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Sally Gabori, Dibirdibi country, 2011
Synthetic polymer paint on linen, 151 × 196 cm
Courtesy the artist, Mornington Island Art and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

below, left to right

Bus shelter tribute to Edmund Capon, 2011; Edmund Capon, 1999,
photograph Jenni Carter; Helen Eager's studio, 2011, courtesy the artist and
Utopia Art, Sydney; The Glue Society, I wish you hadn't asked, 2011, house and
various materials, 1100 × 550 × 500 cm, site-specific installation at 'Sculpture
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Jenny Watson, Mindchatter, 1991

Oil on German cotton, false horse tail and ribbon, 187 × 98 × 9 cm

Courtesy and © The artist

Sally Gabori, Dibirdibi country, 2011 Synthetic polymer paint on linen, 198 × 100 cm Courtesy the artist, Mornington Island Art, and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne







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### From the Editors

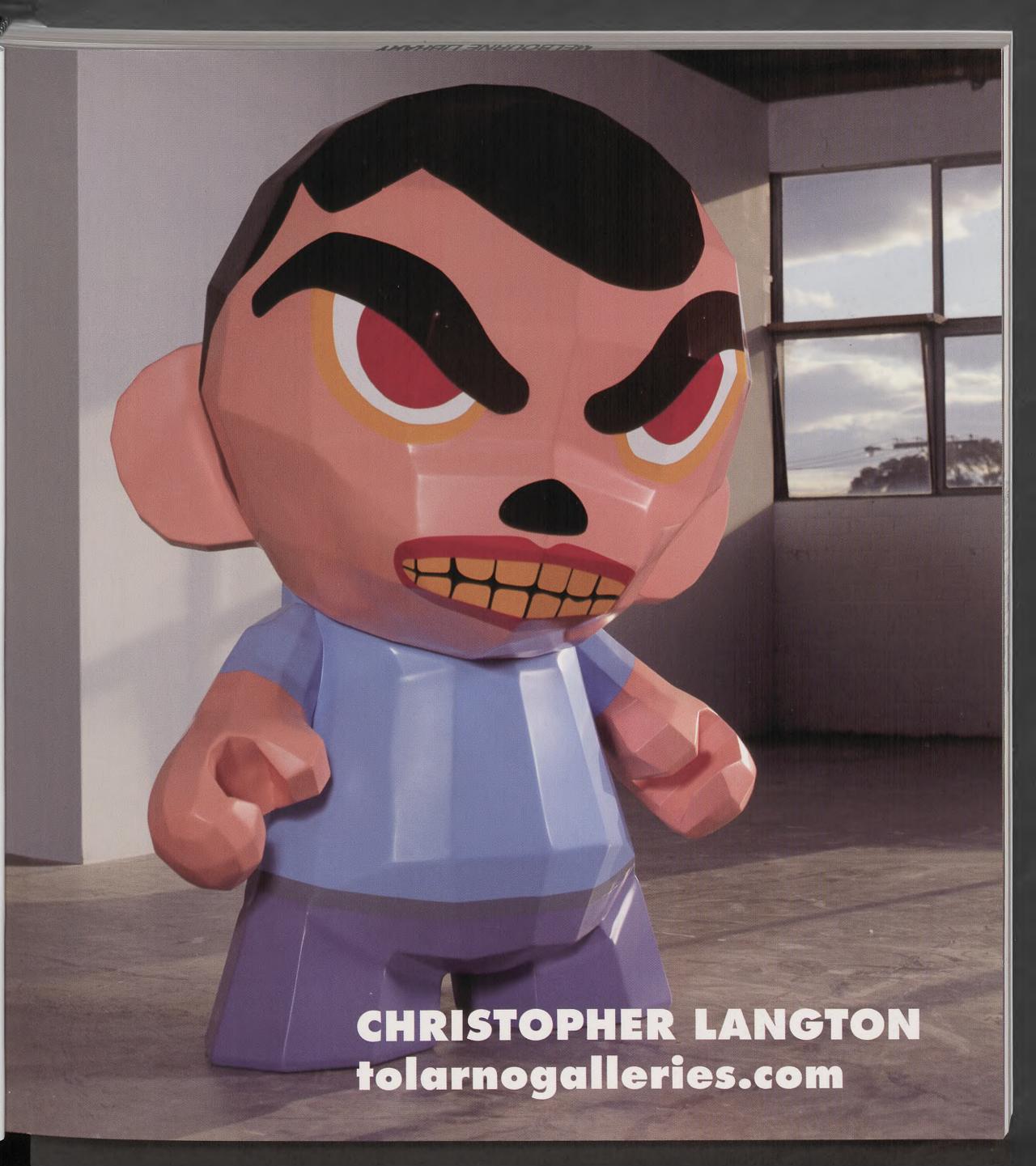
'Is the art world finally taking work created by women seriously?'
Curiously, this question was asked not in the 1960s or the 1970s, when museum visitors sometimes struggled to find works by women artists on public display, but as recently as 2009 when London's *Guardian* newspaper heralded the all-female hang at the Beaubourg in Paris, entitled 'elles@centrepompidou'. Such acts of art-world assertion, where institutions are finally redressing the balance after decades – well, centuries – of curatorial neglect, are to be rightfully welcomed, but the question persists: why do we need to differentiate women's art and why now?

With a steady progression of shows, both local and international, from 'WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution' in 2007 to 2011's 'A Different Temporality: Aspects of Australian Feminist Art Practice 1975–1985', the impact of first-, second- and third-wave feminisms has resounded with increasing volume across the art landscape. And when Brisbane's Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) announced an all-female survey show for April 2012 with 'Contemporary Australia: Women', the noise became louder still, commanding our attention.

'Think big, and be loud', a catchphrase of the Sydney performance collective Brown Council and the title of the discussion that introduces our all-female features section, encapsulates the audible buzz in the Zeitgeist. Yet the feminist mood appears exploratory and open-ended rather than declarative, as our panel discussion attests. It seems the right moment, then, to ask: What are the crucial issues for women today? And, what would you like to see happen next, as women for women, in art and in cultural institutions? These are just some of the questions GoMA's Curatorial Manager of Australian Art, Julie Ewington, puts to our cross-generational panel of female artists and curators – and their responses, like the artists included in the issue, are as unpredictable as they are provocative.

In dedicating this March edition of *Art & Australia* to women artists, we have been wrestling with many of these same issues – and more. How does Sally Gabori, a senior Kaiadilt painter from a remote island in the Gulf of Carpentaria resonate with or relate to her Japanese contemporary Yayoi Kusama, whose practice was forged in the artistic epicentre of 1960s New York? How does the mother of performance art, Marina Abramović, speak to her contemporary 'children'? And how can a single artwork such as Nalini Malani's *Mother India* express the magnitude of universal female experience or, even, in the case of Julie Rrap's 360 degree self-portrait, the full power of the individual? Thankfully art mistrusts definitive answers, but in posing these questions we hope to take readers closer to the essence of today's feminism – something that is ineffable and yet enduring and all the while expressly female.

On a different note, our March issue also pays tribute to Australia's longest-serving gallery director. In his thirty-three years at Sydney's Art Gallery of New South Wales, Edmund Capon has smoothly – and sagaciously – overseen sundry shifts in the museum world. His wit, wisdom and wonderful legacy are celebrated in our pages.



### Contributors



From top, left to right:

Originally from Auckland, Serena Bentley is Next Wave's Artistic Program Manager. She is also a freelance art writer and curator and recently curated 'Yvonne Todd: Wall of Seahorsel' that opened at the Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, in February 2012.

KEVIN CONNOR is a painter of people and cities. He has held over sixty solo exhibitions since 1962. Connor has twice won the Archibald Prize (1975, 1977), the Sulman Prize (1991, 1997) and the Dobell Prize (1993, 2005). From 1981 to 1987 he was a trustee of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, where an exhibition of his work, 'Sketchbooks, Drawings and Studies for Painting and Sculpture', was held in 2006.

JULIE EWINGTON is a writer, curator and broadcaster. She is currently Curatorial Manager, Australian Art at Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane. Recent curatorial projects include 'Contemporary Australia: Women' (2012), 'Scott Redford: Introducing Reinhardt Dammn' (2010) and 'Contemporary Australia: Optimism' (2008).

ALEXIE GLASS-KANTOR is Director and Senior Curator, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, and co-curator (with Natasha Bullock) of the 12th Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, 'Parallel Collisions'.

AMELIA JONES is Professor and Grierson Chair in Visual Culture at McGill University in Montréal. Her recent publications include essays on Marina Abramović (in *The Drama Review*), and on performance art histories, as well as the edited volume *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (2003; new edition 2010). Her most recent book, *Self/Image: Technology, Representation, and the Contemporary Subject* (2006), will be followed in 2012 by titles on identification and the history of live art.

SØREN LUNDBECK is a freelance art critic, writer, lecturer and assistant curator based in Aarhus, Demark.

GAY McDonald is a senior lecturer in the School of Art History & Art Education, University of New South Wales/College Of Fine Arts and a member of the in.site research group, which encourages critical debate, projects and publications on experimental approaches to engage audiences with contemporary art (www.in.site.unsw.edu.au).

Frances Morris is Head of Collections (International Art) at London's Tate. Formerly head of displays at Tate Modern, she curated the first major re-hang of the collection in 2006 as well as overseeing the opening display in 2000. She curated the current retrospective of Yayoi Kusama which opened at Madrid's Reina Sofia in May 2011 and which travels to New York's Whitney Museum in June 2012.

MACUSHLA ROBINSON is a curatorial assistant at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. She studied art theory, philosophy and printmaking at the Australian National University and University of Sydney, winning the latter's University Medal. Her theoretical methodology begins with physical encounters, privileging materiality and teasing out its philosophical implications.

Heather Rose is an award-winning Australian author of three novels: *The Butterfly Man*, *The River Wife* and *White Heart*. Heather travels regularly to New York where, in 2010, she spent two weeks as an observer of, and participant in, Marina Abramović's 'The Artist is Present' at the Museum of Modern Art. Heather gratefully acknowledges the support of Hobart's Museum of Old and New Art in her research.

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### Contributors

GLENN BARKLEY is Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Sydney. He has most recently curated 'Volume One: MCA Collection' for the opening of the MCA's major redevelopment in March 2012.

NATASHA BULLOCK is Curator, Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, and co-curator (with Alexie Glass-Kantor) of the 12th Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, 'Parallel Collisions'.

BOB CARR was premier of New South Wales from 1995 to 2005.

CATHRYN DRAKE is a writer based in Athens and Rome who covers art, architecture and travel for publications such as *Artforum* and *Time* magazine.

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

Angela Goddard is Curator, Australian Art to 1975, at the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, and Reviews Editor of the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art.

DAVID GONSKI was president of the Board of Trustees, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1997–2007. As well as holding a number of other positions, David is Chancellor of the University of New South Wales, Chairman of the UNSW Foundation, and of the Sydney Theatre Company.

SUMMAR HIPWORTH is the Program Manager for 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney. She has worked for art institutions such as Tate Modern and The British Museum in London, and managed the studios and projects for internationally renowned artists Chris Ofili and Sam Taylor-Wood.

Susan Jacobs is an artist based in Melbourne. She is represented by Sarah Scout, Melbourne.

CRAIG JUDD is an independent arts writer, educator and curator. He is the Curator of Detached Cultural Organisation, Hobart.

Talia Linz is currently based in Canada, where she is undertaking a Masters in Curating at the University of Toronto. She is an independent writer and editor and former assistant editor of *Art & Australia*.

STEVEN LOWY AM is President of the Board of Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

BRUCE McLean, a Wirri man of the Birri Gubba nation of Central Queensland, is Curator, Indigenous Australian Art, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane.

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KIT MESSHAM-MUIR is a Newcastle-based art theorist and museologist, and lecturer in art history at the University of Newcastle. He is currently working on a book looking at visual culture and the War on Terror through the work of video installation artist Shaun Gladwell.

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REBECCA O'DWYER is an art writer and academic from Dublin, currently based in Sydney. She is a founding editor of *Not Drowning but Waving*, an Irish publication that aims to provide a platform for critical, artistic and curatorial dialogue, and also compiles a personal art-writing blog at www.rebeccaodwyer.wordpress.com.

SHERIDAN PALMER is currently engaged in writing a biography of the late Bernard Smith. She is an independent art curator and cultural historian working in Melbourne, where she holds honorary positions at the universities of Melbourne and La Trobe.

Andrew Purvis is a writer and artist based in Perth. He is currently in the early stages of his PhD, having completed his Master of Visual Arts in 2011.

MICHELLE USSHER is an artist who lives and works in London. She is represented by KALIMANRAWLINS, Melbourne.

Anna Waldmann is an art consultant. She has been a curator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, and director of visual arts at the Australia Council for the Arts. She is a visiting fellow at the College of Fine Arts (University of New South Wales).

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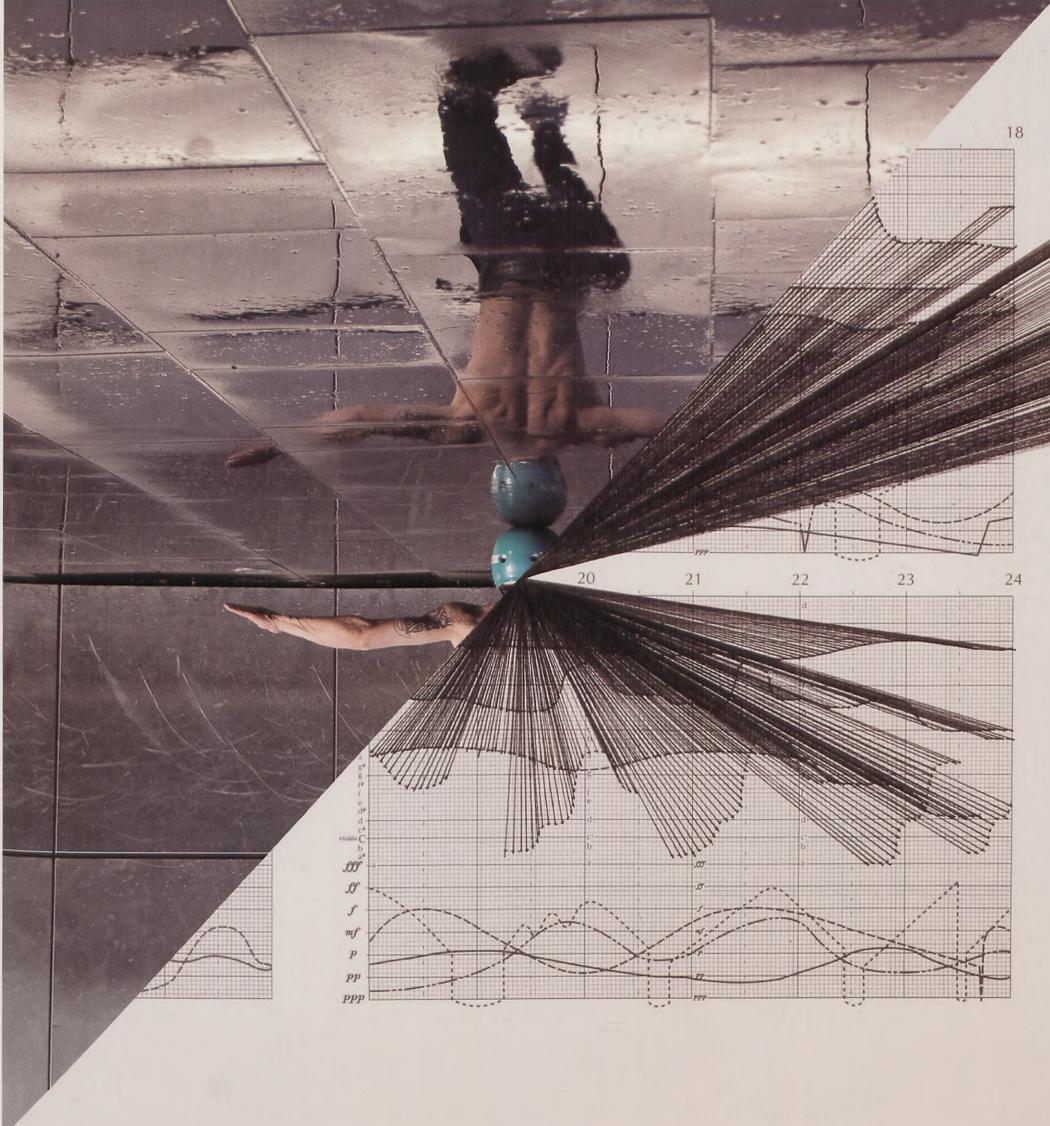




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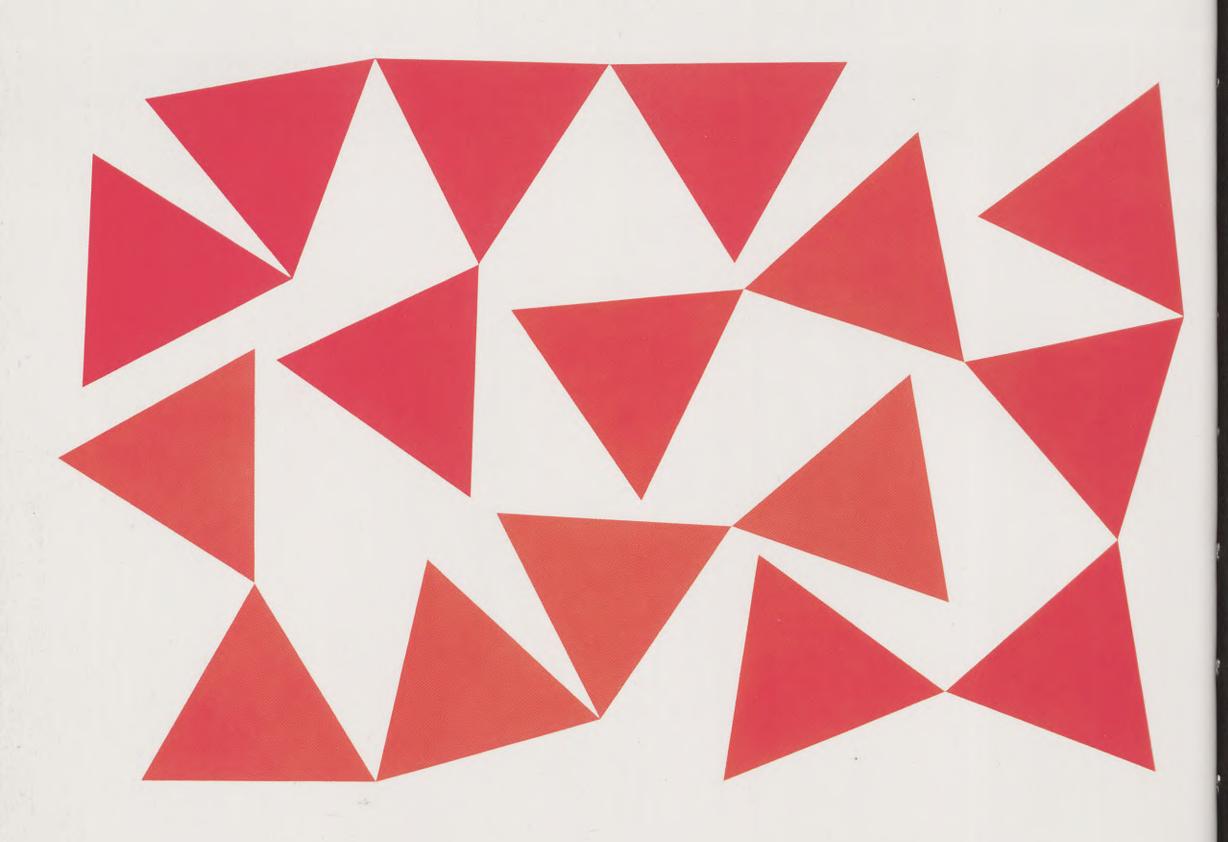
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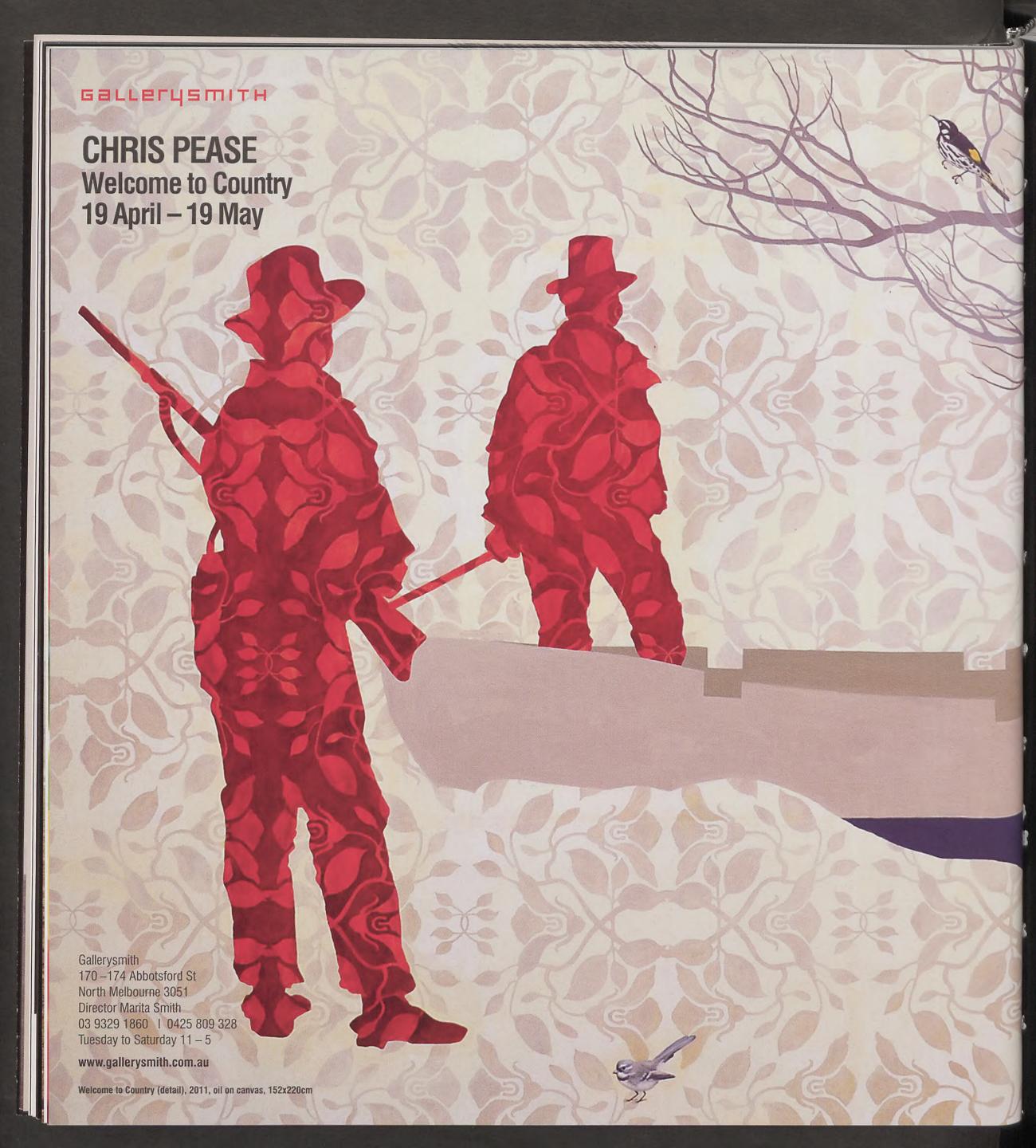


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### Forum, Autumn 2012

Kevin Connor: Scenes from an exhibition, part two Michael Fitzgerald

Edmund Capon's thirty-three years at the Art Gallery of New South Wales
Steven Lowy

Edmund Capon in conversation with Bob Carr

Reflections on a retiring art gallery director David Gonski

> Thomas Demand Michael Fitzgerald

> > Pipilotti Rist Cathryn Drake

The MCA's National Centre for Creative Learning
Gay McDonald

Helen Eager Glenn Barkley

Helen Maudsley Sheridan Palmer

Andrew Rogers
Anna Waldmann

'Sculpture by the Sea Aarhus' Søren Lundbeck

### **Kevin Connor**

Scenes from an exhibition Part Two

Michael Fitzgerald

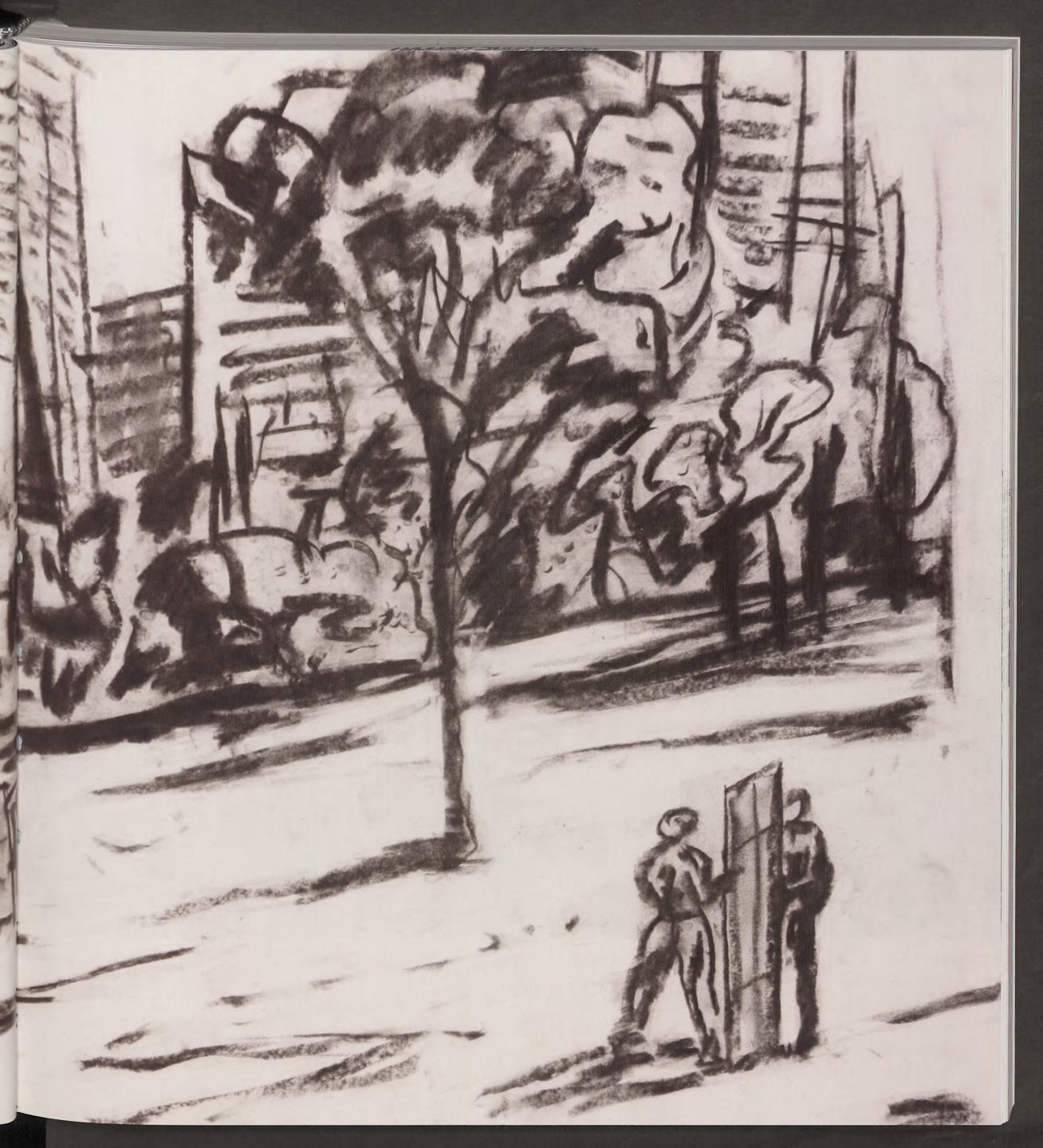
THE ARCHIBALD PRIZE IS IN KEVIN CONNOR'S BONES and being. 'I can remember as a kid being dragged along to see the Archibald', he recalls. 'My folks didn't go to galleries other than that. So it's a unique thing, and whether it's a circus or very serious art is entirely up to the people who run it and show in it.'1 In his sixty years as a practising artist, Connor has brought gravitas to Australia's national portrait prize, hung close to thirty times, and winning it twice (first in 1975 for painting his late father-in-law, Sir Frank Kitto, who, as one of the legal defenders of the Art Gallery of New South Wales trustees with William Dobell's contested 1943 portrait of Joshua Smith, was no stranger to the Archibald). And as a trustee himself from 1981 to 1987, Connor has experienced the prize from the other side of the loading dock, helping choose winners such as Davida Allen's refreshingly candid Dr John Arthur McKelvey Shera: My father-in-law watering his garden, 1986.

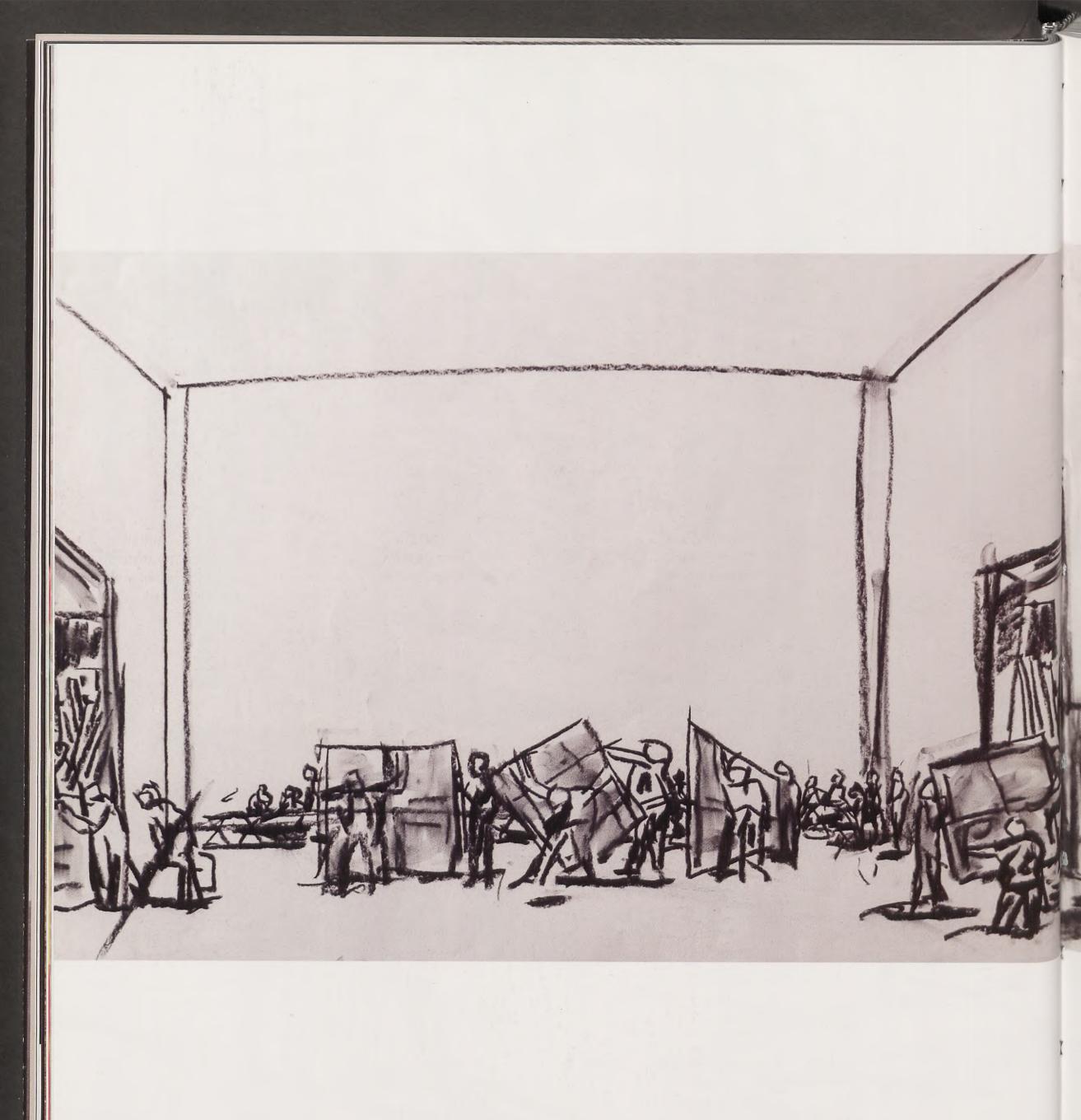
Who better, then, to capture the Archibald's essence? In 2010 Art & Australia commissioned Connor to record the background machinations of this most public of prizes with his indelible ink and charcoal on paper. In this final instalment of the two-part project, Connor presents his eyewitness account of last year's Archibald Prize judging, a rare glimpse indeed. 'Behind the scenes [staff] are always amazing', he says. 'It's a very skilled thing.' As is Connor's virtuosic drawing, and in the following pages we are privileged to behold the bones and being of the Archibald itself.

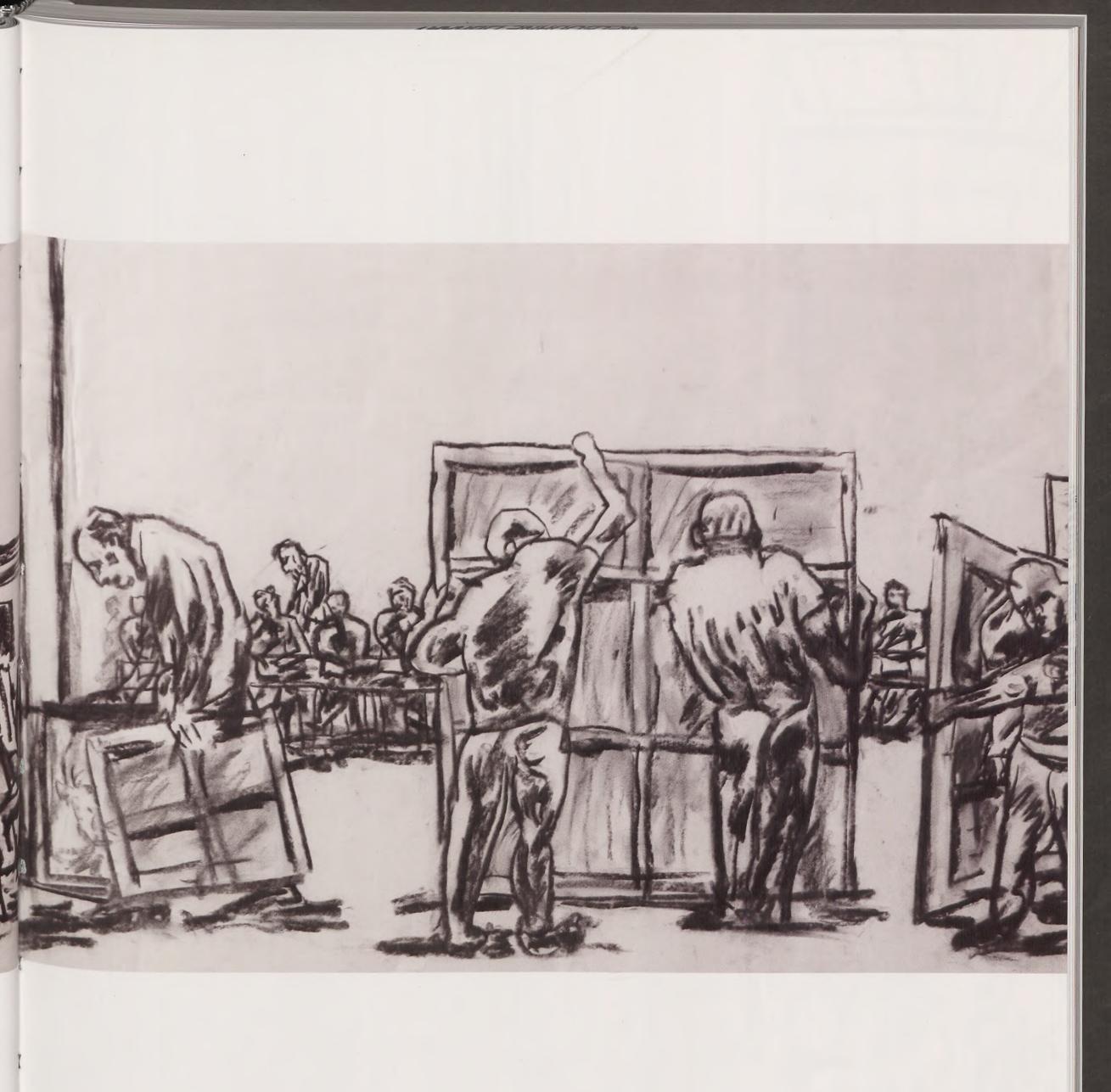
Archibald, Wynne & Sulman Prizes 2012, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 31 March – 3 June 2012.



All quotations from the artist come from an interview with the author at Connor's Sydney studio, 17 January 2011.











Kevin Connor, Backroom drawings at the AGNSW, 2010–11 Charcoal on paper, courtesy the artist and Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney

# On luck and longevity: Edmund Capon's thirty-three years at the Art Gallery of New South Wales

Steven Lowy

The Newly formed reserve bank of Australia was lucky when the legendary public servant H. C. 'Nugget' Coombs was appointed as its founding governor in 1960. So too was the BBC when Lord Reith arrived in the 1920s to imbue that broadcasting icon with its culture of integrity and independent reporting. And Sydney's Art Gallery of New South Wales got lucky beyond measure in 1978 when a 38-year-old Englishman accepted then premier Neville Wran's entreaties to lead the gallery. No-one back then, least of all Edmund Capon, could have guessed that this initial appointment would evolve into a thirty-three-year odyssey which would see both the gallery and its director become celebrated identities in Australia's cultural landscape.

One of Edmund's first acts as director was an egalitarian, and entirely sensible, decision to remove the turnstiles which then stood like sentries at the entry to the gallery. That single act set the tone for everything he has done for the gallery since. Edmund's singular contribution has been to improve the gallery in every respect, most importantly the quality of its collections and also its public programs, while at the same time making it more popular. He achieved this not by dumbing down the aspirations of the gallery but by pursuing quality at every turn.

