Scarce, and Roh Singh. Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 12-5, by appointment

Geelong Gallery Little Malop Street, Geelong 3220 Tel 03 5229 3645 Fax 03 5221 6441 geelart@geelonggallery.org.au www.geelonggallery.org.au Until 11 September: Reflections of the Soul - Chinese contemporary ink wash painting. A special exhibition from the National Art Museum of China, Beijing 17 September – 20 November: 2011 Geelong Acquisitive Print Awards 26 November 2011 – 12 February 2012: Nicholas Chevalier: Australian Odyssey a Gippsland Art Gallery travelling exhibition Daily 10–5, Closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day and Good Friday, Free admission

Australian Tapestry Workshop 262-266 Park Street, South Melbourne 3025 Tel 03 9699 7885 Fax 03 9696 3151 contact@austapestry.com.au www.austapestry.com.au Director: Antonia Syme Changing exhibitions of contemporary tapestries by Australian and international artists, displayed in a studio setting with public viewings of works in progress. Bookings for tours essential. Mon-Fri 9-5

Charles Nodrum Gallery 267 Church Street, Richmond 3121 Tel 03 9427 0140 Fax 03 9428 7350 gallery@charlesnodrumgallery.com.au www.charlesnodrumgallery.com.au Director: Charles Nodrum Exhibiting and dealing in a broad range of modern and contemporary Australian paintings, works on paper and sculpture for corporate and private collectors. Tues-Sat 11-6

C.A.S. Contemporary Art Society of

Tel 03 9428 0568 Mob 0407 059 194

mail@contemporaryartsociety.org.au

www.contemporaryartsociety.org.au

Founded 1938. Non-profit organisation

run by and for artists, Australia-wide.

Bi-monthly exhibitions, Richmond

and Fitzroy Libraries; Decoy Café,

View 500+ artworks online. Regular

e-bulletins. Memberships: Artists \$60,

5-18 September: The Collectors'

Exhibition, Gallery 314,

314 Church St, Richmond.

PO Box 283, Richmond 3121

Victoria Inc.

Melbourne.

Friends \$20.

Dacou Gallery Melbourne 35 Spring St (corner of Flinders Lane), Melbourne 3000 Tel 03 9663 6368 Fax 03 9654 6485 leanne@dacou.com.au www.dacoumelbourne.com.au Director: Fred Torres Dreaming Art Centre of Utopia (N.T.) was established in 1993 by Utopia community member Fred Torres. Today, Dacou's collection includes the finest pieces by close family members such as Minnie Pwerle, Gloria Petyarre, Barbara Weir, The Pwerle Sisters plus many exciting emerging artists from Irrultja and surrounding outstations. Tue-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-5, Sun 11-4

Flinders Lane Gallery 137 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000 Tel 03 9654 3332 Fax 03 9650 8508 info@flg.com.au www.flg.com.au Director: Claire Harris Exceptional and collectable art since 1989. Contemporary Australian painters, sculptors and Aboriginal art. Extensive stockroom including works by Margaret Ackland, Sarah Amos, Richard Blackwell, William Breen, Claire Bridge, Terri Brooks, Lizzie Buckmaster Dove, Lilly Chorny, Jon Eiseman, Damien Elderfield, Karen Gray, Ian Greig, Juli Haas, Greer Honeywill, Dion Horstmans, Marise Maas, Mark Ogge, Gloria Petyarre, Garry Pumfrey, Caroline Rannersberger, Karlee Rawkins, Kathryn Ryan, Melinda Schawel, Keren Seelander, Ken Smith, Peter James Smith, Christophe Stibio, Spinifex artists, Utopia artists, Emma Walker, Simeon Walker, Wangkatjunka artists, Warlukurlangu artists, Kevin White, Christine Willcocks, Dan Wollmering, Mami Yamanaka. New exhibitions every three weeks.

