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7th Asia Pacific Triennial
Joana Vasconcelos, Theaster Gates
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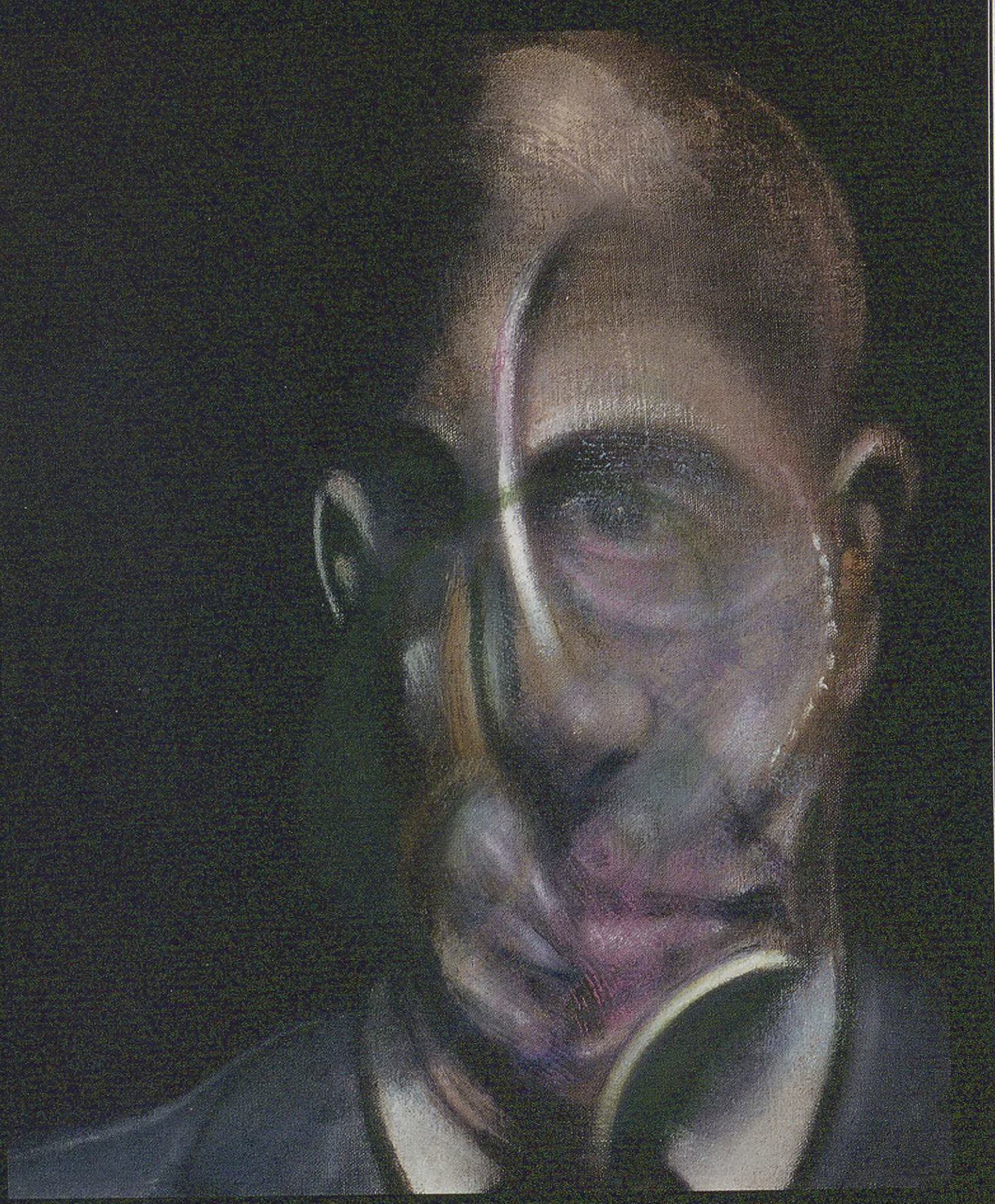

Francis Bacon *Portrait of Michel Leiris*, 1976
Louise and Michel Leiris Collection, Pompidou Centre, Paris
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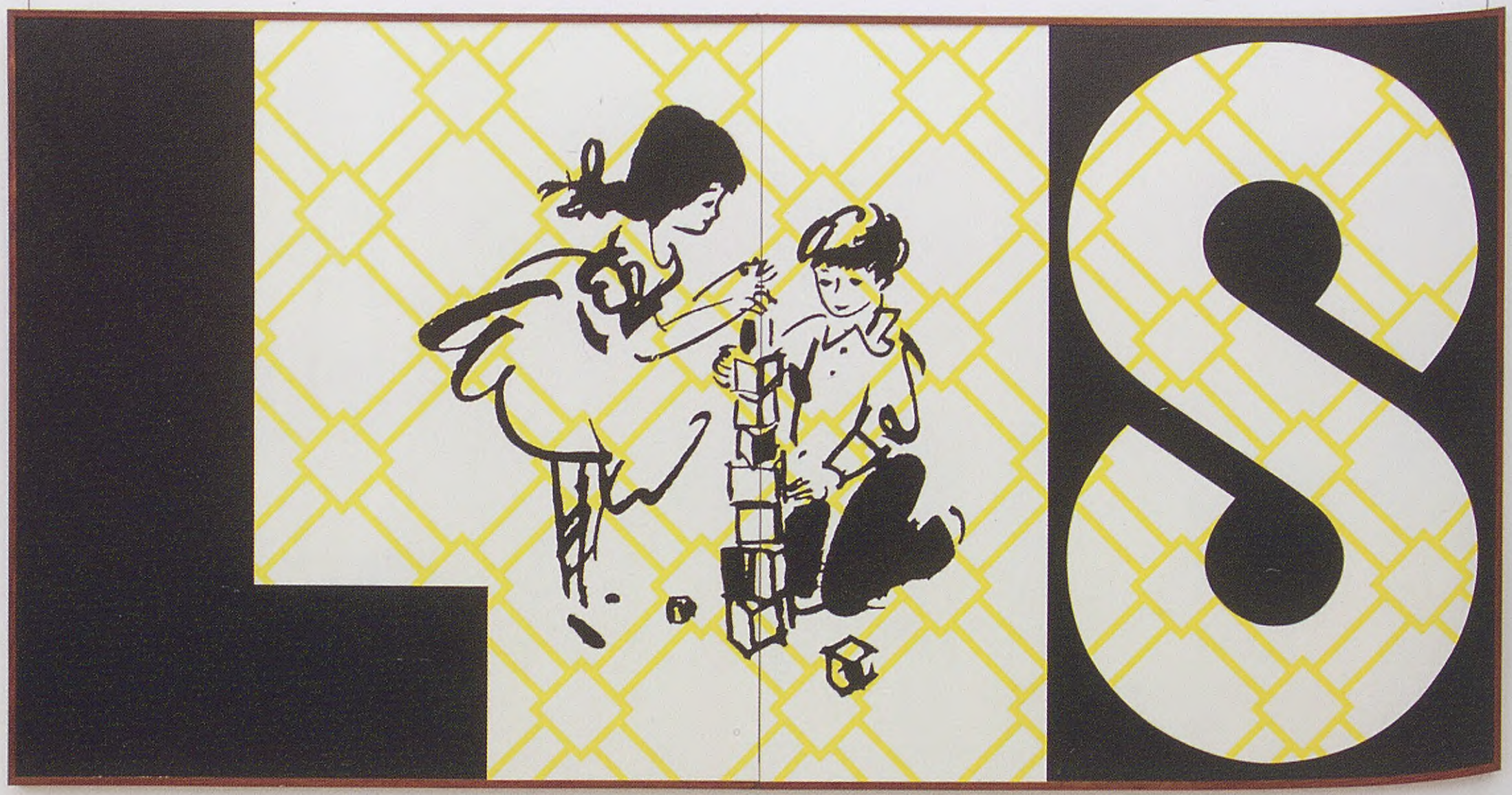
PETER TYNDALL

detail

17 NOVEMBER - 22 DECEMBER 2012



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cover
Graham Fletcher, Untitled (lounge room tribalism), 2009, detail
Oil on canvas, 162 x 130 cm
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From the Editors