That sentiment has informed Edmund's strategy as he has assiduously sniffed out the best buys the gallery could possibly afford. In the early 1980s the gallery's acquisition funds were exhausted with the purchase of Picasso's *Nude in a rocking chair*, 1956. Edmund knew the gallery needed a more sustainable funding base for acquisitions and in 1983 he launched the Art Gallery of New South Wales Foundation to raise and invest funds for the purchase of major artworks. Today, the foundation's resources total some \$30 million. Edmund was also remarkably successful in attracting large donations, most notably with John Kaldor's 2008 gift of contemporary art valued at over \$35 million.

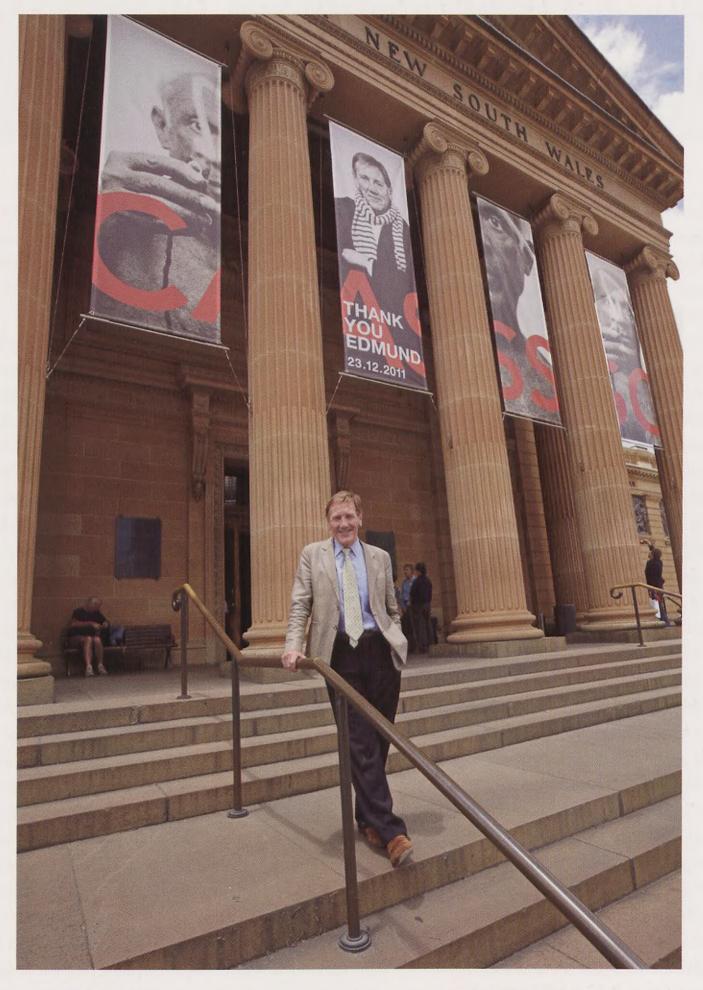
Edmund's legacy is a formidable one. He served nine premiers

and six presidents of the board of trustees of the art gallery. His sundry achievements include securing and curating both scholarly and yet widely attended exhibitions. Among many highlights were the 1999 Jeffrey Smart retrospective; 'Caravaggio and His World' in 2004; his canny oversight of the Archibald Prize for so many years; and the immensely popular 'The First Emperor', which attracted more than 300,000 visitors in 2010–11. Indeed, Edmund's enduring passion for Asian art, particularly his interest in Chinese art and scholarship, led him to establish the Asian galleries in 1990 before their eventual doubling in size in 2003.

Timing has also been an important part of Edmund's repertoire, and he has often been able to come up with just the right purchase, or just the right exhibition, at the right time. Two fine examples of this include the acquisition of Cézanne's *Bords de la Marne*, 1888, which coincided with the thirtieth anniversary of Edmund's appointment to the gallery. At \$16.2 million this masterpiece is the most prized purchase the gallery has made to date. The second example is Edmund's final flourish at the gallery: the magnificent exhibition 'Picasso: Masterpieces from the Musée National Picasso, Paris' comprising 150 drawings, paintings and sculptures by the twentieth century's most famous artist.

Both these events, though they are but two of his countless initiatives and achievements, serve to remind us that Edmund is a lover of art in the purest sense, and that his ambition has always been to share that love with as wide an audience as possible. In the year he started there were 329,000 visitors to the gallery. Now there are 1.2 million annually. For these reasons, and many more, the art gallery has indeed been lucky beyond measure that Edmund Capon arrived to lead the institution with such flair, combined with serious purpose, and that he stayed for so many years.

Steven Lowy AM is President of the Board of Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.



Edmund Capon in front of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, December 2011 Photograph Diana Panuccio

## Towards a great general museum: Edmund Capon in conversation with Bob Carr

On 20 October 2011, in the final months of his directorship of Sydney's Art Gallery of New South Wales, Edmund Capon sat down with former New South Wales premier Bob Carr to reflect on his thirty-three years at the gallery – its exhibitions and evolution – and to touch on the future. What follows is an edited excerpt of that conversation.

Bob Carr: Do you remember your very first impressions from when you came here to take over – be brutal.

Edmund Capon: Absolutely. The very first time was when I came out to Australia for five days when the gallery staged 'The Chinese Exhibition' in 1977, the first major Chinese show with the jade suit. I had written a book [Art and Archeology in China (1977)] which was being published by Macmillan in Melbourne and sponsored by Mobil Oil, which also sponsored 'The Chinese Exhibition'. A delightful, wonderful man called Jim Leslie was chairman of Mobil Oil. Out of the blue Jim rang up our house in London at half-past five one January morning. Half-past five in the morning in January in London is not the most enlightening of times. I asked him what he was doing, and he said: 'Well, it's half-past six; I'm just going to pop down to the pool and then have a drink.' He then said: 'Why don't you come out to Australia?' I looked out of the window where it was dark, cold, sleeting and snowing. I took one look and said yes.

We came out to Melbourne for two days and had memorable moments with Stephen FitzGerald [Australia's first ambassador to China], went to Canberra for a day then came to Sydney. In one of those encounters that you never forget, I walked through the front door and there was this beautiful Vernon vestibule with two great arches and then cutting straight across it was the concrete beam of the then restaurant. I saw all these legs of chairs, tables and people, and I thought: 'What a weird thing to do with two beautiful classical arches.' That was my first image of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

I had come to see the then director, my direct predecessor [Peter Laverty], and I walked into this very room and I sat down here and

looked around and said: 'Not bad.' I recalled my little attic at the V&A which was up with the broom cupboards with a window that looked directly onto a brick wall, and I thought: 'On the whole the view's better here.'

BC: What did you think of the collection?

EC: When I settled here [in 1978] I must say I was in slight despair. On this level where our education and public programs department is now located was a small Asian art gallery, and I looked around and tried to find a few objects that had some familiar presence and quality, and there were one or two. Then I remember going down to the old courts to look for familiar territory and I saw the Bernardo Strozzi, *The release of St Peter* [c. 1635], a picture bought for this gallery by Kenneth Clark in 1965. Then I looked around and saw works by Sid Nolan – I'm of the view that he is the great artist of twentieth-century Australia – and I began to feel better.

BC: Were there any glaring inadequacies in the collection?

EC: Yes, that was why we then launched the Foundation. [At the time] I said it was like a building without enough windows or like a grand tent without the major poles to hold it up. I remember there was a lot of criticism about the general state of the gallery, and I had to contend with two slightly – how can I put it? – recalcitrant trustees in the form of dear Franco Belgiorno-Nettis and Harry Seidler, who were quite against my getting this job in the first place. But of course within six months we talked everything [through] and they actually became two of my greatest and most enduring friends, with great commitment, presence, imagination and knowledge too.

BC: Were you struck by gaps in the collection?

EC: Absolutely. Coming from a fairly objective position, what struck me quite early was the absence of those defining signposts of modern western art. There was no cubist art, there was no German expressionist art, there was no Picasso, the leading lights and signposts of twentieth-century western art were more or less totally







missing. There was one Bacon and one Bonnard. The foundations of modern western art which contributed substantially to the foundations of modern Australian art were simply not here.

BC: In your thirty years here, who have been the standout benefactors?

EC: The first great benefactor whose name still reverberates was actually Mervyn Horton [founding editor of Art & Australia]. Mervyn had been a trustee and left his entire estate to the gallery. But there was a little bit of a hiccup – he'd been relieved of his trusteeship by Neville Wran so he was very cranky and changed his will. One of the first things I had to do was actually get Mervyn back on board. Mervyn died in 1983 and today if you look back at the development of our contemporary international collection, the Mervyn Horton Bequest has been the leading light. So that was the first big step, and that was a pretty major step.

BC: That is a generous tribute. Who would come next?

EC: The next was a dear, dear man – much less known – called Hepburn Myrtle. He was a very modest man, but he was the one great antipodean collector of Chinese imperial ceramics who left most of his collection to our gallery. If you go down to our Asian gallery and look at the Ming dynasty porcelain, it's Hepburn Myrtle, Hepburn Myrtle, Hepburn Myrtle. He was a big influence. And coming back to the Asian collections, they have been largely founded on private benefaction; it is a collection that has been largely defined by private passion, probably more so than any other part of the gallery's collections.

BC: There is really a buzz of private benefaction around the place now. How do you rate that extraordinary Kaldor Family gift?

EC: In terms of the number of works of art forming that collection – because all up it is over 200 – and in terms of the dollar value, then you are looking at the largest single benefaction to probably any Australian public art museum. Then there are people like Ken and Yasuko Myer, the Sternbergs and, in recent

years, James Fairfax, Mollie Gowing, James Gleeson, John Schaeffer and Ken Reed among many others.

It is interesting to look at benefactors and where their interests may lie, because collectors can often become benefactors – not always but often – and collectors in one area are a different species to collectors in another area. Going back to Hepburn Myrtle, who was known around the world as a great collector in his esoteric pursuit of Chinese imperial porcelain, he was quiet, retiring and would absolutely abhor any notoriety or publicity. In comparison those collecting in the more contemporary area today tend to be much more visible and indeed are happy to be visible, which of course is fine. So the nature of the collection can tell you much about the nature of the collector.

However quiet and retiring and private they may be, I think there is a certain side to everybody who likes to be acknowledged – even Margaret Olley. Margaret Olley was a huge and very special benefactor ... But I believe everybody gives in their own particular way and probably wants some kind of recognition, but the overriding motive is invariably positive. Benefaction in whatever form is a positive action.

BC: Can I ask you about the great shows that you have secured. I think of 'German Expressionism' that came here in 1989. I visited German museums with more relish after that. What stands out for you as the great educational shows that seem to have stretched peoples' understanding about art?

EC: Let us say the great shows not of education but of revelation. I honestly think the best ones have been those where we have been the main progenitor of the show. 'German Expressionism' was a good example and one I did with George Költzsch, the leading expert who was director at Essen's Folkwang Museum at the time. The genesis of that exhibition was our purchase of the Kirchner [Three bathers, 1913, in 1984], which was the first Foundation acquisition. Another show that opened people's eyes was 'Fauves' [1995]. We had I think six London subject Derains and

everybody said they had never seen colour as dramatic as that, so that was a revelation. Another memorable exhibition was 'Orientalism: Delacroix to Klee' [1997–98], on the subject of the European and the Australian encounter with the exotic in the late nineteenth century – the exotic being anything east of the Mediterranean. Audiences had never thought about artists such as Conder, Roberts and Streeton going to North Africa, and suddenly works in our collection, including Poynter's *The visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon* [1890], were absolutely star pictures in a big international show.

Another exhibition which was an absolute revelation and one which I enjoyed as much as any I have done was 'Michelangelo to Matisse: Drawing the Figure' for that great year of running, jumping and standing still, the Olympics. I had seen an exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery in London by artist Michael Craig-Martin called 'Drawing the Line' [1995], and it was about how the sensibility of drawing and mark making was a constant story through art. I said: Let's look at the human figure with the same approach, and Peter Raissis, Terence Maloon and I raced around and borrowed some of the greatest drawings - Bronzino, Michelangelo, Leonardo to Pissarro and Cézanne. We ended up with Tintoretto next to De Kooning; Luca Cambiaso next to Wyndham Lewis, drawings that may be separated by 350 years, but with almost the same sensibility at work. It was absolutely fascinating. There are hardly any Lorenzo Lotto drawings surviving but we managed to borrow one from the National Gallery of Scotland. Other drawings I had to work hard for were a Pontormo study from the Uffizi, an unbelievable Michelangelo from Windsor Castle and a Signorelli again from Windsor Castle - but it was all worth the effort. That was one of the great shows.

BC: This puts a premium on your relations with museum directors around the world. How hard is it to build trust?

EC: The gallery has acquired a reputation for doing shows that are not arbitrary but really well considered, and I think that

is the most important thing. For example, the recent 'Mad Square' exhibition was not a huge popular success, but it is a show that has brought to the institution great credibility and authority with the lending institutions around the world. We are very much a net borrower – for every hundred works we borrow for an exhibition we might lend one because we simply do not have the collections, so the question of what we do and how we do it is very important.

BC: Have you got a sense of what's going to work and what's not going to work in packing in the crowds?

EC: As with everything, there are certain blue-chip investments in the art exhibition business: the ancient world revealed, where there's a pharaoh or an entombed warrior you're on sure territory. Then the great and known singular figures: Rembrandt, Rubens, Renoir, Cézanne, the names – Monet above all. Monet is number one.

BC: Have any shows surprised you because they have taken off unexpectedly?

EC: Actually one show that far succeeded our expectations was 'Bill Henson' [in 2005 before the controversy]. To get close to 80–90,000 people through a monographic living Australian artist's show was quite something.

BC: And flops?

EC: I must say that one exhibition I do recall with sadness was a quiet exhibition of Old Master drawings from the Albertina in Vienna [2002] – fabulous show, wonderful works. But Albertina, nobody had heard of and Vienna, oh yeah ... But neither had the hook of instant appeal.

BC: The improvements to the building and infrastructure here are a tribute to your vision and your capacity to build support with government. How different is the building from what you inherited?

EC: The building that I inherited was about half the size of the current gallery. This has been much on our mind [in recent times]. It was four years ago that I sat [President of the Board of Trustees] Steven Lowy down and said: 'Steven your big job is not to worry

about tomorrow or next year, it is to worry about the gallery in twenty, thirty years time.' And then you start to look back at the history of this gallery and you realise that it is a building that has had well over 100 years of perpetual evolution, sometimes even reluctant evolution. The first sections were built from 1897 to 1912, then nothing until 1972, the Captain Cook wing, and that's the building I inherited. It was small but then in 1983 I started really pressing the government about the next stage of the building and we opened the Bicentennial wing [in 1988], which increased the space by about 80 per cent, and then the next was in your administration [the new Asian gallery in 2003]. But now you look at the building and say: Well, what can you do? The footprint on which we sit is pretty finite. Every single part of this building is occupied. So I've spent the last three years really focusing on the next fifty years. We have had well over a century of evolution and now it is the time to make a big bold step.

To put our case in context, this building is less than half the size of the National Gallery of Victoria. It is half the size of the National Gallery in Canberra, and it is half the size of the Queensland Gallery. And to give you an example of the impact of that: earlier in 2011 we had 306,000 people through 'The First Emperor' show in our temporary exhibition gallery. The maximum occupancy at any one time was only about 300 people. Now there were days when we had well in excess of 12,000 people a day coming into this building, but considerably less than half of that number could get through the show. So that is why, for example, we have turned the building upside down to install 'Picasso' in the permanent collection space – a first time for a temporary exhibition.

BC: So your options would appear to be twofold. One would be to win public support for a big extension, or to establish a gallery somewhere else.

EC: Yes, the practical arguments I won't go into because that is a bit touchy, but the philosophy I can. Let us say we took

Aboriginal art out of this building and created a Museum of Aboriginal Art, I'd argue that [such] specialist museums preach to the converted. [Instead], I'd argue for this great general museum, where people come to see everything, or come to see one thing but see everything. The classic example is Asian art – oh, let's build a great museum of Asian art ... The Guimet in Paris is a great museum of Asian art, but only people interested in Asian art go there. That is the problem.

BC: And another argument is one you touched on earlier – you would miss the opportunity for surprising juxtapositions.

EC: Yes, and also curatorial juxtapositions. [Here] you have contemporary curators working with contemporary Australian, contemporary international, contemporary Asian curators. Suddenly you have a curator of Japanese art talking to a curator of photography. It wouldn't happen [otherwise]. So I think there is quite a strong argument for keeping this sort of milieu ...

BC: A department store of art.

EC: Yes, I think it works. I remember having this discussion before I left London. Because in London there were three great Asian collections: the British Museum, the V&A and the David Foundation attached to the University of London where I was, and they are fantastic collections. Put them together and you would have the most spectacular museum of Asian art, but you would lose the audiences that go to the V&A and the British Museum.

BC: That takes us back to the beginning. I wrap-up this interview by thanking you on behalf of all the people of New South Wales for making this such a vital institution. My testament to its vitality is this: [during my premiership] I was able to stroll over from Parliament House across the Domain any lunchtime, and this place was abuzz – school children, young people on their own, city workers and the retired. A great mix. You brought that vitality to it and I want to thank you most sincerely.

# Experiencing Edmund: Reflections on a retiring art gallery director

David Gonski

My period of ten years as edmund capon's president would rank as some of the best years of my professional life.

I first met Edmund in the late 1980s when I was invited to a function of the Art Gallery of New South Wales Foundation. What attracted me was the handwritten statement on the invitation that Rupert Murdoch had specifically requested that I sit at his table. This immense compliment was somewhat assuaged on arrival when I found that Murdoch's table travelled the length of the gallery's large entry court. As if sensing that I might be saddened by a lack of intimacy with the guest of honour, Edmund zoomed up to my seat, introduced himself and told me – in his inimitable way – that he was delighted to meet me and that he looked forward to a long association. This was my first experience of Edmund. Not only did I instantly think he was marvellous but I could also see his enormous strength in understanding people's feelings and making them feel good.

To this day I have never been able to ascertain how he always seemed to know when I was visiting the gallery. I recall one Saturday afternoon when my wife and I decided to catch up on an exhibition. Soon after entering the gallery we noticed Edmund's smiling face coming towards us, demonstrating, yet again, how absolutely on top of his game he was.

Meetings with Edmund were always different. Quite often they were held in the loading dock, which, according to his understanding of the occupational health and safety rules, was the only part of the gallery where he was allowed to smoke. The loading dock, however, did not have an ample supply of ice-cream and so many meetings also took place across the road in the Domain where he could eat his White Magnum while dealing with budgets, future exhibitions and the like.

Edmund always told me that he had serious difficulty with understanding finances. I believed him to begin with. It didn't take long, however, for me to realise that Edmund actually understood

the financial side of the gallery better than anyone and that his comments in this regard were either out of modesty or designed to make me feel that my contribution would be important.

One of the harder parts of Edmund's job must have been to educate his president about the finer points of art. I still remember being shown Cy Twombly's *Three studies from the Temeraire*, 1998–99, which had miraculously arrived in the gallery and which Edmund wanted to buy. I looked at the Twombly and wasn't sure whether I liked it or whether it was genius and I was also very scared by the price. Edmund took the time to explain his views and, as was so often the case, his fervour and excitement was infectious, the articulation of his thoughts precise and persuasive.

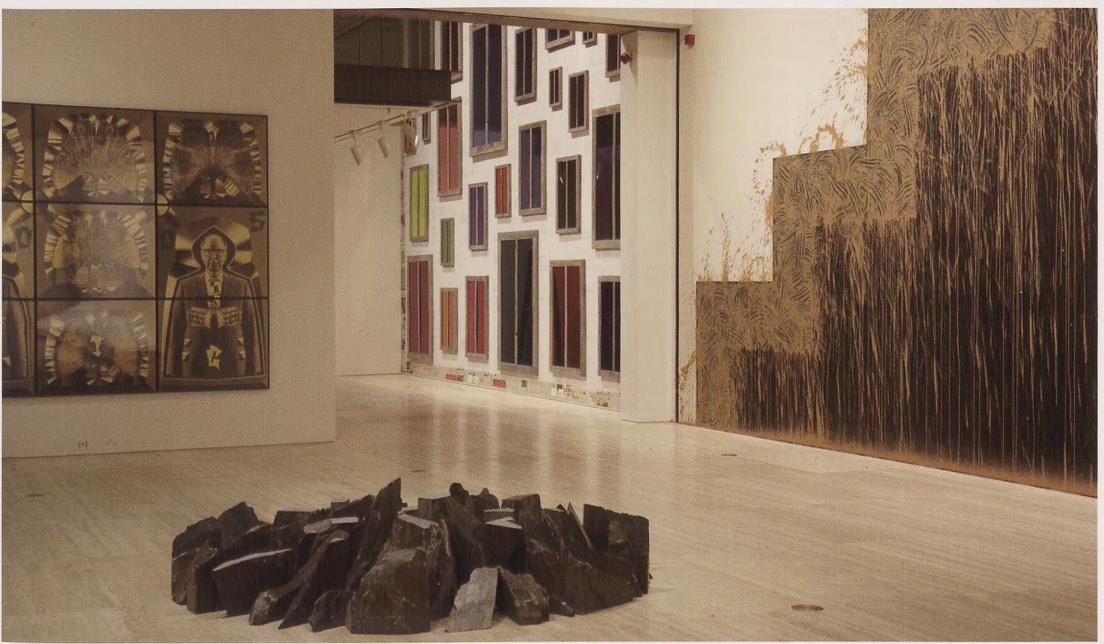
Edmund's superb sense of humour and enormous love of people came through clearly in his speeches. One of the most memorable was at an evening to celebrate an exhibition of Chinese antiquities being held in the gallery in 2007. Our special guest was Kevin Rudd, who at that point was leader of the Opposition. I rose and made a speech which received polite applause. Rudd spoke for more than fifteen minutes, mainly in Mandarin, and tumultuous applause ensued. Edmund then stood up and also spoke in Mandarin and at his conclusion the audience rose to their feet and clapped until asked to resume their seats. To this day I have absolutely no idea what Edmund said, but once again he brought joy and acclamation to his audience and showed the gallery to be dynamically engaged with Asia and its culture.

It has been an honour to know and work with Edmund. Much more than a brilliant director, overseeing the gallery to Sydney's great benefit and to the benefit of Australia more generally, he has been an inspirational figure – and I know his immense contribution will survive the test of time. He deserves all of our thanks.

David Gonski was president of the Board of Trustees, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1997–2007.







from top: Cy Twombly, Three studies from the Temeraire, 1998–99, oil on canvas, triptych: 256.8 x 206 cm; 264.2 x 206 cm; 263.6 x 198.8 cm; courtesy Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, and Gagosian Gallery, London. © Cy Twombly; John Kaldor Family Gallery, installation view with (clockwise from front left): Richard Long, Spring showers circle, 1992; Gilbert & George, Dig, 2005; Ugo Rondinone, Clockwork for oracles, 2011; Richard Long, Southern gravity, 2011. © The artists.

# The information: The generating art of Thomas Demand

Michael Fitzgerald

Contradiction lies at the heart of thomas demand's cross-disciplinary practice. His work is at once simple and complex, real and fake; his practice is sculptural and photographic (Demand creates models from paper and cardboard which are then captured on film); created and destroyed (his work concludes with the model's destruction); discrete and interconnected (the display of artworks is an ongoing area of research for Demand). In Sydney, on the eve of his latest project for Kaldor Public Art Projects, the Berlin-based artist spoke with Michael Fitzgerald about 'the tautological circle' of his highly influential conceptual practice."

Michael Fitzgerald: I wanted to begin by asking what first brought you together with the Sydney collector John Kaldor?

Thomas Demand: John started collecting my films really early on, at a time when there weren't that many to collect, so it was interesting to see him go that way. The films are very uneventful – they are moving pictures rather than action films. They needed a little bit of an engagement from his side, and I was very happy to hear that he actually watches them. He has three films by now: Camera [2007], which is a stop-motion animation of a surveillance camera that pans back and forth, and two of them, Recorder [2002] and Rolltreppe/Escalator [2000], which he donated to the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

I met him several times over the years and then three years ago he came up with the idea for me to do one of his projects and now it seems to be materialising. I've found a building site in Sydney which I think everybody knows of, but nobody really knows what's inside. It's an invisible and yet very visible building, and it has to do a little with its architecture. I mean, it's really beautiful. Architecturally it's very weird inside. Here we're going to show photographic works which are printed in a special way by someone who is the last of his kind; there is nobody else doing these prints anymore, and he's rather old and not to be hurried.

MF: I noticed that your work Camera has appeared in the

exhibition 'Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance and the Camera';<sup>2</sup> that sounds such an obvious but interesting premise for a show.

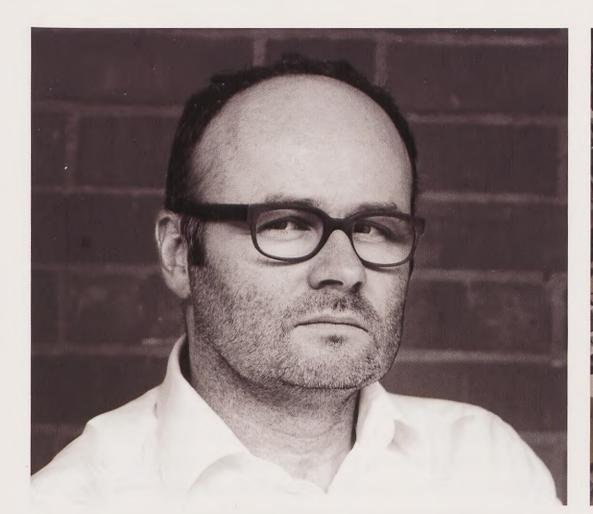
TD: My surveillance camera film is the last piece in the show. Part of the exhibition is exploring the relationship between the viewer, the camera and whoever's photographed – it's basically the peeping Tom idea. The show combines high and low in an exciting way: the paparazzi shots we know, photographs of dead people from the newspaper and artworks. It's an interesting project.

MF: The idea of the camera transforming the way we see and look at things has been a big part of your practice ever since you moved from sculpture to photography at art school in 1993. What prompted your change of medium?

TD: Documentation. I was making these ephemeral sculptures, and these sculptures wouldn't last, which was part of their charm. I had a teacher at the time in Düsseldorf, Fritz Schwegler, a fantastic professor who taught many well-known artists such as Katharina Fritsch, Thomas Schütte, Martin Honert and Gregor Schneider, and he told me: 'You might have to document the sculptures before you throw them away because otherwise you won't know if you've made any progress.' The resulting documentation of those sculptures was rather underwhelming because I'd never studied photography and didn't have a proper camera. This presented me with another problem, which was the translation from a threedimensional context to a two-dimensional one. And, being as naïve as one is as a student, I thought that it wouldn't be a big problem, but it generated tasks and challenges that continue to this day. It's a little way from the idea of a sculpture to a photograph so when you connect these sort of things as a tautological circle, it actually gets quite interesting, because you are creating a meaning or a conceptual space on top of the existing one.

MF: Your methodology has been described as painstaking. TD: I think it's a very harmless description, but it's not

painstaking. Let's imagine you have a realistic painter from







the eighteenth century [to whom] you would say: 'Oh it's so painstaking how you paint the leaves of the tree.' He would reply: 'Okay, if I didn't paint them there would be no tree, there would be no painting.' That's what I do – there's not really an obsession in that sense. If it's anything it would probably be a rhetorical obsession. With a picture of greenery, for example, you want to have something that is telling the viewer something they weren't aware of, that they haven't seen before, something that makes them see the lawn outside with new eyes. That means that you have to have a picture of a certain size, a bigger piece of green. And then you end up with something that's basically kind of amazing in the sense that there is more to see in the picture than the viewer can actually grasp.

MF: For your Prada Foundation work, *Processo grottesco*, which was shown during the 2007 Venice Biennale, you created and photographed a grotto constructed from 900,000 layers of cardboard. What drew you to this subject?

TD: I started with the grotto simply because it felt like an inversion of a mountain, and I always liked those layered landscaping models. I was looking for a natural, not man-made, space, and in German cultural history the romantic movement relates to one of the first times when nature becomes a projection - you might think of Caspar David Friedrich and individual longing. One of the rooms in the Venice installation was just about literary materials surrounding the grotto, from Kurt Schwitters to Thomas Pynchon to Hugh Hefner. The more you look into the grotto the more you find that this is a space for inner-projection. I was looking through postcards – because they are pretty good as an index - and then I found a postcard from Majorca which I was blown away by. I turned the postcard over, and it said in German: 'I'm here in Majorca and the grotto looks really like the picture.' I thought: I couldn't say it any better. And then of course the next question was: Did I want to go and check the real one out? But I

thought it was much nicer to do the whole thing from that photo, nothing else.

MF: The grotto picture was also included in your 2006 show at London's Serpentine Gallery, though I must admit all I can remember is the ivy wallpaper used throughout.

TD: Originally I made the picture for that wall when you come in, where there is a round skylight above, and the light from that skylight is exactly the same sort of light that is in the grotto. I had been hoping for a show in the Serpentine since I was a student; it's had such a fantastic program over the years. So when they asked me to think about a show, on the one hand I was very excited, but on the other I realised the wall space was actually very limited, determining 100 per cent how you could hang your work - unless you did an architectural intervention, which I didn't want to do. It is an old tea pavilion, so I thought that maybe I could emphasise the character of the building in the tradition of William Morris. I spent a couple of days in the Victoria & Albert Museum, and it was really the peak of patternmaking when Morris started looking into that. It's just so unbelievably complex. I ended up working with a company in Manchester that is still making his wallpapers with the same old tools. The pattern, of course, was ivy, which is overgrown in a place like the Serpentine. Viewers would come into the main room having seen the other rooms before and noticing the wallpaper as being rather eccentric, and then realise where the pattern comes from ...

MF: Much is made about the crime-scene aspects of your work, namely your 2007 'Yellowcake' series, which recreated the Niger embassy in Rome, the site of a mysterious 2001 burglary of embassy letterheads. These stolen letterheads later featured in forged sale contracts of Niger yellowcake to Saddam Hussein's regime in Baghdad, which in turn was used as evidence to justify George W. Bush's 2003 invasion of Iraq.

TD: With 'Yellowcake', the interesting thing is that there is

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clockwise from top left: Thomas Demand, Berlin, 2009. Photograph © Albrecht Fuchs; Embassy 1, 2007, C-print/Diasec, 204 × 168 cm, courtesy Sprueth Magers, Berlin and London. © Thomas Demand, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, licensed by Viscopy, Sydney; Installation view, Serpentine Gallery, London, 2006, with Grotto, 2006, C-print/Diasec, 198 × 440 cm, courtesy Sprueth Magers, Berlin and London. Photograph © Nik Tenwiggenhorn. © Thomas Demand, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, licensed by Viscopy, Sydney.

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no crime. It's a complete fake. It's all about fake – it's the fake contracts, it's George W. Bush's fake idea that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. I wanted to know how such information got out into the world, as so much of the information we receive daily is basically passed on from someone else to someone else to someone else until we have a pastiche of hearsay. The interesting thing for me was that the starting point for the yellowcake conspiracy was really trivial: the Niger embassy inside a really humble building in Rome. No reporters ever saw the inside of that place, and I thought it would be amazing for an artist to gain access and for the public to only know about it through my weird process of rebuilding everything from cardboard, constructing the images at the same time as deconstructing them.

It was relatively difficult to talk myself into the embassy as I had to get through two secretaries and I knew that I would only have twenty minutes before they threw me out, which is what happened in the end. And in those twenty minutes I had to scan everything I saw, every little detail, so my head was my camera.

MF: It's an incredible story, right down to the stolen letterheads. How did you first hear about it?

TD: Craig Unger wrote a book, *House of Bush*, *House of Saud* [2004] and a little piece in *Vanity Fair* [2006]. It was about the secret service that Dick Cheney put together, and all they had to do was to try to find evidence that the contracts were actually *not* forged. Which is basically what happened. I was interested in the story because it began with just an empty sheet of paper and that empty sheet of paper caused a butterfly effect. So that's how it all started for me. It's not about crime; it's about the impact a fake can have. And much of my work has been a fake of something. I like that as a figure of speech: a fake is a fake is a fake.

MF: Let's talk about another important strand of your practice. Wasn't it Robert Storr who said that artists shouldn't curate?

TD: I curate all the time. I recently did a postcard show up

in Nottingham.<sup>3</sup> Gerhard Stein is a fantastic collector whom I came across when I did the grotto picture, and he has over 60,000 postcards of grottoes, all different. Can you imagine? I didn't even know there were 60,000 grottoes. I chose three hundred of them.

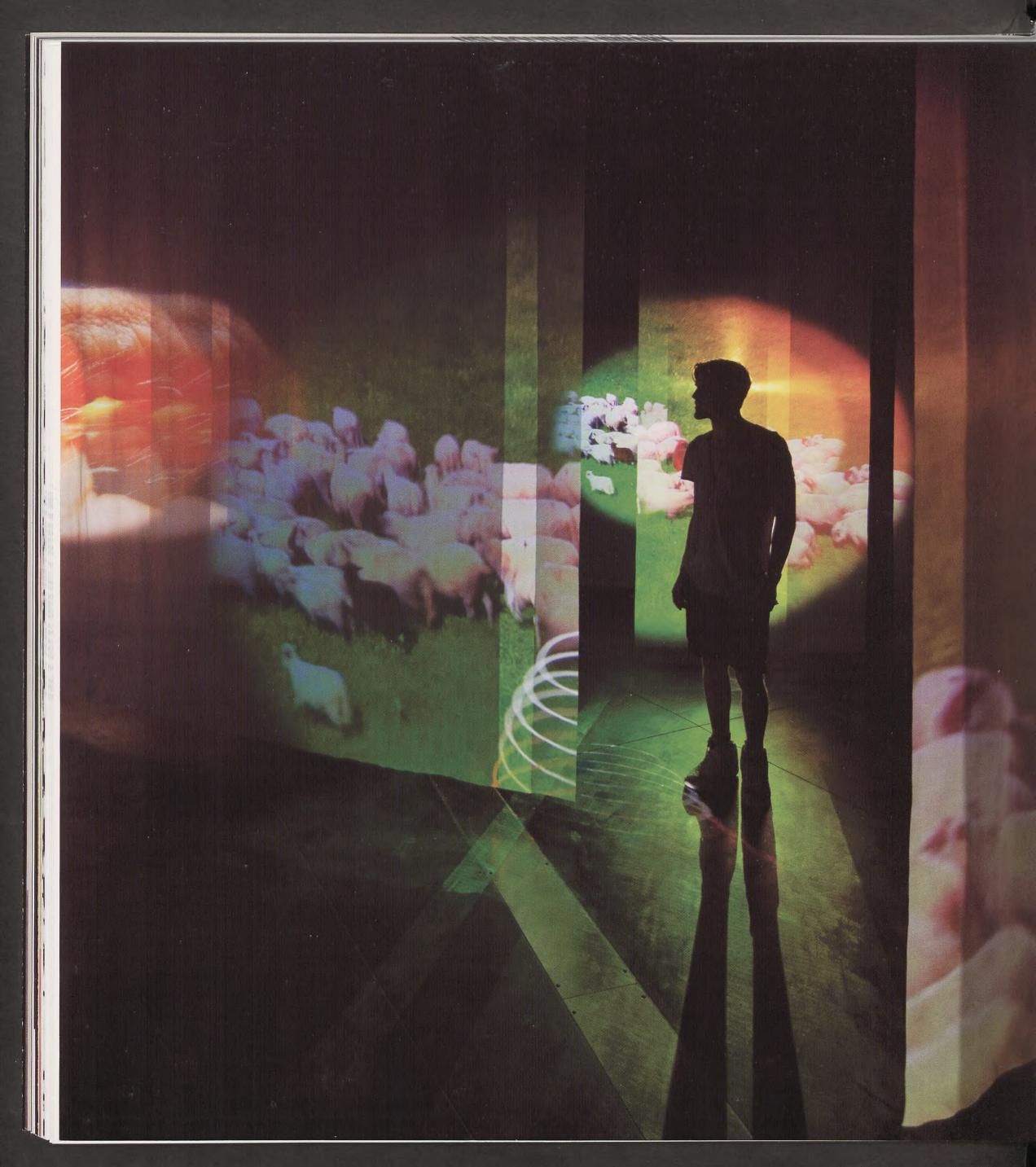
Something else I was quite happy with was a show I curated in Monaco, 'La Carte d'Après Nature', and it was about surrealism in a sense. I had Magritte in there, and Luigi Ghirri, a wonderful photographer from Italy, and Tacita Dean and Rodney Graham, and a couple of young people you've probably never heard of – one was Henrik Håkansson, whom I like very much.

It was fantastic to work with pieces by Magritte. He is really fundamental to anyone's understanding of contemporary art. While he's been very bad-mouthed because there's so much merchandise out there and the work's been over-used, the things in themselves are actually really beautiful objects. What he would say, and it's one of my favourite quotes, is 'you cannot paint a thought – you can only paint the things necessary for a thought'. His realism is just there to show you something else – that's something I put on my own work. One of my interests in that show was to emphasise the fact that what I show you is not necessarily a crime story, but a representation of what surrounds us.

Thomas Demand: The Dailies, Kaldor Public Art Projects, Commercial Travellers Association, Sydney, 23 March – 22 April 2012.



- This interview took place at the Andrew (Boy) Charlton Pool, Sydney, 24 February 2011.
- <sup>2</sup> Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance and the Camera', Tate Modern, London, 28 May 3 October 2010; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 30 October 2010 17 April 2011.
- 'Postcards from the World Beneath: The Collection of Gerhard Stein', Nottingham Contemporary, 15 April 26 June 2011.
- 4 'La Carte d'Après Nature', Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, 18 September 2010 22 February 2011.



## Hit me with a flower: The enveloping spirit of Pipilotti Rist

Cathryn Drake

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO PIPILOTTI RIST is either sublime or scary, depending on how you look at it. It's terrifying mostly because it reminds us that we have become detached from our biological bodies precisely because of the forms of digital media that she employs to bring us closer to the throbbing fabric of life. Splendid because she brings us back to the universe as a garden of earthly delights, portraying it in heightened colours and stylised visions the way an excited mind does. The Swiss artist's immersive multimedia installations evoke our bodies as if they were vessels hurtling toward death, all the more ecstatic for their fragility and temporality.