Tues-Fri 11-6, Sat 11-4

James Makin Gallery 67 Cambridge Street, Collingwood, 3066 Tel 03 9416 3966 Fax 03 9416 4066 info@jamesmakingallery.com www.jamesmakingallery.com Director: James Makin Tues-Fri 10-5.30, Sat 11-5

Karen Woodbury Gallery 4 Albert St, Richmond 3121 Tel 03 9421 2500 Fax 03 9421 2044 info@kwgallery.com www.karenwoodburygallery.com Director: Karen Woodbury Karen Woodbury Gallery speicalises in contemporary Australian and international art, representing thirty artists. Visit our website, blog and Facebook page for updates and current information. Wed-Sat 11-5, or by appointment

LUMA La Trobe University Museum of Art La Trobe University, Bundoora 3086 Tel 03 9479 2111 Fax 03 9479 5588 www.latrobe.edu.au/artmuseum Located at the Bundoora campus, LUMA engages in historical and contemporary art debates. It is a creative institution that seeks to make a significant contribution to contemporary critical discourse; add to the knowledge of Australian artists, movements and events; work in cross-discipline paradigms; and be actively engaged in state, national and international collaborative projects. LUMA also manages the University Art Collection, one of the most significant university collections in the country, which charts the development of Australian art practice since the mid-1960s. Mon-Fri 10-5

Lauraine Diggins Fine Art 5 Malakoff St, North Caulfield 3161 Tel 03 9509 9855 Fax 03 9509 4549 ausart@diggins.com.au www.diggins.com.au Director: Lauraine Diggins Specialising in Australian colonial, impressionist, modern, contemporary and Indigenous painting, sculpture and decorative arts. We unconditionally guarantee the authenticity of all artworks offered for sale. 2011 exhibitions: The Elements within Sculpture; Flora and Landscape; Father's Country - The Morton Sisters; The Mindful Collector Tues-Fri 10-6, Sat 1-5

Libby Edwards Galleries
1046 High Street, Armadale 3143
Tel 03 9509 8292 Fax 03 9509 4696
melb@libbyedwardsgalleries.com
www.libbyedwardsgalleries.com
Monthly exhibitions of paintings by
contemporary Australian artists.
Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat-Sun 12-5

McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park 390 McClelland Drive, Langwarrin 3910 Melways ref. 103 E3 Tel 03 9789 1671 Fax 03 9789 1610 info@mcclellandgallery.com www.mcclellandgallery.com Australia's leading sculpture park and gallery, set in sixteen hectares of bush and landscaped gardens in Langwarrin, a 45 minute drive from Melbourne. McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park houses an excellent collection of paintings, works on paper and an extensive collection of works by leading Australian sculptors. The home of the 2011 McClelland Sculpture Survey and Award, the gallery presents a vibrant program of exhibitions and public programs. McClelland Gallery Cafe is available for special functions, weddings and corporate events. Guided tours Weds and Thurs at 11 and 2, Sat and Sun at 2, bookings essential.

[MARS] Melbourne Art Rooms 418 Bay St, Port Melbourne 3207 Tel 03 9681 8425 Fax 03 9681 8426 andy@marsgallery.com.au www.marsgallery.com.au MARS showcases outstanding contemporary Australian art from emerging and established artists. Two-level state-of-the-art gallery space with an extensive stockroom. Until 18 September: John Scurry, Bronek Kozka 21 September – 1 October: James Hullick 12 October - 6 November: Zoe Amor, Erin Tappe 10-20 November: Jo Mott Tues–Sun 10–5