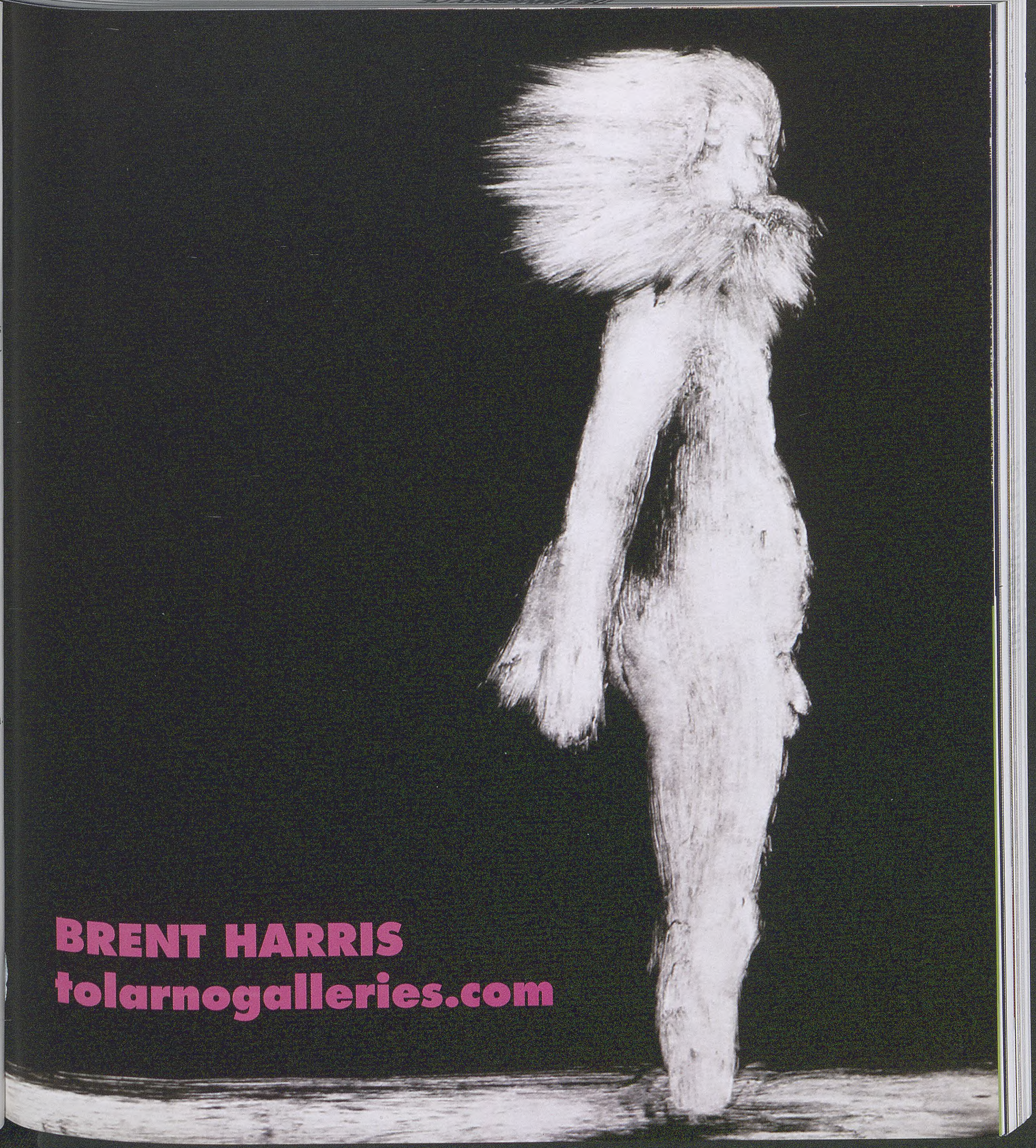
FOR SOME THE DOMESTIC SPACE IS A LODESTAR, guiding them through life. For others it represents loss, distance and pain. The word 'domestic' calls up bilateral ideas of shelter and belonging, of roots and memories; it can define a region and describe the taming of a wild being. For Summer 2012, *Art & Australia* considers the domestic as a concept and a space: its construct, its shifting character across cultures, and its value.

We celebrate this year's 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT7) by exploring our theme through the work of several exhibiting artists who interrogate the interior. As Ella Mudie's introductory essay explains, cover artist Graham Fletcher constructs complex domestic settings full of dark secrets. Coloured by shades of darkness, Yuan Goang-ming's video work contemplates settlement in a world of shifting structures, as discussed in Iris Shu-Ping Huang's text. From these hypothetical structures rises the Papua New Guinean architectural installation that debuts at APT7. In an essay on the project, Diane Losche shows us that construction of space can mean the very making of a man.

From the Asia Pacific we shift to Europe and the United States, where Lilly Wei considers Theaster Gates's dOCUMENTA (13) building rehabilitation project. Wei's portrait depicts a man unique in his approach to artmaking and urban renewal. As the first female artist to undertake the coveted Palace of Versailles commission, Joana Vasconcelos interrogated the role women played in the construction of the palace mythology. Fae Brauer's essay on the artist's epic installation expands the territory of our theme.

We continue threading together the fabric of the domestic and return to the Biennale of Sydney and Gao Rong's soft-sculpture installation, which Summar Hipworth discusses. Although similarly flexible, the world Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro create is angular and hard-edged; their process strips back objects to their mechanics, their bones, as we glean from Jacqueline Millner's essay, which concludes the feature section.

With this issue we travel far and wide across the varied domestic landscape, but like the holiday snapshot, our discussion provides just a glimpse of the ever-developing domestic idea.


BRENT HARRIS
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Contributors

From top, left to right:

Eddy Batache lectured in French and Fine Arts at the University of Sydney from 1964 to 1973. He has written several books, including *Surrealisme et Tradition* (1978), which is dedicated to Francis Bacon, and published *Requiem Pour La Fin Des Temps* (1978), a portfolio of etchings by Bacon, Hans Hartung, Roberto Matta and Henry Moore.

Fae (Fay) Brauer is Associate Professor in Art History and Cultural Theory at the University of New South Wales, College of Fine Arts, Sydney, and Professor in Visual Art Theory, School of Cultural Studies and Creative Industries at the University of East London. Her books include *Art, Sex and Eugenics: Corpus Delecti* (2008), *The Art of Evolution: Darwin, Darwinisms and Visual Culture* (2009) and *Rivals and Conspirators: The Paris Salons and the Civilising Mission* (2012).

Juliana Engberg is Artistic Director of the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne. She is the Artistic Director of the forthcoming 19th Biennale of Sydney in 2014.

Eleanor Heartney received the College Art Association's Frank Jewett Mather Award for distinction in art criticism in 1992, was honoured by the French government as a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2008, and is a past president of the American section of the International Art Critics Association.

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

Iris Shu-Ping Huang is currently a curator at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, and was previously associate curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei. Born in Hsin-chu, Taiwan, she has degrees from the National Taiwan University and the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom and specialises in Asian contemporary art. Iris Shu-Ping Huang was the curator of the 2011 Asian Art Biennial.

Jacqueline Millner teaches in the Theory Program at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney, and writes widely on contemporary art for journals including *Artlink* and *Contemporary Visual Art and Culture Broadsheet*. Her book, *Conceptual Beauty: Perspectives on Australian Contemporary Art*, was published in 2010 by Artspace Visual Arts Centre, Sydney.

Ella Mudie is a freelance writer from Sydney who writes regularly on the visual arts, architecture, design and other subjects for a variety of print and online media. Her work has explored the relationship between the built environment and memory, identity and the senses, reflecting an ongoing interest in the phenomenology of space.

Justin Paton is senior curator at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu and a contributing editor for *Art & Australia*. In 2011 he curated 'Unguided Tours: Anne Landa Award for Video and New Media Arts' for the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, and his 2005 book *How to Look at a Painting* was recently released in a German translation. Paton is currently living in Menton, France, as the recipient of the 2012 Katherine Mansfield Fellowship for New Zealand writers.

Lilly Wei is a New York-based independent curator, essayist and critic whose focus is contemporary art. She contributes to many publications in the United States and abroad, writes regularly for *Art in America* and is a contributing editor for *ARTnews*. Her curated exhibitions include the upcoming 2013 exhibition of contemporary Israeli art at the Neuberger Museum in Purchase, New York.

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Image: Simon TERRILL, *Balfron Tower* (detail), 2010, type c print, 182 x 150 cm, courtesy the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne

Contributors

Sally Blakeney is a Sydney-based literary journalist whose work has appeared in *The Australian* and *The Bulletin*.

Rex Butler teaches in the School of English, Media Studies and Art History at the University of Queensland, Brisbane.

Jane Button lectures and tutors in lens and screen practice, writes on both national and international artists, and is currently an intern at Monash University Museum of Art.

Justin Clemens teaches at the University of Melbourne. His most recent book is a collection of art criticism, *Minimal Domination* (2011).

Erin Coates is an artist and curator from Perth. Her curatorial projects include 'Suspension' (2012) for the Perth Cultural Centre Screen.

Brenda L. Croft is a member of the Gurindji/Malngin/Mudpurra peoples from the Northern Territory. She is a Senior Research Fellow at the National Institute for Experimental Arts, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Max Delany is Director of Melbourne's Monash University Museum of Art. He was previously director of Gertrude Contemporary and curator at Heide Museum of Modern Art, both Melbourne.

Anne Ferran is a Sydney-based artist and Associate Professor at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney.

Christine France is an independent curator and writer. A former tutor in contemporary art at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, she has curated exhibitions for regional galleries.

Dhalulu Ganambarr is an author, artist, writer, singer, academic researcher and advocate of bilingual education and research. She teaches at Yirrkala Community Education Centre and is a member of the Northern Territory's first Indigenous Affairs Advisory Council.

Susan Gibb is a Sydney-based curator. She currently runs an independent curatorial project, Society.

David Hansen is an art writer and historian. A former regional gallery director and state gallery curator, he currently works as Senior Researcher and Paintings Specialist for Sotheby's Australia.

Jeremy Kibel has produced and exhibited major works for collections, institutions and gallery shows for over twenty years. He is the co-founder of Blockprojects, Melbourne, and *Vault* magazine.

Ash Kilmartin is an artist and writer from Auckland, and is currently a studio artist at Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne.

Tessa Laird is a writer, artist and lecturer living in Auckland. A former general manager of The Physics Room, Christchurch, she was co-founder and editor of *Monica Reviews Art* and *LOG Illustrated* and a regular contributor to the *New Zealand Listener*.

Diane Losche teaches in the School of Art History and Art Education at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney. Her PhD from Columbia University discusses Abelam art and culture. She teaches in the field of art and cultural difference and her current research has a focus on museums, the history of anthropology in New Guinea and the interpretation of the visual.

Catharine Lumby has an honours degree in Fine Arts from the University of Sydney. She has written books and articles about contemporary art. She was privileged to have known Robert Hughes.

Joanna Mendelssohn is Associate Professor and Program Director of Art Administration at the School of Art History and Art Education, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney. She has written several books on Australian art, including studies of the Lindsay family, is the former award-winning art critic for *The Bulletin*, and contributes to *Artlink* and *Art Monthly Australia*.

Daniel Palmer is a writer and Senior Lecturer in the Art Theory Program at Monash University, Melbourne. His publications include *Twelve Australian Photo Artists* (2009), co-authored with Blair French, and he regularly contributes to art and scholarly journals.

Carol Schwarzman is an American–Australian writer and visual artist based in Brisbane. She has written for *Art Monthly Australia*, and is currently working on a series of Queensland artist profiles/interviews for Flying Arts Alliance.

Imants Tillers is an artist and writer. The recent exhibition, 'The Loaded Ground' (2012) at the Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra, highlighted twelve years of collaboration with the Walpiri artist Michael Nelson Jagamara.

Anna Waldmann is an art consultant, visiting fellow at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, and a board member of the Power Institute Foundation.

Charles Waterstreet is a Sydney-based barrister. He has published two books of memoirs, *Precious Bodily Fluids* (2001) and *Repeating the Leaving* (2001), and is co-creator of the ABC Television series 'Rake'. He writes a column for the *Sun-Herald*.