The first time I saw 'Pippi' was through a tiny hole in the wooden floor of New York's PS1, in the 1994 video Selfless in the bath of lava, where the naked artist, swimming in boiling magma, looks up and implores: 'I am a worm and you, you are a flower. You would have done everything better. Help me. Forgive me.' I will never forget that moment of discovery: delightful and humorous, touching and disturbing all at once. It knocked me over. 'I really fight against the fact that they want to make us feel we are full of sin when we are born', Rist tells me on the occasion of her recent Trussardi Foundation exhibition, 'Parasimpatico'. 'And then they want to control us the rest of our lives.'

The 1997 double video installation *Ever is over all* expressed the essence of Rist's cathartic impulse to rebel against the constraints of our modern lives. In it filmmaker Silvana Ceschi, dressed in a fluid blue dress and shiny red shoes, walks down the sidewalk in slow motion toting a gigantic flower, which unexpectedly turns into a weapon as she suddenly destroys a car window without changing her blissful expression. 'I *hate* cars', Rist explains. 'For me it was the car as a symbol: it just takes over the world and is unquestioned. It's a golden cow.'

Since Ever is over all, which won a Venice Biennale

prize, Rist has continued to bust open taboos and provoke hedonistic urges, attempting to loosen the ties of our formidable inhibitions. Some new underwear chandeliers comprise a dizzying array of incandescent white panties strung up as if hung out to dry, a slickly sweet double entendre on letting it all hang out. Here Rist sees the crotch – our entryway into the universe, the focus of lovemaking and sexual pleasure, and the exit for waste – as sacred and underpants as its temple. The *Massachusetts chandelier*, 2010, greeted visitors at the Hayward Gallery's recent exhibition 'Eyeball Massage', while *Cape Cod chandelier*, 2011, illuminated the lobby of Milan's Cinema Manzoni, site of the 2011 Trussardi show.

For 'Parasimpatico', the 1950s movie palace was transformed into an erotic carnival, introduced halfway up the red-carpeted stairs by Nothing, 2011, a machine blowing giant bubbles past the voids of empty illuminated billboards. Further along was the hallucinogenic Lobe of the lung, 2009, starring Rist's red-haired alter ego Ewelina Guzik, who frolicked in a red-and-green flowerbed that dripped down the undulating ceiling. In the main theatre a projection of Homo sapiens sapiens - the film that was shut down by the Vatican during its 2005 Venice Biennale run in the church of San Stae - animated a frescoed cupola. The chariot-borne women in the historical painting were transformed by lurid blood-red streaks, invoking menstrual allusions; a hand gently fondling a pair of testicles segued into two hands violently crushing oranges. Viewers' craning necks were supported by stuffed headless torsos, designed by Rist and her sister, Tamara, while disembodied appendages - a breast and an ear, a pretty smiling mouth, a flaccid penis - floated comically around the auditorium's perimeter.

One of the most compelling aspects of the artist's work is the way she uses herself as a subject to draw the viewer in through a sense of intimacy. In her very first video, *I'm not the* 

girl who misses much, 1986, Rist appears in a black dress with her breasts bared, awkwardly dancing while singing the first line of the Beatles song 'Happiness Is a Warm Gun' until she becomes completely blue and fuzzy. As curator Massimiliano Gioni says: 'She likes to go home and put the video camera on herself because it is warm.' Projected onto the giant screen in the Cinema Manzoni, Open my glade (flatten), 2000, featured Rist pressing her face against the lens in an attempt to break through it towards the audience. Gradually her enormous visage becomes more distorted and desperate and, with her makeup smudged, she starts to lick the screen.

By breaking down the corporeal boundary of the screen, merging it with space and thus our bodies, Rist hopes to make us one giant orgasm – as Guzik proclaimed in the artist's 2009 film, Pepperminta - flowing with the natural universe. From the perspective of extreme close-up we see details too sharply while the big picture remains fuzzy, kind of like a giant caress. Body parts are often confounded with fruits and flowers, exploding in dazzling colours; disorienting motions undermine our terrestrial bearings, carrying us away into a psychedelic womb. 'People come to a museum and bring their body - a big contrast to TV, which comes into your private home – so why always make them fight against gravity?' Rist asks. The title of her 2008 exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, 'Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)', evokes the desired effect of the Swiss artist's recent celluloid experiences to transform spaces into living organisms: the room was filled with high-definition video projections, hypnotic music and furniture designed to encourage visitors to recline and melt into their surroundings.

Rist often adds sculptural elements to create living-room environments and enhance the ambient experience. For 'I Packed the Postcard in My Suitcase', the artist's recent show at Melbourne's Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), she built a carpeted topographical landscape from which the recumbent audience can watch the morphing spectacle. In other rooms, solid colours or scenes are painted on the wall as backgrounds for projected images. 'I hope they go home then and put their flat screens onto the ceilings – because it takes away so much space, you know, in the living rooms', she says. 'I'm sure in one hundred years it will be standard.'

Rist uses the exhibition space as a material, adapting her work equally to both white cubes and rooms fraught with historic or stylistic character. For the drab concrete box of the Hayward Gallery – as well as for ACCA – she employed a series of scrims that layer, repeat and merge the images. 'You walk in between and the picture becomes bigger and bigger, extremely physical like layers in the brain, blinding you a little bit', Rist explains. As each work mingles with the next, becoming a sort of ambient background for the others, our freely associating brains project meaning onto them just as certain spaces imbue the images with a particular flavour. Indeed, these environments – created out of light, intense colour and sound – mimic how the brain reflects reality.

Perhaps in Rist's hands the museum is really a hospital for the mind and spirit. 'That's what I would wish', she says. 'I'd like you to walk out smiling, feeling lighter.' It's all about discovering our own unexplored potential and the adventure that is our splendiferous body. 'The brain is absolutely scary', Rist emphasises. 'We are never the same; every day we are somebody a bit different. And what you actually see is always what you think of.'

Parasimpatico, Trussardi Foundation, Cinema Manzoni, Milan, 9 November – 18 December 2011; I Packed the Postcard in My Suitcase, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 21 December 2011 – 4 March 2012.



# Engaging art museum audiences: The MCA's National Centre for Creative Learning

Gay McDonald

ON 31 MARCH 2012, SYDNEY'S MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (MCA) is slated to reopen following a \$53 million refurbishment that incorporates a significant expansion of its gallery spaces. A jewel in the crown of this redevelopment is the MCA's new National Centre for Creative Learning (NCCL), which will enable the MCA to consolidate a position of leadership within the area of art education. The following text is an excerpt from an interview with Heather Whitely, the MCA's Head of Creative Learning, which examines the NCCL's philosophy and mission and how the vision articulated by Whitely has been shaped by her professional experiences at the Victoria & Albert (V&A) Museum, London. The interview also explores how the state-of-the-art digital infrastructure earmarked for the NCCL will accommodate the needs of diverse audiences to the MCA, whether physical or virtual.

Gay McDonald: Why did the MCA decide to establish the NCCL at this time?

Heather Whitely: The redevelopment of the MCA happened at a time when we also needed to rethink the core function of learning within the museum. We had limited facilities to be able to offer a variety of forms of audience engagement. This new development is really an architectural articulation of the MCA's commitment to putting learning at the very heart of the museum. Forty per cent of the new build is dedicated to the NCCL.

GM: What are the key ideas that have influenced your thinking as an art museum educator?

HW: I've always been inspired by a model of philosophical inquiry that prompts viewers to make their own meaning in art. It's really through a social constructivist learning theory as such but, more broadly, I'm interested in providing all our visitors with opportunities to engage with contemporary art using a dialogical approach that stimulates their looking and thinking skills.

GM: How has your professional experience at the V&A and its Sackler Centre for Arts Education informed your approach?

HW: The V&A is an enormous site and the Sackler Centre sits within a corner of the museum's courtyard, requiring a distinct journey to be made and creating a potential barrier for the development of learning activities. One of the key ideas that I've taken from that experience has been the exploration of the role of the learning space within the museum; specifically, what learning activities are appropriate to take place within dedicated learning spaces, what learning experiences are appropriate within the gallery environment, and the transition between those two architectural spaces.

While a smaller museum, the MCA has been redesigned as an entire development, architecturally signalling the MCA's commitment to placing learning at the very core of its operations. What's important about the redesign is the rearticulation of the MCA's circulation space by carefully integrating the NCCL, the temporary exhibition galleries, the permanent collection and our lecture theatre and seminar room. We avoided the term 'arts education' as we wanted to signal a break away from the traditional sense of contemporary art only belonging to a domain of the arts. This point is particularly important in schools education because we see contemporary art as having a place right across the curriculum.

GM: What are the features of the NCCL's digital capabilities, and how will they be used?

HW: The digital infrastructure for the NCCL covers the digital studio, multimedia studio, creative studio spaces, the lecture theatre and seminar room. This infrastructure will allow us to effectively engage with schools across Australia that are coming online with video-conferencing in the next year. The first year will allow us to experiment and determine the different types of technical capabilities that will be required in the future.

As the National Centre for Creative Learning, the MCA sees this new initiative as a hub for activity that reaches out into the







clockwise from top: Architectural rendering of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) redevelopment; Architectural rendering of the National Centre for Creative Learning, MCA, Sydney; Heather Whitely, 2011; courtesy MCA, Sydney.

community and vice versa. With the national curriculum coming online in the near future it's important that we support that initiative – through the resources that we develop for the digital learning environment, but also through video-conference facilities and other forms of digital engagement. As the only Australian museum dedicated to the work of living artists it's important that we provide that support right across Australia.

GM: How might these resources be used by visiting families? HW: There will be expanded free programs for kids and families on a monthly basis, and every school holidays we'll have a week of drop-in activities for families as well. The drop-in style of programs for families is something that I bring from the United Kingdom as an important tool of accessibility to encourage adults and children to learn together. It's a common experience to see adults walk away from an activity they've participated in with their child, feeling like they've learned more than their child because they've been given permission to play.

**GM**: How will the NCCL enhance how young people with disabilities and those who are socially disadvantaged engage with contemporary art?

HW: In the past our funding for 'Bella', a program tailored to young people with specific needs, allowed us to run a season of programs each year, generally coinciding with 'Primavera'. With the NCCL and the securing of funding from private donations we are now able to run programs for 'Bella' throughout the year. One of our most exciting programs is 'Good Vibrations', a retro-fitted touring caravan with a brain, ears and eyes developed by New York artists Bruce Odland and Michael Luck Schneider. The caravan provides technical devices for young people with disabilities to create a sensory response to their visual and auditory environment. We wanted to integrate that idea within the NCCL and so have created the 'Bella Room'. Each year an artist will be commissioned to produce a work that addresses a different type of

disability. For 2012 we've commissioned Melbourne artist Emily Floyd to create a work that allows visually impaired young people to engage directly with her installation.

GM: How will you assess the effectiveness of your programs?

HW: We are developing an evaluation framework to collect and monitor data over a period of time that helps us to be reflective in the present but also to plan for the future. We intend to develop a research program to build our understanding of how our audiences actually learn or experience art, what creativity looks like in the museum and the role to be played by the NCCL.

GM: This year Lawrence Rinder, Director of the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, a speaker at in.site's symposium 'Reprogramming the Art Museum' commented that the struggle for resources is becoming greater and museums simply have to find ways to be relevant to society and to more diverse audiences.

HW: I think he's right. The concept of engagement is critical to the twenty-first-century museum. Our role is to create a variety of stimulating activities that support different ways of engaging with contemporary art. The museum has to break away from the traditional concept of a white middle-class museum-going audience. Being relevant in the twenty-first century means being relevant to a diverse range of people and breaking down the physical structure that can sometimes create a barrier between those who've never had a cultural experience and those who have.

I'm sure our audiences will diversify in new ways because of the digital infrastructure we will be using through our schools program to reach audiences in regional and remote areas. For example, teachers working in these areas indicate they have few resources for engaging in an arts curriculum. So we've developed programs specifically for them that examine different kinds of pedagogy. There'll be opportunities to explore behind-the-scenes in the museum and to bring the voice of curators and artists directly to the students.

# Zoom: The shape-shifting painting of Helen Eager

Glenn Barkley

THE REOPENING OF SYDNEY'S EXPANDED Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) galleries, National Centre for Creative Learning and refurbished cafe and public spaces has provided an opportunity for the museum to engage artists on a number of public commissions throughout the building. One of these is by the senior Australian abstract painter Helen Eager, who has been commissioned to create a major new painting that will be installed on a large internal wall near the MCA's new quayside entry. On its completion the work will be accessioned into the MCA Collection, joining other instructional painting works by Robert Owen and Kerrie Poliness.

Eager's inclusion in the program is an acknowledgment of her committed and sustained practice over the past forty years. Eager's career began during painting's most critical phase in the 1970s – the point when the medium was at its lowest ebb and found itself attacked from within the citadels of the academy. Tellingly, Eager also spent her student years in Adelaide, which was one of the hotbeds of Australian conceptualism, where painting was being reordered and deconstructed.

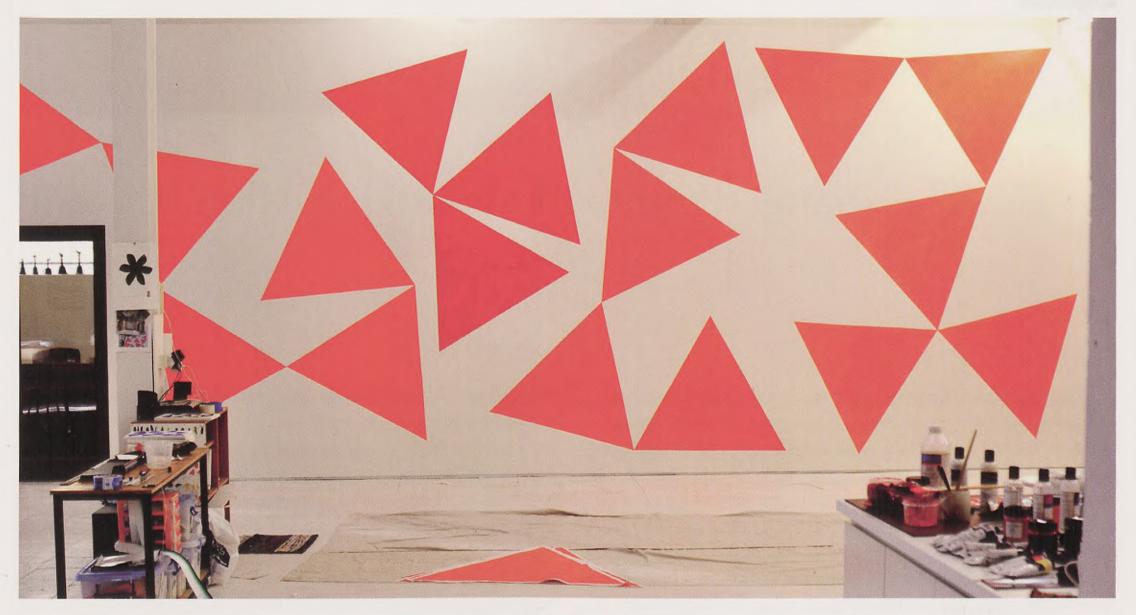
In contrast to many of her peers Eager chose to internalise her relationship with painting by focusing on intimate scenes, and her early work on leaving art school in the late 1970s was intentionally domestic. Still lifes and interiors were both beyond the pale of contemporary painting at the time, which was either vast in scope and heavily formal or heading into serious 1980s Sturm und Drang. But the domestic roots of Eager's work reveal something of their time. Perhaps as a tangential response to feminism, these works activate the inner worlds of the suburban. Working alongside conceptualism, Eager's alignment of the still-life tradition with feminism allowed for earthy seepages of the domestic into the grand halls of the art world.

From that point on there was a fairly linear narrative whereby Eager's work was pushed into an abstract painting style that moved beyond the simple representation of things. In 1988 Eager

was living and working in New York as a resident of the Australia Council for the Arts's Greene Street Studio. Here she began by painting the things that were at hand around her, but over time these forms became more compressed and simplified. A chair became a shape, which became about colour. A window became both a light and a pattern; how these things related on the picture plane became more important than how they related in reality. Once such 'props' were reduced to these simple forms they began to be superfluous. From this point on we can trace Eager's new engagement with abstraction. The props still had their importance, but once transformed into pattern, colour and form they became something the eye could zoom in and out of. Paintings from this period seem to focus on the cusp of things – they are all edges. The eye is butted hard against the side of a cup, which sits next to a jug - not that they are these things anymore; rather, they have become a locus for exploring the world anew. Eventually looking beyond her studio, Eager's works began to reflect the actual architecture outside her window, with cups and teapots transformed, in this new macro view, into buildings and sky. I

This painterly transformation reminds me of Charles and Ray Eames's *Powers of Ten* (1968). In this short film an overhead establishing shot focuses on a couple having a picnic. The camera then pulls gradually back, each time by the power of ten, over and over, until planet earth fills the screen, then becomes a dot, then a speck in the universe. The camera then focuses back on the couple at the picnic, moving closer and closer to the man's skin, then down into his cells, through to the nucleus of being.

For a time Eager's imagery stemmed exclusively from her explorations of still life, a subject matter which seems endlessly shifting and permeable. And once we conjure up this pulling back and forth of scale – playing with it in both a pictorial and physical sense – it allows for a detachment from the natural world. In the late 1990s a triangular form began emerging from the bottom edge





From top: Helen Eager's studio with wall drawing, 2011; Helen Eager at work in her studio, 2011; courtesy the artist and Utopia Art Sydney.

of Eager's paintings, and a decade later, by the time of her 2005 exhibition 'New Directions', the work began to shift and change again. Here the triangle is cut loose from the edge of the paintings and settles into a net of such forms splayed across the picture plane. The negative space of the painting, the ground between the shapes, is activated, becoming another shape just as important as the triangles themselves. These are works of rare clarity and purpose where colour feels heightened, taking off, and the image a fusion of all these things: colour, space and geometry that seem to lock into place within the retina.

Eager's new wall work fits within the confines of the new MCA Collection spaces, which will include a group of works looking at contemporary expressions of abstraction – the grouping asks what this expression might mean and how it may manifest in contemporary contexts. The hang includes a number of works by women artists, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike.

In Eager's painting there are certain tonal relationships that recall Aboriginal art – especially the colour shifts, often within a limited tonal range, of an artist such as George Tjungurrayi. But the most obvious influence is the spontaneity of Indigenous painting, its sense of informality and its intuitive way of placing forms on the surface of the painting. Aboriginal artists, in most cases untrained in a western academic sense, have no regard for the design principles that are ingrained into artists from western cultures. Order may rest within the rhythms of the works' narrative drive, providing an internal structure with infinite visual possibilities, but to a non-Indigenous viewer the works' abstract qualities are paramount. Any abstract painter working in Australia today has to work out an approach to artmaking that must at least consider Aboriginal art and a way of working with or through it. Eager's new wall work is part of this challenging dialogue.

The placement of the work, above the major entrance from Circular Quay, offers another set of challenges: first, the irregular shape of the wall and its scale. Such a work must also take into account the functionality of the space, as well as being able to cut through the other visual elements with which it competes. In this case the site is arguably the most recognisable locale in Australia, opposite one of the greatest buildings in the world. To make a work within this context takes much poise and consideration. One of the reasons for choosing Eager as the artist for this site is the way her work resonates with MCA architect Sam Marshall's new building, which has a relationship to a particular kind of geometric abstraction: simple cubic shapes pushed and pulled, massed and reduced in much the same way that a sculptor or painter would use such forms.

For viewers of Eager's paintings, intelligibility doesn't come on first glance. The work is wholly hermetic, and meanings, where they exist, are submerged within the very making and physicality of the artworks themselves. The only way to unlock some of their mystery is through time: the way they are affected by light; the changes in colour throughout the course of a day; the way they are able to cut through the visual clutter which surrounds them. These are their rewards.

The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of Helen Eager, Christopher Hodges and Ian Gunn for their input into this article.

At.

For more information on this period, see Christopher Hodges's essay 'Blame it on New York', in *The Precipice: New Paintings by Helen Eager*, exhibition catalogue, Watters Gallery, Sydney, 2003.

## Helen Maudsley: Outside the view

Sheridan Palmer

'It is not the glance but the stare and the gaze' – Helen Maudsley's recent comment points to a necessary requisite when considering her art. There is a sense of unstoppable time in Maudsley's work. Her compelling visual language employs a highly developed and codified grammar that leads to symbolic geographies, slowly revealing interior worlds that are both familiar and strangely foreboding. Whether of the self or society, she reveals inherent hierarchies of power and protection and these complex works, quite literally, lead us into labyrinths of the mind and soul.

Born in 1927, Maudsley has been exhibiting regularly over the past five decades, yet her profile is relatively subdued, with her work appreciated by a discerning selection of collectors and connoisseurs. Even though she has operated within the engine rooms of Melbourne's art world as one of its most intellectually informed artists, she has remained 'outside the view'. This is largely because her art *is* complex – consistent with her reputation as a sophisticated 'cerebralist' interested in the ambiguities of appearance and representation, and the root of function and form.

As a young woman Maudsley associated with a number of key figures in the Melbourne art scene. She knew Daryl Lindsay and Norman MacGeorge and took private painting lessons with Winifred McCubbin and James Quinn; the latter encouraged her to exhibit at the Victorian Artists' Society in 1943, where she gained the attention of the *Herald* art critic Basil Burdett. In 1945 she enrolled as a student at the National Gallery School, then part of the State Library and Museum compound in Swanston Street, where Quinn taught briefly between 1946 and 1947. This two-way street of creative learning and culture allowed students to freely wander from the art school into the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) where Maudsley encountered Arnold Shore, modernist artist and gallery guide, and Ursula Hoff, art historian and keeper of prints at the NGV. Both Shore and Hoff supported Maudsley's aesthetic inquiries. At this time a number of returned servicemen

enrolled at the school under the government's Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS). Referred to as 'rehabs' by the younger students, these mature men created an interesting mix, with some of them, including John Brack and Douglas Green, demanding a more instructive environment.

That Maudsley and John Brack became a couple reveals their intellectual connection and similar artistic temperaments; a shared appreciation of Seurat was an initial link and later Vermeer's seductive, perfected compositions, as was 'the language of the rectangle' and an interest in reproductions.2 Where Brack's work exposed relationships, Maudsley's art began to interiorise them, probing at identity and motives from within the constraints of social structures. Though she disagreed with the prevailing aim of developing an 'Australian' realism or expressionism, she nevertheless was aware that 'our art [had] to be Other than from Europe, [it had] to have an Australian identity'. 3 Maudsley continued to move towards the challenging psychological concepts associated with avant-garde culture in the twentieth century, engaging in the related manifestations of cubism, surrealism, futurism and symbolism. Her interest lay in distilling the formal properties of the individual within society and she began to render this relationship and its associated objects as multilayered, presenting distinctive thresholds and structural analogies.

In 1957 John Reed invited Maudsley to hold her first solo exhibition at his Museum of Modern Art in Melbourne's Tavistock Place. Initial reception by the art market and critics was slim or silent. Maudsley's work not only challenged the system but it could not be reified as part of any accepted movement. Because she never associated with the George Bell School, the Murrumbeena Group or the Angry Penguins entourage, she remained largely 'invisible'. Perhaps Maudsley was simply too different for any locked-in parochialism.

Though the postwar period was a time when changing

Helen Maudsley, The iris, 1985 Wool and cotton, 203 × 152 cm, woven by Sara Lindsay Courtesy the artist and Niagara Galleries, Melbourne

international politics and cultural forces provided greater opportunities for women, in reality female artists were not taken as seriously as 'the blokes' until the late 1960s and 1970s. Those working during the postwar decades, such as Dorothy Braund, Inge King and Erica McGilchrist, experienced some of the gender complexities that existed within the patrilineal art world, with recognition often slow in its arrival. Despite this Maudsley was always serious and committed, sustained by a determined and unwavering view that one must exhibit despite marginalisation – whether by critics, the cultural hegemony, the constraints of motherhood or marriage.

From her highly individualistic style of the 1950s, Maudsley developed a beautifully articulated style of painting inhabited by an array of anagrammatic and semiotic images: hidden passages, inverted prisms, fluted columns, footprints, clenched fists, keys and stairs. While Maudsley's art always embraced metaphysical issues, her consciously honed psycho-aesthetic approach has offered a new formal language with which we can investigate her 'unknown room'. This is what the brilliant curator, the late John Stringer, alluded to as a 'discretely stylised and perfected [composition] within a box-like isometric space' where images advance and retreat.<sup>4</sup> As a domain of transferred reality, the poetics of space, matter and mind are crucial to the work.

Music and cognitive sight further inform Maudsley's practice, and it is important to note that she embarked on musical studies at the Melbourne Conservatorium while also attending the National Gallery School. European philosophers and scholars such as Rudolf Arnheim, Sigmund Freud and André Malraux stretched her exploration of the limits of perception, and Jacques Lacan's words – 'Putting together many sounds or many shapes yields a kind of supple thread... And when it's all done it "means something", simply put, it speaks' – perfectly capture the highly orchestrated linearism of Maudsley's angular, totemic imagery.

During her middle period from 1970 to 1989 Maudsley concentrated on oil painting, which led to more visually robust work. From 1990 she returned to the subtlety and immediacy of watercolour, and since then the scale of her work has ranged from small, intimate pictures to larger paintings such as We are. As we don't want to be, 1996, or her recent compelling cityscape Through the never country. Going; rushing along. Here and there and never was, 2010. There are few publications on Maudsley but the calibre and importance of the artist was acknowledged most recently in 2007 when two survey exhibitions – one at Deakin University's Stonnington Stables Museum of Art and the other at McClelland Gallery+Sculpture Park, Langwarrin.

To this day it is difficult to situate Maudsley because she transcends localities and defined positions. Early on she decided that 'art for exploration with its dimension of risk and anxiety and stress to those doing it' was important, and this made her a more radical voice.5 From the late 1960s Maudsley's work has reflected a hard-edged abstraction, but one that is semiotic rather than mathematically articulated like that of the American painter Agnes Martin or optical like that of the British artist Bridget Riley. While Maudsley remains very much sui generis within the Australian art world, she is nevertheless considered important in the area of psycho-aesthetics and her work sits comfortably with a wider and younger generation of abstract neo-expressionists such as David Harley, or the mindscape artist Karen Casey. In many ways Helen Maudsley has been ahead of her time, but there is every reason to give greater attention to this artist who coaxes us into remarkable visual journeys and teaches us to look ever more deeply.

I Maudsley in conversation with the author, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Maudsley in conversation with the author, July 2011.

<sup>3</sup> ibid

John Stringer, Cross Currents: Focus on Contemporary Australian Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2007, p. 15.

Maudsley, op. cit.



# Reclaimed by the land: Andrew Rogers's 'Time and Space'

Anna Waldmann

A DESIRE TO ESTABLISH CONSECRATED SPACES was the genesis of 'Rhythms of Life', the monumental land art project begun by Australian sculptor Andrew Rogers in Israel's Arava Desert in 1998. Since that time forty-seven stone structures known as geoglyphs have been arrayed across natural environments in thirteen countries spanning seven continents, a practice that is overwhelming in sheer scale and ambition. 'The structures denote the separation from the ordinary and provide contemplative settings', the artist tells me. 'They address the cycle of life and the interconnection of humanity throughout time and space.'

The plan for the latest part of this grand project, 'Time and Space', was first unveiled in May 2010, and has resulted in the creation of twelve major structures, made of rock and basalt, some engraved and carved, others covered in gold leaf, across a 2.4-kilometre plateau in central Turkey. Cappadocia is remarkable for its surreal 'moonscape' of tuffs – rock-like formations that are the result of ancient volcanic eruptions – that has been sculpted by rain and wind into valleys with curvy cliff faces and pointy fairy chimneys. Local people chiselled homes in this soft rock, and during the medieval period the valleys were a refuge for Byzantine Christians who established monastic settlements.

Cast against such a backdrop, the works comprising 'Time and Space' are undoubtedly epic, commanding a certain gravitas in relation to the humble viewer and the landscape. Rogers's constructions are not always clear references to architecture – some are abstracted or metamorphosed, others stand in defiance of the fossilised status of the standard significant historical monuments and symbols. There is never a personal element in his work, and the generic words carved into some of his columns speak universally of liberty, justice, hope and so on.

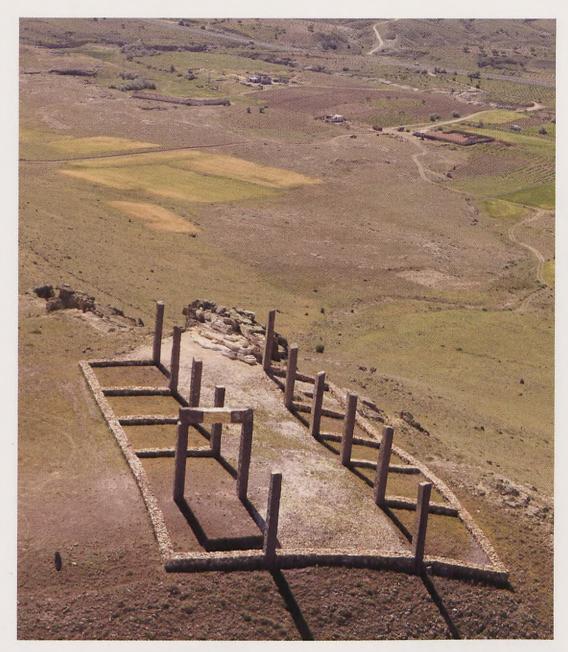
Although there is nothing playful about these constructions which sit solidly on the ground, as memorials and markers of time they are also low-key and ephemeral. Some have started to crumble

because of their exposure to the elements and the artist is content with their slow disintegration. The reality that the structures are so imposing and at the same time so fragile is one of the distinctions that can be made between traditional sculpture as a discrete object and what critic Rosalind Krauss suggested in the late 1970s as a new form of artistic creation: land art, which she called 'axiomatic structures' and 'site-constructions'.

Some of Rogers's works disappear into their surroundings, appearing two-dimensional, while others can be seen from great distances, rising many metres high to echo the extraordinary cliffs and arid hills around the town of Göreme. Rogers's sensitivity to his immediate environment and his concern with the interdependence between the natural world and the human presence are enduring themes in the artist's practice. For the past five years he has immersed himself in the rugged landscape and worked with hundreds of local labourers using found materials or basalt slabs transported from a quarry nearby.

Some of the geoglyphs, *Strength*, *Sustenance*, *Siren* and *The gift*, are inspired by designs sourced in local museums, by mythology and rock carvings, and have arrived at their form following Rogers's consultation with local historians, artists and community leaders. They may be somewhat conventional, but there is an attractive simplicity and strength to them.

These vertical structures include basalt monoliths and arches and Rogers uses mathematical formulae for their sequence and positioning. Listen, Time and space, Predicting the past, Sentinels, A day on earth and the most recent and final work, Presence, are columns and portals based on classical forms and the simple concepts of their titles. They would look unconvincing almost anywhere else, yet they are perfect in this heroic landscape. They have a monumental aesthetic, an intense spirituality and accessibility that validate them.







clockwise from top left: A day on Earth, 2009, basalt columns and volcanic rock, 3150 x 5100 x 900 cm; Arch of memory, 2011, solid basalt columns and lintel, 1950 cm high; Sustenance, 2009, volcanic rock, 10,000 x 200 cm; courtesy the artist. Photographs Andrew Rogers.

# A descent into the uncanny: Conceptuality at 'Sculpture by the Sea Aarhus'

Søren Lundbeck

On a public lawn by the water just south of Aarhus Bay in Denmark stood a small wooden house. Had it been for sale, the house would have been expensive. Not because it was luxurious in any way. On the contrary, it was quite small and, if judged by modern urban standards, perhaps even primitive. It would have been expensive because it was situated on a beautiful and attractive site by the sea. Yet this was a temporary artwork installation called *I wish you hadn't asked*, the contribution of the Australian collective The Glue Society for 'Sculpture by the Sea Aarhus 2011'. One of sixty-five works exhibited by artists who ranged across twenty-two nationalities, *I wish you hadn't asked* represented one of the larger and more conceptual artworks in the show.

The Danish critics couldn't agree as to whether the event – very popular among the citizens of Aarhus – should be classified as an art exhibition or a crowd-pleasing populist affair. However, a judging panel was unanimous in awarding Sculpture by the Sea Aarhus's top prize to *I wish you hadn't asked*, praising the artists' masterful storytelling and powerful ability to 'affect its visitors with excitement and amazement in equal measure'.

The Glue Society presented a fully functional house, small but cosy, and furnished with the kind of things found in second-hand stores. Each minute of the day for the month-long duration of the exhibition, 200 litres of water rained down through thousands of holes that had been drilled in the ceiling, turning the house into a smelly, uninhabitable place: a couch absorbed so much water it was seen to drip; soaking-wet books threatened to fall apart; a double bed housed a puddle; the wooden floor turned slippery and, like much of the house, slowly began to decompose.

For those who saw and entered the so-called 'raining house', dressed in the yellow raincoats provided, it was the experience of a world turned upside down and every homeowner's nightmare. Perhaps the work's power came from the fact that the symbol of home is something everybody can relate to. Our homes are a

stabilising mirror; they often echo our ideas about what a perfect life is. The home is an integral part of our identity. Jean-Paul Sartre once wrote that our bodies are so attached to our homes that we would lose the feeling for bodily and psychic wholeness if our home was destroyed. Many artists who have explored the theme of home in recent decades have involved Sigmund Freud's concept of *das unheimliche*, the unhomely or uncanny. The German word *heimlich* means both homely and secret. Psychoanalysis describes the phenomenon of das unheimliche as a reappearance of that which is repressed or when something that should have remained hidden has been revealed. In this instance a comforting place turns into its opposite because we have been alienated from it through repression.

And yet many questions remain: What happened in the house? What might have been repressed for so long that made this place reappear in its negative form? What question had been 'asked' that caused it to constantly rain, decomposing the house? The Glue Society didn't provide us with any answers, but the questions posed somehow reminded us of our vulnerability. It was clear that this family home appeared suddenly destroyed by a simple question and turned into something uninhabitable, something uncanny. And so we looked into the mirror of the artwork and asked ourselves: What lies do we carry around that might be big enough to return with a vengeance and destroy our homes and our lives?

Along with many of my fellow citizens of Aarhus, I found 'the raining house' both entertaining and intriguing, but at the same time my memory of it brings an appalling feeling of decay – a sense of trauma and a touch of sadness. Since what was being asked remains unanswered, and as questions keep appearing, the house continues to haunt – several months after it has disappeared from the lawn by the harbour.

Sculpture by the Sea Aarhus 2011, various sites, Tangkrogen, Aarhus, 2 June – 3 July 2011.











The Glue Society, I wish you hadn't asked, 2011, house and various materials, 1100 x 550 x 500 cm, site-specific installation at 'Sculpture by the Sea Aarhus 2011', courtesy the artist. Photograph Nicolai Lorenzen.