Tues-Sun 10-5, Entry by donation

Menzies (formerly Deutscher~Menzies) & Lawson~Menzies
Menzies Art Brands Pty Ltd
1 Darling Street, South Yarra 3141
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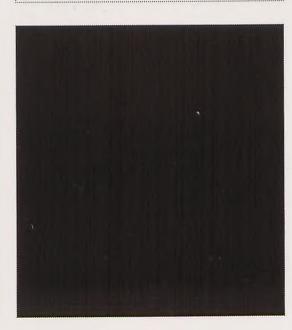
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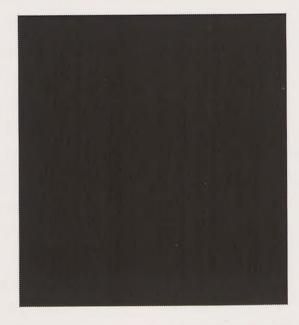
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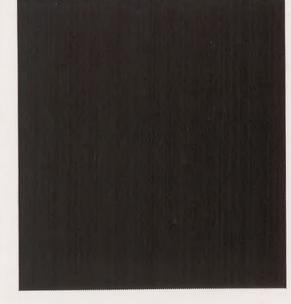
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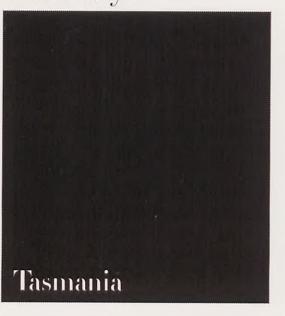
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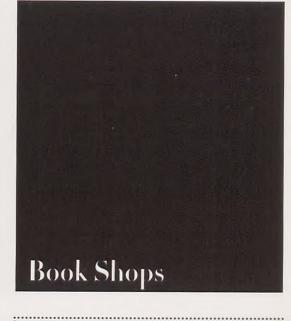
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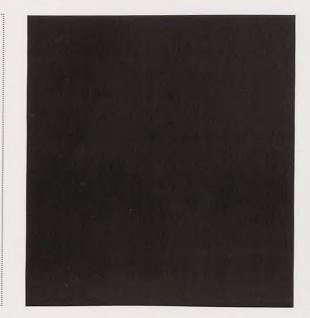
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Gertrude Contemporary and Art & Australia Emerging Writers Program: Marian Tubbs



Walking into this filmic video installation at Sydney's Art Gallery of New South Wales Contemporary Project Space, it appeared a revival of French New Wave cinema was at play. Interestingly, it was not the work of Truffaut, Godard or a new young European video artist but of an Australian, Sam Smith. The Sydney artist's work has consistently focused on the camera as a subject, and the looping non-linear narrative of 'Camerman' featured Smith's first use of vintage film formats such as Super 16 integrated with more recent systems such as 4K digital cinema.

The work read as a portrait of a man, a camera and a city. Presented as a two-channel installation, the work expanded with the introduction of further characters: the artist, the director, plaster camera replicas and Berlin. Smith's production values were, as always, resplendent. While the mood floated between dreamy and melancholic, every scene and frame was calculated – from the dance of floating dust illuminated by the throw of a projector to the strangely intimate noises made when mixing a plaster recipe. Plaster camera sculptures have a lineage in the artist's vernacular. Here it was as if the unnamed cameraman wanted to take control of his device by re-creating it in its own image again and again.

Now exposed, the cameraman's tools of perception did not aid clarity but instead revealed more questions. Who was the cameraman? Was the actor/director meant to be Smith? Or the man that the camera followed? Or even the guy at the back of the scene almost out of shot? The more time spent with the work, the more one felt the wrestle between technical perfection and narrative. So thorough was this investigation of the camera that the form became partly emptied of meaning. This was especially apparent when the camera's model plaster replica was captured in frame. This, along with a full exploitation of 'after effects', continually allowed for truths and illusions to be created and then unmade.

Only during scenes of Berlin, the city that played home to the work, did the two channels synchronise. The left channel depicted

the artist (played by Smith) examining photographic lenses and making plaster camera replicas; the right starred an anguished director (played by Johannes Suhm) and his on-set story. But even this consistency was broken when the two characters met in the same frame to sit and watch the film. For all of this play with narrative's potential meanings, no great truth was revealed; instead we arrived at a more confused state, unhinged within Smith's non-linear structure. This harks back to New Wave director Robert Bresson's famous paradoxical writings from *Notes on the Cinematographer* (1975), a volume cited in the exhibition catalogue's 'reading list' (an indication that Smith happily wears his influences on his sleeve). In a sense this outward gaze was an extension of Smith's earlier piece, *Into the void*, 2009, where the artist was depicted dissolving into Yves Klein paintings while on visits to overseas art institutions.

'Cameraman' tried hard, and succeeded at times, to build an emotionally effective world for an audience who might otherwise have felt alienated by Smith's engagement with 'art cinema', a territory often accused of innate pretension. A hypnotic score composed by the artist could be heard quite a distance from the gallery, lulling one into the sensory experience of the exhibition. This was a quiet installation, displaying a lonely but beautiful world for its 31 minutes and 22 seconds – the beginning was when you walked in and the end when you walked out.