Lisa Worthington is a PhD candidate at the Institute for Culture and Society at the University of Western Sydney. She is researching the experiences of Muslim women who attend universities in the West.

Souchou Yao is a writer and cultural anthropologist based at the Department of Chinese Studies, University of Sydney. His books include *Singapore: The State and the Culture of Excess* (2007). He is a regular contributor to *Art & Australia*.

Anna Zagala is a writer and graphic designer living in Melbourne. She has written a book, *Redback Graphix* (2008), and publishes the blog *www.sweetpolka.blogspot.com*.

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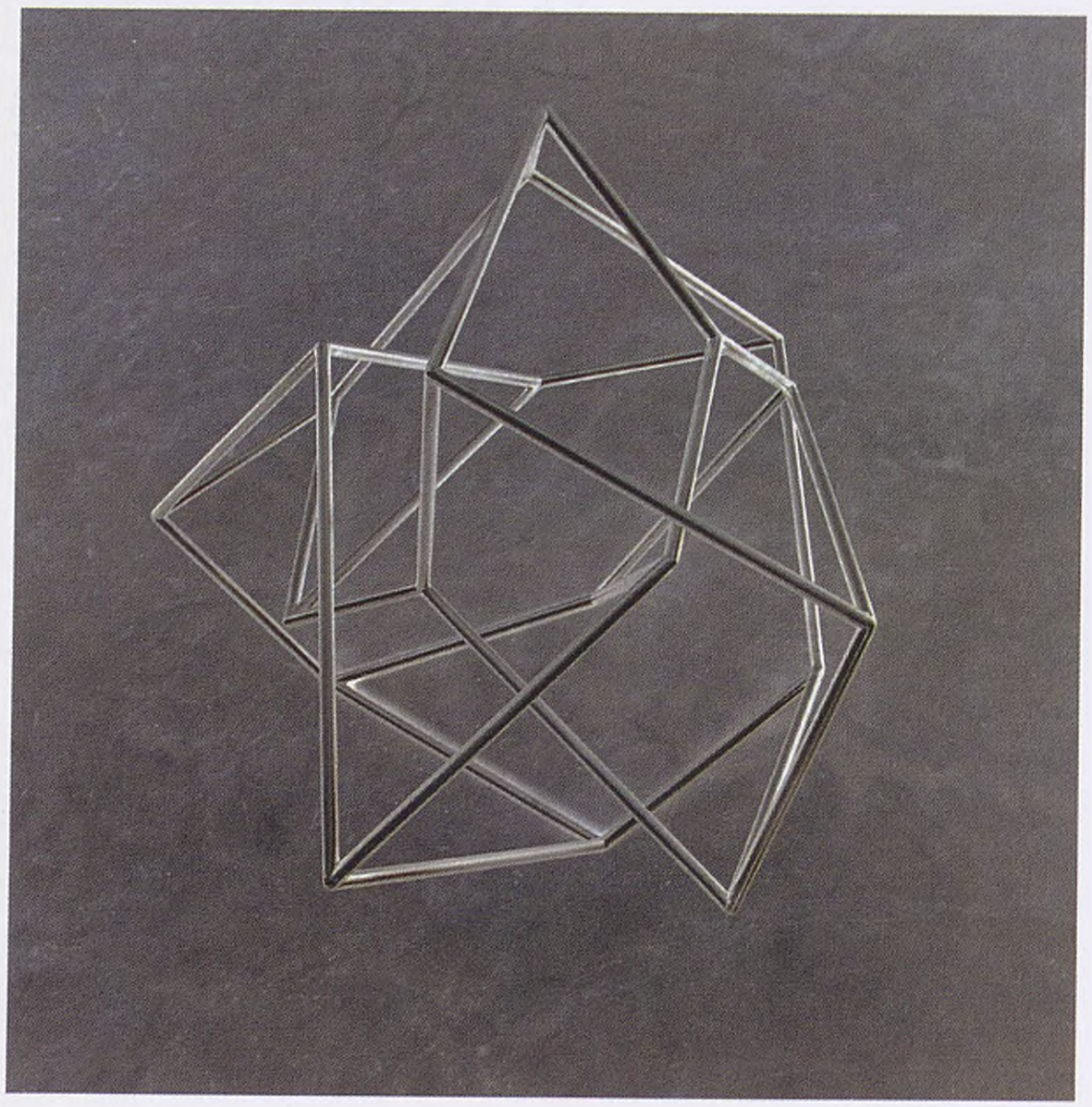

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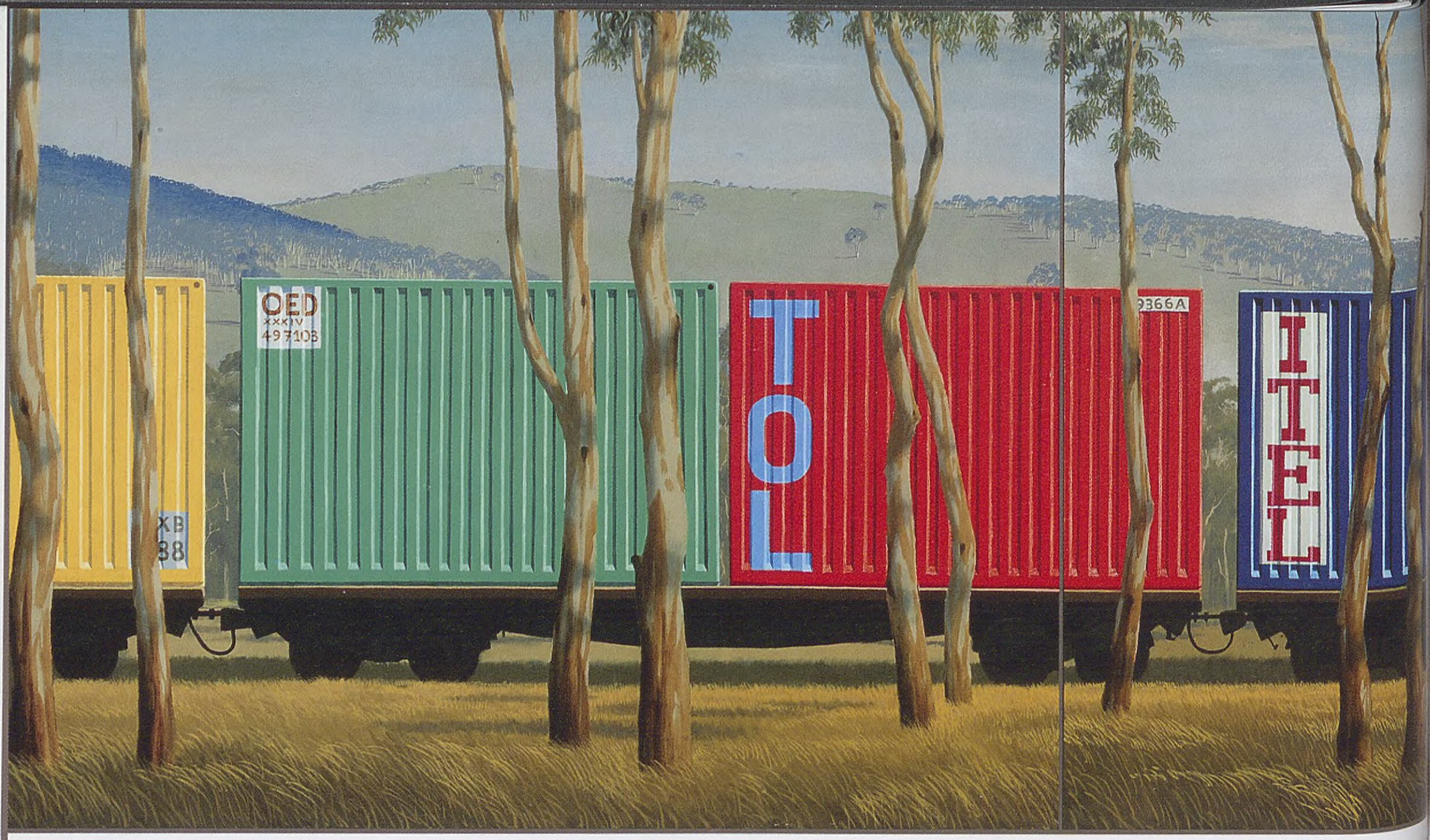

Jeffrey Smart *Container Train in Landscape* (detail) 1983–84, oil on 5 hardboard panels, 113.5 x 985.0 cm. Collection: Arts Centre Melbourne, Public Art Collection. Commissioned in 1983. Gift of Eva and Marc Besen.

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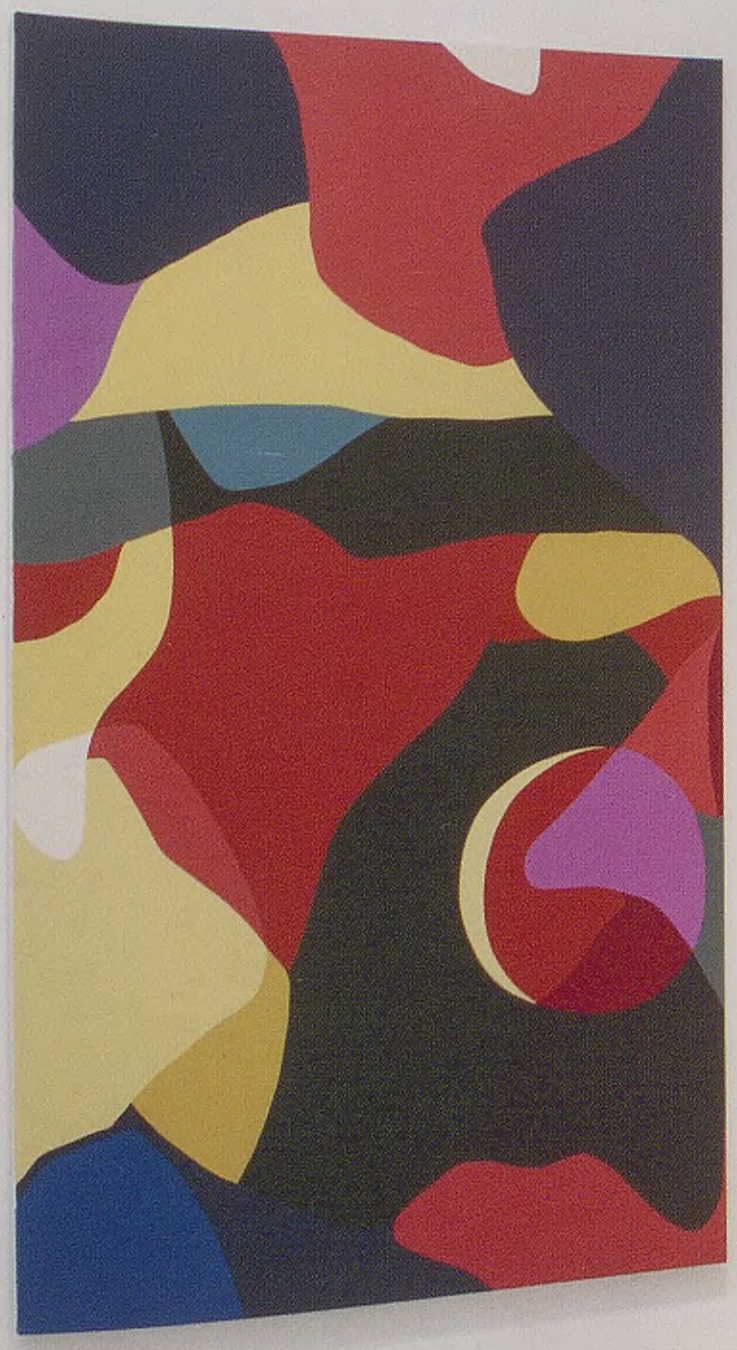