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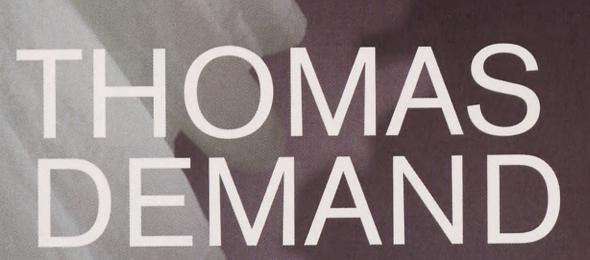


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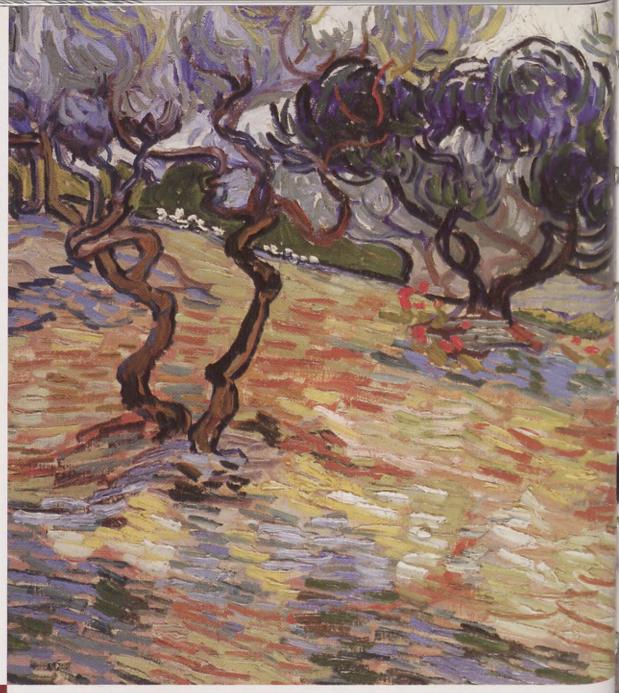


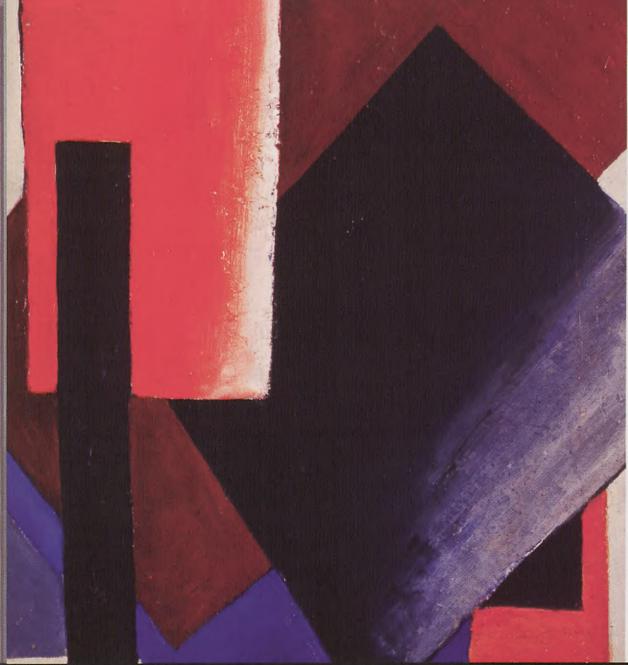
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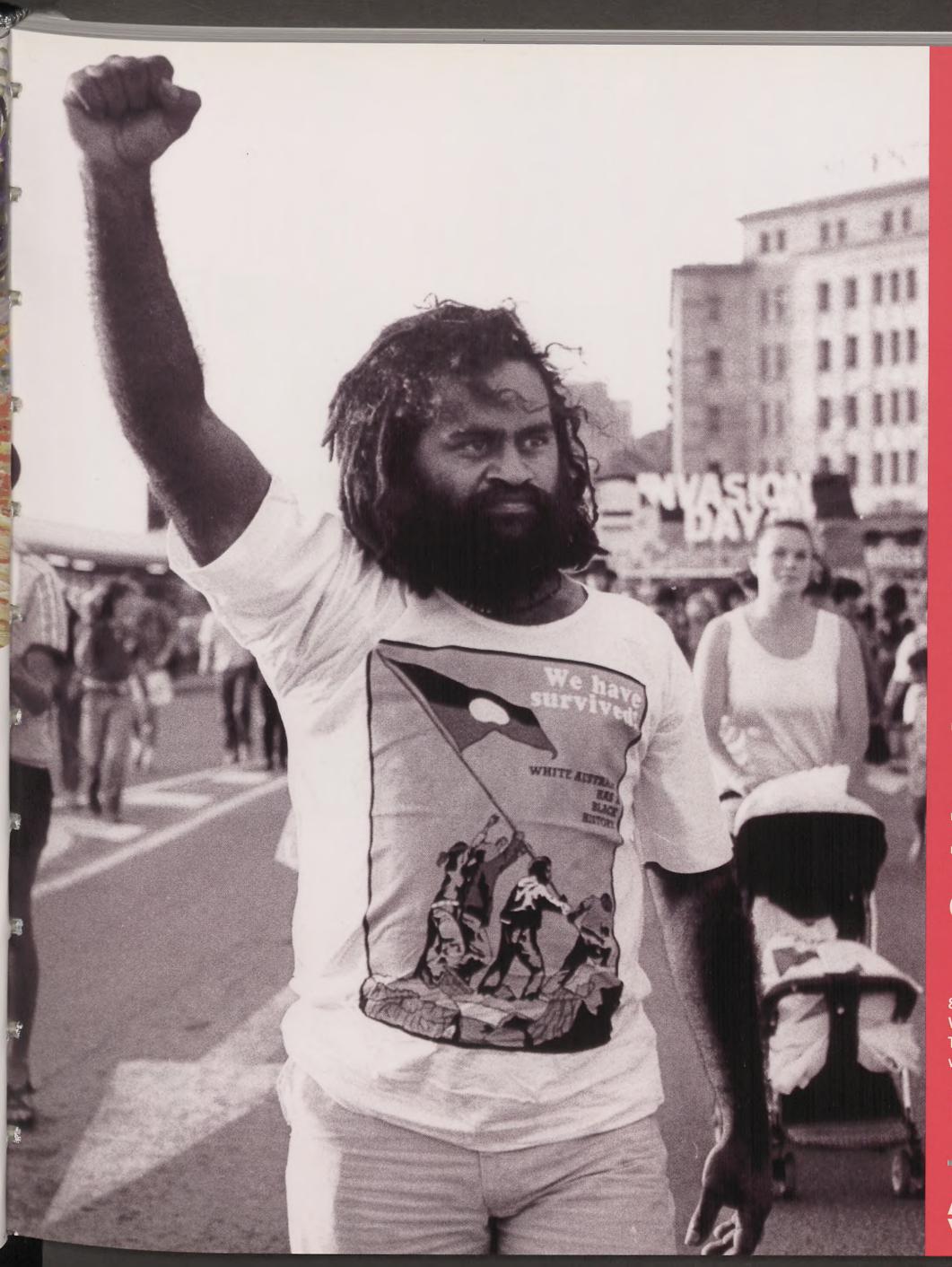
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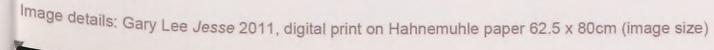
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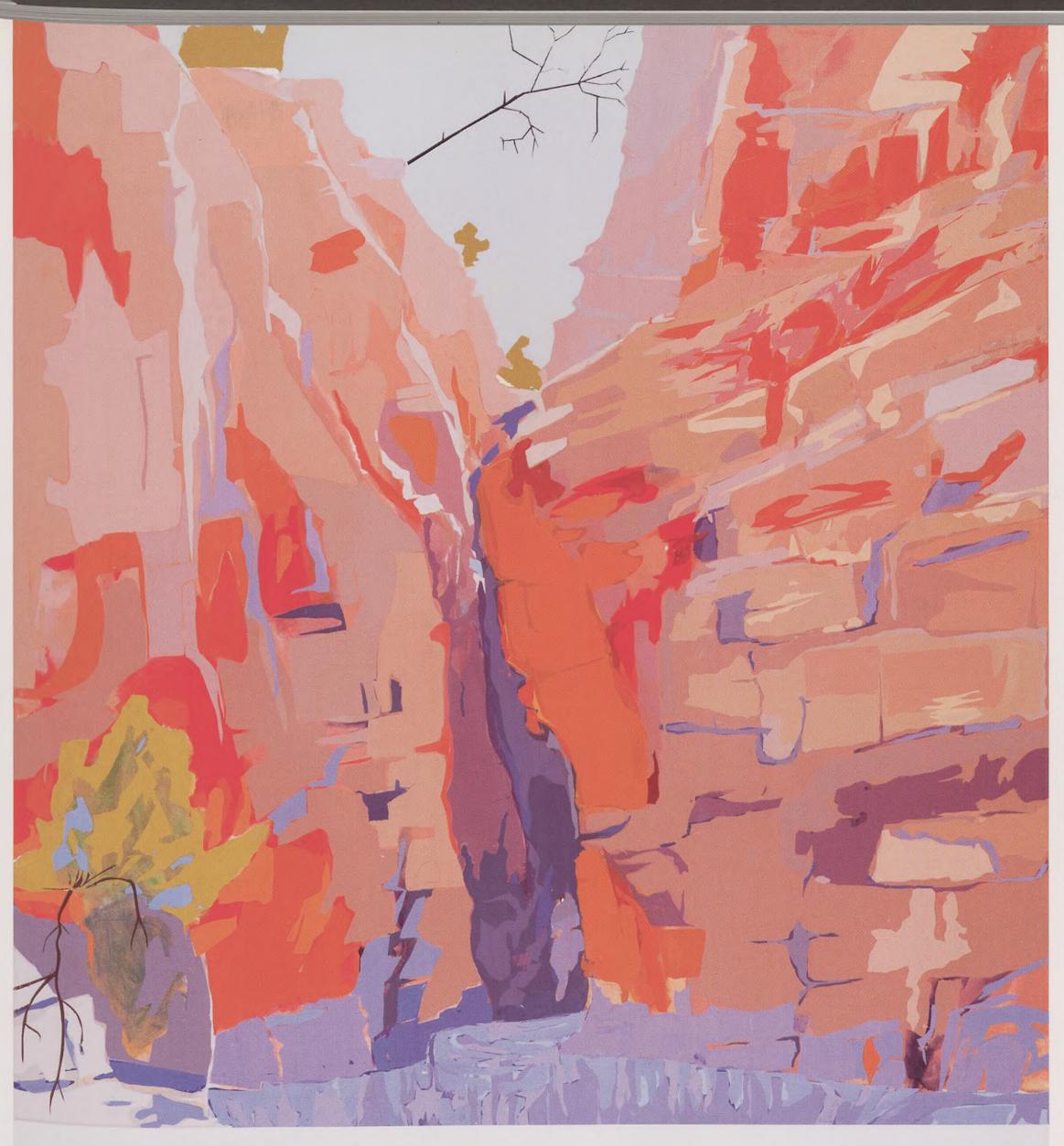


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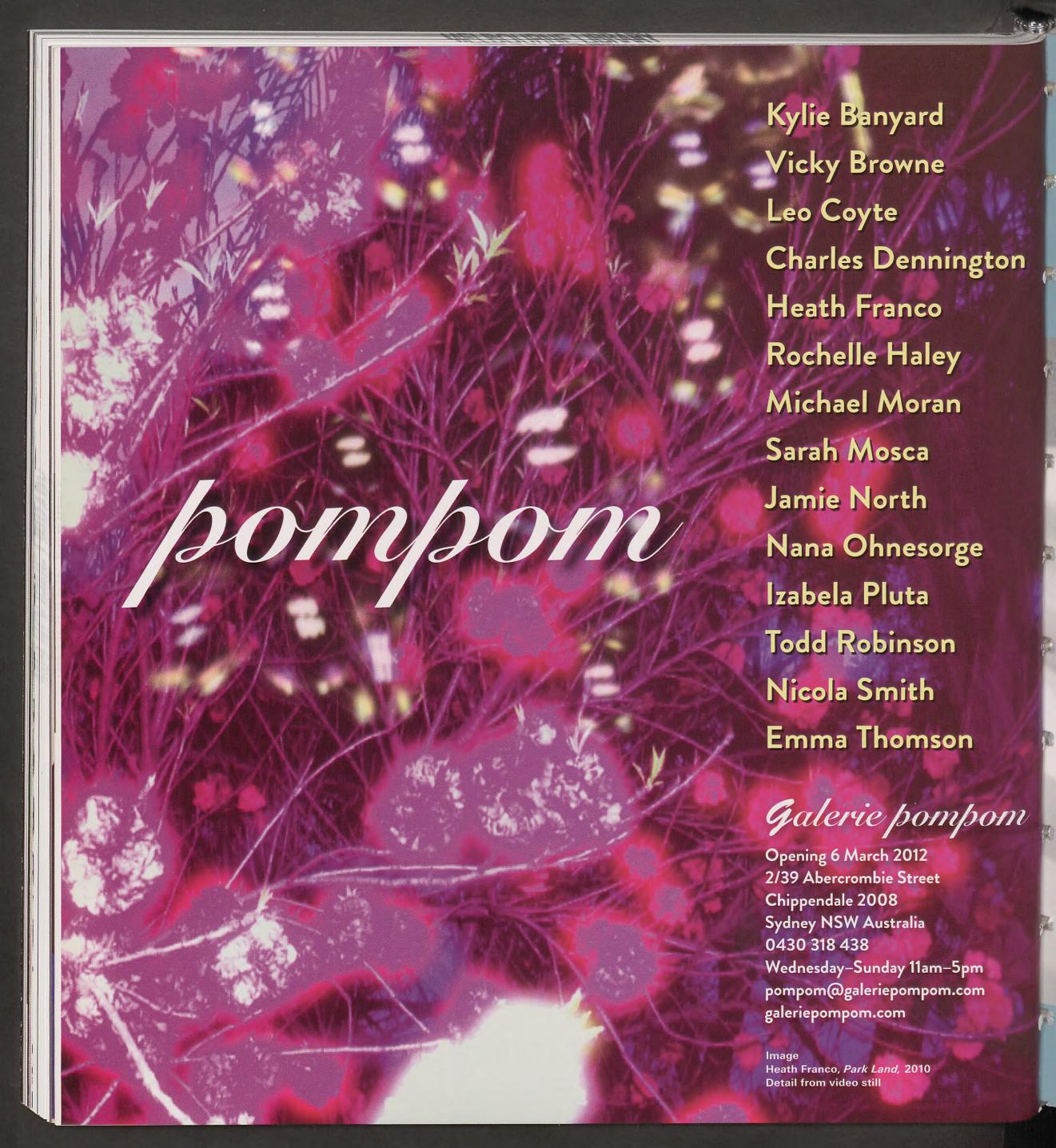


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Grace Kelly, 1953 (detail)
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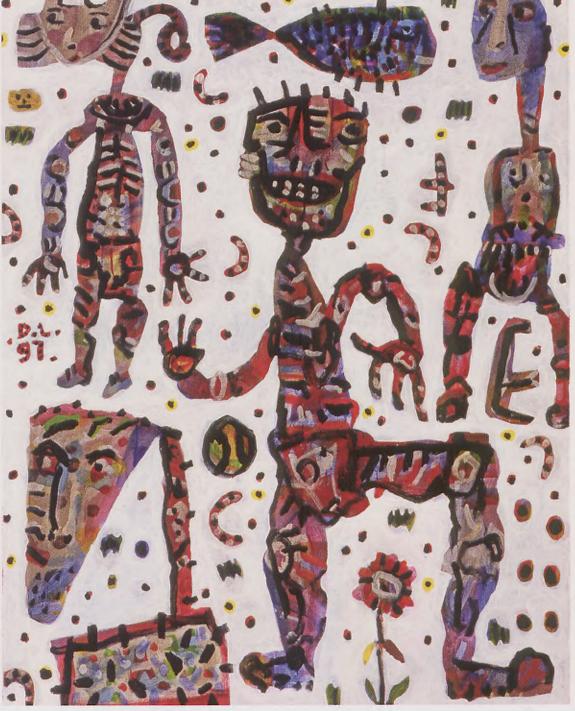
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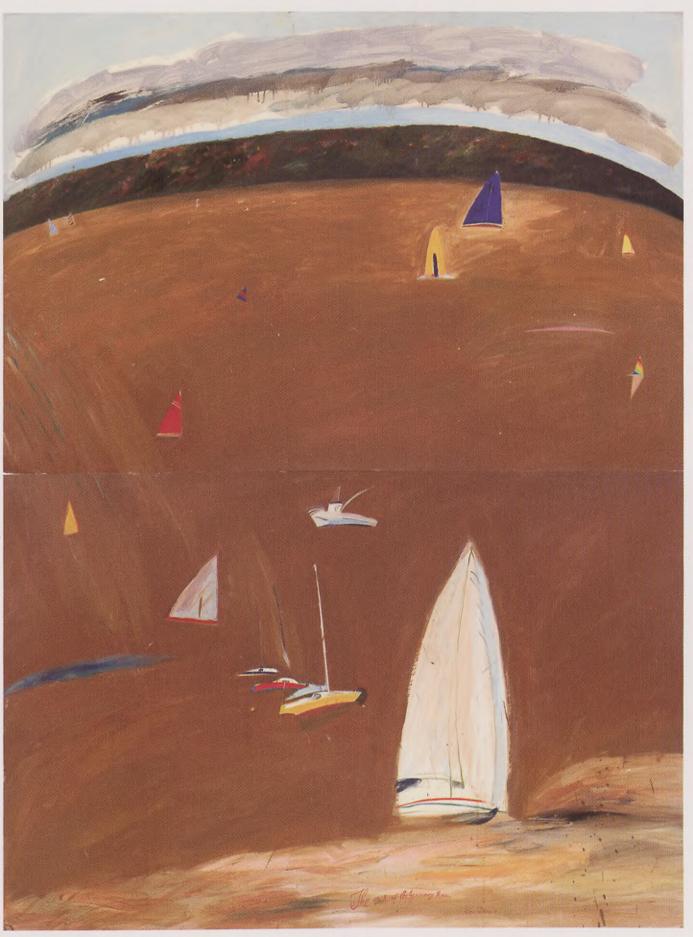
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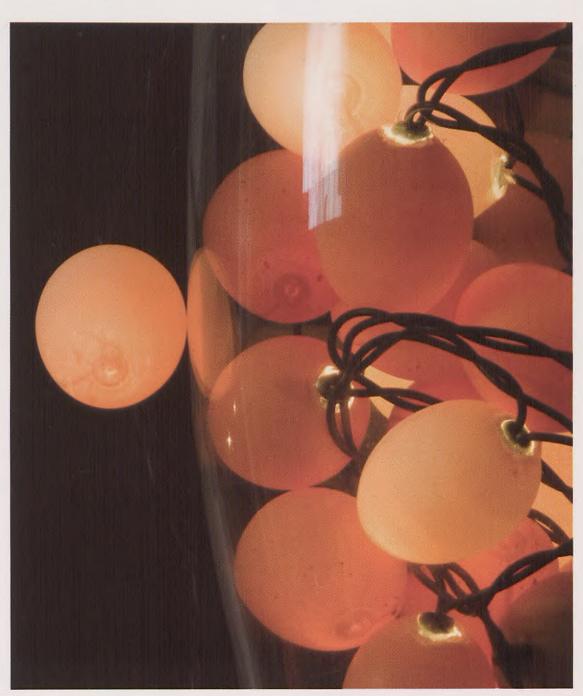
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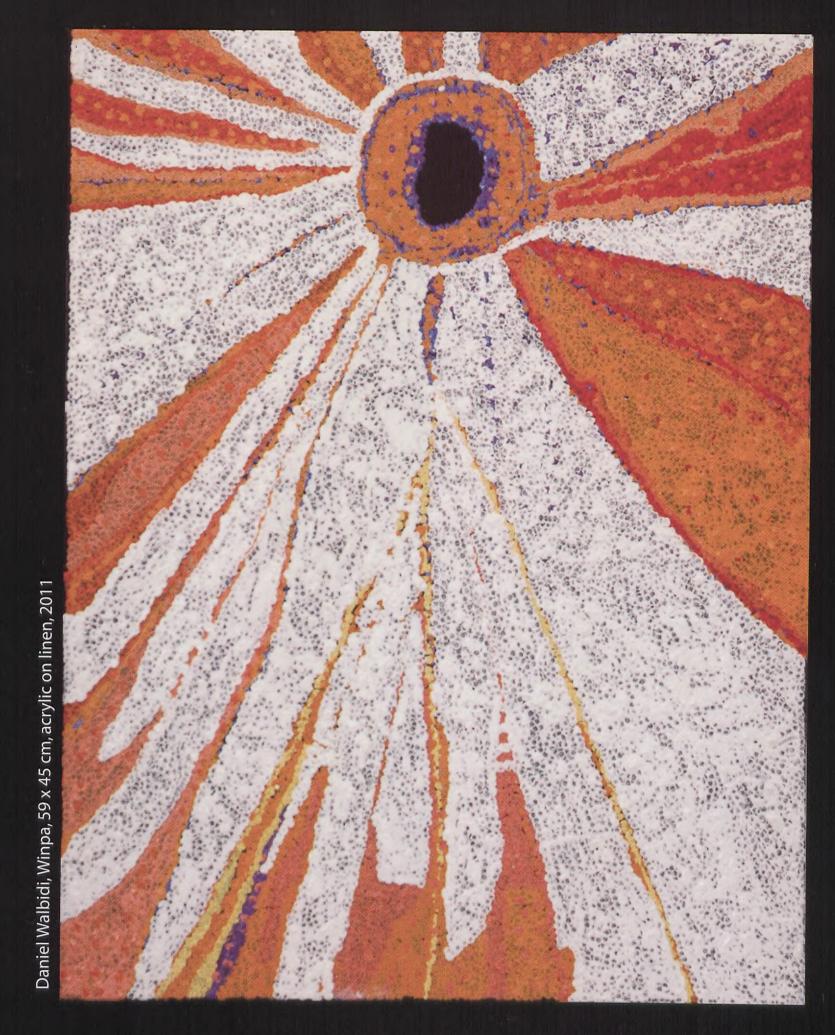
Rupert Betheras Ilparpa Composition #11 (detail) 2011 Synthetic polymer paint on linen 180 x 200 cm

Deakin University Art Collection, Melbourne Image courtesy the artist and Deakin University Art Collection Photograph courtesy Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

Deakin University Art Gallery, Deakin University, Melbourne Burwood Campus, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125. Melways Ref 61 B5. T +61 3 9244 5344 F +61 3 9244 5254 E artgallery@deakin.edu.au Hours Tuesday-Friday 10 am-4 pm, Saturday 1 pm-5 pm, free entry. Gallery closed on public holidays. Please visit www.deakin.edu.au/art-collection for exhibition details. Deakin University CRICOS Provider Code: 00113B



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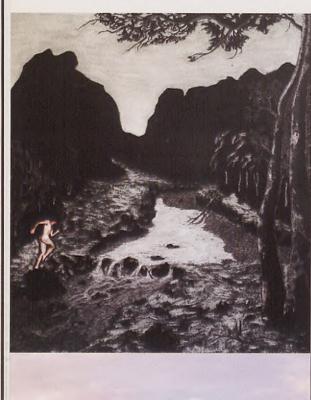


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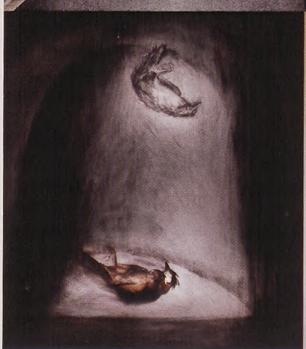








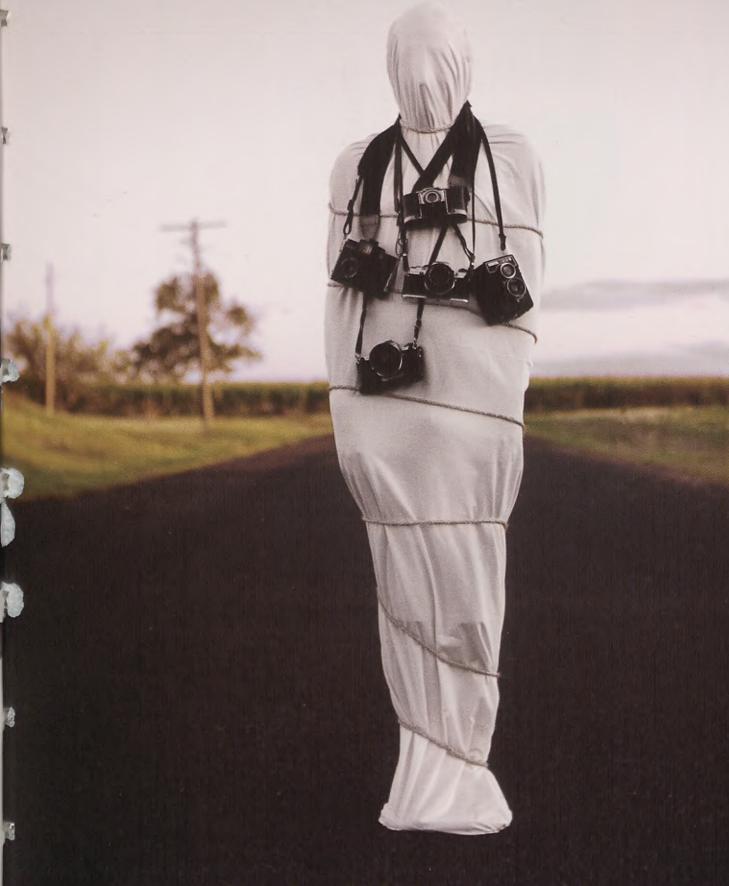






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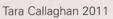
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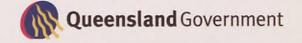


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James NEWITT, When a Wolf Might Look Like a Dog, 2011, production still Commissioned as part of Star Dust, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, HDV, © the artist







#### Essay, Autumn 2012

Three generations of Australian female artists

Julie Ewington

Yayoi Kusama Frances Morris

Nalini Malani Macushla Robinson

Sitting with Marina Heather Rose

Julie Rrap's 360 degree self-portrait

Amelia Jones

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#### Artist project

Parallel Collisions: 2012 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art
Susan Jacobs and Michelle Ussher





## Think big, and be loud'

Three generations of Australian female artists

Julie Ewington

page 448–9
Kathy Temin, My monument: Black garden, 2010–11
Synthetic fur, wood, steel and synthetic filling, 365 × 800 × 300 cm
Installation view, AGNSW Contemporary Projects 2011
Courtesy the artist. Photograph Mim Stirling

In late 2011, Early 2012, more than thirty-five years after Australian women, influenced by second-wave feminism, began meeting and organising in order to investigate their practice as artists, Julie Ewington asks a series of questions, via email, of artists Brown Council, Kathy Temin and Jenny Watson and curator Kyla McFarlane about their views on the current situation and issues facing Australian women as artists today. The question 'why ask this now?' is a fair one, and the artists, who range across several generations and very different experiences, tease this out, take stock of how far we have come and consider whether there is still a need to meet and organise in the same way. Whether as exhibitors, teachers or contributors to wider debates in the visual arts both in Australia and internationally, these female participants have found their own potent ways to engage; that their views often diverge reveals that feminism is still indefinable and necessarily variously effective.

Julie Ewington: What do you think makes the current moment different from previous decades for women working as artists? Or is it so different?

Jenny Watson: In the 1970s it seemed that the main concern was getting women artists fairly represented – in galleries, museums, survey shows, speaking panels and teaching. As I was lucky enough to show Lucy Lippard around women's studios in Melbourne in 1974–75, and then later to meet up with her in New York, I was aware of the issues at the forefront of the problem. It seemed that there had always been a lot of women artists taking their work seriously; it was actually getting them to be visible that was the problem. Lesley Dumbrell started the Women's Art Register [in 1975] and there was a fair bit of meeting activity and dialogue with institutions.

In this day and age, awareness of women artists' practice is not the problem, however the global financial crisis affects all artists and funding tends to go to 'community' activities in a climate like this. So I would say that at this moment the problems are financial, not philosophical.

Kathy Temin: There are positive differences but some things have not changed at all. As an artist and educator having worked over two decades, the difference today is that there is less awareness of the history of feminism within the Australian and international art world. As an art student during the 1980s I shared a need with my peers to start SWIM (Support Women Image Makers). We invited practitioners to talk about their work, including Jenny Watson, Anne Marsh, Juliana Engberg and Elizabeth Gower. We wanted to address the absence of practising female staff.

There is still a predominance of women art students, however there are not more female artists in higher-level positions at art schools. In my job as an educator and coordinator of Sculpture at Monash University in the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, I aim to address this imbalance and to educate about this history.

I have benefited from my work being acquired by public collections. But interestingly enough, recently my work My monument: Black garden, 2011, was on display in the Level 2 Project Space at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) on the same floor as the John Kaldor Family Collection that was donated to the gallery. This collection has many great works, has generated more exhibition space and a broad audience. However, as a private collection placed in a public institution, its lack of work by women has been highlighted. Given my interests and this context, my work, and works by other female artists on display from the AGNSW collection, inadvertently engaged in dialogue with this absence. [The AGNSW acquired Temin's work in late 2011.]

**Kyla McFarlane:** I was asked this quite a few times this year in response to my curation of 'A Different Temporality: Aspects of Australian Feminist Art Practice 1975–85' ('ADT'). It's a difficult question – how do we define change? One way to think about it is to do the numbers, to attend to the visibility (or

invisibility) of women artists and their work. At an 'ADT' floor talk, artist Micky Allan spoke of walking through the Australian art and contemporary art galleries in the National Gallery of Victoria as a student in the late 1960s and not seeing one work by a woman artist on display. This may seem remarkable today but, in recent years, the blue, pink and green pie-charts and graphs featured on the 'countess' blog (a website that says: 'women count in the art world') have sought to show us that the numbers still don't always stack up so well in the representation of women in survey exhibitions, public institution acquisitions and biennales. What the numbers don't describe, however, is the changing political, social and cultural landscape on which they sit, which is where the complexity of such comparisons lies. But they hopefully prompt us to examine this terrain and work to change it for the better.

Brown Council: For us, there seems to be a lack of female solidarity in the current moment - in and beyond artistic practice. In previous decades, there were dozens of female groups working together towards a shared vision or goal. Now, individualism predominates and determines how we work, what we produce and how we live. This interest in collectivity - of the power of a group of women - has been a focus of our recent work. As four women making work together it is easier to make a statement about these things when the very act of female collaboration is instantly politicised. Additionally, spaces and collectives such as Level (in Brisbane) are great examples of how this collectivity can have an impact.

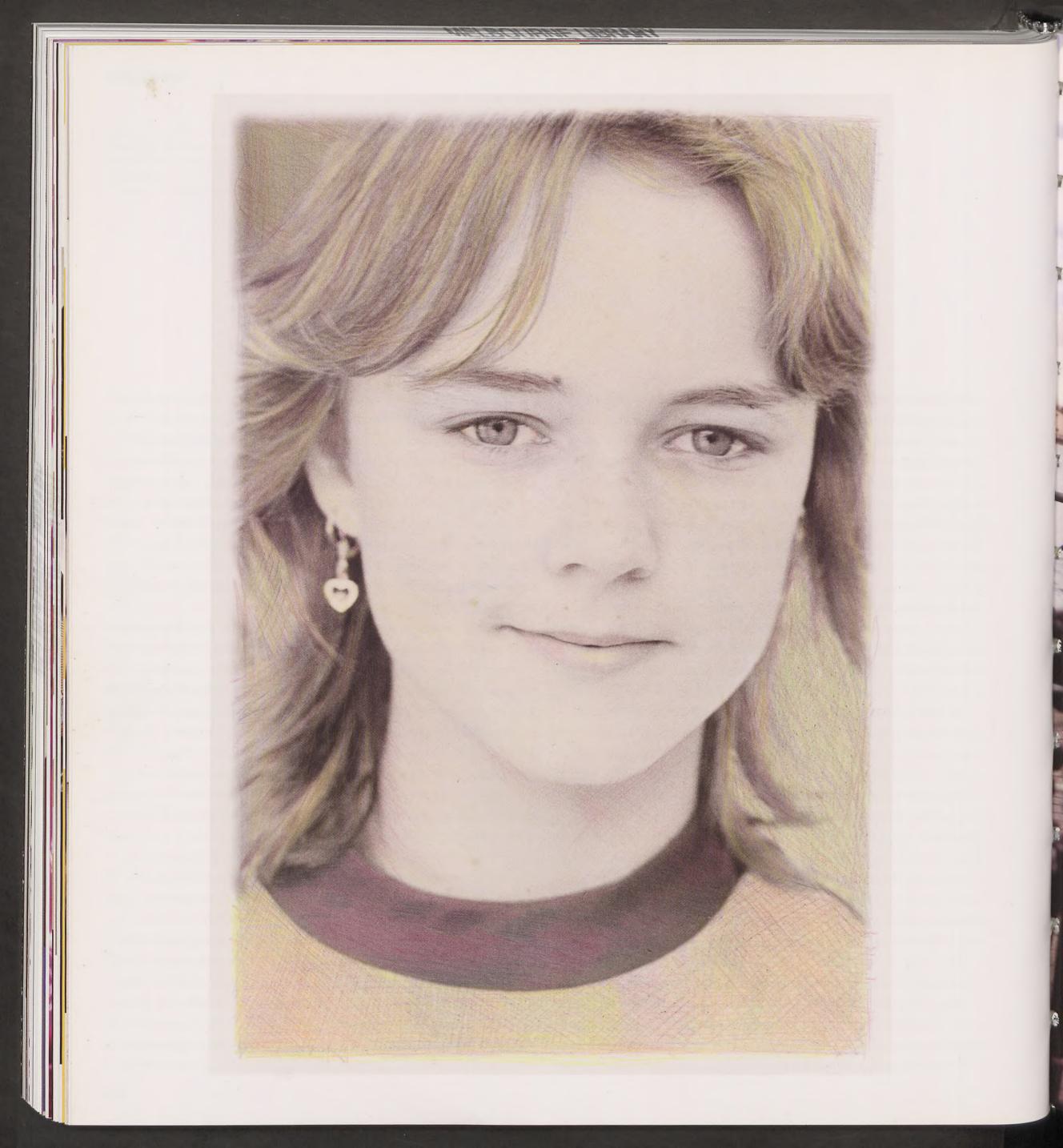
- as artists, and as audiences for art?

KT: The same issues all women face in relation to finding a work-life balance: making time to make work, to make a living and balancing family life. However the main difference for female artists is that we often have to work at another job to support our practice.

KM: If studying feminist art and thought has taught me anything, it's that women aren't a homogeneous group – let alone women artists – so that so-called 'feminist' issues such as the experience of motherhood, for example, might be seen as central to some women and marginal to others. (Although the continued definition of women in terms of our perceived rejection or acceptance of motherhood continues to irk me!) I also think that issues such as the fate of the planet under climate change and the effects of corporate greed addressed by the Occupy movement in 2011 are so pressing and overwhelming that they tend to outweigh any art-specific concerns that might trouble us.

BC: As a collective of four women, feminism is an issue that is constantly addressed both implicitly and explicitly in our practice. Our work has been criticised by our peers for being feminist and by second-wave feminists for not being feminist. These attitudes represent a lack of communication and solidarity between the different generations of Australian feminists. There are many inspiring young female artists working in Australia today who we would assume to be feminist but are not interested in aligning their practice with the term. We feel that a direct, politicised 'feminist' voice is somewhat absent within the emergent practices of young female artists. Each of the four members of Brown Council bring different points of view and understandings of what feminism is to the collaboration - through this ongoing conversation, our collective attitude towards feminism is constantly interrogated and re-defined.

JW: Well, money. When a financial crisis is announced, there JE: What do you think are the crucial issues for women today is a paralysing effect - through all budgets everywhere including collectors, galleries, institutions, teaching - so in what has been a developing culture here, everything grinds to a halt. It's not only recently understood that we have good women artists here. There have been a number of initiatives to promote Australian art overseas: studios, group shows, travel grants, and so on. All





#### **art**feature

Jenny Watson, Australian artist of the 80's, 1987
Offset-lithograph, printed in colour from multiple stones/plates
Printed image 54.8 × 76.8 cm, collection National Gallery of Australia (NGA), Canberra
Commissioned by the NGA, Canberra, and the Australian Bicentennial Authority 1988.
Courtesy the artist and NGA, Canberra. © Jenny Watson



page 452 Micky Allan, No title (Teenage girl with earring), 1982–83 From the 'People of Elizabeth' series Gelatin silver photograph, coloured pencils, 33.6 × 22.4 cm Courtesy National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne © Micky Allan / Licensed by Viscopy, 2011

page 453
Brown Council, Photo with the artist, 2011
Offsite project, installation view, 'Primavera 2011', MCA, Sydney
Courtesy the artists and Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
Photograph Alex Davies

of this will be affected over the next few years, making it very clear that art is a luxury. Ditto audiences: people will be much more concerned about their own survival than cultural activities.

JE: What would you like to see happen next, as women, for women, in art and in cultural institutions?

JW: Australia has an appalling track record of its treatment of mid-generation and mature artists. It is very difficult to see good survey shows of artists who made the art culture what it is today. This applies to all artists but women, because their careers tend to be a bit more patchy, are more often overlooked. So I would say that the main problem as I see it is mid-to-late-career survey shows.

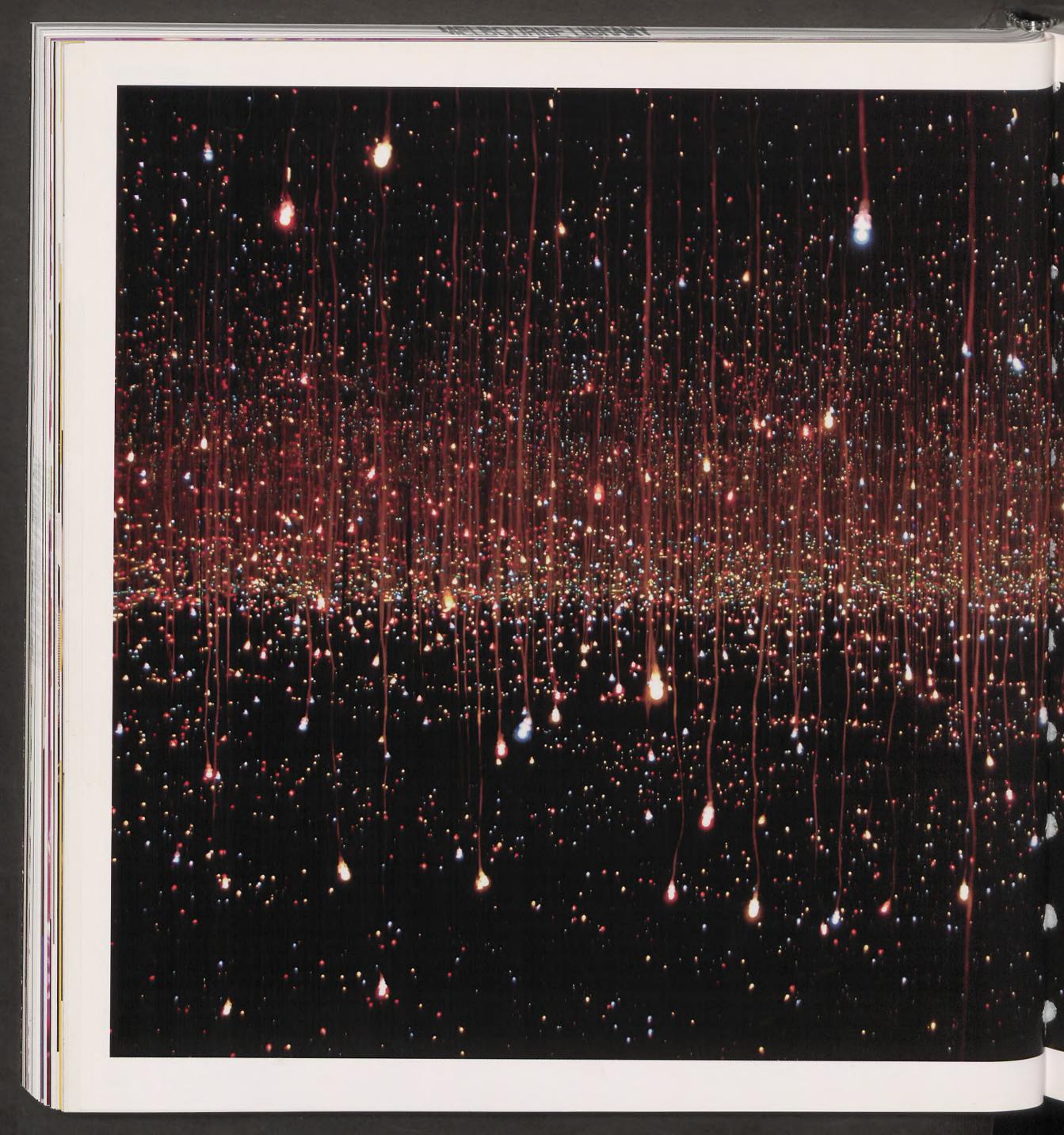
I mentioned Lesley Dumbrell before, an influential force in the 1970s, and a major abstract painter, and there is nothing in the pipeline for her in terms of a survey. This, to me, seems a significant oversight and I am sure there are many more. Historical knowledge and precedents are not of great interest in Australia. The interest in generations changes about every three years, and that is reflected in curatorship, right down to commercial galleries and the market.