Marian Tubbs was mentored by Daniel Mudie Cunningham, independent curator, writer, artist and Senior Curator, Artbank; Sam Smith: Cameraman, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 21 May – 14 August 2011.

Sam Smith, Camerman, 2011
Production video still
Courtesy the artist and Grantpirrie Gallery, Sydney

Art & Australia / Credit Suisse Private Banking Contemporary Art Award Peter Nelson

Talia Linz

At once wildly organic and highly structured, Peter Nelson's work eludes being pinned down. It calls forth landscapes both familiar and imaginary, drawing on influences as diverse as fourteenth-century Chinese literati painting and real-time strategy video games. The strength of Nelson's work lies in this very eclecticism, and is reflective of a creative practice that has taken the Sydney-based artist from the Chinese province of Hunan to the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris where he was recently in residence.

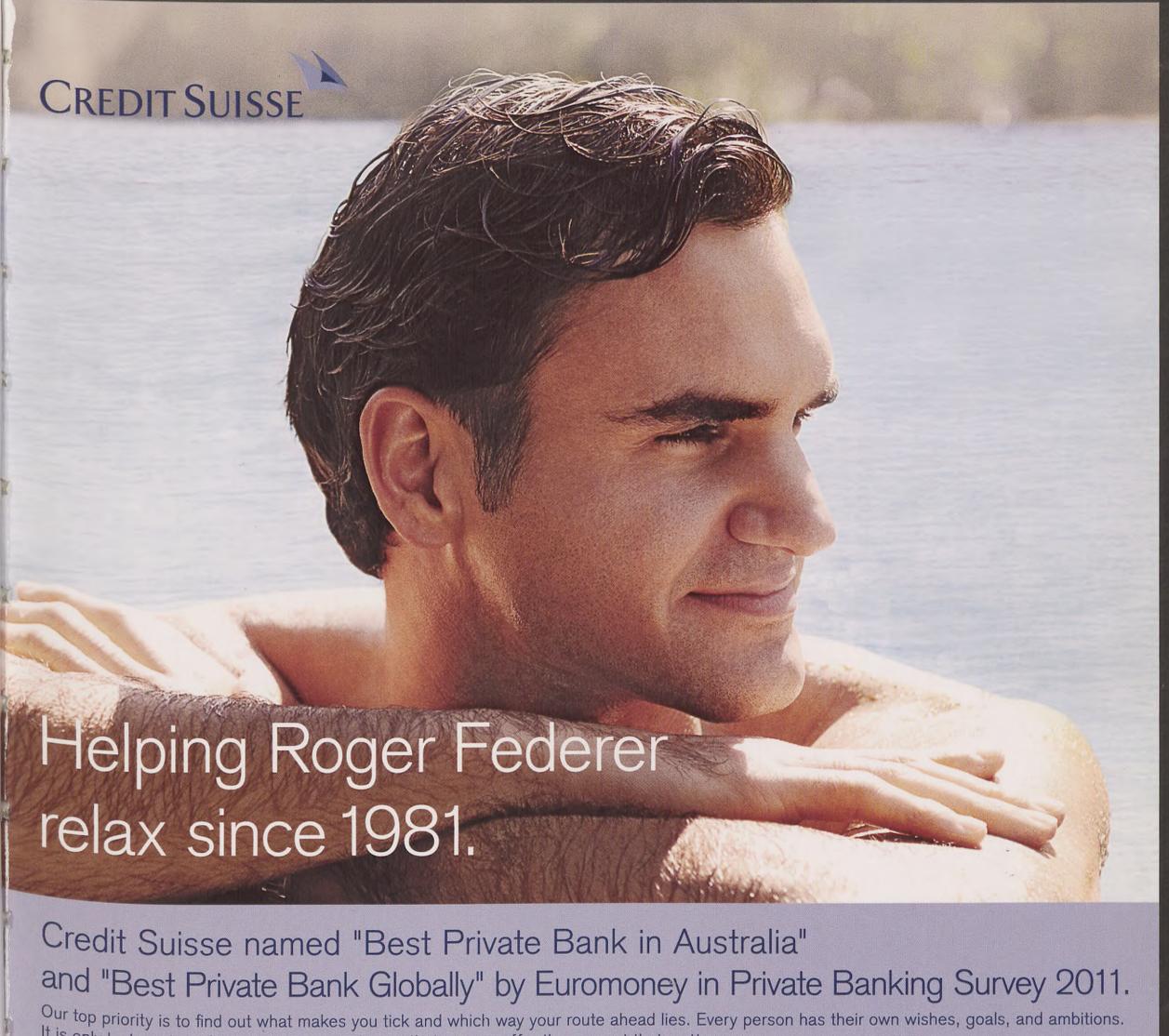
Nelson's current project, Extensions of a no-place, 2011, employs one of the artist's signature motifs: an oblique grid prompted by traditional Chinese scrolls. When used as a backdrop this spatial framework allows Nelson to experiment with aesthetic and conceptual notions of territory within a set perspectival system. Innate in this format is the potential for eternal expansion, for the creation of a borderless and colonising territory – what the artist calls a 'Cartesian wasteland' after the revolutionary coordinate system developed by René Descartes. This multi-panelled work on paper is reminiscent of urban architectural plans, with figurative nods to the tools of construction, and yet it does not represent a recognisable place. Textured sketches resembling municipal ruins are interlaid with coloured roadblocks and staircases merely connect one part of the grid to another ad infinitum. When read as a meditation on space and balance, the influence of the literati painters becomes evident. These scholar-artists of the Yuan Dynasty were less interested in representational likeness than they were in invented landscapes, and in manipulating existing tropes of Chinese landscape painting. The archetypal literati painter lived in retirement amid natural beauty, employing expressive brushstrokes and impressionistic techniques in opposition to the more studied formalism and illusionistic representation of his art-trained contemporaries.