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Amanda Marburg, *Giving the devil his due,* 2004, oil on canvas 72 x 135 cm, Art & Australia collection

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The realism of Francis Bacon

Eddy Batache

Francis bacon often referred to himself as a realist. He reacted violently against the critics who assimilated his work in the 1960s to expressionism. Sometimes he felt the urge to explain his very personal understanding of realism, as in this excerpt from an unpublished letter to French author Michel Leiris:

> *For me realism is the attempt to trap appearance with all the sensations that a particular appearance starts up in me … Perhaps realism in its more profound sense is always subjective. When I look at grass I would at times love to tear up a lump of earth and grass and put it in a frame but of course that wouldn't work and one is forced back into trying to invent methods by which the realist can be reimposed on our nervous system.*

When Francis Bacon died in Spain in 1992 he had long since won wide international recognition. Twenty years earlier he was honoured within the walls of both the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (the first living artist exhibited there), and the Grand Palais in Paris. Now, and for the first time in Australia, Sydney commemorates the twentieth anniversary of his death with an exhibition of sixty paintings showing how his work evolved over five decades.

While Picasso is generally considered preeminent among revolutionary artists of the first half of the twentieth century, Bacon ranks as the most important artist of the second half, at least in terms of figurative art. His work still fascinates or irritates, yet controversies never seemed to worry or interest him; he never took part in any debate, was never self-indulgent and praised few among his contemporaries. Bacon's criticism of various artistic trends – in particular abstraction – could be cruel and sometimes unfair but never failed to be witty. This did not prevent him from proclaiming his admiration for old masters such as Rembrandt and Velázquez, Degas and van Gogh, although he professed a distinct preference for prehistoric cave painting and Egyptian sculpture. He often spent time in museums and at exhibitions but his real source of inspiration was in the crowd. He would never tire of observing men at work or in cafes, whether caught unawares or conscious of his scrutinising gaze.

It was said that death and violence are omnipresent in Bacon's work. In fact, for him, death does not prevail; although present, it cannot be separated from life, which sooner or later must end. Beyond this end there is no other life. Life and death are therefore intimately linked and there can be no depiction of life without evoking death. As for violence, Bacon claimed that ten minutes of television news contained more violence than all his paintings. If violence is nevertheless undeniable in his work, it is not so much in the shape of physical brutality as in the inner conflict which tears us apart, physiologically as well as psychologically. In any case, tortured or burnt flesh is never the pretext for anecdote; it is there to subjugate the viewer with subtle harmonies of pink, purple or orange.

Although the subject is always present in a Bacon painting, it is often not recognisable. Photographic resemblance is 'illustrational', and clearly dismissed as such. The aim of the artist, in portraiture, is to reveal the identity of his model. If the extraordinary *Portrait of Michel Leiris*, 1976, is strikingly recognisable, it is so in spite of a multitude of details which, rather than reproducing the sitter's appearance, creates a new veracity of which the artist is sole author.

Bacon always possessed a modesty that allowed him to listen to suggestions and comments made by friends about his work. While it was unusual for him to show an unfinished painting, he would readily admit that a fresh eye might well be a source of positive criticism. However, he did not let such advice influence his work unless convinced of its validity. Once, when Bacon had just finished one of his rare landscapes – a landscape conceived with exemplary severity and bareness – he finally added two red arrows, which duly aroused certain reservations among his closer friends. To one of these he explained that he needed red to underline the luminosity of the blue. 'I agree about the red', said the friend, 'but why the arrows?' To which Bacon retorted, not without humour: 'But what should I have put? Poppies?'

page 207
Francis Bacon, Study for self-portrait, 1963
Oil on canvas, 165.2 x 142.6 cm
Collection Amgueddfa Cymru, National Museum, Wales

opposite
Francis Bacon, Study for self-portrait, 1976
Oil and pastel on canvas, 198 x 147.5 cm
Collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

On another occasion I witnessed Bacon struggling to give definitive form to *Jet of water*, 1988, a painting that had occupied him for weeks. The work was almost finished, in fact there was really nothing to be added, but Bacon was not satisfied. Suddenly he put on a glove and hurled a pellet of white paint at the picture with all his might, crushing it against the canvas. I was staggered by the force of his gesture and the risk he was taking – he for whom every brushstroke meant a moral dilemma. Luck favoured him, but that was not all; this new element caused him to question the whole framework of the image. He set to work on it again with astounding vehemence and, within minutes, had transformed and completed the painting. Although it is to such gestures that Bacon's work owes its characteristic Dionysian spontaneity, we should not be misled; the instinctual element, though he did not disown it, is far from constituting the essence of his painting, which relies on subtle transformations of form through the determined overworking of materials.

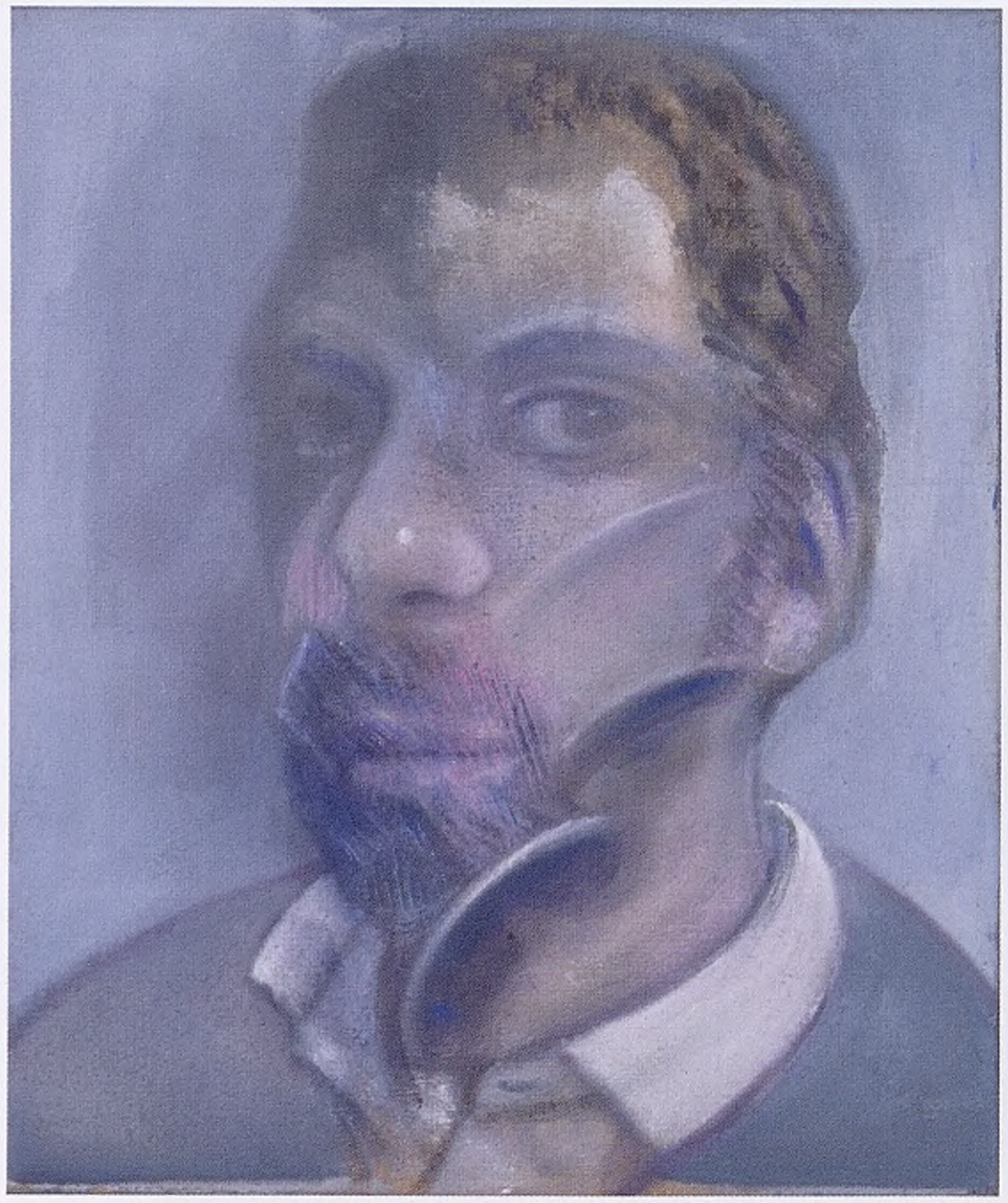
In the successful works of the 1970s and 1980s, such as *Study for a self-portrait*, 1976, the seemingly paradoxical coexistence of these two elements is particularly obvious. Sensitive to all impressions from the world around him, Bacon used any pieces of information offered to him to fertilise those already lying in the depths of his subconscious – that immense fallow field which is the source of everything that escapes rational knowledge: impulses, emotions, aspirations of all sorts, even the mysterious forces that guided his arm. Only such an impulse could have drawn the main character lines: his attitude and presence. But one cannot fail to appreciate the extraordinary finish of the work.