KT: To see more shows on the history of artwork made in Australia that address the different waves of feminism and their international influences. I think it is important that there is equal representation of male and female artists having solo exhibitions, in public art collections, group exhibitions, biennales, representations by commercial galleries, public art opportunities, works displayed at art fairs, artists teaching in art schools and on institution boards.

I would like it to be easier for all artists to take up highprofile opportunities and to see cultural institutions pay greater artist and material fees for contributions to exhibition programs. The Australia Council and Arts Victoria grants are a great help to artists, however institutions rely on artists receiving funding, which does not always happen. We have wonderful philanthropy in this country that allows cultural institutions to continue to function. I would encourage the government to fund contemporary art spaces with a similar focus to that of sporting venues and to understand how public funding can directly help artists, institutions and generate wider audiences. Primarily I would like greater support for all artists seriously making work.

KM: Many of the most positive responses I had for 'ADT' were from young women involved in contemporary art - artists, writers, curators - who want to know their history and who are inspired, invigorated and empowered by that knowledge. So I would like to see many more exhibitions, discussions and critiques of our recent art history that foreground the role women artists have played - and continue to play. We are at an important moment with respect to second-wave feminism, and as international projects such as 'WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution' have shown, we're now able to look back on the late 1960s and 1970s with fresh eyes. And we can still benefit from many of the protagonists from this time still being around to share their experiences first-hand. We need to work hard now to bring the richness and relevance of this history to current and future generations, which means accounting for it from many points of view. I'd like to see the radical contributions feminist practice made regarded as central to our history, rather than being relegated to the margins.

BC: We want to see the word 'feminism' re-asserted by future generations of female artists. We are constantly inspired to see women heading some of our most important arts institutions, such as Lisa Havilah and Elizabeth Ann Macgregor, and we look forward to the day when more women artists are included in major contemporary art collections such as John Kaldor's at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. For us, as women and as artists, it is really important to think big, take up space and be loud.





## Through the looking glass

YAYOI KUSAMA'S AMAZING WORLD

Frances Morris

opposite, clockwise from top Self-obliteration no. 2, 1967 Watercolour, pen, pastel and photo collage on paper, 40.4 x 50.4 cm Courtesy the artist and Tate Modern, London

> Fashion shoot on a New York rooftop, 1968 Courtesy the artist and Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo © Yayoi Kusama, Yayoi Kusama Studio Inc.

> Yayoi Kusama, c. 2010–11 Courtesy the artist and Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo © Yayoi Kusama, Yayoi Kusama Studio Inc.

pages 456–7 Infinity mirror room, 2011 Courtesy the artist. © Yayoi Kusama Studio Inc.

I FIRST ENCOUNTERED YAYOI KUSAMA when I visited her Tokyo studio in October 2009 to invite her to make a retrospective exhibition at Tate Modern. Kusama's own ambition, relayed by her representatives in answer to my earlier written invitation, was to create a striking new work for Tate Modern's Turbine Hall. The octogenarian Japanese artist's desire was to build on almost twenty years of installation work, and numerous commissions worldwide, since her spectacular re-entry onto the world's stage as Japan's representative at the 1993 Venice Biennale. Although the idea to give over this quintessentially popular space to Kusama's inimitable polka dots and mirrored surfaces was quite compelling, the challenge, as we saw it, was not just to celebrate the ascendancy of one of the few truly global brands in contemporary art – who else, aside from a handful of practitioners, is so instantly associated with a single type of mark making? - but to set out for pleasure, scrutiny and reassessment a career that spans more than seven decades, that has moved across continents and through successive convulsive innovations within avant-garde practice and along the way engaged in an extraordinary range of medium and technique, scale, style, distribution mode, context and audience. Hers is an amazing story, at the very least, but also one capable of helping us readdress the histories of the twentieth century so often too neatly packaged, as they are, into narratives around national schools, avant-gardes and ascendant – mostly male – practitioners. The challenge for me, then, in visiting Kusama was to persuade an artist emphatically rooted in the present, and propelled still by an ambition to surpass tomorrow the achievements of today, that her past was worth unravelling and her story worth retelling.

Anyone visiting Kusama in her studio would surely be as curious as I was to come face to face with an artist who has so carefully constructed and projected a public persona in the style of her own work and who has put herself so resolutely at the centre of her own creative world. At the same time she has

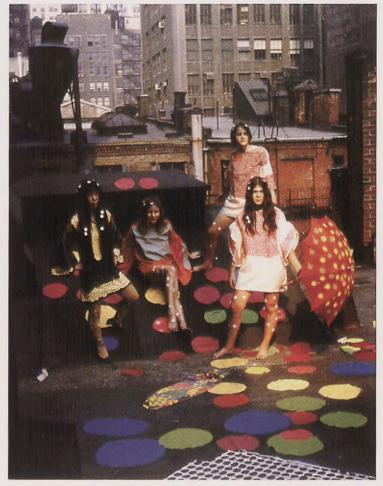
so tightly spun the fabric of her own life story into a protective autobiographical veil of psychic disorder, depression and neurosis that, in my view, it can all too often obscure a real understanding of her work, its genesis and its place in history. So adding to the usual anxieties of any such meeting was my awareness of the puzzling gulf between Kusama's extraordinary public image and the deeply private life she has maintained in her secluded and protected home within a Tokyo psychiatric hospital, adjacent to her studio complex. Which Kusama, I wondered, would I meet?

The anxiety of not knowing was compounded by the knowledge that our meeting would be filmed, it being Kusama's practice, over the last decade, to capture the comings and goings and doings of her professional life - meetings, outings, even the activity of painting itself – to be recycled in regular documentary programs for Japanese TV. The film crew formed a kind of impediment an additional human shield. Add to that Kusama's indomitable studio team and her fiercely protective gallerists, and there was a considerable barrier that lay between us and the artist. We found her eventually, surrounded by dozens of her brilliantly coloured and fantastically detailed new paintings, and stacks of prepared canvases, ample evidence of the artist's continuing will to generate original and striking work, and of her absolute commitment to the future. There was little sign, at this first meeting, of Kusama's fascinating past, either in her conversation or in the studio itself, although there were just enough tantalising glimpses of the history we were so keen to explore - a portfolio of early drawings and collages, a 10-metre-long offcut from a vast early painting, crumbled vintage photographs - to stimulate our curatorial vision for an exhibition which would span over half a century and present these striking new canvases as the end point of a remarkable journey through life and through the histories of modern art.

Although she is best known for her large-scale immersive installations, often combining mirrors, LED lighting systems and







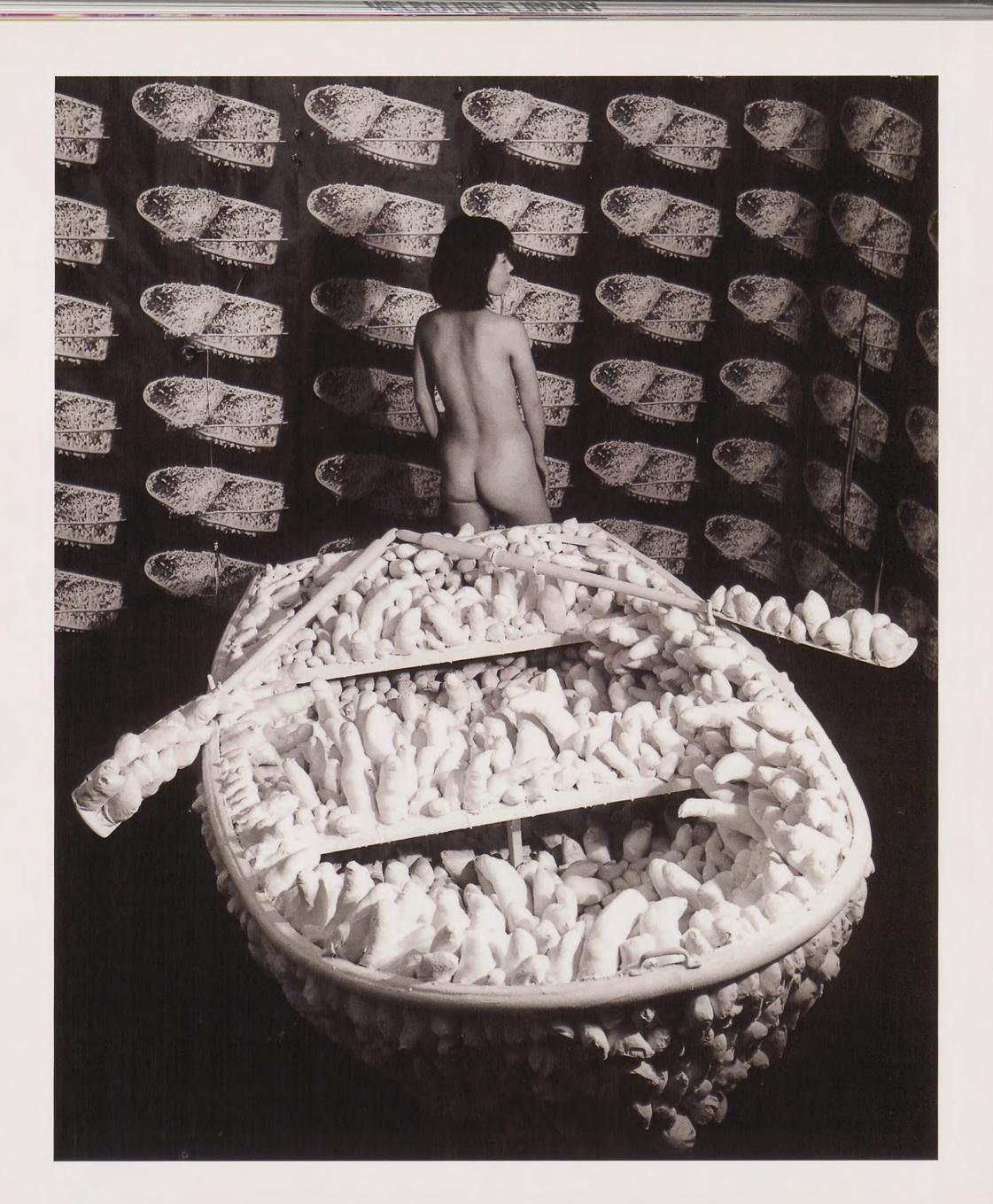
Dots infinity–NOWH, 2004 Acrylic on canvas, 182 × 227 cm Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

large-scale polka dots, Kusama's artistic grounding was as a painter in the *nihonga* tradition – a blend of Japanese custom and western innovation - that was the officially endorsed style in the Japan of her childhood and youth. Born into a relatively affluent middleclass family in the provincial mountain town of Matsumoto - the family business was in seed wholesaling - Kusama soon showed evidence of a precocious talent and artistic ambition, highly unusual within this conservative milieu. Only exceptional drive and an iron will can, to my mind, account for Kusama's particular trajectory from obscurity to world renown. This began, in wartime Japan, through her hunger to push the boundaries, to experiment with new methods and styles; she invented her own 'homemade' oil paint and improvised canvases from old seed sacks, devoured artistic influences from abroad (the abstraction of Joan Miró's 'Constellations', the decalcomania and frottage of Max Ernst), and took every opportunity to exhibit her paintings, so that long before she made actual contact with the European and American avantgarde her work was fully connected with western modernity. An invitation to show in Seattle in 1957 provided the final aspect of an exit strategy that Kusama had pursued over many months and which had gained real momentum when she made contact, some years earlier, with the legendary American artist Georgia O'Keeffe, whose advice and encouragement was crucial.

After a brief stay, and an exhibition at Dusanne Gallery in Seattle, Kusama crossed the continent to New York City. Within weeks this young Japanese artist had located the epicentre of New York's avant-garde in the Manhatten district of Chelsea and taken up residence in close proximity to many of the artists – among them Donald Judd, Claes Oldenburg and Andy Warhol – who were destined to make that city the focus of the western art world's most radical experiments for the next few years. Over the course of a long decade Kusama was at the forefront of this scene. She







opposite

Aggregation: One thousand boats show, 1963

Rowboat and oars covered by plaster castings in white cotton, a pair of women's shoes and 999 black-and-white offset posters on paper,  $60 \times 265 \times 130$  cm Courtesy the artist and Tate Modern, London

first gained notice for her large-scale monochrome paintings covered edge to edge with repeated looping brushstrokes. Known as 'Infinity Net' paintings in recognition of the implied absence of edge or bottom, these were, it seems, a deliberate and emphatically public answer to the challenge of abstract expressionism, evidenced by Kusama's letter to a Japanese magazine in which she wrote of her intention 'to create a revolutionary work that will stun ... the New York art world'. For many artists achieving this would have been sufficient to establish a mature style with which to live and through which to experiment for a career - think of Mark Rothko or Willem de Kooning or indeed her close friend Judd, whose mature stance, once achieved, remained more or less his signature style. The puzzle of Kusama, as well as a key reason for our enduring fascination with her life and work, is why she chose, just as she won serious critical acclaim for the first time, to reinvent herself first as a sculptor - replacing the abstract motif of the loop with the eroticised symbol of the phallus in sexually charged installations of domestic furniture - and then, again and again, in successive reincarnations as performance artist, filmmaker, fashion designer, party planner, poet and novelist, ceramicist and collage artist, installation artist and public sculptor. These are just the key staging posts of the journey which took her from New York through Europe and back to Tokyo and which led, eventually, to the remarkable paintings she is making now.

The exhibition that has developed over the last two years will focus on the moments of maximum intensity in this long career, each gallery space exploring the emergence of a radical new stance. At first sight this appears as a history of ruptures and abrupt shifts, yet underpinning each new body of work is a sense of extremity and excess, of life and creativity experienced at the limits of what is possible. This is the aspect of her art that is, I believe, at least as interesting as discovering and laying bare the genealogy of

Kusama's inimitable contemporary style, which the exhibition will also do. Each room will enact an immersion into Kusama's world. Works will be deployed as the artist conceived them in her studio or as she first showed them, evidence for which lies in the remarkably full photographic documentation which Kusama compiled from her very earliest years. These photographs – which demonstrate her need to document her own history and which often show the artist herself at the centre of the image – speak of Kusama's precocious awareness of her own destiny, and sharpen our insight into an individual who has managed her life, and the very ebb and flow of her mental health, with extreme care.

Two years on from that first memorable meeting, and now on the brink of installing her exhibition, I lie awake at night in trepidation. This is the moment when the exhibition goes 'live' within the institution – when the press and marketing offices, art handling and conservation departments, learning colleagues, public programming and development teams take the project 'on'. From here on it escalates from the curatorial to the institutional, from a rather private endeavour – a collaboration between artist and curator – to a public enterprise. Such moments of stress are typical for me, and are no doubt commonly experienced by others, but in the case of Kusama the anxiety is more acute: a reflection, perhaps, of the fact that although she continues to display a steely determination and astonishing ambition, Kusama herself views this retrospective as a huge challenge. This is her first museum show in the United Kingdom, and granting us such generous access to her past has involved stepping back from the controls - an act of faith on her part in our ability to bring the past back into the present with currency and conviction.

Yayoi Kusama, Tate Modern, London, 9 February – 5 June 2012; Whitney Museum, New York, June – September 2012.

#### Nalini Malani

BODIES IN PAIN

Macushla Robinson





At fifteen metres across, Nalini Malani's Mother India: Transactions in the construction of pain, 2005, is physically overwhelming. The five screens of this video installation are arranged in a semi-circle that surrounds the body, dominating one's field of vision. They show archival footage – of women spinning, flags converging on the face of Gandhi, people flooding across borders and religious iconography – alongside more recent allegorical imagery including a young woman superimposed over a map of India and Pakistan. Having opened with images from the time of the 1947 Partition of India, the work closes with pictures of the destroyed landscape of Gujarat in 2002 when many Muslims and Hindus were killed following racial riots in western India.

With such politically charged sequences concerning violence against women, past and present, *Mother India* constitutes a major work by an artist who grapples with history in many different forms. Where Malani has often portrayed mythological women from both western and Indian literature (such as Euripides's Medea and the Hindu goddess Sita), *Mother India* depicts both anonymous and allegorical female figures, representing the estimated 100,000 Indian and Pakistani women who were caught up in the Partition and its aftershocks.

Malani's practice is informed by her own family's experience of displacement during the Partition in her early childhood. Born in Karachi, then a city of India but now within Pakistan, she was educated largely in Bombay (Mumbai) and spent some years in Paris in the early 1970s. Exhibiting internationally since the 1980s, Malani has been included in such important survey shows as Brisbane's Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (1996 and 2002) and 'iCon: India Contemporary' at the 2005 Venice Biennale. Most recently her work was featured in 'Paris-Delhi-Bombay', a major exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and she will soon participate in the 13th documenta in Kassel. As cultural commentator Andreas Huyssen has noted, becoming

a refugee at a young age led Malani to think of herself as 'an artist at home in the world rather than belonging to one local or national culture'.<sup>1</sup>

While working across national and cultural boundaries, Malani remains deeply engaged with her heritage and, in particular, the gender politics of India. In the late 1980s Malani was closely involved with a travelling exhibition of Indian women artists, 'Through the Looking Glass', which included the work of Madhvi Parekh, Nilima Sheikh and Arpita Singh – women who were exhibiting in a male-dominated art world. As with *Mother India*, much of Malani's work directly interrogates Indian history and the question of gender, aiming to resist what she terms the cynical exploitation of nationalism.

Malani confronts these issues using diverse methods and materials, shifting from delicate watercolour to installation and theatre. While known as a pioneer of Indian video art, Malani's practice is founded on painting and drawing techniques, having said: 'I paint therefore I am'. 2 She transforms these processes through performance and installation strategies including wall drawings that are rendered and then erased (City of desires, 1992); hand-drawn or painted animations (Memory: Record/erase, 1996, and Stains, 2000), and works such as Transgressions, 2001 - an installation of reverse-painted cylinders which spin slowly in the gallery space and when lit from behind cast a series of shadows on the walls which overlay video projections. In the latter work, both the painted and the projected images recall nineteenth-century colonial India, combined with a voice-over that hints at the complexity of cultural identification: 'I speak orange, I speak blue, I speak your speak just like you.'

The figure dominates Malani's work, yet always seems to be on the threshold of dissolution. Bodies wrapped in thin translucent skins float across her compositions surrounded by organs, or melt

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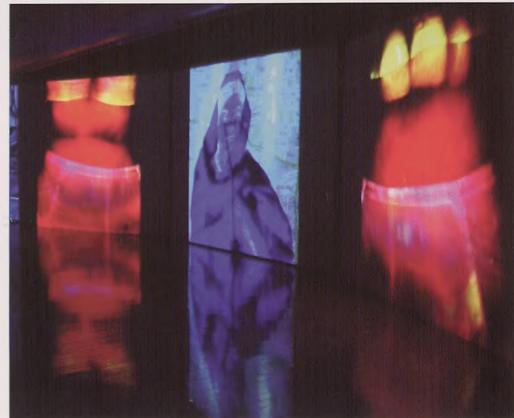
Nalini Malani, Mother India: Transactions in the construction of pain, 2005

Video installation, five-channel projection, 5½ mins duration

Courtesy the artist and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney









into shadows as they spin out of view. As cinema theorist Ashish Rajadhyaksha has suggested, even the voice which features in Malani's recent video work is 'dismembered, evacuated of an ego, full of projectiles'. The paint in Malani's work can suggest blood, mucus or bodily fluids smeared onto the surface. By showing the body in pieces, Malani suggests a body that is in pain.

The video installation *Mother India* continues this concern for the body in pain through photographs, archival footage and spoken word, directly addressing the suffering of women during and after the Partition. Following 350 years of British colonial rule India gained independence and at that same moment was divided in two. Partition arose out of ongoing religious tensions and in the ensuing riots atrocities were committed on all sides of the conflict, a violence that recurs in contemporary India. As Malani has said: 'Possession by inflicting extreme sexual violence on women has had a trajectory right up to present times.'

Mother India was spurred on by Veena Das's 1996 essay 'Language and the body: Transactions in the construction of pain', in which the anthropologist investigated widespread sexual violence against women during the Partition, citing claims that 50,000 women were abducted by Hindu and Sikh men, and 33,000 by Muslim men. Framing her study as a work of mourning,

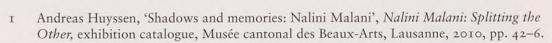
Das has said that these events were not publicly memorialised.<sup>5</sup> She argues that in both the initial brutality and the subsequent officially sanctioned repatriation, women's bodies were treated as surrogates for their national identities – hence violence done to women was violence done to their nation.

Through reference to a classic 1957 Hindi film of the same name, Malani's *Mother India* connects the violence that Das talks about with a nationalist mythology that equates women with their country. The earlier film portrays a woman who, despite enormous emotional and financial hardship, embodies a nationalist ideal of morality and self-sacrifice in the newly independent India. Malani interrogates this ideal by showing women caught in the violence of independence: old women carrying their belongings on their heads; a young woman with a partially exposed stomach; a girl's face with downcast eyes. All are accompanied by an affective female voice that sings and shrieks in turn.

Perhaps the most potent image in this work is that of a woman superimposed over a map. The figure and the map merge, with urban and topographical details marking the woman's skin. Place names appear on her body and words that designate regions fall across her forehead, disappearing into the shadows of her face, which is split in two by a border that cuts through her forehead and eye. Such an image powerfully alludes to the many unconfirmed accounts of racist slogans being inscribed on womens' bodies during Partition, which Das has written about: 'If one deified women so that the nation could be imagined as the beloved, the other makes visible the dark side of this project by making the bodies of women the surfaces on which their text of the nation is written.'6 In Malani's image cartographic borders and inscriptions read as wounds and scars on the skin, making palpable the violence implicit in establishing the national boundaries that are delineated on the map.

Having been regularly presented on the international stage, from Dublin's Irish Museum of Modern Art to New Plymouth's Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, and recently unveiled in the collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Mother India demands attention for the violence done to women during the Partition and compels the recognition of subaltern feminisms more broadly. The work comes up against the limits of representation by alluding to enormous suffering without graphically depicting it. Malani implies this violence through a barrage of shifting and loosely connected images that are emotive rather than narratively coherent. The work does not to seek to make sense of this suffering. Rather, it is a condemnation of violence in the service of nationalism and an act of mourning. We need to look at this work (and works by other female artists from developing countries) because feminism strives to be an international platform that takes account of the lives of women everywhere. We may not fully comprehend the complexity of this history and its contemporary manifestations but we must continue to witness it.

Nalini Malani: Mother India, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 11 February – 20 May 2012.



Johan Pijnappel, 'Interview with Nalini Malani', in iCon: India Contemporary, exhibition catalogue, 51st Venice Biennale, 2005, www.nalinimalani.com/texts/venice.htm.

3 Ashish Rajadhyaksha, 'Spilling out: Nalini Malani's recent video installations', www.nalinimalani.com/texts/ashish.htm?id=49.

4 From the artist's website: www.nalinimalani.com/video/motherindia.htm.

Veena Das, 'The figure of the abducted woman: the citizen as sexed', in Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan (eds), *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-secular World*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2006, p. 427.

Das, 'Language and the body: Transactions in the construction of pain', in Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (eds), *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, Blackwell Publishing, London, 2004, pp. 328–9.

Aq.

# Sitting with Marina

Heather Rose





Nothing quite prepared me for the utter simplicity of the woman in the vivid red gown seated at the table. It was 15 April 2010, almost officially spring in New York. In the great white box of the Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Marina Abramović had seen little of the days outside. Since the second week of March she had been sitting for seven hours each day, ten on Fridays, meeting the gaze of anyone who sat opposite.

According to the Japanese performance artist Seiji Shimoda, 'art is the way to see invisible things', and experiencing Abramović's 'The Artist is Present' was a fine balance of the seen and the unseen. Abramović's dark mane of hair was swept over one shoulder in a thick braid. Her skin was the colour of church candles. The blonde-wood table and two chairs had an IKEA-like naivety. There was more than the normal amount of reverence found in art galleries floating about. People were standing, kneeling, sitting cross-legged on the floor, settled in as if they hadn't left, nor did they intend to leave, for many hours. They were all intent on Abramović, who was, at that moment, sitting opposite an older man in a tweed jacket, the two of them gazing into each other's eyes.

If Abramović was an acquired taste before this, she became haute cuisine during 'The Artist is Present'. MoMA was inundated by visitors seeking out Abramović's controversial nudes that were titillating the city,<sup>2</sup> and they flocked to see the woman herself who was, well, *staring* at people downstairs: more than 500,000 visitors came to see the show during its eleven-week run; 1546 people sat with Abramović over 700 hours of her performance; there were more than 750,000 hits on MoMA's Flickr site showing the haunting portraits of the sitters captured by photographer Marco Anelli (that number now exceeds 1.1 million views).

Abramović has spent more than thirty years harnessing the energy of her audience to conduct and endure performances,

all designed to take her beyond fear and the normal limitations of physical pain. She has drawn on her Yugoslavian past to create a formidable career that includes her being awarded a Golden Lion for Best Artist at the Venice Biennale in 1997. Interestingly, the roots of 'The Artist is Present' lie in Australia. Abramović and her then-partner, performance artist Ulay, spent twelve months here across 1980–81 – first living with traditional people for six months in Pitjantjatjara country southwest of Alice Springs, and then travelling around Australia performing and lecturing. From this they conceived a meditative performance piece – *Nightsea crossing*, 1981–86, where the two artists would sit on either side of a table and stare into each other's eyes for an entire day. Neither could leave nor move. There would be no toilet breaks, no food, no water.

The inaugural *Nightsea crossing* was performed for eight hours in Melbourne at the First Australian Sculpture Triennial in 1981. After three hours the pain became excruciating but the rigour of their commitment meant they could not move. Ulay had determined that they would repeat their performance of the work for a total of ninety days. The next *Nightsea crossing* was performed in Sydney at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. This time it lasted for sixteen consecutive eight-hour days. As Abramović biographer James Westcott recently recounted:

It was astounding the amount of pain that the body could generate just by being still and doing nothing ... The cramp in Marina's legs was so bad and her shoulders so tense that at a certain point in every performance she felt like she would lose consciousness. But she found if she accepted this possibility and continued to dwell within the pain, then she would transcend into an ecstatic space ... the passage into this post-pain state was like dying again and again.<sup>3</sup>

Nightsea crossing was performed for ninety days over six years

across Australia and Europe. At the end of it Abramović and Ulay would end their relationship, giving one final performance in a long walking meditation on the Great Wall of China.

Next in this evolution of meditative performances came the solo Abramović performance *The house with the ocean view*, 2002, at the Sean Kelly Gallery in New York. Abramović fasted for twelve days while undertaking a repetitive ritual of actions performed on a raised stage with minimalist wooden furniture, a toilet and a shower – all while maintaining eye contact with the audience for long periods of time. A year after this performance Abramović commented to Laurie Anderson:

The relation to the audience is the essence of performance. In my case the need to be completely open and vulnerable, to give everything I can, 100 per cent, is extremely strong ... People would come like drunks – instead of a shot of vodka they came for a shot of this connection with the eyes.<sup>4</sup>

In 2005 Abramović performed Seven easy pieces. Over seven nights at the Guggenheim in New York, Abramović re-enacted the works of Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Valie Export, Bruce Naumann, Gina Pane and her own Lips of Thomas. Again Abramović harnessed the audience, searching for eye contact:

I can take energy from the audience ... To confront pain by taking this kind of risk in order to liberate yourself from fear and at the same time, to jump to another state of consciousness. That is the really important thing.<sup>5</sup>

The major retrospective 'The Artist is Present' was enriched not by the nude re-performers of her work who fanned the flames of media attention and drew the crowds, but by the care with which Abramović had documented every step of her career. From MoMA's sixth-floor walkway, which led into the retrospective, visitors could look over the railing and see Abramović below,

in person, anchoring that vivid life of exploration, emotion and endurance. This was emblematic in itself. *I have come all this way*, she seemed to say. *And I am still here*. She wasn't wielding knives or whipping her naked body. She was sitting still, practising her art.

One of the few artists to consistently pursue performance over a similar length of time is the Australian Julie Rrap. Both Abramović and Rrap utilise their personal identities powerfully. They are women of a certain generation (Rrap was born in 1950; Abramović 1946) with a persistence and dedication to expressing themselves with their bodies as a tool, a canvas, a medium. Where Rrap's work has explored notions of identity and non-identity, Abramović has sought to be a bridge between eastern and western cultures:

What is important is less what you do than the state of mind you do it in ... you have to empty the body to the point where you can really be connected with the fields of energy around you. I think that men and women in our western culture are completely disconnected from that energy and in my new work I want to make this connection possible.<sup>6</sup>

On my first day at MoMA, fresh off the plane from Australia, I spoke to a tall Hispanic man as he waited in the queue. 'Have you sat before?' I asked. 'Yes', he nodded. 'What does it feel like?' I asked. 'It feels', he said, 'as if I am able to let things go. As if I am being cleansed. Cleaning out the cupboard.' He was make-up artist Paco Blancas. He sat with Abramović twenty-one times over seventy-five days and he would have this number tattooed on his arm at the end of the performance. There were other, more recognisable, celebrities: Antony Hegarty, Isabella Rossellini, Sharon Stone, Rufus Wainwright. The author Colm Tóibín related his sitting for the *The New York Review of Books*:

It was like being brought into a room in Enniscorthy when I was a child on the day after a neighbour had died and

being allowed to look at the corpse's face. You studied Abramović's face with the same mystified intensity, as though it would yield something – not come alive exactly, but in its very stillness offer something, an image maybe, that you should know and remember.<sup>7</sup>

Abramović had captured my attention years before with a photograph from her 1976 performance in Naples titled *Rhythm o*, in which she had laid out a table with seventy-two implements and invited the audience to do with her as they wished. From that performance she learned 'the audience can kill you'. After I saw the photograph I began crafting a novel based on Abramović's life. When I heard of the MoMA show, I knew I had to go.

Anyone could sit. Anyone with the patience. There were no metal detectors, no airport scanners. All of us who waited floated in the unknown. Time was beyond our control. In the queue we befriended each other, finding ourselves with literally hours to sit side by side. Some who waited were drama students, and there were scholars and art enthusiasts, but there were also lawyers, musicians, bankers, writers, teachers and tourists from all over the world.

On day thirty-four I arrived at the gallery at 9 a.m., a morning of grey skies and rain. The doors opened to allow us into the ground floor just after 10 a.m. The crowd intensified. At 10.30 there was literally a stampede up the stairs to the atrium despite the best efforts of the staff to slow the running crowd.

The queue moved quickly that morning and after an hour or two the empty chair opposite Abramović awaited me. I slipped off my shoes and listened to the guard's whispered instructions: 'Maintain eye contact. Do not speak. Do not put anything on the table, not even your hands. Sit as long as you like. When you are ready to leave again, simply bow your head.' I walked to the empty chair as Abramović sat with her head bowed, awaiting her next visitor, or perhaps victim.

I am drawn to ritual. In my twenties I spent four years participating in Native American ceremonies in mid- and southwest America. I learned to go beyond fear, pain, hunger, thirst. I like the freedom of discipline and the discipline of freedom. Perhaps this was what really drew me to the chair at the table. To experience a ritual. To be in the presence of an artist who has harnessed suffering and endurance and made it art. Abramović has often said: 'I don't do anything that doesn't frighten me.'

I settled on the wooden chair, noticed my racing heart begin to settle, aware of the noise beyond the table, the flow of people moving in and out of the atrium, the ripple of voices. I took a deep breath and raised my head. Our eyes met. Abramović's expression for a brief moment was warm and welcoming and then she slipped back inside a gaze that was slightly unfocused, the right eye quite fixed on me and the left softer, reminding me of what Susan Sontag once wrote: 'In a woman, beauty is something total. It is what stands, in a woman, for character. It is also of course a performance, something willed, designed, obtained.'9

Abramović is strikingly beautiful. Her beauty lies in her strength and her fearlessness. She is an art warrior.

I considered what I was feeling. The crowd seemed a long way away. Even the idea that I was at MoMA disappeared. I became aware of how big she was, how her presence appeared to fill the entire six floors of emptiness that is MoMA's atrium. I felt a part of myself I rarely consciously visit: the warm core of myself where death has no hold nor the norms that constrain me – the physical laws, the social standards, the intellectual rules, the psychological boundaries.

I understood that I had forgotten something, perhaps many things. I felt as if there was a deep kindness at work inside Abramović, and also a strength that might carry us anywhere. There was a sense of awe in me and a sense of peacefulness. A sense of being much older, with much more yet to do. I had a feeling of being omnipresent at all the points in my life from birth to death, deeply connected to the earth and every form of life on it. I saw many landscapes. After a while I realised that the energy had changed. I was aware again of the noise of the room, the bright glow of the floodlights, the waiting queue, the watching people. I bowed my head and walked back across the square, collected my shoes and went to an empty space against the wall. I slipped to the floor and realised I was shaking. I wanted to weep, as if I had lost something very precious. The next day I learned I had sat for three quarters of an hour. I would have guessed it was fifteen minutes.

I returned to the atrium each day for two weeks. I sat another three times with Abramović. I became acutely aware of the physical extremes of the performance. The degree of suffering that was there in her eyes, in her face, though at a glance she appeared immobile and composed, a living sculpture. I watched as she engaged with people young and old, men, women, children, all races and creeds. One young woman seemed to grow into a shimmering version of herself before shrinking back. Afterwards the woman came and sat next to me. 'You looked as if you grew very big, as if she had given you permission to be beautiful', I said to her. 'That's exactly how it was', she said, tears welling in her eyes. 'I didn't know how I was going to keep breathing. It was amazing.'

On my last day I wanted to thank Abramović. I wanted to ask her about the book I was writing. As I sat and gazed into her eyes I heard myself form the words in my mind: 'I want to know if it's all right to write it. You're in it. You're right at the heart of it.'

At that exact moment Abramović did a rare thing. She sat forward, leaning in across the table towards me, fixing me with the full intensity of her gaze. Without her uttering a word I heard her say to me: 'You must do it – and you must be fearless.' It might have been instructions for writing, and it might have been instructions for life.

When I returned to New York and to the atrium months later, I felt the breath knocked out of me. The sheer emptiness of the space without Abramović was palpable. Just as The Blue House is without Frida Kahlo, the Galleria dell'Accademia might be without David or the Louvre without the Mona Lisa. It was as if the life force had gone. And maybe that is the power of performance art. At its best it is flesh and blood with all its vulnerability and strength and endurance, reminding us that we are bigger and more fearless than we think. It challenges us to forget our limitations and for a moment we become, like the artist, and art itself, indefinable. We are seen and unseen.

- Seiji Shimoda, 'Performance art scene in Japan, 1978–1998', Art Action 1958–1998, Edition Intervention, Québec, 2001, p. 224.
- 2 'The Artist is Present' included thirty-eight performers in revolving shifts of eight who faced each other in the gallery, mostly naked.
- James Westcott, When Marina Abramović Dies, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., p. 169.
- 4 Laurie Anderson, 'Marina Abramović', BOMB, no. 84, Summer 2003.
- 5 Karlyn de Jongh, Sarah Gold, Peter Lodermeyer and Rene Reitmeyer, 'The artist is present: A conversation with Marina Abramović', *Art Monthly*, no. 230, June 2010.
- 6 Marina Abramović in conversation with Bernard Goy, Journal of Contemporary Art,
- 7 Colm Tóibín, 'Still drama: Marina at MoMA', The New York Review of Books, 21 April 2010.
- 8 See www.MoMA.org/explore/multimedia/audios/190/1972.
- 9 In Annie Leibovitz and Susan Sontag, Women, Random House, New York, 1999.

page 471 Marina Abramović, The Artist Is Present, 2010 75-day performance at The Museum of Modern Art, New York Courtesy Marina Abramović Archives and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York Photograph Marco Anelli. © Marina Abramović

#### Time passing upside down: Julie Rrap's 360 degree self-portrait

Amelia Jones

If ART IS TO HAVE ANY RESONANCE IN TODAY'S WORLD, pressured as it is with increasingly frantic and superficial types of human expression and interaction, then it must find ways to slow meaning down. Art at its most interesting impedes the otherwise rapid flow of information between subjects and objects by blocking the interface which we expect to deliver instant gratification or by suspending our comprehension of what we are seeing, forcing us to find innovative ways to engage with what we don't understand.

Throughout her thirty-year career, Julie Rrap has consistently found ways of welcoming, and even eliciting, the recalcitrant moments when circuits of expression give way to incomprehension, opening out this delay in meaning that affords time for us to think. Rrap creates images, objects and installations that are often productively baffling and mysterious in the way in which they evoke bodily responses but also suspend intellectual attempts to pin down meaning. Rrap has done this by employing her own body, always filtering and manipulating its appearance through technologies from photography to video to body casting. In this way she explores the interrelations between the body and its modes of experience, presentation and representation, pointing to the overlapping and co-constitutive nature of being, seeing and feeling. Art, in Rrap's practice, traces and retraces this interesting nexus – making us think.

Rrap's 2009 project 360 degree self-portrait exemplifies this way of engaging the viewer yet never allowing easy access to the work. We glance and we think we see a simple image of Rrap's face staring forth with little emotional inflection. But Rrap does not disappoint our expectations that something seemingly simple will reveal itself through time to be increasingly unsettling. If we stop to stare, a creepy sense of something going awry descends on us. Her face looks strained – no, wait, not strained, but weighted, as if suffering from the effects of air pressure. But no, that's not quite right either. As we continue to

look we feel empathetically exhausted, because her face seems pressured or manipulated, the skin moving gradually, but by an energy we cannot pinpoint. Her eyes are tearing; she is all but grimacing. We begin to realise that her face seems to sag *upwards*, the looseness of her still beautiful middle-aged flesh dragged or pulled. As time passes, her face becomes increasingly strange before our eyes; it shifts shape almost imperceptibly, but then (even as we continue to watch without looking away) we realise it has been transformed as if behind our backs.