Far removed from such a scenario, Nelson graduated in 2006 from the College of Fine Arts, Sydney, with First Class Honours and



the University Medal in Painting, and has already secured a number of solo shows in his relatively short career. A logical extension of his interest in built environments, Nelson's 2010 Section of a no-place saw the artist migrate from the wall to the floor, constructing a multifaceted Perspex and cardboard work. This in turn led to the development of his solely Perspex piece, Mountain drawing (the first time I felt at home) earlier this year. The transparency of Nelson's chosen material, which he compares to the inherent quality of his much-loved ink, renders the complex skeleton of this large sculptural work visible and imbues the work with an ethereal seductiveness. It seems to both solidly occupy space while also encouraging the surrounding air and light to float through and around its many parts. Complemented in exhibition by ink and graphite plein-air drawings, even Nelson's three-dimensional work highlighted his attention to mark-making; the work's sporadic opaque faces accent the piece like the dotted tien brushstrokes that are the final touch of Chinese landscape painting.

Spatial colonisation, fabricated landscapes and modular arrangements are perhaps an unlikely coupling with this traditional form, and more accurately describe the basis for real-time strategy video games. Expert players possess versatility and resourcefulness, both traits with which the artist can be credited. Of import to Nelson is the capacity of these games to continually expand territory while they evolve within a codified form - much like his work. From the business district of La Défense in western Paris to the geomorphology of southern China, Nelson is constantly gleaning environmental forms and suspending them within curious non-places. The effect is a kind of surrealist temporal freeze, both enchanting and inhospitable in effect. And so his work not only plays with the perceived permanence of urban architecture, or the impending spoil of natural forms, but also suggests an internal, melancholic terrain – a further example of his work's intriguing and seemingly infinite heterogeneity.



It is only by knowing what success means to you that we can offer the support that matters.

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Art & Australia / Credit Suisse Private Banking Contemporary Art Award

Peter Nelson

Peter Nelson, Mountain drawing (the first time I felt at home), 2011 Perspex and glue, 265 X 420 X 200 cm, installation view, Kudos Gallery, Sydney, February 2011 Courtesy the artist and Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney





For applications and guidelines,

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