Bacon was the quintessential city dweller. He always needed a milling crowd and banishing him to the countryside would have been the harshest of punishments. In his canvases, moreover, the landscape is rarely more than a setting and the essence of the work is always the character portrayed: the man of multiple faces, racked by thousands of everyday dramas, which Bacon transformed into one essential, permanent drama.

A singular witness of the human condition, Bacon's portraits hold a significant place in his output. Each portrait confronted the artist with a real moral dilemma and his chosen subjects were few. Before undertaking a portrait he had to be convinced that the sitter's face was interesting enough to serve as a vehicle for the work; it was also necessary for him and his subject to be well acquainted, for what fascinated him beyond any question of appearance was his knowledge of the person within. Bacon saw this task as preserving sufficient resemblance for the sitter to be recognised, while discarding any superfluous detail that might obstruct his creation of a new kind of reality. Sometimes he failed to achieve the desired balance between these two objectives and the result was either an image that was too close to photography or an amorphous composition in which the sitter could not recognise himself at all. On most occasions, however, his carefully achieved equilibrium is the fruit of a splendid alchemy that re-creates the sitter according to the requirements of another universe whose laws, though different from those of our world, correspond to the same archetypes.

Bacon declared that he found real life much more interesting than the best-written novels. This contempt for fiction came from his horror of the anecdotal, of the sort of painting that tells stories, of the illusionism that tries to make things seem true. That is why his painting deliberately rejects anecdote; if one perceives a swastika on an armband, a tricolour rosette or a syringe stuck in an arm, a camera in the corner of a picture or a crucified figure hanging upside down, one should be warned against seeing them as allusions to any sort of political or social message, for in Bacon's universe objects do not possess the identity we might attribute to them.

Bacon's use of the triptych format, whether for portraits or for larger canvases, has intrigued both art lovers and critics, and attempts have been made to construct a whole philosophy around it. Bacon took his taste for successions of images from the cinema, but he transformed them in such a way that their juxtaposition, far from



clockwise from top left
Francis Bacon, Study for portrait of E, 1979
Oil on canvas, 35.5 x 30.5 cm
Private collection
© the estate of Francis Bacon. DACS/Licensed by Viscopy

Roy de Maistre, Francis Bacon's Queensberry Mews studio, c. 1930
Oil on canvas, 60 x 44.5 cm
Private collection. Courtesy Sotheby's Australia

Francis Bacon in his Reece Mews studio, May 1970
Photograph Michael Pergolani
Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane

Eddy Batache (left) and Reinhard Hassert with Francis Bacon, rue de Birague III, Paris, 1986
Collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

emphasising the anecdotal, has the opposite effect of neutralising it. Where a whole work was conceived as an uninterrupted scene, the triptych format helps to eliminate continuity over successive canvases and, consequently, the temptation to use the format for telling a story. While he may not have objected to the title of 'image-maker', Bacon most certainly refused that of narrator; he was simply the intermediary whereby an image assumed concrete form, delivered without the least concern for interpretation.

Bacon often asserted that his painting aimed at 'thickening the quality of life', but he also said that a true work of art makes it possible to 'unlock the valves of sensation'. As for those valves that we keep so carefully closed within us, which so limit our vision and potential, it is art's function to force them open and to reveal new horizons. The artist is both pathfinder and participant in this process; he makes new intuitions possible and is the first to be astonished by them. Art provides the tools to explore the complexity and mystery of existence.

It was Bacon's view that a living work of art sustains a persistent 'presence' through the ages. Whether an Egyptian portrait of the Old Kingdom in polychrome limestone or an encaustic portrait from the Fayum, material and style make no difference: it is presence that finally determines the quality of the work. This magical, uncontrollable element, despite the changing rules of aesthetics, enables the work to outlive fashion and theory and remain present in the eyes of future generations.

Bacon declared that he found real life much more interesting than the best-written novels. This contempt for fiction came from his horror of the anecdotal, of the sort of painting that tells stories, of the illusionism that tries to make things seem true.

Francis Bacon: Five Decades, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 17 November 2012 – 24 February 2013.

(Reprise, with minor amendments, of Eddy Batache, 'Francis Bacon and the last convulsions of humanism', *Art & Australia*, vol. 23, no. 2, summer 1985, pp. 222–5.)

Makin' Bacon: Roy de Maistre in the 1930s

David Hansen

page 212
Francis Bacon, Crucifixion, 1933
Oil on canvas, 60.5 x 47.5 cm
Private collection

page 213
Roy de Maistre, Annunciation, c. 1934
Oil on board, 65.5 x 54 cm
Courtesy Menzies Art Brands, 2012

WHO KNOWS WHAT IT WAS THAT BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER? Being gay, being modern, being short of a quid? Perhaps it was the horses. It is unlikely that we will ever know the exact details of Francis Bacon and Roy de Maistre's relationship in London in the early 1930s. After all, de Maistre was a famous self-fabulist – a man who invented a royal pedigree for himself and who would stage dinner parties for society patrons with his young gay friends pretending to be footmen. Bacon, of course, was a much more straightforward liar and denier. Furthermore, both men, though they remained friends until de Maistre's death in 1968, were inclined to downplay their early intimacy. Indeed, as de Maistre's biographer Heather Johnson has observed, 'largely due to Bacon's subsequent fame this association has become more important to the perpetrators of the story of the relationship than it appears to have been to either of the participants'.[1]

Nevertheless, there is something between the two artists, particularly in the early 1930s, that is of much more than incidental/anecdotal, Bacon-hagiographic interest. Whether or not they were actually lovers, de Maistre was certainly a good friend and a benevolent father-figure to the tyro designer–artist. While Bacon's later arrogant auto-mythologising required him to have been entirely self-taught, and the accommodating and self-deprecating de Maistre would only admit to having 'shown Bacon a few things',[2] it does seem likely that de Maistre's technical advice and support greatly facilitated the younger man's transition from interior decorator to painter. De Maistre was also a social and professional mentor; at his Ebury Street studio salon Bacon met people such as the artists Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland, the young writer Patrick White and the Australia-descended collector and art dealer Douglas Cooper, as well as patrons R. A. Butler and Gladys MacDermot, who commissioned Bacon to redesign her entire Bloomsbury apartment.

That flat may well have ended up looking something like Francis Bacon's Queensberry Mews studio, an interior documented in de Maistre's eponymous painting of 1930. This work is at one level simply an exercise in moderne stylism, in a cool, crystalline geometry and perspective that matches its Bacon-designed steel and glass and chrome furniture. Yet hindsight and close inspection enable us to infer genuine personal warmth. On the stair landing stands another Bacon creation, a painted screen which de Maistre himself was to acquire and would keep for the rest of his life, together with a Bacon sofa 'often commented upon by visitors ... as being the most uncomfortable thing they ever sat on'.[3] Even more intimate is the inscription; alongside the artist's own signature is one of Bacon's rugs, with the designer's name clearly legible woven along its fore-edge. Whether from scrupulous fairness or avuncular indulgence, de Maistre thus gives his young friend – as designer of the furniture and as author of the overall decorative scheme – almost equal billing as creator of the picture.

Pictorial style can be a somewhat difficult beast to track: from person to person and studio to studio, from source inspirations in museum collections and gallery exhibitions to those in books and magazines, it flits and sits and jumps backwards and forwards and off at various tangents, irrationally and promiscuously. It is in the stillness of finished works of art that we find the clearest evidence of origin and influence, sympathy and patronage.

De Maistre painted many views of Bacon's studios in this period – no fewer than ten works are known – and they provide a rare and important visual record of some of the younger artist's earliest paintings; paintings subsequently lost or destroyed. Moreover, these pictures also show the two men to have been exploring similar motifs and devices throughout the early 1930s. Thus the arm-winged, spread-eagled angel in de Maistre's *Annunciation*, 1934, irresistibly recalls Bacon's well-known *Crucifixion* of the previous year.[4] Similarly, the long-necked, globular mutant in de Maistre's *Composition with a bath*, 1934, is very close to the creatures in Bacon's *Three studies for figures at the base of a crucifixion*, 1944,

both painters apparently having worked from a stuffed doll that Bacon kept in his Chelsea studio. In this period both artists adopt a strange hybrid style of mixed cubism and surrealism, a mode much influenced by Picasso's work of the 1920s and 1930s. Their cubo-surrealist figures are often suspended within an idiosyncratic framing and faceting; such box structures would remain central devices throughout Bacon's oeuvre, and become sublimated as windows in de Maistre's. Sadly, one can only speculate about de Maistre's posthumously destroyed pictures of 'fellas doing things to fellas',[5] and their likely relation to Bacon's images of homosexual coupling.

More sadly still, because art histories are persistently nationalist affairs, expatriate artists such as de Maistre suffer a double disadvantage. Although he was born and raised in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales and was a key figure in the origins of Sydney modernism, de Maistre's long absence from the local exhibition mainstream have made him something of a mystery in his native country, despite Johnson's exemplary two-volume monograph. At the same time, although he worked and showed in Britain for some forty years, was mentor to Bacon and friend of Moore, Sutherland and of Tate Gallery director Sir John Rothenstein, who called him 'one of the most original painters at work in Great Britain today',[6] it appears that he still remains, to the Poms, 'the Australian painter Roy de Maistre'.[7]

Nevertheless, there is something between the two artists, particularly in the early 1930s, that is of much more than incidental/anecdotal, Bacon-hagiographic interest.

1 Heather Johnson, *Roy de Maistre: The English Years 1930–1968*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1995, p. 21.
2 Ronald Alley quoted in Johnson, ibid.
3 ibid., p. 28.
4 This was the work that first introduced Bacon to a wide audience, through its reproduction in Herbert Read's best-selling *Art Now: An Introduction to the Theory of Modern Painting and Sculpture*, Faber & Faber, London, 1933.
5 Caroline de Mestre quoted in Read, op. cit., p. 28.
6 John Rothenstein, 'Introduction', in *Roy de Maistre: A Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings 1917–1960*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 1960, p. 6.
7 James Beechey and Chris Stephens (eds), *Picasso & Modern British Art*, Tate Publishing, London, 2012, pp. 43, 151.