Could this be some traction within the body itself, eating it from within, dragging it hither and thither? Or is it a power that is disturbing the flesh from the outside? We become acutely aware of the body as a malleable thing in space, and one profoundly affected by spatial pressures and by the passage of time. But here the uncanny effects of Rrap's shape-shifting face seem *out of time*, suspended. Our understanding is thwarted. We both identify in obvious ways with the self-portrait format – the face as a kind of 'double' of our face – and feel stymied by its impossible transformations.

In fact, 360 degree self-portrait, if one cares to ask, was made by suspending Rrap's body from a mechanical frame and filming her upside-down face as it adjusts to the pull of gravity, her body tugged by the vicissitudes of space and time. The face on the screen is oriented as we expect a face to be at first (doubling or mimicking our own orientation), but its appearance is reversed from our expectations.

360 degree self-portrait reminds us that the body in Rrap's practice is uncanny in the surrealist or Freudian sense. In relation to Rrap's bodies, we find ourselves suspended momentarily in a state of incomprehension that opens up a gap and causes a delay of productive cognitive confusion. It is this gap which I have suggested is crucial to any opening of emotional and political resonance in contemporary art today.







## Sally Gabori's mind-mapped landscapes

Bruce McLean



opposite

My country, 2011

Synthetic polymer paint on linen, 151 × 151 cm

Courtesy the artist, Mornington Island Art and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

pages 478–9

Dibirdibi country, 2011

Synthetic polymer paint on linen, 151 × 196 cm

Courtesy the artist, Mornington Island Art and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

IN AN ART-WORLD SENSE, Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori is what many would call a 'late bloomer'. Born around 1924, Gabori commenced painting in 2005 at a mere 80-odd years of age. A Kaiadilt woman from tiny Bentinck Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Gabori was one of many Kaiadilt who grew up living a near traditional life until the 1940s when natural forces enabled missionaries to relocate their entire population to the nearby Methodist mission on Mornington Island. Here the Kaiadilt found themselves aliens in a new land: Lardil country. The varied artforms of the Lardil people constitute a strong force throughout the history of Queensland Aboriginal art: there are the unique paintings depicting creation stories on white painted bark by Goobalathaldin (Dick Roughsey), Lindsay Burrud (Spider) Roughsey and Thuganmu Arnold Watt, among others; the iconic conical and cylindrical Lardil dance hats; the landscape-style watercolours, often used as illustrations in children's books by Goobalathaldin; and, more recently, their canvas paintings and ceramic vessels depicting body designs. Conversely, the Kaiadilt have had to bide their time in this land of exile, a place which many now consider their home. However, increasing numbers of Kaiadilt people have returned to Bentinck, allowing them to refresh their ties to country and revitalise their fractured traditions.

Following the rejuvenation of the art centre on Mornington Island from 2002 it was the Lardil, the owners of the country, who dominated the art rooms there. Gabori and other senior Kaiadilt women specialised in weaving beautiful bags and fish and dugong nets, but no Kaiadilt had the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the rapidly expanding contemporary Aboriginal art movements. Gabori's chance to make her mark on these movements came completely by chance. In 2005 Gabori became stranded on Mornington Island with her (late) husband Pat, while many other Kaiadilt returned to Bentinck for the dry season. Gabori decided to go to the art centre to gather the materials needed to make

string bags. However, she arrived to a painting workshop – these were dominated by senior Lardil men.¹ Intrigued by what was happening, she picked up a brush and began painting on a spare canvas. The result was quite unlike anything the art centre had ever seen: Gabori combined elements of gestural, expressive painting with a softer, densely daubed dotting technique – made with the bristle end of the paintbrush – executing her compositions with an innate knowledge of negative space. Soon after painting would become Gabori's life, and this treasured work remains on the walls of the art centre today.

What followed was a creative outpouring. Gabori became a regular at the art centre, and produced a phenomenal amount of work. She had found a way to communicate her eighty years of unique knowledge to an audience eager to understand more about her idiosyncratic vision. Many of Gabori's first paintings were a mixture of subjects and styles: her trademark gestural, mindmapped landscapes would sit next to representational paintings such as a nest of turtle eggs or of the ripples left behind by a school of fish breaking the surface of the sea. Gabori gradually refined her style and condensed her range of subjects to the countries and people she knew best – most notably Makarrki and Dibirdibi.

Makarrki, or King Alfred's country, encompasses the clan lands of Gabori's family on the northern tip of Bentinck Island. This is the country of Gabori's brother, who was an important leader and warrior throughout a period of enormous upheaval that spanned the first sustained contact period with white Australians, environmental catastrophes and the subsequent exodus of the Kaiadilt people to the foreign land of Mornington Island. Pat Gabori (Thunduyingathi Bijarrb), or Dibirdibi, was Gabori's late husband and the custodian of the Rock Cod Dreaming. The cod, which is also known as Dibirdibi, has many sites and deeds associated with its creative journey including the creation of Sweers Island to the south-east of Bentinck, though Gabori often





opposite

Dibirdibi country, 2011

Synthetic polymer paint on linen, 151 × 198 cm

Courtesy the artist, Mornington Island Art and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

pages 484–5
Dirbirdibi country, 2008
Synthetic polymer paint on linen, 200 × 600 cm
Purchased 2008 with funds from Cathryn Mittelheuser AM through the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation
Courtesy Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane

concentrates on Thunduyi, the salt flats near Pat's place of birth.

Gabori recalls that King Alfred 'grew her up' until his death at the hands of Pat Gabori, who then took Sally for his wife² during a fructuous exchange between the eastern and western Kaiadilt people.³ Although this scenario seems challenging to the morals of contemporary Australia, it was commonplace in the society that the artist was born into – a world and sixty-five years away from our reality. Today Sally Gabori paints both her brother's country as well as that of her husband – which are roughly in the same area on the northern tip of Bentinck Island – commemorating both equally as great men in her life through representations of their countries. Gabori also paints her own country around the Mackenzie River, Mirdidingki, which is a well-known dugong hunting area on the southern side of Bentinck Island.

Many describe Gabori's works as 'painterly' – they are raw yet resolved, and convey the power of, and her great passion for, the land she loves. Although these paintings appear abstract, they are highly representational maps of country – landscape paintings as true and culturally evocative to Gabori's eyes as Hans Heysen's or Eugene von Guérard's are to European eyes. Gabori's Kaiadilt family, and many of the Lardil artists, immediately saw the symbolism of her paintings, recognising the islands, inlets, points, reefs, beaches, salt flats and stone-walled fish traps that typify her country.

Although quite astonishing, Gabori's story is not unique in the world of contemporary Aboriginal art. Across the country talented Aboriginal painters have emerged in their seventies, eighties or even their nineties, and this is generally as people have been introduced to art materials. As one follows the Aboriginal painting movements from their points of inception through their spread across regions we observe that the first generation of important painters from each of these places are the very senior people who become 'emerging' artists very late in their lives. The most notable examples in the



Central Australian movement at present are the senior painters from the Anangu people (of the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara lands) along the South Australian, Northern Territory and Western Australian borders. These senior artists' paintings are important: imbued with power and an unrivalled knowledge of subject, and an artistic freedom that has been earnt through their rise to absolute authority. Many of these painters assert this power by breaking with established visual traditions and creating their own styles, invigorating movements. This is certainly true of Sally Gabori, who has invented a new artistic language,

which many other Kaiadilt women, including some of her eleven daughters, have followed in establishing their own school of painting.

Gabori's paintings have attracted increasing interest over the past few years, being publically commissioned for the Brisbane Supreme and District Court development and reproduced along the length of a tilt train, while gaining selection and representation in exhibitions including the 'Western Australian Indigenous Art Award 2008' at Perth's Art Gallery of Western Australia and 'Contemporary Australia: Optimism' in the same year at Brisbane's



Gallery of Modern Art. Gabori's art has also been one of the major influences driving the Queensland Government's push to establish and better fund Aboriginal art centres in the remote communities of Far North Queensland, Cape York and the Gulf of Carpentaria. Sally Gabori has shown how the will of one shy, senior Kaiadilt woman can bring about positive local changes, enabling Aboriginal artists from the Gulf Country to engage with the wider world and bring attention to their important, but largely unknown, stories and countries.

Nicholas Evans, Louise Martin-Chew and Paul Memmot, *The Heart of Everything: The Art and Artists of Mornington and Bentinck Islands*, McCulloch & McCulloch Australian Art Books, Melbourne, 2008, p. 45. An account of this is given by Pat Gabori in Dick Roughsey, *Moon and Rainbow: The Autobiography of an Aboriginal*, Reed, Sydney, 1971, p. 116. David McKnight, *Of Marriage, Violence and Sorcery: The Quest for Power in Northern Queensland*, Ashgate Publishing, Burlington, 2005, pp. 45–8.

### Parallel Collisions: 2012 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art

Natasha Bullock and Alexie Glass-Kantor

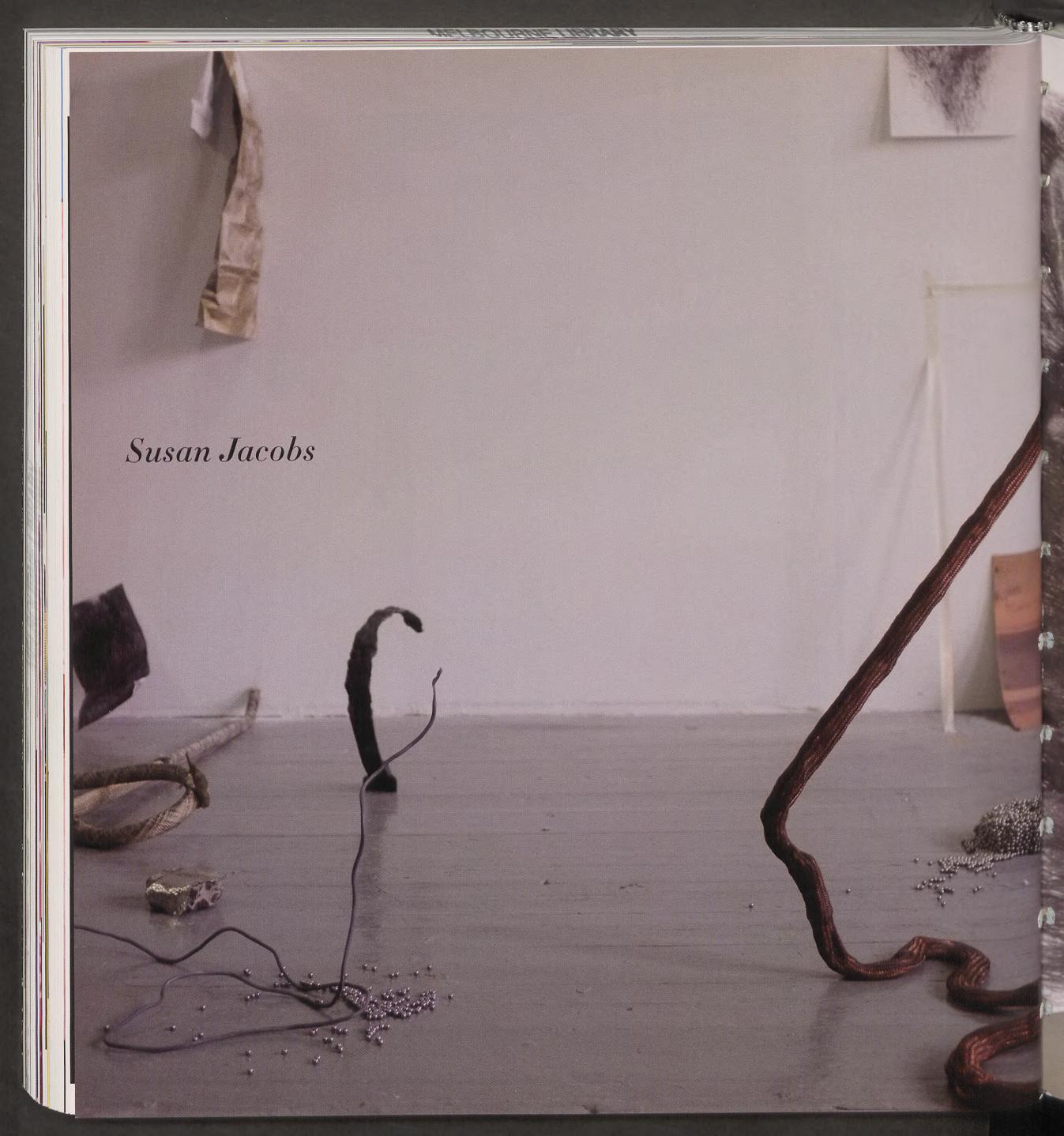
The 12TH ADELAIDE BIENNIAL OF AUSTRALIAN ART explores how ideas emerge, converge and re-form over time, echoing throughout history as they reveal points of similarity (parallel), contact (collisions) and encounter (trespass). The title 'Parallel Collisions' describes the architectural and temporal devices at play in the exhibition's structure. Presented across the Art Gallery of South Australia's Elder Wing of Australian Art and the temporary exhibitions galleries, this edition is transhistorical, bringing the past into dialogue with the present with works variously collapsing, hovering, evolving, accumulating or splintering across time.

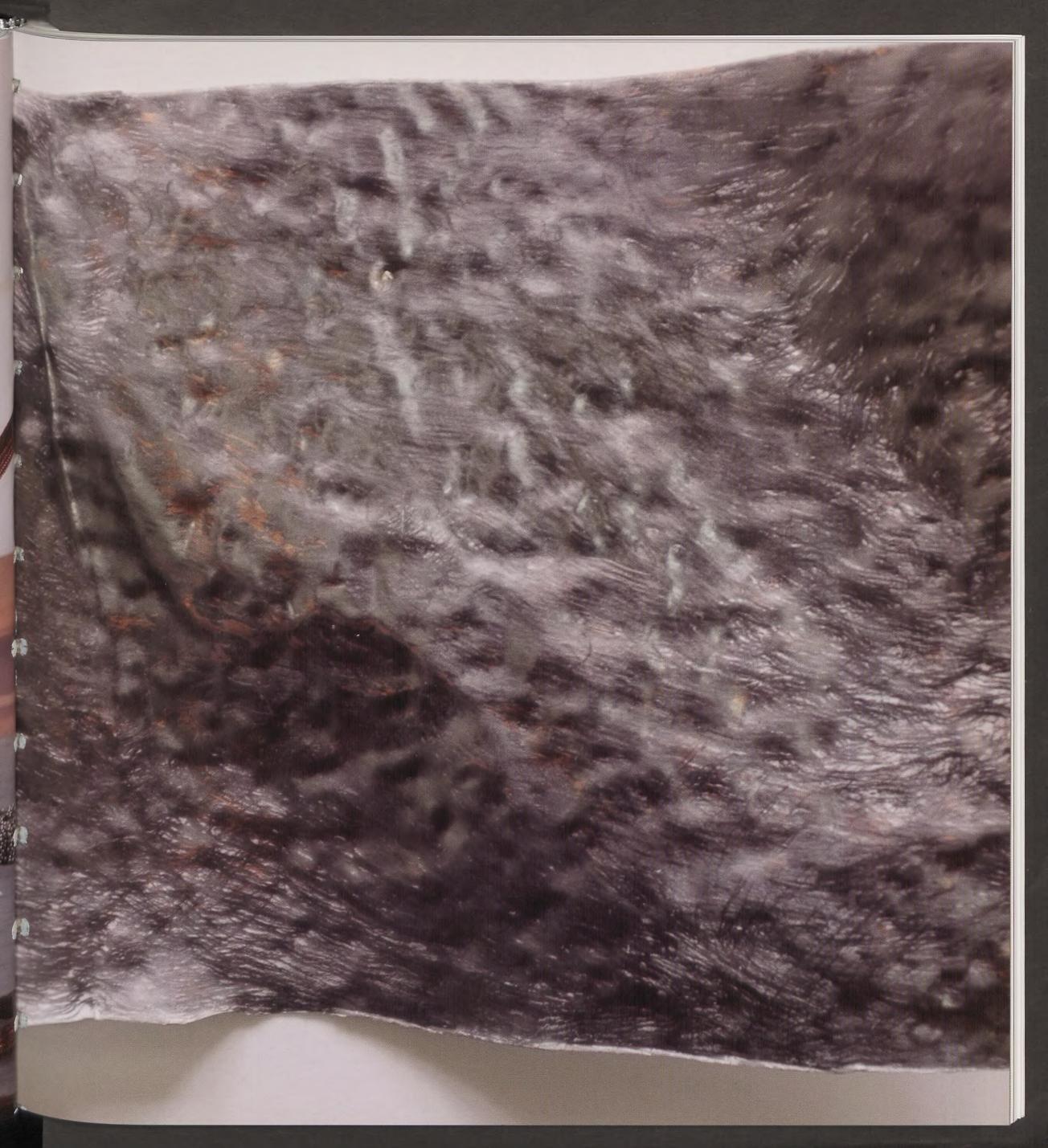
In the following pair of artist projects, fashioned especially for *Art & Australia*, biennale artists Susan Jacobs and Michelle Ussher extrapolate on their Adelaide artworks and, with their contrapuntal sensibilities collectively presented, create their own parallel collisions within these magazine pages.

Describing a serpentine trajectory through space, Jacobs's biennial commission *Snake drawings*, 2011–12, combines sculpture and moving image to trace the markings of a pregnant emerald python on sand. Rendered in bronze and video, the work takes on new life in the following series of photographic documents. Thresholds are crossed as the work articulates the tenuous boundaries between states of consciousness, control, order, fear and otherness.

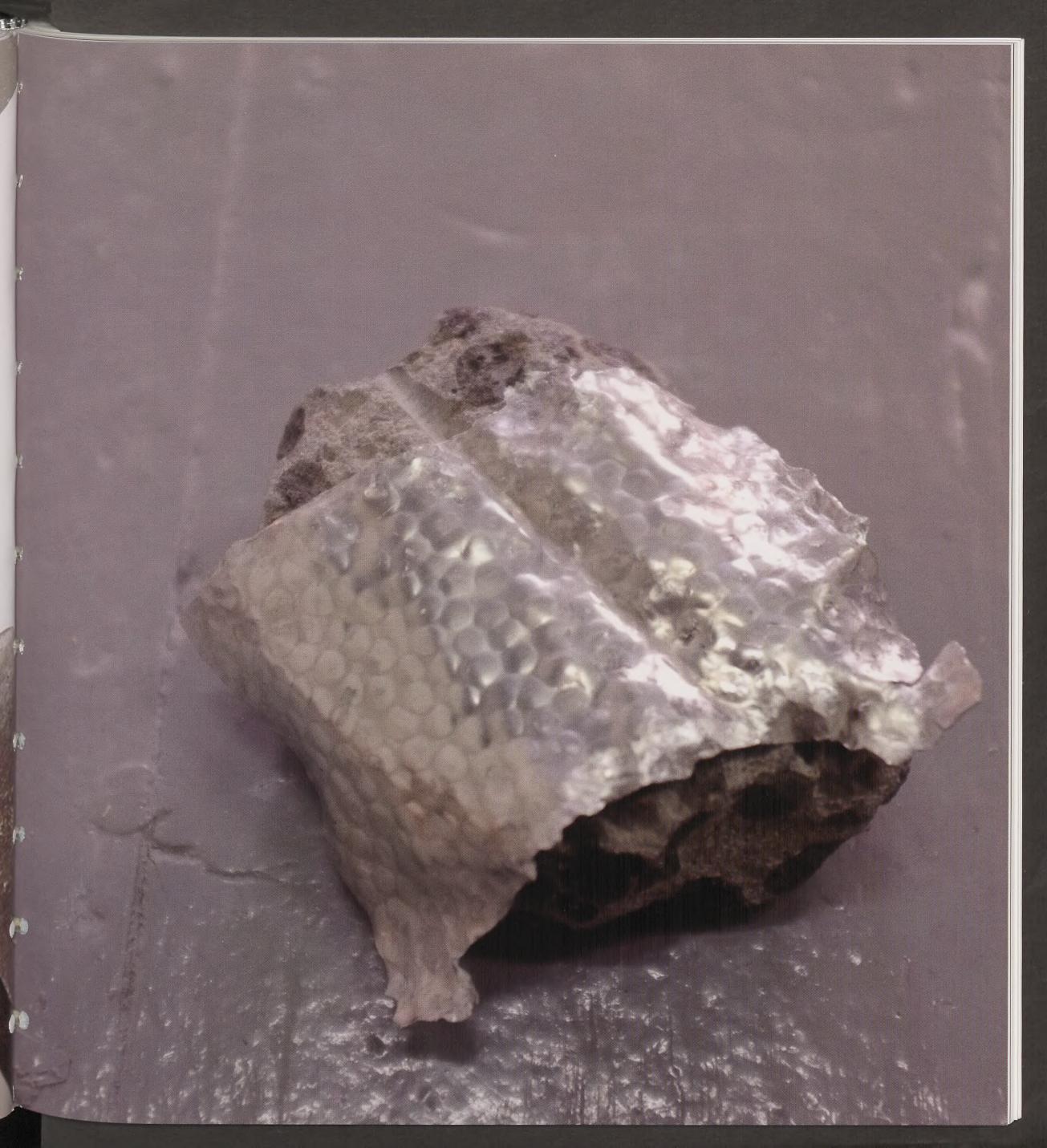
Playing with the possibilities of perception in relation to fiction, holographic principle and contemporary theory, Michelle Ussher's *Amaurot's mirror*, 2011–12, commissioned for the biennial, is similar to the artist project presented here. *Army of Mirriams*, 2011–12, depicts the narrative of a three-faced head relentlessly pursuing an object through a universe of parallel reflections. The face we see repeated in some of the images is inspired by Joseph Losey's film of the Mozart opera *Don Giovanni*. Obscured by a shifting crescent – a detail from an art deco mirror – this woman is a man whose identity is in a state of flux. Each work describes a transitional state – a state one encounters in many of the works created for this year's biennial.

Susan Jacobs, 'Snake Drawings', 2011–12: page 488, Studio work in progress, 2011, copper, graphite, paper, found objects, epoxy modelling compound, pewter, dross, steel ball bearings, lead, dimensions variable, photograph Susan Jacobs; page 489, Skin study, 2011, graphite, acrylic, copper, 40 × 18 cm, photograph Susan Jacobs; page 490, left to right: Studio work in progress, 2011, steel ball bearings, lead, ferrite magnet, dimensions variable, photograph Jake Walker; Half specific/not half obvious, 2011, detail, iron crowbar, steel ball chain, neodymium magnet, dimensions variable, photograph Jake Walker; page 491, Skin study, 2011, pewter, concrete, 6 × 14 × 8 cm, photograph Susan Jacobs; page 492, Metabolism, 2011, detail, graphite on paper, 42 × 30 cm, photograph Susan Jacobs; page 493, Half specific/not half obvious, 2011, detail, iron crowbar, steel ball chain, neodymium magnet, dimensions variable, photograph Jake Walker. All works courtesy the artist and Sarah Scout, Melbourne.

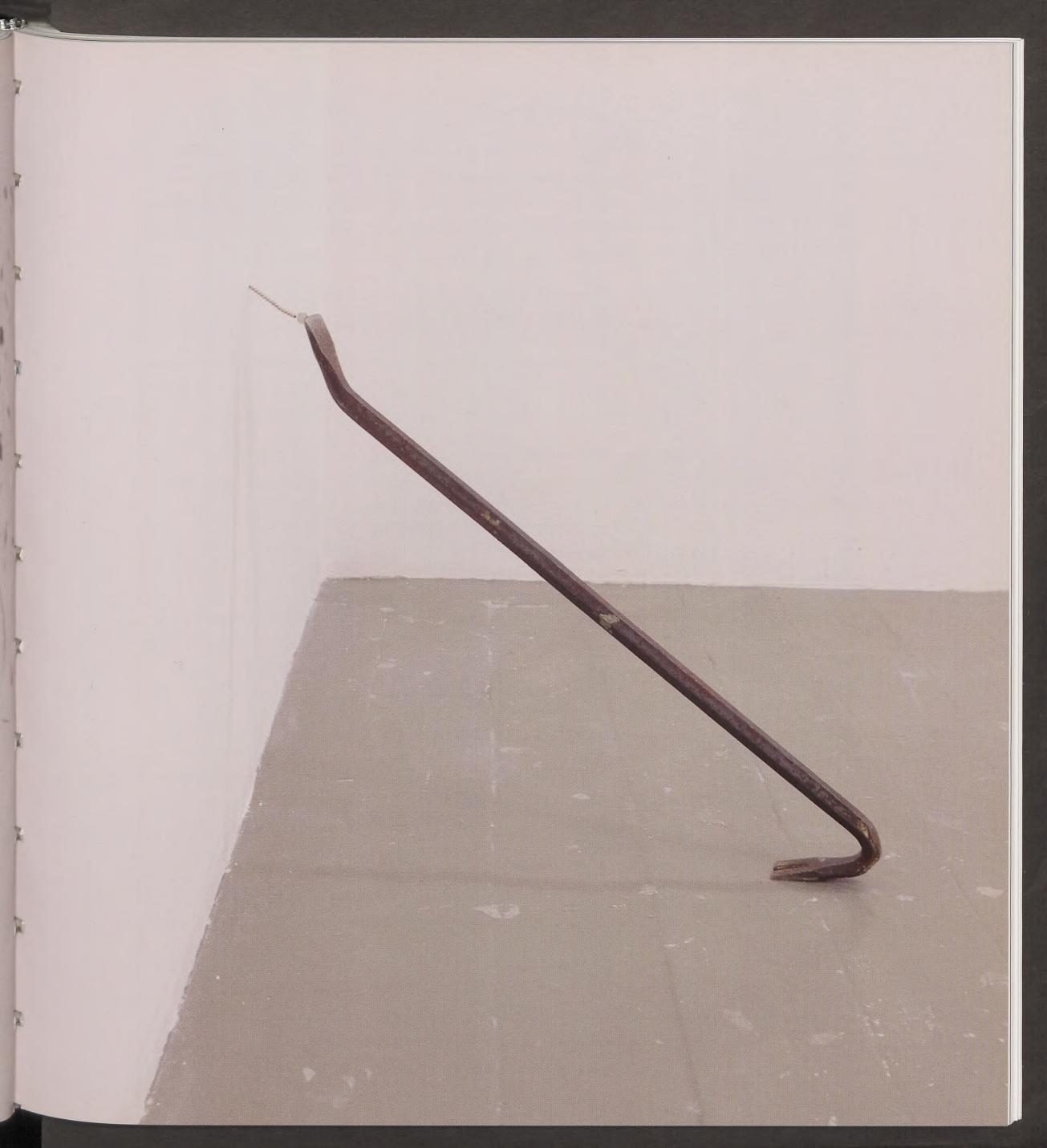












Mirriam is more than one.

Mirriam is a vessel of memories she keeps rearranging to fit her ever-changing most current self. She wears a cloak of politeness, always charming and charismatic. She longs for emotional depth yet cannot still her heart other than through serendipity or the makings of a cardboard assemblage of treacherous nostalgic events.

Mirriam is sometimes not sure where one stops and the other begins as her skin is rather a membrane of confusion.

Mirriam is a designated eater of thoughts, who searches for moments when ideas become a taste on her tongue and rationality stuffs her belly, while emotions run down her throat like warm whiskey.

Mirriam is a compulsive liar with amber eyes, a light blue conscience and a mint cashmere sweater she has knitted herself.

Mirriam is a complacent spectator in perpetual motion relentlessly chasing the promise of a forest, a place of endless potential possibilities and opportunities.

Mirriam is a hypochondriac spirit who has outer body immaterial experiences, she feels charges in the prickly sensations she gets from passing through neon time, she sees in the form of blobby shapes.

Mirriam considers herself to be skilful and adept under pressing conditions.

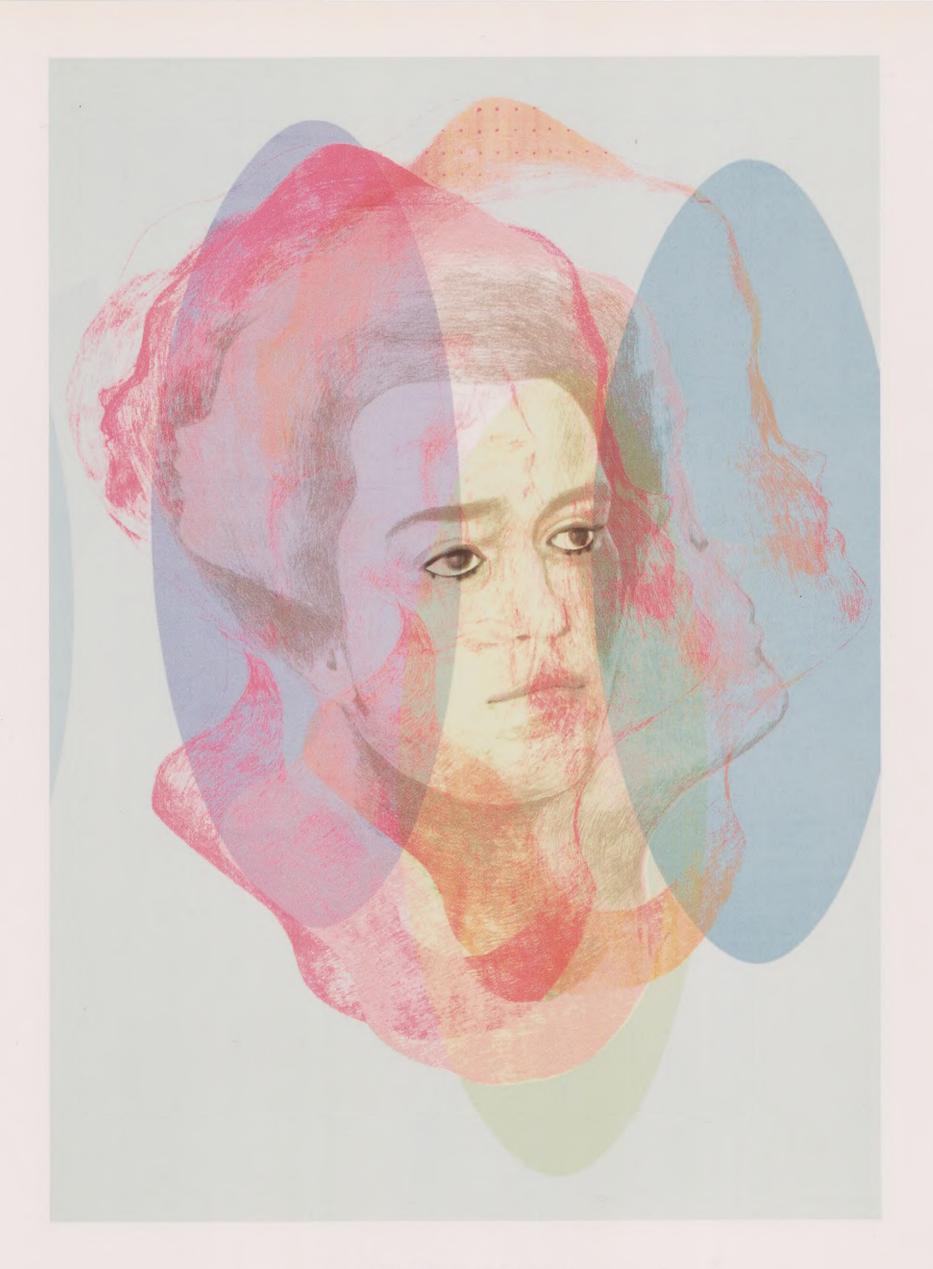
Mirriam is a husky voice who for endless time ever utters rhyme. Words carried through waves of sound. Not a single moment ever profound. Powered by the paralysis of the sublime.

Mirriam is the moonlight imagining sea horses while making music for a small but enthusiastic group of followers who love her obscure handling of the tambourine.

Mirriam is obsessed with squirrels, cats and foxes and is working on a map not of streets but of meandering paths and well-trodden trails, of shortcuts and forbidden alleyways following the tempting smells and desired tastes for the four-footed adventurers of the city.

#### Michelle Ussher

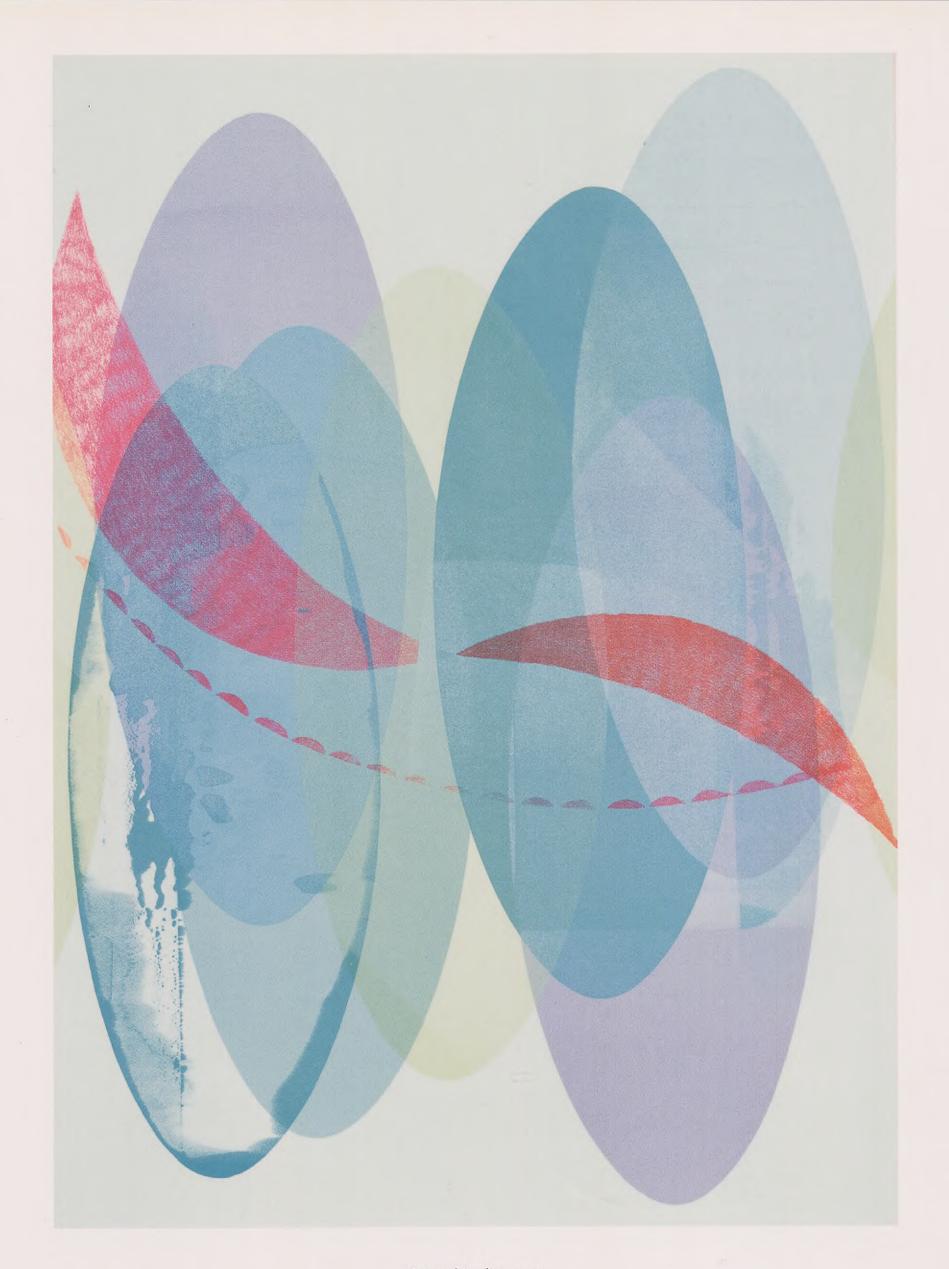
From 'Army of Mirriams': text by Mareike Dittmer and Michelle Ussher; screen-print images by Michelle Ussher, 2011, printed with 12 colours, 5 screens, 1 digital print, embossing, silver pigment, pencil and watercolour, 59.5 x 84 cm; printed by Michelle Ussher and Lesley Sharpe at Wimbledon School of Art, London; courtesy the artist and KALIMANRAWLINS, Melbourne.



Membrane of confusion, 2011



Eater of thoughts, 2011



Compulsive liar, 2011



Hypochondriac spirit, 2011



The poet, 2011

DAVID M THOMAS

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## Review, Autumn 2012

### Exhibition reviews

Untitled (12th Istanbul Biennial); TOUCH: The portraiture of Dani Marti; Wim Delvoye; Case Study; Alex Spremberg: Wrong Angles; Kaye Mahoney: Moving Imagery; Enniskillen: Recent Work of David Rankin

### Books

Robyn Backen: Backspace; Look!; Brett Whiteley: A Sensual Line 1957-67; Pedder Dreaming

Gertrude Contemporary and Art & Australia Emerging Writers Program

Serena Bentley

Art & Australia / Credit Suisse Private Banking Contemporary Art Award

Rebecca Baumann

### Untitled (12th Istanbul Biennial)

Alexie Glass-Kantor

The sheer scale and the visceral texture of Istanbul is often overwhelming for the presentation of art. At the crossroads of East and West, the city exerts a steady gravitational pull, drawing the viewer into this most complex of localities. For curators Jens Hoffmann and Adriano Pedrosa, it was Istanbul's biennial that originally drew them both to the city, and it was through the lens of previous editions that they got to know Istanbul's public and private spaces. However, they did not want to curate an exhibition that seeped into the landscape as earlier iterations had; rather, they made an exhibition that explored the expanded potential of the biennial model itself.

Consequently 'Untitled (12th Istanbul Biennial)' was a show almost entirely detached from its locality. Grounded firmly in the biennial's lineage, the exhibition's methodology was developed from a conference Hoffmann and Pedrosa convened in November 2010 entitled 'Remembering Istanbul'. At this conference each of the previous Istanbul Biennial curators reflected on their exhibition, its intentions and resonances over time. The record of these papers forms one volume of the two-part exhibition catalogue for 'Untitled (12th Istanbul Biennial)', and this historiographic approach enabled the curators to relinquish any obligation to a tokenistic engagement with the city and its communities. The second volume of the catalogue also functioned as the exhibition room guide, and was an exemplary resource to have at hand in a biennial filled with artists with whom the viewer was mostly unfamiliar. The curators undertook interviews with each of the solo artists and these conversations became the primary source material in place of didactic or descriptive texts. It was as if the viewer was directly listening in on the artist, an inclusive approach indicative of the curators' collaborative way of working with art and artists.