Lee Miller with David E. Scherman, Lee Miller in Hitler's bath, Munich, Germany, 1945
Vintage gelatin silver print, 11.4 x 10.8 cm

dOCUMENTA (13)

Juliana Engberg

Can a breeze carry ambiguity? In the instance of the opening gambit of Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev's dOCUMENTA (13), I would say yes. Ryan Gander's gentle yet emphatic wind, blowing through the lower halls of Kassel's Kunsthalle Fridericianum, was uncanny, like a Freudian return. A premonition, announcement and ghostly phantasm, it registered on the body like a tap on the shoulder. Does it convey the refreshing revolutionary wind of change, or an ill wind that blows no good? It was a brilliant opening, a masterstroke in keeping with Christov-Bakargiev's desire to keep her audience energised and open to the potential of ideas, art, science, histories, philosophy, games, politics, ethics and metaphysics.

This kept company with the humbly enshrined modernist sculptures of Julio González: another uncanny insistence. González was included in Arnold Bode's documenta II, 1959. Then, these skeletal, cubist works conveyed a desire for Germany and its artistic life to rejoin the march of modernity, interrupted and banned by the Nazi regime. In 2012 they were knowingly recast in the game-changing circumstances of a historical, postcolonial, postmodern, intra-conceptual dOCUMENTA (13).

Doubt lurked in these grand halls of the Fridericianum, designed originally as enlightenment chambers. Apprehension was ushered in on Gander's wind; in the lyrical ellipses of Ceal Floyer's serenade lament, 'I'll keep on going … 'til I get it right'; and in an extravagant letter of apology to the curator from an artist who could not participate. Massive rooms were kept sparse. The experimentation, fleetingness and uncertainty they alluded to seemed appropriate acknowledgments for our contemporary condition.

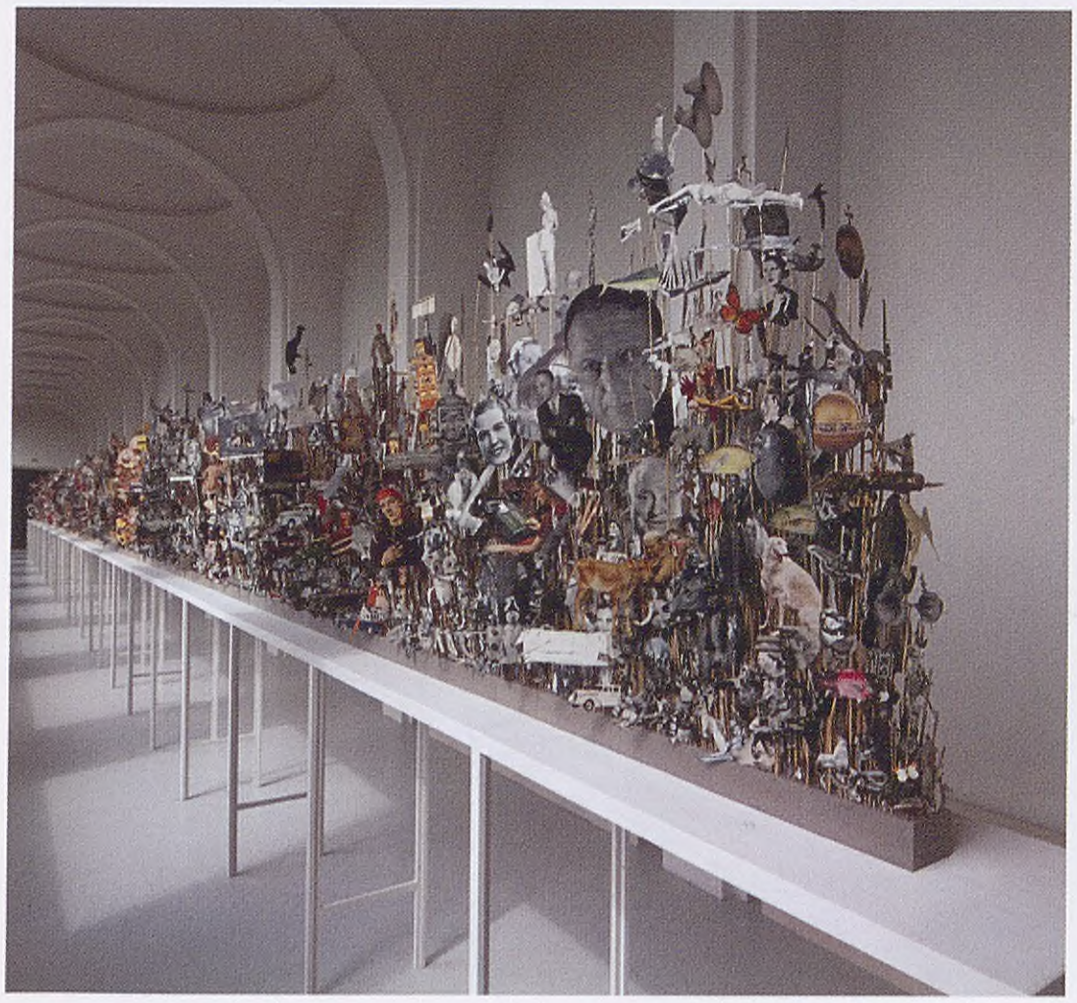
This opening overture of space was like the heart of Christov-Bakargiev's enterprise: beating, fluttering, ready to fall in and out of love with art and its seductive foils – but willingly daring to take the chance. Further into the Fridericianum we encountered the 'brain', and a harder heart – an intense space, given over to a thrillingly elaborate matrix of works and ideas.

If Bode's motivation in starting documenta was, in part, to erase the horrible traumas of the Nazi regime, then Christov-Bakargiev's mission was to acknowledge them. Trauma appeared in unexpected ways. Psychological cross-pollinations were fertilised between the surrealism of Man Ray's voyeuristic metronomes – destructible and indestructible items that point to the resilience and the neurotic response of art – and the compelling photographs of Lee Miller.

In particular, Christov-Bakargiev brought attention to the surreal arrangement of Lee Miller washing in Hitler's bath. Miller's head and upper body appear, like Marat's, in the bath, which becomes her body. The muddied boots, caked with the muck of the Dachau concentration camp she has just photographed, complete this contaminated scene, and leave their stain on Hitler's white mat. A portrait of Hitler is displayed to the left on the bath's ledge; a neorealist, porcelain Rosenthal statuette of a woman is placed on the sideboard. Beauty and horror are announced in simultaneity in this image made on the day Hitler committed suicide.

Miller's image returns us to the loci of trauma. Nearby, the precariousness of the female within the systems of culture, representation and authorship was reinforced by the beautiful, but detachable, limestone heads on the chlorite stone-carved Bactrian Princesses, which date to 3000–2000 BC. Morandi's long-necked vases and round vessels took on a biomorphism in such company, while rocks and stones assumed the cerebral weight of politics, activism and the gestalt in projects by Giuseppe Penone, Sam Durant and Tamás St Turba. Mohammad Yusuf Asefi's small, untitled Afghan landscape, a tribute to his ingenious camouflage of important paintings in the National Gallery of Kabul, which saved them from destruction by the Taliban regime, was also included.

With documenta, Arnold Bode sought to expose and explore the roots of contemporary artistic production, a vision that differed from other exhibitions that simply addressed the current state of art. Christov-Bakargiev adopted this challenge as her own. One



opposite, clockwise from top
Goshka Macuga, Of what is, that it is; of what is not, that it is not 1, 2012
Tapestry, 520 x 1740 cm
Courtesy the artist, Andrew Kreps Gallery New York, Kate MacGarry, London, and Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle, Munich
Photograph Roman März

Carol Bove, Floras garden, 2012
Petrified wood, steel, bronze, brass, concrete, dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist, Maccarone, New York, and David Zwirner, New York
Photograph Nils Klinger

Geoffrey Farmer, Leaves of grass, 2012
Life magazines (1935–85), tall grass, wood, glue, dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist
Photograph Anders Sune Berg

strength was the inclusion of lost, forgotten, neglected and under-acknowledged artists, many female; another, the enabling of cross-cultural recognitions and connections.

Christov-Bakargiev gave us tremendous contemporary events like Susan Philipsz's *Study for strings*, 2012, composed by Pavel Haas, which Philipsz played in fractured parts at the end of the Kassel Hauptbahnhof, the place of deportation of Jews. Also at the station, Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller's wonderful place/space/time dislocation audiovisual 'walk' collided the present, past and fictional. Elsewhere the ruin and wreckage of culture was produced in the mound of sculpture rubble arranged by Lara Favaretto and, at the Neue Galerie, Geoffrey Farmer's evocative, stick-puppet pageant confirmed the flux of history.

As she did at the 16th Biennale of Sydney, Christov-Bakargiev included *Anger workshop*, 2008–, by Australian artist Stuart Ringholt. In an enclosed space visitors were invited to download their angst and be guided to cathartic embrace by Ringholt. There was no shortage of participants. In an exhibition aware of its proximity to current and historical trauma this seemed a great inclusion.

The beautiful patterns of Indigenous Australian artists Doreen Reid Nakamarra and Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri seemed well situated among the reappraisals of colour abstraction. And true to her quest to reinstate the forgotten and under-acknowledged, Christov-Bakargiev brought Margaret Preston with works from her Indigenous-inspired period to the attention of Europe.

In Karlsaue Park numerous works, such as Carol Bove's procession of objects, the relational aesthetics of Thea Djordjadze, and the mad fluxus environment of Pierre Huyhge, provided sculptural surprises and elegance.

In lesser curatorial hands the links made between Kassel and Kabul, which provided a core premise, might have seemed well intended yet ultimately suspect. Instead, Kabul was made prescient and central in a mix of works dealing with past and present. That there is a legacy for such connection was clear in the project of Mario Garcia Torres, whose search for the One Hotel in which arte povera artist Alighiero Boetti lived and worked provides the basis of a fictional correspondence between the artists, which becomes a film. Garcia Torres also 'exhibited' Boetti's *Mappa*, 1971–72, originally intended for, but absent from, documenta 5. Distance and the inability to 'know' are powerfully metaphoric in this gentle, recuperative project.

Tacita Dean's *Fatigues*, 2012, provides a sublime scenography of the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan. Just as the fragile materiality of these epic chalk drawings suggests the destructive conditions of war, Goshka Macuga's arresting, hyper-real tapestry suggests the resilience of the Afghan people. Michael Rakowitz's carved books were housed appropriately in the Fridericianum, bombed during the Second World War. These works, made from Bamiyan stone located near the destroyed Bamiyan Buddhas, are like gravestones for the lost books of Kassel and remind us that cultures are perpetually under siege.

Christov-Bakargiev created a vast, important and timely event. Dauntingly large, yet intimate in its parts, dOCUMENTA (13) confirmed the status of art as fragile, but powerful; as resilient in its ability to return, regroup and survive, even while under siege. Christov-Bakargiev showed us that art is filled with the humanity it reflects.

dOCUMENTA (13), Fridericianum and other venues, Kassel, 9 June – 16 September 2012.

London diary: In the flesh

Justin Paton

In London this summer the reigning cultural mood was one of strained optimism. In the papers it was all bad news about Britain's prospects in crisis-ridden Europe, with the country staring down its longest economic slump in a century. Meanwhile tourist London was doing everything in its power to stay upbeat and 'on-brand', as the city braced itself for the twin excitements of the Queen's Jubilee and the Olympic Games. Strung with Union Jack bunting, heaving with tourists, and patrolled (one heard) by more than 40,000 extra security staff, the place looked cleaner, busier and more frantically promotional than I've ever seen it. Recession might be tearing at the social fabric, but for the moment, in polite British fashion, everyone seemed to have agreed not to notice it.

In the galleries and museums, as you'd expect, there were Jubilee tie-in shows, with Hampton Court Palace winning the Drollness Award with its exhibition about the sex lives of past Royals, 'The Wild, the Beautiful and the Damned'. There was Olympic trophy art on a triumphal scale in the form of Anish Kapoor's *Orbit*, 2012, the pretzelled tower that rises 115 metres above the site of the Games in east London. And there was, incessantly, 'Damien Hirst' at Tate Modern, a full-dress retrospective that all too perfectly mirrored the city's boosterish mood. The exhibition started promisingly enough, as a kind of showroom of sharp ideas, but before long devolved into a wheezing pageant of precious metals and Victorian symbolism. It even sported its own version of the 'crown jewels' in the famed diamond skull, which was presented to comically anti-climactic effect in the deepest recesses of the vast Turbine Hall. The wall labels tried hard to maintain some critical distance, but calling Hirst's recent work an 'investigation of gold and diamonds' is like calling a Big Mac an investigation of cholesterol.

Beyond the bluster and bling, however, there was other art to see. Abstraction was there at its modest and investigative best in the Bauhaus and Ben Nicholson shows – the first huge, the latter tiny, but both humming with visual intelligence. The old art of assemblage looked new again in the hands of Gabriel Kuri and Bill Culbert, both of whom turned poor materials to effortlessly poetic effect. And above all, for me, there were pictures and sculptures of *people* – art that pushed in uncomfortably close to faces, figures and flesh. The Olympics, among other things, is a festival of perfect bodies, with high-speed cameras zooming in on all that primed athletic skin and muscle. But from Stanley Spencer's famous 'leg of mutton nude' at Tate Modern (*Double nude portrait: The artist and his second wife*, 1937) to the minutely blotched and goose-bumped figures of Ron Mueck at Hauser & Wirth and Louise Bourgeois's lumpy body doubles at the Freud Museum, it felt as though London's galleries and artists were collaborating on an accidental festival of un-Olympian bodies. Call it dirty realism redux.

The biggest body show in town was 'Lucian Freud Portraits' at the National Portrait Gallery, where hundreds of visitors were jostling for a glimpse of the famous painter's best-known works (I foresee a future of business-class tickets, where you pay extra to get close to the art). Since Freud's death last year at the age of eighty-eight, the already effusive London art press has gone into adulatory overdrive, and all the talk of 'true greatness' was enough to put you in a resistant mood. There's also something indulgent and off-putting about the hoary old myth of Freud, with its endlessly repeated (yet often coyly veiled) details about the posh girlfriends, the many children, the gambling and carousing. But once you shouldered past the myth (and the clumps of competing viewers), the portraits were completely involving – weird, wilful, clammy, awkward, and never less than gripping.

I have a weakness for Freud's big-eyed portraits of the 1950s, where he sets down every hair and eyelash with fine-brushed, neo-Flemish devotion (if I could steal one painting from the show, it would be *Girl with beret*, 1951–52). But Freud seems most himself

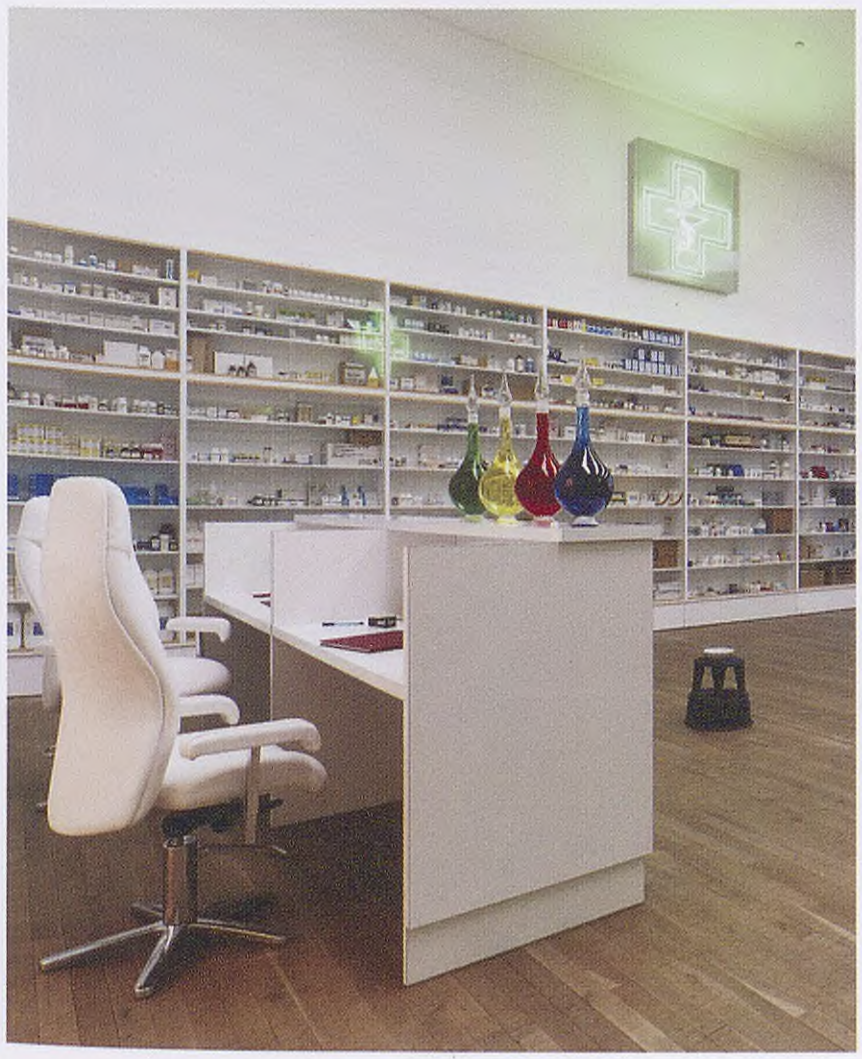
opposite, clockwise from top left: **Gillian Wearing, Trauma, 2000**, colour video for monitor with sound, 30 mins duration, courtesy Maureen Paley, London. © Gillian Wearing; **Lucian Freud, Girl in bed, 1952**, oil on canvas, 45.7 x 30.5 cm, private collection. Photograph courtesy Lucian Freud Archive. © The Lucian Freud Archive; **Damien Hirst, Pharmacy, 1992**, glass, faced particleboard, painted MDF, beech, ramin, wooden dowels, aluminium, pharmaceutical packaging, desks, office chairs, foot stools, apothecary bottles, coloured water, Insect-O-Cutor, medical text books, stationery, bowls, resin, honey, honeycomb, dimensions variable. Photograph Prudence Cuming Associates. © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd.