The exhibition itself was housed in a single venue spanning two waterside warehouses known locally as Antrepo no. 3 and 5.

Comprised of fifty-five solo exhibitions and five group shows, the biennial was loosely anchored on the practice of the late Cuban—American artist Félix González-Torres. Despite his work being absent from the exhibition, his legacy helped act as a conduit, underscoring the curators' stated theme of art and politics, with each of the five curated exhibitions titled in the manner of the artist's works: 'Untitled (Abstraction)', 'Untitled (Passport)', 'Untitled (History)', 'Untitled (Death by Gun)' and 'Untitled (Ross)', with the last named after González-Torres's lover who, as with the artist, died as a result of AIDS. The curators hauntingly referred to González-Torres as a 'disembodied presence', a phrase that converged strangely with the artist's deceased status and also his post-minimal and conceptual artistic practice.

A presence that was felt throughout was the weighty exhibition structure, designed by Tokyo-based architect Ryue Nishizawa. Forensic and cool, its labyrinthine white-cube interiors were constructed to individual artists' specifications, creating the sensation of moving through a series of solo exhibitions or artist studios. The exteriors of these white cubes were clad in corrugated aluminium with narrow passageways, the width of a person, between each space. There was something slightly cynical in the accessioning of made-to-measure spaces: such standardisation eliminated the potential for works to leak or bleed into the space or contaminate others. And this heavy-handed architectural intervention, while absolutely intrinsic to the exhibition's internal logic, was strangely at odds with works by artists that largely eschewed spectacle in favour of the more discreet advancement of ideas.

The curators sought to privilege a return to 'aesthetic concerns', and the works, for the most part, had a subtle, thoughtful and conceptual tenor. Large-scale sculptures and bombastic installations were sidelined, as was interactive or new media work, and there was less video than might have been expected. Instead, there was an emphasis on photography, works



on paper, painting, text-based practice, works drawn from the archive, readymades, assemblage and objects that were imbued with a sense of innate materiality.

A strength of 'Untitled (12th Istanbul Biennial)' was that it looked beyond the familiar pool of artists who frequent the biennale circuit. The lingering trauma of colonisation and occupation was seen in Bisan Abu-Eisheh's installation of vitrines filled with remains from Arab homes bombed along the Gaza Strip; the evolution of language and its vulnerability to introduced semantics was evident in the woven works of Newell Harry; and the film work from Chilean artist Camilo Yáñez described, without words, the pain suffered during the country's dictatorship and the determination of hope.

Sexuality and the emergence of a more profoundly acknowledged gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender identity was achingly articulated in the video work of Akram Zaatari; the intimate portraits of Catherine Opie; and Carlos Herrera's fetishistic repurposing of sporting apparel. Persuasive and compelling works by women artists were generously woven throughout much of the exhibition. Geta Bratescu's fragments of layered fabric had a delicate potency; Zarouhie Abdalian created a magnetic sound environment filled with fractious echoes; while Dora Maurer, who created conceptual art in the midst of 1970s Hungarian communism and oppression, reminded viewers that the origins of abstraction lie in the political.

Disappointingly, the curated group exhibitions were the antithesis of the deftly selected solo presentations, with the clarity of the artist's voice often obscured. Once co-opted into the overarching González-Torres thematics, and absorbed into cavernous rooms painted a bureaucratic mid-grey, works became largely indistinguishable from one another: 'Death by Gun' literalised the concept that guns are bad; 'Abstraction' took a turn into formalism via modernism; 'Passport' followed a route traversed in much early postcolonial discourse; 'History' was

strangely disengaged from the alternative ways we have of writing history today, and 'Ross', while moving, relied on already familiar narratives of the queer body.

The group shows were indicative of a style of curatorship more common to European kunsthalles or independent spaces than biennales, and Pedrosa and Hoffmann are rigorous, disciplined and intellectual curators who work consistently in those contexts. These shows-within-the-show were able to delve into specific issues quite intensively, and this approach moved the exhibition's core concerns beyond the vague thematic catch-alls that characterise many other international biennales. Even if it rendered some works as mutely stylistic, the multiple group show model was a risk that was ultimately rewarding for the viewer, drawing nuanced and unexpected connections between images and ideas.

'Untitled (12th Istanbul Biennial)' was an exhibition of contradictions, binaries and seemingly incompatible methodologies. The abstraction and aestheticisation of complex political ideas was problematic, while the exhibition design was often distracting and suffocating, leaving the viewer with the feeling that they had digested something that was undoubtedly worthy but rather absent of flavour. And yet, for the most part, the artists' works were able to move past the strictures of the exhibition's dogmatic structure. Over time and at a distance, images reappear in my mind and I experience vertigo-like sensation when recalling the raw integrity of much of the work encountered. In perhaps the same way that Pedrosa and Hoffmann could not really disavow Istanbul, this biennial embedded itself into my viewing memory, and it continues to linger, accumulate and seep long after the walls have come down.

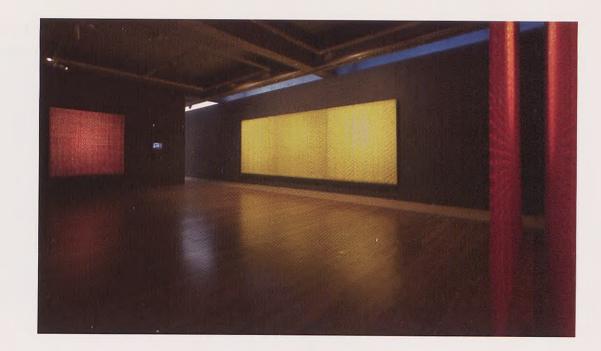
Untitled (12th Istanbul Biennial), Antrepo no. 3 and 5, Istanbul, 17 September – 13 November 2011.

## TOUCH: The Portraiture of Dani Marti

Kit Messham-Muir

Eugène minkowski, a french psychiatrist active in the 1930s, wrote about the psychological intensity of dark spaces and claimed that we cannot hold darkness at a distance; 'instead, it covers me completely, it penetrates my whole being, it touches me in a much more intimate way than the clarity of visual space'. The charcoal walls and low lighting of 'TOUCH: The Portraiture of Dani Marti' helped create such a space at the Newcastle Art Gallery, with the rich textures and colours of Marti's heavily woven pieces and accompanying video works punctuating the darkness. The materiality of Marti's enmeshed ropes and beads, all non-objective portraits of the artist's family, friends and lovers, invited physical engagement and, in the case of the red-beaded curtains of Looking for Felix, 2000, something to be entered. Functioning as a counterpoint to the physicality of these works, Marti's videos were portraits of a different kind as they vividly and almost unbearably exposed their subjects. As a survey of Marti's work from 2000 to 2011, 'TOUCH' was a thoughtfully selected presentation of a mid-career practice that has proved to be conceptually, aesthetically and materially coherent.

Exemplifying the dual approaches to portraiture in the show were *Bacon's dog*, 2010, a 12-minute two-channel video, and *It's all about Peter*, 2010, an abstract burst of coloured plastics – with the subject, in both cases, being Peter Fay, collector and patron of contemporary Australian art. The plastic objects were collected by Fay from 1999 to 2009 and given to Marti to meld together to create a wall piece quite different from his usual woven ropes. Behind the wall where this hung, *Bacon's dog* provided video fragments, recorded over three months, of the sexual and emotional intimacy between artist and subject, with Fay lying before us at one point with the starkness of a Lucian Freud painting. I found this video overwhelmingly intimate – the raw openness of Fay's whispered declarations were at times uncomfortable to watch – and yet my presence as its audience was



much too intrusive for this to feel voyeuristic.

The ease with which Marti's practice seems to cross between personal and public spaces is balanced by his sensitivity to the very private nature of the spaces he encounters. The exhibition's dual portraits, *Bolted*, 2008, a 41-minute three-channel video, and *Beige*, 2008, a three-panel weave of golden and black ropes, portrayed the silent life of a man living alone in his Glasgow flat. He was glimpsed masturbating in front of a webcam, going to the toilet and standing at his kitchen bench to eat. In contrast to this austere life, Marti's neighbouring portraits of his teenage niece in Barcelona comprised a single bright panel of pink and yellow ropes and a video of a vivaciously chatty teenager explaining her internet love life.

As these works demonstrated, Marti's videos portray their subjects through largely confessional documentary means, with the artist often insinuating himself into the process. Such was the case with *Time is the fire in which we burn*, 2009, an hour-long video of Marti and an ex-porn star friend lying together in bed and talking about life, while for the exhibition's closing work, *Vial queen*, 2009, Marti had threaded on the wall hundreds of used medical vials, the contents of which he had injected to treat his HIV condition.

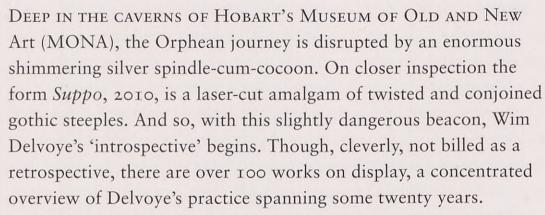
The latter work offered another moment of uneasy disclosure, further revealing an underlying theme of the show. While the civic spaces of Newcastle seemed unlikely ones for exposing these very personal narratives, as Minkowski has reminded us, their enveloping darkness granted us unusual levels of intimacy, touching us in ways that were often beautiful but never comfortable.

TOUCH: The Portraiture of Dani Marti, Newcastle Art Gallery, 17 September – 13 November 2011.

from left: Andrea the secret life of tweens, 2008, courtesy the artist and BREENSPACE, Sydney; George, 2001, Newcastle Art Gallery Collection; Looking for Felix, 2000, Newcastle Art Gallery Collection, installation view, 2011.

### Wim Delvoye

Craig Judd



Delvoye is an arch prankster in the Duchampian mode with a slathering of late twentieth century 'kynicism' via Diogenes of Sinope and the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk. The former scandalised his city-state by choosing to live in an oversized ceramic jar in the central marketplace where he deliberately spectacularised his most intimate bodily functions. Diogenes's most famous affront to decorum was to tell Alexander the Great to stop blocking his sun. Sloterdijk admires Diogenes's attitude as an example of enlightened consciousness, and Delvoye considers this worthy of emulation as a strategy to counter the schizoid nature of the art world.

The exhibition provides a plethora of challenges to the authorities that govern Euro-centric culture, taste and desire in the continued creation of this thing called Art. It is a joyously adolescent display of sly in-the-know naughtiness surrounding the wonders of delegated process and commissioned artisanal skills. The artist appears obsessed with 3D computer modelling tools, and the larger, more complex, forms that populate the exhibition point to a new direction in his oeuvre: architecture.

Though Delvoye refers to this show as his 'introspective', it is certainly not a quiet and meditative experience. From the delicate but badly decorated shovels and gas bottles to the cement truck where Richard Serra's favourite material, Cor-Ten steel, is given gender-bending treatment to create an oddly feminine bibelot, decoration, that unnecessary surplus, is a leitmotif. As well as *Cloaca professional*, 2009, on permanent display at MONA, there



are six versions of Delvoye's now infamous hymn to peristalsis. These 'Cloacae' are given a new cinematic, science fiction-inspired portable designer-schtick glamour by their jewel like isolation in an enormous mirrored hall – more bibelots. A slew of tattooed pigskins occupy another hall with a live model, Tim, as punctuation.

Delvoye's project is to reveal the illogical and absurd qualities found in habituated systems and concepts like nationalism, organised religion or the notions of exchange and transformation of value in contemporary economics. But as with the work of his hero Marcel Duchamp, sometimes the one-liner, dandyish stance does not work. The artist's engagement with Roman Catholicism illustrates this: The shadowy sections of mice performing the Stations of the Cross are just plain silly. Contrast these with the bravura craft techniques used to create DNA strings and a gold Möbius strip of stretched crucifixes reminiscent of nineteenth-century Belgian art nouveau design.

'Wim Delvoye' promotes a series of maddening reactions – something I am sure the artist would be most pleased with. Witness 'Anal Kisses', a series of lipstick monoprints that depict women's arseholes. The individual sheets of paper are generic but for the glamour of hotel logos. Deliciously sexist, the artist claims that these have a talismanic significance, that he can read the subjects, fortunes by the individual lines, creamy clefts and folds. Delvoye goes on to claim that male arsesholes are far too hairy to conduct a similar augury. With work shifting across the amusing and stupid, provocative and extraordinary, perhaps 'precious' is the key descriptor that comes to mind.

Wim Delvoye, Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, 10 December 2011 – 2 April 2012.



from left: Gemma Smith, Tangle painting (red/blue), 2011; Margo Lewers, Various colours, c. 1971; Gemma Smith, Untitled #11, 2008; courtesy Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest.

### Case Study



Alex Spremberg, Orthogonal dawn, 2011
Enamel on cardboard, 76 works,
445 × 875 cm total
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Düsseldorf,
Perth

### Alex Spremberg: Wrong Angles



Andrew Purvis

Summar Hipworth

Drawing from Her Intimate knowledge of Margo Lewers's oeuvre as a previous curator and visual arts director of the Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, Anne Loxley returned to the gallery to curate 'Case Study'. Identifying strong parallels between the practices of Lewers (1908–1978) and contemporary artist Gemma Smith, Loxley invited Smith to respond to the Australian modernist's work in the light of her own practice.

The collaborative approach taken in the selection of Lewers's work allowed Smith to find shared nuances within their artistic concerns and methodologies, achieving a genuine 'case study' rather than a comparative exhibition that risked drawing superficial conclusions. By presenting Lewers's early abstractions, later textiles and collages, and acrylic sculptures, Smith's selections and omissions revealed a clear relationship between their approach to geometry and colour. Without relying on obvious comparisons, each artist's acrylic sculptures were juxtaposed with the other's paintings, revealing a shared conceptual questioning that underpins their practice across mediums. Both Lewers and Smith approached sculpture as a means for exploring composition that, in turn, informed their painterly practice. As the viewer orientated around Smith's angular sculpture, and the colours of each plane oscillated between transparency and opacity, space appeared to simultaneously recede and flatten. This ephemeral and shifting sense of space was also evoked in Lewers's nearby two-dimensional works – an effect that Smith likewise achieved in her paintings.

'Case Study' offered an important re-evaluation of Lewers's work and its historical contribution to Australian abstraction, as well as her continued relevance and influence. It also positioned Smith within an important lineage of artists who employ abstraction as a conceptual strategy to address the challenges of pictorial space. Extending his longstanding investigation into the properties of painting, Alex Spremberg's latest exhibition saw the artist departing from the confines of the canvas, electing instead to pour enamel paint over a range of reconfigured cardboard boxes. Gradually building up layers of brightly coloured drips and rivulets over peculiar geometries, Spremberg crafted an array of kaleidoscopic abstract forms. These enticing objects emphasise the physical qualities of the paint, its fluidity and viscosity. In places, the many coagulated layers manage to elide the sharp edges of the angled forms beneath, giving them a strange organic quality, while elsewhere surfaces came to resemble the striations of cut stone.

The exhibition's standout piece, *Orthogonal dawn*, 2011, was composed of seventy-six differently sized cardboard boxes painted with a black-and-white drip pattern and covering one entire end of the gallery. Although positioned on the customary vertical plane, this work protruded starkly from the wall, operating not unlike the shaped canvases of Frank Stella to highlight the essentially three-dimensional nature of painting.

With almost 190 individual pieces, 'Wrong Angles' managed to encompass the complete evolution of Spremberg's body of work. The audience was made privy to its genesis with the inclusion of Spremberg's initial playful interventions with commercial packaging. There was also a collection of inadvertent but nonetheless rewarding by-products: a series of greatly enlarged photographs showing the swirling paint drips that had fallen over a random selection of images from the newspaper sheets with which the artist covered his studio floor. This comprehensive approach to curation revealed an insight into Spremberg's process-driven practice, a fascinating blend of experimentation and observation allied with an openness to chance and unforeseen discovery.

Case Study, Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, 19 November 2011 – 29 January 2012.

Alex Spremberg: Wrong Angles, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2 September – 30 October 2011. Kaye Mahoney, Interior 1, 2011 Silent video progression Courtesy the artist

### Kaye Mahoney: Moving Imagery

Olimpia Mailat



Enniskillen: Recent Work of

David Rankin, Jacob's ladder - ruin, 2010

Acrylic, charcoal and collage on paper,

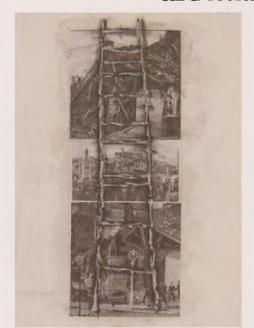
Courtesy the artist and Adrian Slinger

76.2 × 55.9 cm

Galleries, Noosa

David Rankin

Rebecca O'Dwyer



On entering kaye mahoney's exhibition at Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, one was struck by the combination of intellectual discipline and finely tuned aesthetics. An array of works including paintings on Perspex, videos and a large-scale interactive mixed-media installation created an engaging dialogue between artist, art and viewer about spatio-temporal concepts.

Mahoney's recent move back to Sydney after living and working for twenty years in New York was reflected in canvases that harmonised Australian echoes of Emily Kngwarreye and Fred Williams with American minimalist inflections. Yet the predominant style expressed the 'Fluxattitude' of Fluxus – an intermedia approach that protests against distinguishing art from life. Though herself not a Fluxus artist, Mahoney's most conventional oil-on-canvas works presented intimate dialogues with the liberating works of her artistic circle, Fluxus artists such as Jean Dupuy and Christian Xatrec.

Calling to mind Kasimir Malevich's famous entreaty, 'But a surface lives; it has been born', Mahoney's show intriguingly connected such a powerful century-old antecedent to a possible future. Dimensions of time, space and existence have long been elemental totems for Mahoney, and here they appeared in almost every medium: on canvas, in the silent, elegiac 'Interior' video progressions of 2009, and in her vibrant '2.5 Dimensional Composition' series of 2011, painted on Perspex back and front, which extended the space in which the surface lives, as Malevich did.

It is impossible to write of Mahoney's work without acknowledging its deep relationship to music. From the reverberation of the 2008 'Pleinair' series to the patterns of silence in the 2007–09 'Trio' triptychs, 'Moving Imagery' communicated Mahoney's thrilling explorations into how human perception functions at inter-dimensional interstices and between the micro and macroscopic.

Martin McGuinness, the former leader of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) recently contested the presidential election for the Republic of Ireland, coming in at a not insignificant third place. This can be interpreted in two ways: one, that the presence of violence in Irish politics has ceased to be an issue; and, two, that Irish republicanism now thrives on a situation derivative of contemporary economic and social concerns. In any case, the concept of 'the Troubles' appears to have been at least partially sidelined by other issues, namely mass unemployment, economic ruin and the formation of a new and ever increasing Irish diaspora. It was within this context that New York-based Australian artist David Rankin chose to revisit Enniskillen, the homeland of his father, but more infamous as the site of a catastrophic bombing carried out by the IRA in 1987. Eleven people were killed, mostly civilians, including Rankin's own aunt and uncle.

At Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, Rankin presented this new series of works in an act of cathartic self-exploration. The paintings were generally large-scale: overlaid gestural brushstrokes atop a murky ground of photo clippings depicting the disaster's aftermath. The symbolism was clumsily overt: here streams of paint represented tears, and the recurring form of Jacob's Ladder presumably a metaphor for mystical ascent over and beyond the violence of this shared past. It was, admittedly, heavy-handed but there remained something compelling in the single-mindedness of Rankin's process. For him, the idea of Enniskillen will always carry a weight of pain and loss that must be given expression. Of course such nostalgia might be deemed pompous or reductive, but from this Rankin has created a portrayal of a place that he never got the chance to truly know. The Enniskillen of this exhibition, thankfully, has all but slipped into the mire.

Kaye Mahoney: Moving Imagery, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, 6–29 October 2011.

Enniskillen: Recent Work of David Rankin, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre, Gymea, 14 October – 27 November 2011.

### Robyn Backen: Backspace

John Murphy

BACKSPACE DOCUMENTS TWO DECADES OF ARTWORKS by the sculptor and installation artist Robyn Backen, offering the first opportunity to view the full range of her practice. The elegantly designed volume allows us to find connections and associations, differences and diversity throughout her series of witty, experimental works that have engaged with public sites including Sydney International Airport and Old Parliament House, Canberra.

In one of Backen's early works, *Sprung*, 1990, a bed is stripped to its round springs; they are filled with earth, and ferns unfurl in a type of nursery. In a later sculpture, *Littoral*, 1998, optical fibres are uncovered from their casings and looped into coils of light. More recently Backen has created *Delicate balance*, 2009, a circular watchtower that teeters on the edge of Sydney Harbour at Ballast Point, seeming exposed and defenceless.

Like Backen's artworks, the book's text by Susan Best is richly allusive, precise and subtle. Best introduces the context of phenomenological philosophy to her understanding of Backen's art and nominates the term 'elemental' for the grounding of her analysis – a term that connects a number of Australian women artists working during the 1990s. Within Backen's site-specific installations, Best skilfully distinguishes between works which share 'a quality of containing and containment' (centripetal) and those operating 'in a more dispersed, unbounded mode' (centrifugal).

The book's title, *Backspace*, may suggest the artist's interest in earlier forms of technology (the bakelite telephone, morse code, the periscope), and the way these have advanced her art – an association so intimate that the title plays on her surname. *Backspace* may also imply that its retrospective view of Backen's practice is a momentary glance over the shoulder before this pleasingly unpredictable artist proceeds forward.

Look!

Talia Linz



Anne Marsh's voluminous survey isolates a period of prolific photographic production in the Australian art world, presenting a number of works from many stalwarts of the genre, including Brook Andrew, Pat Brassington, Destiny Deacon, Anne Ferran, Sue Ford, Bill Henson, Tracey Moffatt, Michael Riley, Julie Rrap, Robyn Stacey, William Yang and Anne Zahalka. Critical essays historically situate the period, tracing varied formal trajectories from indexical and documentary to performative and experimental. There is a clear trait of practices invested in critical engagement rather than aesthetic seduction as Marsh recounts the original debates among modernist fine-art photographers and follows reccurring frictions and photographic interventions made by subsequent artists seeking to explode the medium and its perception.

Look!'s sweeping coverage is structured around such themes as 'Archive', 'Witness', 'Experiment' and 'Space'. This mode of presenting such a breadth of work and information is somewhat dry, particularly when looking at practices embedded in a poststructuralist discourse. 'Framing' arises as a literal, theoretical and methodological challenge. A strong Indigenous presence plays out in the pages, as does the ongoing fascination with the construction and deconstruction of identity and its representation. Digital techniques and manipulations are touched on, particularly in their relationship to the tropes of advertising and the evolution of visual culture. Also included are practices dealing with the more traditional photographic concerns of light, space and place.

Look! is a convincing argument for the centrality of photography in postmodern art and life; as Marsh writes: 'It has seduced the contemporary visual world because it is the signifying status of global capital and the vehicle for constructing private and public memories. It is everywhere but nowhere in particular.'

Susan Best, Robyn Backen: Backspace, Boccalatte, Sydney, 2011, hardcover, 126 pp., \$35.

Anne Marsh, Look!: Contemporary Australian Photography Since 1980, Macmillan, Melbourne, 2010, hardcover, 400 pp., \$120.

Brett Whiteley: A Sensual Line 1957–67

Angela Goddard



### Pedder Dreaming

Glenn Barkley



In this substantial recent publication, Kathie Sutherland focuses on the early decade that laid the keystones to Brett Whiteley's art. His great facility with curvaceous line, pure raw expressiveness and intuitive responses to diverse influences all led to the development of one of the most recognisable idioms in both painting and drawing of the postwar period.

Sutherland organises the text into four chapters, beginning with 'Bathurst and Beyond', examining Whiteley's initial flirtations with abstraction; 'Revelation', exploring London's wholehearted embrace of the young and precocious artist as emblematic of new Australian art; 'From the Sacred to the Profane', focusing on the two great series which established his reputation: the sensual studies of his wife and muse, Wendy, in the 'Bathroom' paintings of 1962–64, and the raw sexual violence of the 'Christie' series of 1964–65. The final chapter charts Whiteley's immersion in 'Swinging London', visits to India and Tangier, and his canny recognition of the growing role for the artist within the public eye.

The author is a former auction specialist and states an ambition for the publication to redress the market's over-emphasis on Whiteley's later works. Not surprisingly, allusions to the market appear in many ways throughout the book, including the interesting, but perhaps now less relevant, early sale prices.

Like so many Australian artists before and after him, Whiteley's time spent overseas was crucial to his art. His natural talent, exuberance and boundless energy were also perfectly in tune with the 'Swinging Sixties', the sense of which is conveyed eloquently through the liberal use of contextual photographs. The bold and sumptuous design and production of the book ensure that, as well as being an excellent catalogue raisonné for future scholars, it will also be desirable for a wide range of readers.

The Pioneering Photographic works of the disappeared Lake Pedder by Olegas Truchanas (1923–1972), and his central role in the emergence of green and environmental politics regionally, nationally and internationally are ably explored in this stunning book by Natasha Cica. Images are beautifully reproduced, crisp and clear, permeated by the air and light of the Tasmanian wilderness. This clarity also comes through in the writing, and the approach to the material is refreshingly honest, personal and heartfelt.

In the process Cica brings a group of Tasmanian artists to the fore. The photographs of Ralph Hope-Johnstone, among others, and the works of the Sunday Group reveal a regional tradition which is helpful in understanding Truchanas's work, though perhaps the book could have placed their work within a wider Australian art context or within the context of a growing awareness of environmental issues in the contemporary art world. A reference to the pioneering audiovisual work of Adelaide avant-gardist Joseph Stanislaus Ostoja-Kotkowski is telling, and a later mention of Geoff Parr's site-specific photographs – documenting sculptor Leonie Heap's papier-mâché bust of Truganini set up on Pedder's disappearing shore – shows that a more conceptually driven approach to representing the landscape was also taking place.

But these are only small criticisms in a book whose regional specificity is otherwise its strong point. I have never been to the wilderness of Tasmania, the south-west landscape that is the subject of this book, but that scarcely matters – nor will it for other readers of *Pedder Dreaming*. In the same way that Truchanas presented slide shows at the Hobart City Hall through the 1960s in the hope that images of Pedder's sublime nature would win the day when it came to its survival, this beautifully designed book transports readers there.

Kathie Sutherland, Brett Whiteley: A Sensual Line 1957–67, Macmillan Art Publishing, Melbourne, 2010, hardcover, 342 pp., \$130.

Natasha Cica, Pedder Dreaming, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, hardcover, 246 pp., \$59.95.

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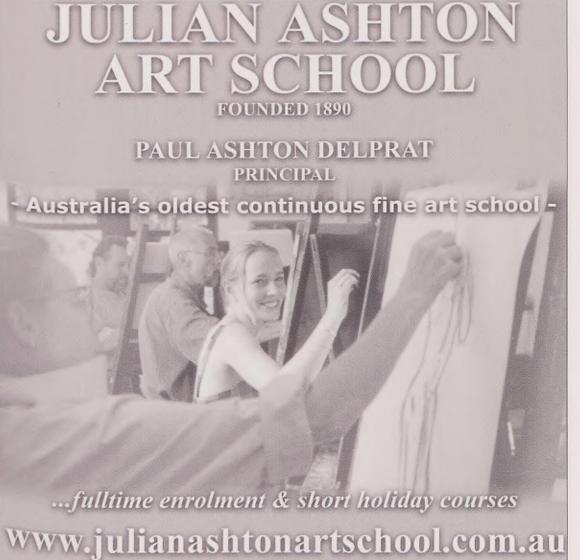
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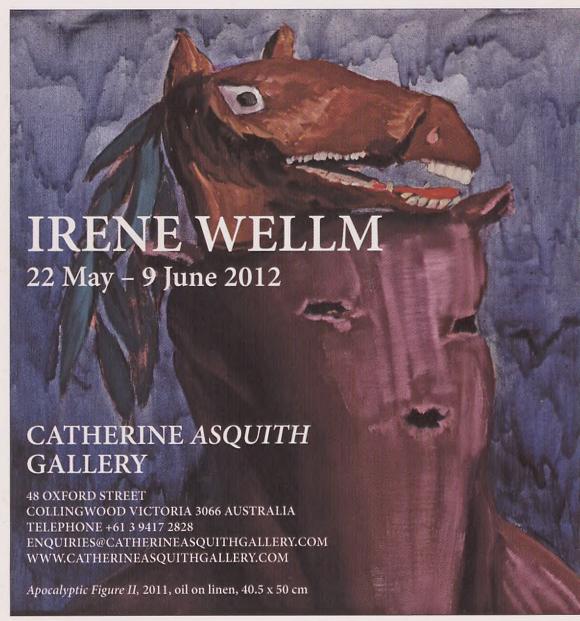
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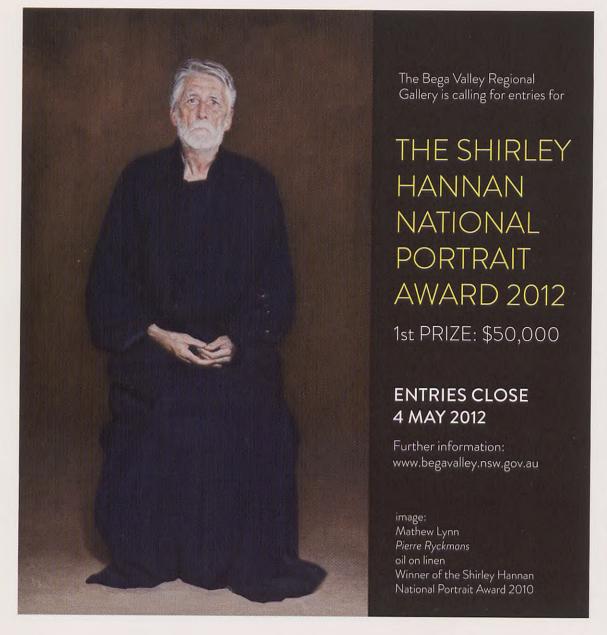
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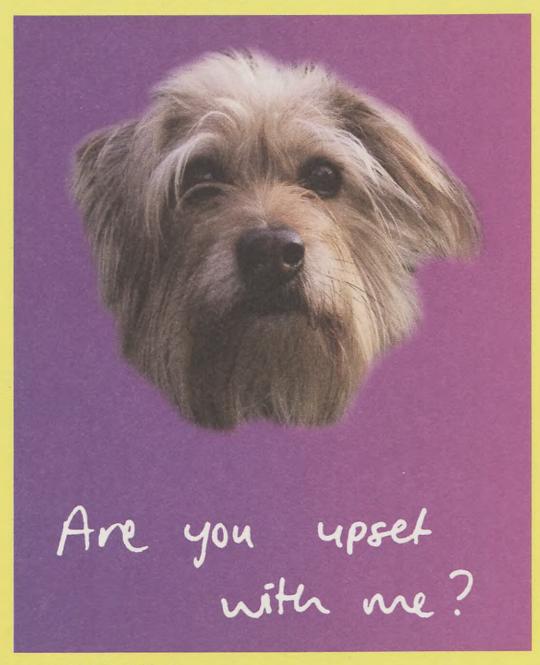
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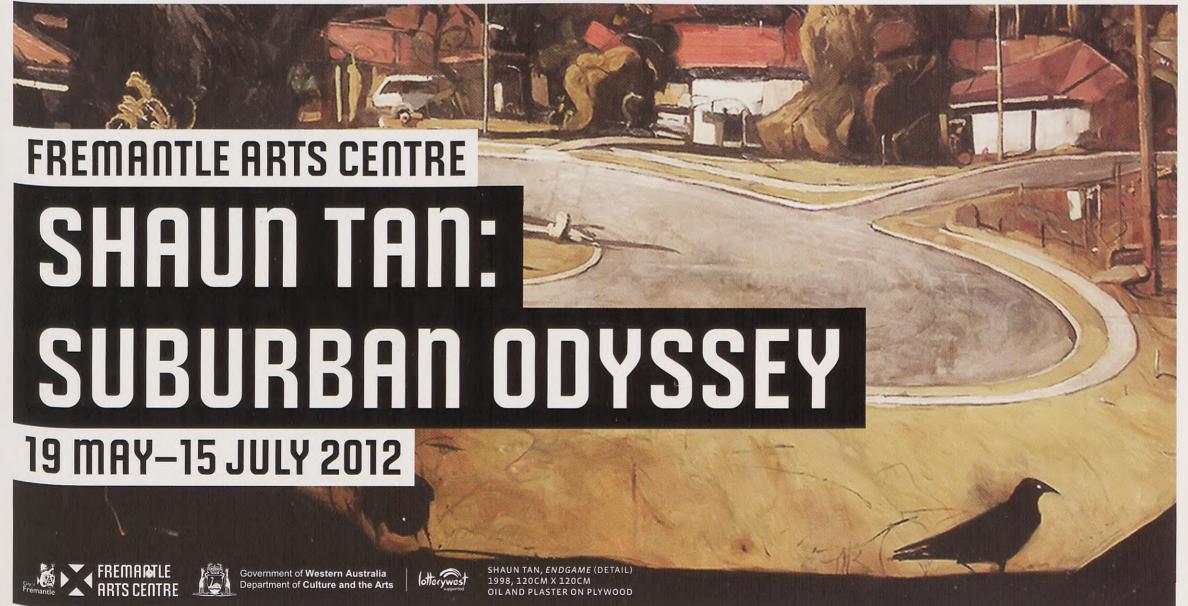
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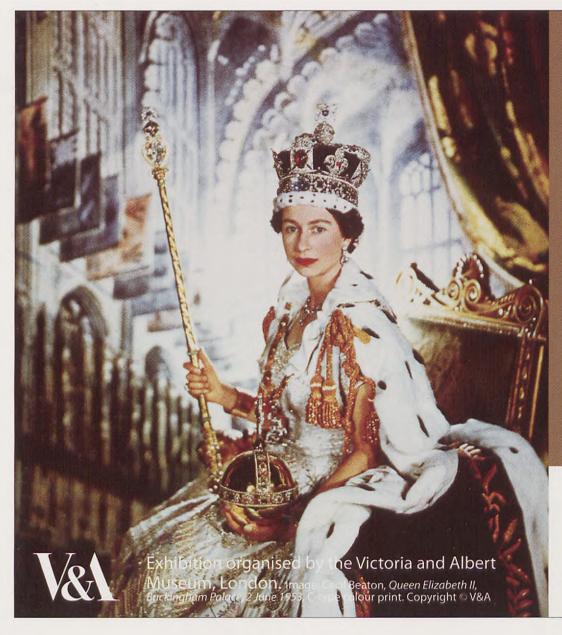
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Christian de Vietri, 2nd law, 2004 Polyurethane, fibreglass, metal, enamel 110 × 245 × 170 cm Courtesy the artist and Goddard de Fiddes Gallery, Perth

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UNTIL 18 MARCH

Ian Smith: On and Off the Road Galleries 1 and 2

This new exhibition features large-scale paintings and drawings made since 2001 that deal with Smith's fascination with the imagery and experiences of being on the road, in particular the many trips that he has undertaken within Queensland, driving between Cairns and Brisbane and beyond.

Of Trees and Ordinary Things... Gallery 3

The ordinary, mundane object becomes imbued with meaning through its use in our daily rituals. This is juxtaposed with evocations of the natural world and our dependance on it. Through a combination of abstraction and realism the viewer is taken into a deeper exploration of the things we take for granted in life and how they impact on us in subtle ways.

22 MARCH - 6 MAY

An Architect's Eye: The John Mainwaring Collection

Artworks include paintings by Gloria Petyarre, Marrnyula Munungurr, Sally Gabori and Gracie Purle Morton

25 APRIL - 27 MAY

Treeline Series: Germinating, Growing, Wilting Gallery 1

An installation of ephemeral sculpture and paintings by Claudine Marzik and Tijn Muelendijks. A part of the 'Treeline' series, aimed at emotionally connecting with children to encourage environmental awareness.

Treeline Series: Swamp Cartography Gallery 2

The small but exquisitely jewel-like flowering and fruiting bodies found in the threatened areas of South-East Queensland provide inspiration for jeweller Rebecca Ward and ceramiscist Shannon Garson who fuse ceramics, jewellery, glass, film, web-based media. A part of the 'Treeline' series, aimed at emotionally connecting with children to encourage environmental awareness.

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



### Caloundra Regional Gallery

Until 4 March

MEMORY, MYTH AND THE 1/4 ACRE BLOCK: BRONEK KOZKA

Through elaborate tableaux photographs, the artist explores memory and remembered moments of growing up in suburbia, playing on the ambiguity of fact and fiction and the human ability to recall a scene or happening.

7 March - 22 April

FRIENDS' SELECTION FROM THE KEN HINDS COLLECTION

Members of the Friends Regional Gallery Caloundra Inc. are invited to make a selection from the extensive collection of art, toys and ojects held within the Ken Hinds Collection.

25 April - 27 May

DROP THE DUST: PAMELA KOUWENHOVEN AND MARGARET WORTH

Two-and three-dimensional works by two established South Australian artists whose jointly conceived curatorial theme focuses on the pervasiveness of dust in our lives, whether it takes the form of infinitely small or imperceptible cosmic particles, or huge frighteningly visible dust storms.

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
A Sunshine Coast Council arts initiative

|Sunshine |Coast |Council

### Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum

UNTIL 12 MAY

Australian Portraits 1880-1960

An exploration of portraiture presenting the work of renowned Australian artists A National Gallery of Australia touring exhibition, supported by the Gordon Darling Foundation

31 MARCH - 19 MAY

2012 INTERCITY IMAGES: GLADSTONE SAIKI PHOTOGRAPHIC EXCHANGE Display of all Gladstone Regional entries received in the annual photographic exchange between Gladstone and sister city Saiki, Japan. Entries close 5 pm, 26 March 2012 An initiative of the Gladstone Saiki Sister City Advisory Committee, supported by Queensland Alumina Limited and the Gladstone Regional Council

21 APRIL - 19 MAY

ANZAC DAY: LEST WE FORGET

A tribute to those who have served Australia. Photographs and memorabilia from the local families together with that from the RSL and Gladstone Regional Art Gallery and Museum collections

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





18 May - 8 July

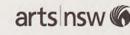
KEN DONE: UNDER THE HARBOUR

Sydney-based artist Ken Done, is renowned as the great contemporary artist of Sydney Harbour and his work is well known and respected in both Australia and Japan. 31 May – 1 June 2012 is the seventieth anniversary of the Japanese attack on Sydney Harbour and Done explores this key event through a series of new artworks, promoting understanding and goodwill between Japan and Australia.

SIMON GILBY: THE SYNDICATE

A sculptural installation including ten life-sized figures that explore our humanity. Gilby's works reference images and text from popular culture, art history, religious and political imagery and propaganda to take the form of monuments to unknown protagonists. The sculptures are made of etched, welded and forged steel, combined with incidental materials.

A touring exhibition managed by Art on the Move, the national exhibitions touring structure for WA Inc. This exhibition is supported by Visions of Australia



GLADSTONE

REGIONAL COUNCIL



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



Hervey Bay Regional Gallery
PO Box 1943, Hervey Bay 4655
Tel 07 4197 4210 Fax 07 4124 7764
www.herveybayregionalgallery.org.au
Director: Marj Sullivan
Enjoy a diverse program of touring
exhibitions and regional artists' works,
artists' talks and children's programs.
Mon–Sat 10–4, Free admission

Jenni Gillard Art Dealer
1/37 Wyandra Street, Newstead 4006
Tel 07 3852 5582 Mobile 0409 900 578
jenni@glowaustralia.com.au
Director: Jenni Gillard
Specialising in contemporary Australian
art. Sole representative of artist Dooley
Zantis.
Wed-Sat 11-5 by appointment

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

Ipswich Art Gallery

d'Arcy Doyle Place,

special events.

Tues-Sat 10-5

Nicholas Street, Ipswich 4305

Tel 07 3810 7222 Fax 07 3812 0428

info@ipswichartgallery.qld.gov.au

www.ipswichartgallery.qld.gov.au

Queensland's largest regional gallery

exhibitions, social history displays,

educational children's activities and

presents a dynamic program of visual art

Daily 10-5, closed Christmas Day, Boxing

Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday and

Anzac Day morning, Free admission

Libby Edwards Galleries 482 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley 4006 Tel 07 3358 3944 Fax 07 3358 3947 bris@libbyedwardsgalleries.com www.libbyedwardsgalleries.com Monthly exhibitions of paintings by contemporary Australian artists. Tues-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5 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, John Perceval, Margaret Preston, 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

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

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. 31 January Gallery re-opens Current exhibition: Michael Muir March/April: Rhys Lee April - May: Richard Dunlop May: AJ Taylor May - June: Adam Lester

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 31 March: Queensland Wildlife Artists Society Inc: International Wildlife in Art 2012 Mark Davey: Natural Patterns Workshop Wonders X 4 April - 12 May: 8th Centre for Contemporary Photography Documentary Photography Award Liam O'Brien: Burdened Limbs St Paul's Primary School

Tues-Sat 10-5, Free admission

QUT Art Museum
2 George Street, Brisbane 4001
(next to City Botanic Gardens)
Tel 07 3138 5370
artmuseum@qut.edu.au
www.artmuseum.qut.edu.au
From 31 March: Marrka: Exploring
the strength of QUT's Indigenous Art
Collection
Until 15 April: In the spotlight: Anton
Bruehl photographs 1920s—1950s
From 21 April: Perspectives: Jon Cattapan
and eX de Medici
Tues—Fri 10—5, Sat—Sun 12—4

Redland Art Gallery
cnr Middle and Bloomfield Streets,
Cleveland 4163
Tel 07 3829 8899 Fax 07 3829 8891
gallery@redland.qld.gov.au
www.redland.qld.gov.au
Director: Emma Bain
The Redland Art Gallery showcases a mix
of innovative exhibitions and specialises in
a varied program that looks to define the
cultural identity of Redland City.
Mon-Fri 9-4, Sun 9-2, Free admission

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.
6–31 March: Bob Moore
3–28 April: Noel McKenna
1–26 May: Scott Redford
29–23 June: Julie Fragar
Tues–Fri 10.30–6, Sat 10.30–5

### artdirectory

Rockhampton Art Gallery 62 Victoria Parade, Rockhampton 4700 Tel 07 4936 8248 gallery@rrc.qld.gov.au www.rrc.qld.gov.au Director: Tracey Cooper-Lavery Rockhampton Art Gallery has a nationally significant collection of over 1650 Australian, British and Japanese artworks including paintings, works on paper, ceramics, small sculpture and textiles. It offers constantly changing exhibitions from national touring exhibitions to in-house projects, workshops, art films, children's activities and lectures at the gallery and throughout the region. Tues-Fri 10-4, Sat-Sun 11-4



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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

ArtiFacts Art Services and Aboriginal Art

Christopher Day Gallery
cnr Elizabeth and Windsor Streets
Paddington 2021
Tel 02 9326 1952 Mob 0418 403 928
cdaygallery@bigpond.com.au
www.cdaygallery.com.au
Established 1979. Quality traditional and
modern masters. NSW agent for Graeme
Townsend. Including Beauvais, Boyd,
Dobell, Forrest, Heysen, Johnson, Knight,
Lindsay, Olsen, Rees, Storrier and Streeton.
Tues-Sat 11-6, and by appointment

Stanthorpe Regional Art Gallery
Cnr Lock and Marsh Streets,
Stanthorpe 4380
Tel 07 4681 1874 Fax 07 4681 4021
director@srag.org.au
www.srag.org.au
Director: Penelope Hillam
Home to the permanent collection
established in 1972 and hosting local, state
and national exhibitions.
Now accepting entries for Art Festival
2012
Mon-Fri 10-4, Sat-Sun 11-4,
Free Admission

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
4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art is a non-profit organisation established in 1996. 4A is committed to Asian and Australian cultural dialogue through its innovative program of exhibitions, talks, performances and community projects featuring local and international artists. Tues–Sat 11–6

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
Sundays and public holidays 11–2

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

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

Anna Schwartz Gallery
245 Wilson Street, Darlington 2008
PO Box 1926, Strawberry Hills 2012
Tel 02 8580 7002
mail@annaschwartzgallery.com
www.annaschwartzgallery.com
Located in the historic CarriageWorks,
Anna Schwartz Gallery Sydney presents
ambitious projects by leading international
and Australian artists. The artistic program
focuses on large-scale installations and
curated exhibitions.
Tues-Fri 10-6, Sat 11-5

BREENSPACE
Level 3, 17-19 Alberta Street,
Sydney 2000
Tel 02 9283 1113
media@breenspace.com
www.breenspace.com
Director: Sally Breen
Until 24 March: Nike Savvas: No Gods
No Kings
Wed-Fri 11-6, Sat 11-5

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

Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery 531 Ruthven Street, Toowoomba 4350 Tel 07 4688 6652 art@toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au www.toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au/trag 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

Annandale Galleries
110 Trafalgar Street, Annandale 2038
Tel 02 9552 1699 Fax 02 9566 4424
info@annandalegalleries.com.au
www.annandalegalleries.com.au
Directors: Bill and Anne Gregory
Australian and international contemporary
art and modern masters. Specialists in
Aboriginal bark paintings and sculpture
from Arnhem Land.
240 metres of space in three galleries.
Tues-Sat 11-5

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
The gallery hosts solo and thematic
exhibitions, has an extensive website and
an 'open' stockroom of movable racks.
Tue-Fri 11-6, Sat 10-6, Sun 11-4

Eva Breuer Art Dealer 83 Moncur Street, Woollahra 2025 Tel 02 9362 0297 Fax 02 9362 0318 art@evabreuerartdealer.com.au www.evabreuerartdealer.com.au Specialises in buying and selling museumquality paintings and works on paper by traditional, modern and contemporary Australian artists. Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, John Olsen, Brett Whiteley, Garry Shead, William Robinson, James Gleeson, Fred Williams, Ray Crooke, Kevin Connor, Donald Friend, David Boyd, Brian Dunlop, Margaret Olley and more. Tues-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-5 or by appointment

Gallery 9
9 Darley St, Darlinghurst 2010
Tel 02 9380 9909
info@gallery9.com.au
www.gallery9.com.au
Representing: Peter Alwast, John Aslanidis,
Simon Blau, Brett East, Michelle Hanlin,
Julian Hooper, Matthew Hopkins, Simon
Kennedy, Anna Kristensen, Tonee Messiah,
Adam Norton, Jade Pegler, Michael
Taylor, Jelle van den Berg, Craig Waddell,
Jake Walker, Bradd Westmoreland, what,
Andrzej Zielinski
Wed–Sat 11–6, and by appointment

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

Hazelhurst Regional Gallery

& Arts Centre

www.mrag.org.au
3 March: Opening event, 3–5pm
Until 8 April: Tallulah Cunningham, Michelle
Maartensz, Trever Weekes, Riverstories
Until 29 April: Judith White, Riverstories
2 March – 8 April: Maitland International
Salon of Photography
14 April: Opening event, 3–5pm
23 March – 3 June: A new look at James
Gleeson
13 April – 24 June: NELL – Hometown Girl
Has Wet Dream; 50 Years of Printmaking
Tues–Sun 10–5, closed Mondays and public
holidays

Maitland Regional Art Gallery 230 High Street, Maitland 2320 Tel 02 4934 9859 Fax 02 4933 1657 artgallery@maitland.nsw.gov.au

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
seventy works by Australian Aboriginal
artists.
Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-1, Free admission

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

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

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

Museum of Contemporary Art 140 George Street, Sydney 2155 Tel 02 9245 2400 Fax 02 9252 4361 mail@mca.com.au www.mca.com.au Director: Eizabeth Ann Macgregor OBE The only museum in Australia dedicated to exhibiting, interpreting and collecting contemporary art from across Australia and around the world. Following a \$53 million redevelopment, the MCA opens as a bold, new and expanded museum on Thursday 29 March 2012. Opening highlights include: Marking Time; Christian Marclay's The Clock and Volume One: MCA Collection. Daily 10-5, Free admission

Goulburn Regional Art Gallery
Civic Centre, cnr Bourke and Church
Streets, Goulburn 2580
Tel 02 4823 4494 Fax 02 4823 4456
artgallery@goulburn.nsw.gov.au
www.grag.com.au
Director: Jane Cush
Exhibitions and public programs with a
focus on contemporary regional practice.
Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 1-4, closed Sunday and
public holidays

The Ken Done Gallery
1 Hickson Road, The Rocks,
Sydney 2000
Tel 02 9247 2740 Fax 02 9251 4884
gallery@done.com.au
www.kendone.com.au
A vibrant space in The Rocks precinct,
with exhibitions by Australian artist Ken
Done, featuring Sydney Harbour, the
beach, reef and outback. Recent original
works on canvas and paper, limited-edition
prints and posters, bookshop and art
related products.
Daily 10–5.30, closed Christmas Day only

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 appointment necessary)

Newcastle 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

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

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
March-April: Solo exhibition by
internationally renowned installation
artist Asher Bilu, expressing his ongoing
fascination with light, music, science, and
cosmology.
Mon-Fri 10-5, Free admission

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

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

### artdirectory

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

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 25 March: Russell Drysdale - The Drawings 31 March - 20 May: Salon des Refusés 25 May - 1 July: Not The Way Home Tues-Sun 11-5

METEROIOBINE DIBLOVA

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

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. Mon-Sat 10.30-6, Sun 1-6

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/ secondary market art and the exhibition of professional emerging to mid-career Australian artists with an emphasis on painting. Other services offered include; insurance valuations, assistance in secure storage, fine art investment advice and art leasing.

Tues-Sat 11-6, Sun 12-4

Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation 16-20 Goodhope Street, 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 16 March - 19 May: Janet Laurence: After Eden Wed-Sat 11-5, Free admission

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

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 17 March: Peter Poulet: Paintings 21 March – 14 April: Patricia Moylan: paintings, Rod McRae: paintings 18 April – 5 May: Joe Frost: Paintings and works on paper, Roger Crawford: Paintings and mixed media 9–26 May: John Bartley: Paintings and works on paper, Jasper Legge: Works on paper 30 May – 16 June: Wally Barda: Paintings, Noel Hutchison: Sculptures Wed-Fri 10-7, Tues and Sat 10-5

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

**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

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

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

Robin Gibson Gallery

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, David Eastwood, Erwin Fabian, Simon Fieldhouse, 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

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

**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. 6 March - 5 April: The Baker's Dozen: Debra Dawes, Kerry Smith, Bonita Bub, Vivienne Binns, Lisa Jones, Elizabeth Pulie, Samantha Wittingham, Gemma Smith, Elizabeth Gower, Nike Savvas, Lynne Eastaway, Lesley Giovanelli, Lorna Gear 24 April - 1 June: Universal Remote: Wade Marynowsky Mon-Fri 12-6, Free admission

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. 3 March - 27 May: Near Earth Art: The Knock of the Shoe, curated by what Until 15 April: WCG Friends: Post Codes From The Edge 21 April - 10 June: The James Kiwi Watercolour Prize 26 May - 26 August: Opportunity Knocks: Naomi Ullman 26 May – 26 August: Octagonal Rooms: Jenny Tubby, 2011 Resident Artist Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat-Sun 12-4, closed public holidays, Free admission

### Australian Capital Territory

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 1 April: Spirit in the Land
7 April – 20 May: Karl Wiebke: Paintings
1997–2012
Wed–Sun 12–5, Free admission

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 (ACGA) Canberra's largest private gallery. Regular exhibitions of contemporary paintings, prints, sculpture, glass and ceramics by established and emerging Australian artists. 1-20 March: Graeme Drendel; Holly Grace 22 March - 10 April: Kate Briscoe; Belinda Fox and Neville French 3-22 May: David Frazer; Brenden Scott French Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat-Sun 9-5

National Gallery of Australia Parkes Place, Parkes, Canberra 2600 Tel 02 6240 6502 information@nga.gov.au www.nga.gov.au Director: Ron Radford AM Now showing: Renaissance More than seventy early and high renaissance paintings by some of the greatest European artists including Raphael, Botticelli, Bellini and Titian. Out of the West Presenting a large sample of Western Australian artists from pre-settlement until Daily 10-5

National Portrait Gallery
King Edward Terrace, Parkes 2600
Tel 02 6102 7000 Fax 02 6102 7001
www.portrait.gov.au
Until 4 March: Impressions: Painting Light
and Life
Until 18 March: David M Thomas: Dream
Job
Until 1 April: Jo's Mo Show (With Beards)
Until 29 April: Skater: Portraits by Nikki
Toole
16 March – 20 May: National
Photographic Portrait Prize 2012
Daily 10–5, closed Christmas Day
Free admission, Disabled access

Solander Gallery
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, established
1974 by Joy Warren OAM.
Advice on collecting, large stock of
significant Australian artists, gazetted valuer.
Fri-Sun 10-5, and by appointment

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

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

### Victoria

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 March: Tjunkaya Tapaya 6-30 March: Gary Lee 3 April - 4 May: Barrupu Yunupingu 30 April – 12 May: All About Art: Annual Collectors' Exhibition @ Depot Gallery, Sydney Tues-Fri 10-6, Sat 11-5

Alison Kelly Gallery

1 Albert Street, Richmond 3121
Tel 03 9428 9019 Fax 03 9428 9049
Mob 0417 542 691
ak@alisonkellygallery.com
www.alisonkellygallery.com
Director: Alison Kelly
Exhibiting contemporary Indigenous art
from art centres across Australia.
Tues-Sat 11-5

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



Tues-Sat 11-5

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

Bendigo Art Gallery
42 View Street
Bendigo Victoria 3550
Tel 03 5434 6089 Fax 03 5443 6586
s.bloomfield@bendigo.vic.gov.au
www.bendigoartgallery.com.au
11 March – 17 June: Grace Kelly: Style
Icon.
Organised by the V&A Museum, London
and the Grimaldi Forum, Monaco
Daily 10–5

MICHELOLOGICALINE BICHARDA

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
for details.
Tues-Fri 10-4, Sat 1-5 during
exhibition period, Free admission

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

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

C.A.S. Contemporary Art Society of Victoria Inc.
PO Box 283, Richmond 3121
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, Melbourne.
View 500+ artworks online. Regular
e-bulletins. Memberships: Artists \$60,
Friends \$20.

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
Flinders Lane Gallery has been exhibiting
the work of collectable and exceptional
Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian
artists since 1989. The exhibition program
incorporates both emerging and established
artists' practices. The FLG website is
extensive, user friendly and updated daily.
New exhibitions every three weeks.
Tues-Fri 11-6, Sat 11-4

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

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

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 Gallerysmith works with collectors, art consultants, curators and enthusiasts to develop/augment significant collections for museums, corporates and private individuals. Represented artists include Kirstin Berg, Eric Bridgeman, Dadang Christanto, Nici Cumpston, Paula doPrado, Sue Lovegrove, Chris Pease and Arlene TextaQueen. Tues-Sat 11-5

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. The museum 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 manages the University Art Collection, which charts the development of Australian art practice since the mid-1960s. Mon-Fri 10-5

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

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 Art Centre of Utopia (N.I.) 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

Geelong Gallery
Little Malop Street, Geelong 3220
Tel 03 5229 3645 Fax 03 5221 6441
geelart@geelonggallery.org.au
www.geelonggallery.org.au
Until 15 April: The Colin and Elizabeth
Laverty Collection
Until 15 April: Freshwater Saltwater –
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prints
21 April – 24 June: The Picturesque Ruin –
in prints, paintings and photography
Daily 10–5, Free admission

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.
Tues=Fri 10-6, Sat 1-5

National Gallery of Victoria

Please refer to http://www.ngv.vic.gov.

au/whats-on/ngv-studio for updates on

our changing program of exhibitions,

installations and events that actively

Sun-Wed 10-5, Thurs-Sat 10-10, open

10-5 Labour Day Monday, open 10-10

Easter Saturday, open 1-5 Easter Monday

involve Melbourne's youth.

NGV Studio

Flinders Street

Melbourne 3000

Tel 03 8620 2222

www.ngv.vic.gov.au

Federation Square

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 McClelland Sculpture Survey and Award, the gallery presents a vibrant program of exhibitions and public

McClelland Gallery Cafe is available for special functions, weddings and corporate events.

Guided tours Weds and Thurs at II and 2, Sat and Sun at 2, bookings essential. Tues-Sun 10-5, Entry by donation

[MARS] Melbourne Art Rooms

andy@marsgallery.com.au

www.marsgallery.com.au

and established artists.

MARS showcases outstanding

418 Bay St, Port Melbourne 3207

Tel 03 9681 8425 Fax 03 9681 8426

Menzies (formerly Deutscher~Menzies) & Lawson~Menzies

Menzies Art Brands Pty Ltd 1 Darling Street, South Yarra 3141 Tel 03 9832 8700 Fax 03 9832 8735 artauctions@menziesartbrands.com www.menziesartbrands.com Australia's Leading Fine Art Auctioneers and Valuers Specialists: Timothy Abdallah, Chris

Cullity and Cameron Menzies Mon-Fri 9-5.30 Free appraisals Wednesdays 2-5 (no appointment necessary)

Metro Gallery

1214 High Street, Armadale 3143 Tel 03 9500 8511 Fax 03 9500 8599 info@metrogallery.com.au www.metrogallery.com.au Director: Alex McCulloch Senior Art Consultant: Anita Traynor Art Consultant: Julia Matthews Representing established and emerging artists: Olsen, Storrier, Benjamin, Canning, Green, Booth, Lister, Knight, Stevens, Truscott, Danzig, Peck, Langridge, Hoddinott, Stavrianos, Laity, Young, Hirata, Loculocu, Chen and Swan. Tues-Fri 10-5.30, Sat-Sun 11-5

860 Ferntree Gully Road, Wheelers Hill, 3150 www.mga.org.au

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

Mossenson Galleries

41 Derby Street, Collingwood 3066 Tel 03 9417 6694 Fax 03 9417 2114 art@mossensongalleries.com.au www.mossensongalleries.com.au Director: Dr Diane Mossenson Established in 1993, Mossenson Galleries exhibits work from Australia's leading contemporary and Indigenous artists. ACGA member. Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat 11-5, and by appointment

Mossgreen Gallery 310 Toorak Road, South Yarra 3141 Tel 03 9826 0822 Fax 03 9826 1255 mail@mossgreen.com.au www.mossgreen.com.au Directors: Paul Sumner and Amanda

Mossgreen Gallery represents emerging, mid-career and established Australian painters, ceramicists and sculptors with exhibitions changing monthly.

The Gallery also stages retrospective selling exhibitions for Australian and international

Mon-Fri 10-5.30, Sat 10-4

National Gallery of Victoria

Federation Square

Melbourne 3000

Tel 03 8620 2222

www.ngv.vic.gov.au

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia

Corner Russell & Flinders Streets

Until 9 September: Linda Jackson: Bush

22 March – 15 July: Top Arts 2012 7 April – 22 July: Fred Williams: Infinite Horizons; Exhibition entry fees apply

NGV Kids Corner: Time Catcher Daily 10–5, closed Mondays, closed Good

Easter Saturday, open 1-5 Easter Monday

Friday, open 10-5 Labour Day Monday, open

Until 27 May: Fred Kruger: Intimate Landscapes

Niagara Galleries

Nellie Castan Gallery

South Yarra 3141

Level 1, 12 River Street,

mail@nelliecastangallery.com

www.nelliecastangallery.com

emerging and prominent artists.

Tues-Sun 12-5, and by appointment

Tel 03 9804 7366 Fax 03 9804 7367

Specialising in contemporary Australian

painting, photography and sculpture from

245 Punt Road, Richmond 3121 Tel 03 9429 3666 Fax 03 9428 3571 mail@niagara-galleries.com.au www.niagara-galleries.com.au Director: William Nuttall (ACGA) The finest modern and contemporary Australian art. Offering one of the most extensive stockrooms in Melbourne, Nuttall and his staff can advise on all aspects of creating a rewarding art collection. Nuttall is an approved valuer under the Cultural Gifts Program. 6-31 March: Martin Parr (UK) 6 March - 28 April: Blue Chip XIV 3-28 April: Stephen Benwell 1-26 May: Angela Brennan Tues-Sat 11-6 or by appointment

Monash Gallery Of Art

Tel 03 8544 0500 Fax 03 9562 2433 mga@monash.vic.gov.au Director: Shaune Lakin Holding one of the finest collections of photography, MGA also represents a range of exhibitions, educational programs and events.

Monash University Museum of Art MUMA

Ground Floor, Building F, Caulfield Campus, Monash University, 900 Dandenong Rd, Caulfield East 3145 Tel 03 9905 4217 Fax 03 9905 4345 muma@monash.edu www.monash.edu.au/muma Until 7 April: Hany Armanious: The Golden Thread, Australian premiere of works shown at the 54th Venice Biennale

Adrian Paci: Per Speculum Self-Conscious: Contemporary Portraiture Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat 12-5, Free admission

NGV International 180 St Kilda Road,

Melbourne 3004 Tel 03 8620 2222 www.ngv.vic.gov.au Until 4 March: The Mad Square: Modernity in German Art 1910–37; entry fees apply Until 4 March: Looking at Looking: The Photographic Gaze 10 March – 12 August: Brent Harris 23 March - 16 September: Light Works 21 April – 26 August: Unexpected Pleasures:

The Art and Design of Contemporary Jewellery NGV Kids Space: Napoleon and Josephine's Excellent Adventure Daily 10-5, closed Tuesdays, open 10-5

Labour Day Monday and Easter Saturday, open 1-5 Easter Monday, closed Good Friday RMIT Gallery RMIT Storey Hall, 344 Swanston Street, Melbourne 3000 Tel 03 9925 1717 Fax 03 9925 1738 rmit.gallery@rmit.edu.au www.rmit.edu.au/rmitgallery Director: Suzanne Davies Presenting a vibrant and diverse program of Australian and international fine art, design, fashion, architecture, craft and new

Mon–Fri 11–5, Sat 12–5, closed public holidays, Free admission

 $5^{23}$ 

Two-level state-of-the-art gallery space with an extensive stockroom. 8-31 March: Ode to Ziegfeld Follies by Grant Cowan and Querido Alfredo by 4 April – 6 May: Graeme Base and Ode to Trees, a group show Tues-Sun 10-5

contemporary Australian art from emerging

### **art**directory

Sophie Gannon Gallery
2 Albert St, Richmond 3121
Tel 03 9421 0857 Fax 03 9421 0859
info@sophiegannongallery.com.au
www.sophiegannongallery.com.au
Director: Sophie Gannon
Representing artists Cressida Campbell,
Clandia Damichi, Julia deVille, Emily
Ferretti, Gwyn Hanssen Pigott, Nicholas
Harding, Kirra Jamison, Leslie Rice, Vera
Möller, John Nicholson, Selina Ou, Martin
Smith, Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, Judith Wright
and Michael Zavros.
Extensive stockroom.
Tues-Sat 11-5, or by appointment

William Mora Galleries
60 Tanner Street, Richmond 3121
Tel 03 9429 1199 Fax 03 9429 6833
mora@moragalleries.com.au
www.moragalleries.com.au
Contemporary Australian and Aboriginal
art. William Mora is an accredited valuer
under the Australian Cultural Gifts
Program.
Wed-Fri 10-4, Sat 12-4, and
by appointment

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Art Gallery of South Australia
North Terrace, Adelaide 5000
Tel 08 8207 7000 Fax 08 8207 7070
www.artgallery.sa.gov.au
3 March – 29 April: Parallel Collisions:
2012 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art
Explores the ways in which ideas emerge,
converge and re-form through time.
Across four physical platforms, Parallel
Collisions presents 21 commissioned works
by some of Australia's leading artists.
Daily 10–5. Bookshop and Art Gallery
Restaurant, Daily 10–4.45.
Free admission, charges may apply to
special exhibitions

Hill Smith Gallery
113 Pirie Street, Adelaide 5000
Tel 08 8223 6558 Fax 08 8227 0678
gallery@hillsmithfineart.com.au
www.hillsmithfineart.com.au
Director: Sam Hill-Smith
Hill Smith Gallery features solo and group
exhibitions by established and emerging
artists from South Australia and interstate.
Mon-Fri 10-5.30, Sun 2-5

TarraWarra Museum of Art
311 Healesville-Yarra Glen Road,
Healesville 3777
Tel 03 5957 3100 Fax 03 5957 3120
museum@twma.com.au
www.twma.com.au
Located in Victoria's beautiful Yarra Valley
wine region, TWMA is Australia's first
major publicly owned, privately funded art
museum, featuring a program of seasonally
changing exhibitions.
Admission \$5 (pensioners, students,
children free)
Tues-Sun 11-5

South Australia

BMGArt
31–33 North Street, Adelaide 5000
Tel 08 8231 4440 Fax 08 8231 4494
art@bmgart.com.au
www.bmgart.com.au
Monthly exhibitions by leading
contemporary Australian artists. Sculpture,
paintings, graphics and photography.
Tues–Sat 11–5, and by appointment

Kensington Gallery
39 Kensington Road, Norwood 5067
Tel 08 8332 5752 Fax 08 8332 5066
e.kengall@kern.com.au
www.kensingtongallery.com.au
Interesting exhibitions each month by
leading Australian artists.
Agents for Barbara Hanrahan, John Dowie,
Jim Kinch and Jörg Schmeisser. Specialising
in South Australian female artists.
Wed-Fri 11-5, Sat-Sun 2-5

The Johnston Collection
East Melbourne
Tel 03 9416 2515
info@johnstoncollection.org
www.johnstoncollection.org
The Johnston Collection of fine and
decorative art holds a unique collection of
Georgian, Regency and Louis XV antiques.
The museum complex incorporates the
'Fairhall' housemuseum and the Gallery,
which presents a temporary exhibition
program and regular lecture series.
Admission: Adult \$22 Con \$18.50
Open weekdays with three guided tours
daily

Adelaide Central Gallery
45 Osmond Terrace, Norwood 5067
Tel 08 8364 2809 Fax 08 8364 4865
acsa@acsa.sa.edu.au
www.acsa.sa.edu.au
Specialising in new works from emerging
and mid-career Australian artists. Monthly
exhibitions and stockroom.
Exclusive dealer for Pro Hart in South
Australia.
Mon-Fri 9-5, Sat 11-4
Mon-Thurs 9-7 during school term

Flinders University City Gallery
State Library of South Australia
North Terrace, Adelaide 5000
Tel 08 8207 7055 Fax 08 8207 7056
city.gallery@flinders.edu.au
www.flinders.edu.au/artmuseum
Director: Fiona Salmon
Flinders University City Gallery conducts
a program of changing exhibitions with an
emphasis on contemporary Indigenous art.
Tues-Fri 11-4, Sat-Sun 12-4

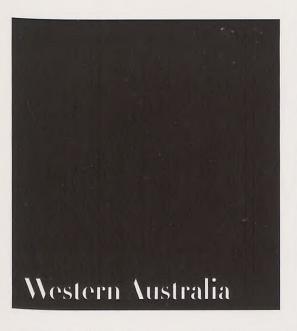
Peter Walker Fine Art
101 Walkerville Terrace
Walkerville, 5081
Tel 08 8344 4607 Fax 08 8364 5817
info@peterwalker.com.au
www.peterwalker.com.au
Director: Peter R. Walker
Specialising in rare Australian and
international art.
Thurs-Sat 11-5, and by appointment

Wangaratta Art Gallery
56–60 Ovens Street, Wangaratta 3676
Tel 03 5722 0865 Fax 03 5722 2969
d.mangan@wangaratta.vic.gov.au
www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au
Director: Dianne Mangan
The Wangaratta Exhibitions Gallery
presents a relevant, diverse and changing
visual arts program consisting of national,
state and regional exhibitions, including
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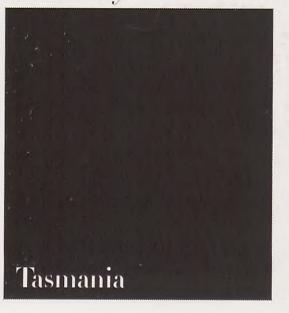
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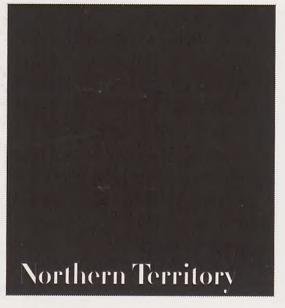
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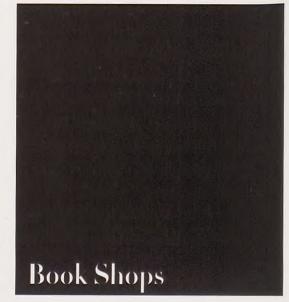
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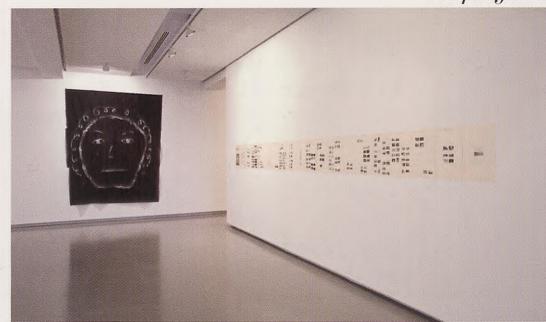
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### Gertrude Contemporary and Art & Australia Emerging Writers Program: Serena Bentley



Hovering on Canvas in a state of Permanent Consternation, the floating head of Jenny Watson's 1981 painting *Mu-me* was the first thing encountered on entering 'A Different Temporality: Aspects of Australian Feminist Art Practice 1975–1985'. In a few cursory strokes, Watson had created a symbol of the everywoman, the ultimate figure of authority. And she stuck out like a sore thumb.

Curated by Kyla McFarlane, 'A Different Temporality' gathered eight Australian artists working within the paradigm of 1970s and 1980s feminist practice. Featuring works by Watson alongside that of her contemporaries Micky Allan, Janet Burchill and Jennifer McCamley, Bonita Ely, Sue Ford, Helen Grace and Lyndal Jones, the exhibition was shaped by a concern for the domestic, the environment, politics and film. Central to the exhibition was McFarlane's curatorial conceit, which decidedly rejected any summation of feminist practice in Australia. 'A Different Temporality' wasn't characterised by a single unified voice; instead, with great subtlety, McFarlane brought together a small group of artists with divergent interests in temporality.

These artists were all engaged with time as an essential medium but employed markedly differing approaches to its examination as both metaphor and subject. In Ford's *Faces*, 1976, for instance, the artist chronicled her immediate social community by filming close-up portraits of family and friends. Ford revisited the series in 1996 by re-filming the same subjects, thereby creating a powerful meditation on the passing of time.

Many of the artists utilised documentation and duration to convey a spectrum of female experience. Though not included in the exhibition, the legacy of American artist Mary Kelly's seminal work *Post-partum document*, 1973–79, was palpable here. Based on conceptual processes, Kelly's work included over 139 elements such as soiled nappies and quasi-scientific writing as a means of challenging traditional depictions of the mother–child relationship. The artists in 'A Different Temporality' adopted equally abstract

modes of representation. In *Time and motion study* #1 'Women seem to adapt to repetitive-type tasks ...', 1980, Grace recorded the routine domestic labour of women by photographing the same full clothesline each day for a week, while Allan's self-published travel diary, My trip, 1976, featured photographs and written material created by the artist in collaboration with the individuals she encountered during a road trip across Victoria.

'A Different Temporality' was heavy with obsessive forms of documentation (not all of it easily penetrable), but it also included fluctuations between the personal and the political. McFarlane encouraged the distinct styles to be reconsidered in light of their radical approaches to the representation of female experience. The filmic and text-based elements of Burchill and McCamley's installations appeared fresh and vital, whereas Allan's hand-coloured photo-portraits of the 1982–83 'People of Elizabeth' series looked decidedly dated. This rift in aesthetics confirmed McFarlane's rejection of one unified feminism, presenting us with evidence of multiple and diverse feminist languages.

Which brings us back to Watson. A painter through and through, Watson's relationship to time was not immediately apparent: *Mu-me* is a childhood portrait of the artist's mother painted from memory. While Watson's work may have seemed a less obvious inclusion, her presence revived the exhibition by lifting it out of document-heavy, process-based practice, offering a vision of womanhood that was intimate, eternal and – most importantly – accessible.

Serena Bentley was mentored by the Melbourne-based independent curator Hannah Mathews; A Different Temporality: Aspects of Australian Feminist Art Practice 1975–1985, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 13 October – 17 December 2011.

from left: Jenny Watson, Mu-me, 1981; Micky Allan, My trip, 1976 'A Different Temporality', installation view, MUMA, Melbourne, 2011 Photograph Christian Capurro

# Art & Australia / Credit Suisse Private Banking Contemporary Art Award Rebecca Baumann

Leigh Robb

IMAGINE YOU HAD COLOURED CONFETTI FALLING AROUND YOU, constantly. This notional idea of creating a continuous colour experience marked the start of Rebecca Baumann's artistic practice. She describes her early work from 2007, Confetti international, as her first attempt to distil and activate such a concept using only an industrial fan, a conveyor belt and 12 kilograms of confetti, but to dramatic effect. Her recent work, Automated colour field, 2011, in which 100 flip clocks animate cards of coloured paper for twenty-four hours, seems an extension of her attempts to create an endless colourfield experience. It is this urge and her elegant pursuit of implausible ideas that has led to the inclusion of her work in major national surveys such as 'Primavera 2011' (Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney), and a new commission for 'Contemporary Australia: Women' at Brisbane's Gallery of Modern Art this year.

This glorious mess, 2009, and Living with your emotions, 2010, consist of coloured streamers that whirl in free form like dervishes, yet are curtailed by the same blue drum fans that animate them. Baumann's fans are often industrial, powerful, relentless machines whose blades create and force air out with metronomic regularity. They propel her crepe streamers to perform wily, drunken pirouettes, constantly fending off gravity with surges of electrically generated gusts of wind. That these works are reminiscent of the Lumière brothers and their early forays into moving colour pictures speaks volumes - Baumann's practice being the simple, yet exquisite orchestration of colour and movement. Her streamer works recall the beguiling and breathtaking film Danse Serpentine (1899), in which dancer Loie Fuller propels enormous stretches of fabric around and around, each frame handcoloured in post-production to create an endless rainbow stream of billowing material. Baumann's streamer works become similarly cinematic in their production and harnessing of drama and effect, but also in their ability to create something utterly hypnotic and



timeless - and to generate the resulting range of human emotion.

The strength of Baumann's work lies in the density of her materials and the concentration of human experience – the fleeting orchestration of parts en masse. We can't get enough of the heady coloured clouds of smoke or avert our gaze from the glints of light refracting on gold tinsel curtains and yet, at the same time, it is all far too much. Formally her work relies on repetition and return, but there is always the threat of deflation, of being brought back down to earth, or being rudely interrupted by the squeaky surrender of an obnoxious cog in one of her machines.

Baumann's smoke works, such as *Improvised smoke device*, 2010, use pure pigment inspired by her trip to the Holi festival celebrations in India. They are again utterly intoxicating, in part because of the density of colour, but more so because of the ephemeral dispersal of smoke into air on ignition by her pyrotechnician. Baumann's works can move instantaneously from a birthday celebration with bursts of confetti to a funereal sprinkling of remains into the wind, scaling not only the colour spectrum, but the mortal arc from birth to death.

Her works speak of a certain optimism initially, and spectacle perhaps, for a brief indulgent moment. But it is the conflation of extremes, in formal terms, of density versus dispersion, but also existentially, of joy versus despair, and success versus loss that arrests our gaze and our consciousness. Perhaps comparisons of Baumann's work garner more traction when considered not only as being next in a lineage of colourfield painters, or from the generation of contemporary colour environments of Olafur Eliasson or Spencer Finch, but when they are also seen in relation to the history of painting and emotion. Whether using confetti, streamers, coloured paper or smoke, Baumann's interventions feel charged with the atmospheric purity of a Turner painting, and yet embody the transcendental drama and pathos of a Caravaggio ascension fresco.

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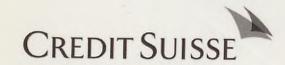


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