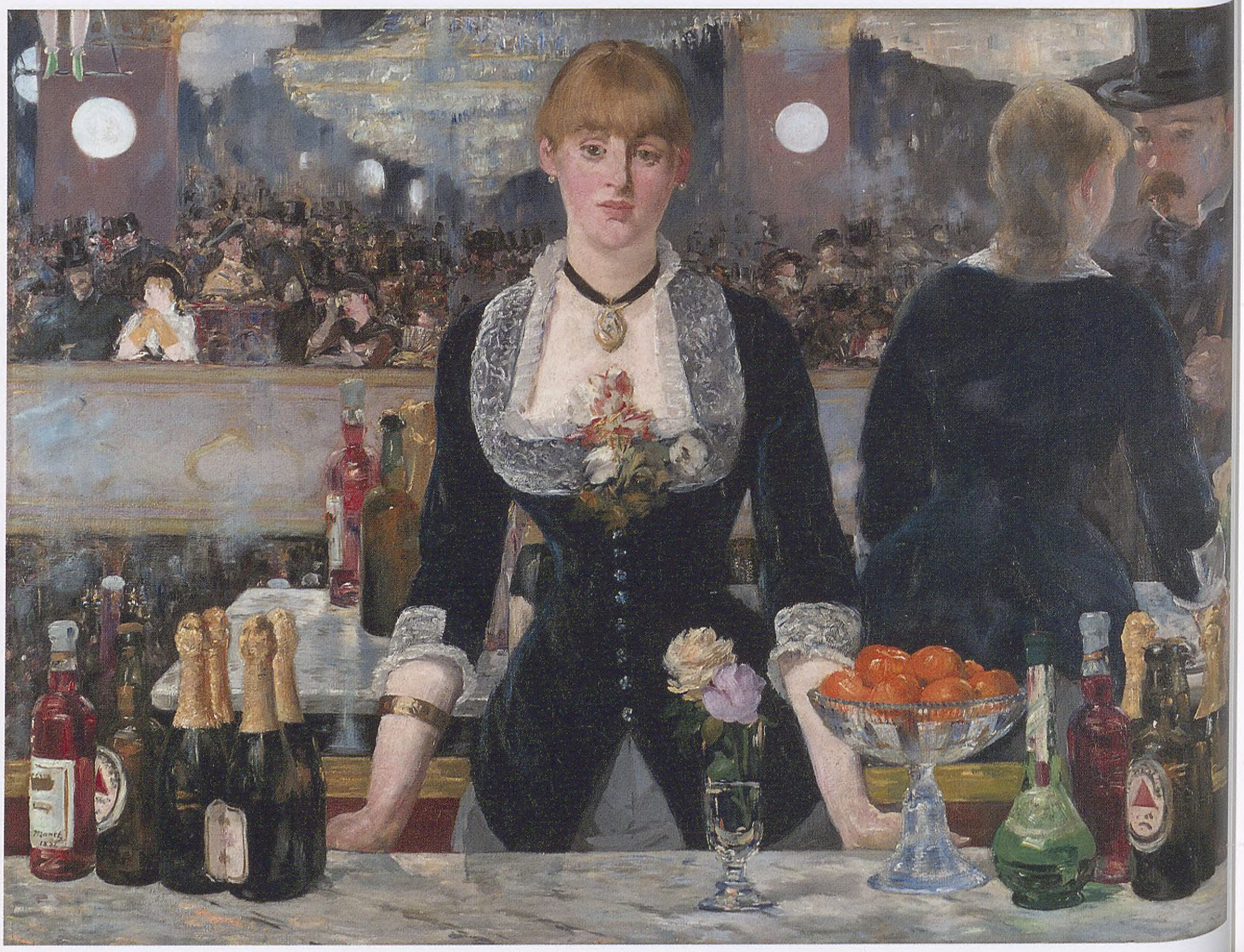
– most Freudian, I guess – from the 1970s onwards, when he starts painting naked bodies in thickened strokes of gravy brown, cabbage green and scrotal pink. The strongest meat of the show, so to speak, arrives in the 1990s, when Freud embarks on his huge fleshscapes of the Australian performance artist Leigh Bowery and his friend Sue Tilley, the so-called 'Benefits Supervisor'. The operative metaphor in Freud's portrait encounters is usually one of control, as the painter takes visual possession of his naked subjects under the glare of the studio lamp. But with Bowery and Tilley the balance seems to shift, perhaps simply because he has his hands full. In the crowded galleries, you couldn't help noticing how these huge portraits made people stand back, as if fearful that the hyper-alert Bowery might pounce or that Tilley, snoozing in her own massiveness, might spill from her sofa right into the room. The paintings give substance to Willem de Kooning's great line about flesh being the reason oil painting was invented.

Like Freud, Gillian Wearing (subject of a survey at Whitechapel Gallery) makes portraits that leave you shifting uncomfortably in your own skin. But where Freud's scenes, even at their scungiest, always emit some of the old romance of the artist in the studio, Wearing's video portraits evoke a world that feels frighteningly unglamorous – a place of housing estates and hospital visits, of casual violence and workaday anguish. What makes her best work vital rather than just depressing is her creative disrespect for documentary filmmaking – the way she submits its rules and conventions to a series of short sharp structural shocks. She'll hide her subjects behind joke-shop masks to loosen their tongues and scramble our sympathies. She'll put children's words in adult mouths and vice versa, instantly exposing all the need and malice that boil away in everyday relationships. Or she'll hand artistic control to someone too involved to keep their distance, as in the recent film *Bully* (2010), where a young man collaborates with method actors to re-create his own real experience of harassment. By the time the film ends, the 'fourth wall' of theatrical illusion has not been removed so much as smashed to splinters.

The economy and queasy urgency of these videos go missing in Wearing's big recent photographs, which suffer from a mild case of the over-production virus that brings the Hirst retrospective to its knees. Making use of a well-stocked costume department and some extraordinary prosthetic masks, Wearing re-creates herself in the image of her own family members and some of her favourite photographic artists. In the latter case I think we're meant to be impressed by some idea about self-fashioning – Andy Warhol was invented by Andrew Warhola, and now Wearing invents herself as Andy – but the thought is too slight and familiar to justify such large and laborious productions. The catalogue even boasts a substantial section devoted to the 'making of' the masks, as if we're meant to be impressed by how much *trouble* she went to. But in the end it's not the quality of the masks that one remembers in any of her works. It's that glimpse of real human faces behind them, blinking like frightened reptiles.

Meanwhile, over in plushest Chelsea, there was 'Out of Focus: Photography', the latest of the colossal contemporary-art surveys regularly mounted by Saatchi Gallery. The show's title is so clearly a pre-emptive strike that it feels a bit obvious to complain, but it would be nice, one day, to encounter a new-photography show with an *argument* to make – as opposed to the there's-no-argument argument that was on offer in 'Out of Focus'. Many of the artists seemed terrified by the prospect that someone might think they were *only* photographers, and they tried to hold the fear at bay with three main compensatory gambits: going painterly, going sculptural, or above all going *big*. The prime offender on the latter count was former young British artist Mat Collishaw, whose three beyond-huge works made me think of something the critic William Hazlitt said in 1823 about an over-reaching painter: *he is great, but only great by the acre.*





opposite
Edouard Manet, A bar at the Folies-Bergère, 1881–82
Oil on canvas, 96 x 130 cm
The Courtauld Gallery Collection, London

page 221
Katy Grannan, Anonymous, Los Angeles, Boulevard 26, 2008 / printed 2011
Archival pigment print on cotton rag paper, mounted on Plexiglas, 139.7 x 104.1 cm
Courtesy Saatchi Gallery, London

The exhibition was essential viewing, however, for its opening room alone, which contained twenty portraits by an artist who is unmistakably and unashamedly a photographer. Rather than footnoting the medium's past, Katy Grannan fiercely inhabits it, reanimating the hard-staring American portrait tradition that runs from Walker Evans through Diane Arbus and Richard Avedon. The subjects of Grannan's 'Boulevard' series are American strivers, flameouts and street folk, people whose sense of how they look has sprung loose from how the world sees them. See, for instance, the elderly woman in *Anonymous, Los Angeles Boulevard 11*, 2009/2011, who served as the cover girl and unlikely mascot for the entire show ('Oh god, what's that?!' my companion said when she glimpsed her on the catalogue cover). With Marilyn Monroe hair, shakily applied lipstick, a medical journal's worth of blemishes, and a look of dreamy contentment in her eyes, she seems to be the star of a Hollywood movie that's running only in her own mind. For anyone tired of Jubilee photos of the tolerantly smiling Queen Elizabeth II, here was an unforgettable counter-image – the uncrowned Queen of the recessionary United States.

And there's that R-word again. Just as the Depression of the 1930s hovers behind Evans's famous portraits of dust-bowl farmers, so the current American recession haunts Grannan's 'Boulevard' photographs. This, you might say, is what it looks like when the American self defaults on its mortgage payments. Yet Grannan, who also makes 'straight' photographs for venues like *The New York Times*, refuses to provide the kind of context or caption that would permit us to feel pitying or aloof. Posed against white walls under Californian sunlight that's both brutal and miraculous, her anonymous figures look as defiant and monumentally sculpted as ancient statues in their niches. To be 'anonymous' is, perhaps, the worst imaginable fate for a person in a culture of celebrity. But Grannan ensures that, whatever their names, you'll never forget their faces.

Coming to conclusions about the London art scene is like trying to arm-wrestle an octopus. No sooner do you think you've seen enough than a dozen new shows sprout into view, each one demanding attention and promising to alter your sense of the big picture. And no doubt, had I kept looking for another week, my 'portrait' thesis would have unravelled. But with Grannan and co. in mind and only half a day left in the city, I knew exactly where I needed to go – namely The Courtauld Gallery for my first face-to-face encounter with one of the most famous of modern portraits. I must have seen Manet's *A bar at the Folies-Bergère*, 1881–82, a thousand times in reproduction, but the painting in the flesh was shockingly different: smaller, fresher, stranger and more tender than I'd ever been led to expect. It's a painting about how it feels to be a person at work among the din and glitter of modern life. It's also about that very modern sensation of wondering how other modern people feel, the way life seems to flicker between intimacy and distance in a city full of crowds. And at the end of a week of frantic gallery-going in London, Manet's painting was a timely reminder of what we turn up for in the first place – the chance to stare as we never do in real life and undergo some fresh shock of intimacy.

The Wild, the Beautiful and the Damned, Hampton Court Palace, 5 April – 30 September 2012; **Anish Kapoor: Orbit**, Olympic Park, 2012; **Damien Hirst**, Tate Modern, 4 April – 9 September 2012; **Bauhaus: Art as Life**, Barbican Art Gallery, 3 May – 12 August 2012; **Ben Nicholson: Paintings, Reliefs and Drawings (London)**, Bernard Jacobsen Gallery, 4 April – 11 July 2012; **Ron Mueck**, Hauser & Wirth, 19 April – 26 May 2012; **Louise Bourgeois: The Return of the Repressed**, Freud Museum, 8 March – 27 May 2012; **Lucian Freud Portraits**, National Portrait Gallery, 9 February – 27 May 2012; **Gillian Wearing**, Whitechapel Gallery, 28 March – 17 June 2012; **Out of Focus: Photography**, Saatchi Gallery, 25 April – 15 July 2012.

Letter from New York

Eleanor Heartney

On 6 November, Americans go to the polls to cast votes in the presidential election. It will be the culmination of a long and contentious campaign, the outcome of which has enormous consequences for the nation's fragile economic recovery, its international position and its domestic funding for education, infrastructure, environment and the arts. Four years ago, when Barak Obama was battling John McCain for the presidency, the New York art world was keenly focused on the contest, and the city was bursting with political art shows, political art projects, and political art debate.

As Obama squares off against Mitt Romney in an equally close election (outcome unknown at the time of writing), things are oddly quiet on the art front. It has been hard to find any museums or galleries dealing with the election or the political process. The few informal actions by artists or activists in the months leading up to the election seemed more about a generalised resistance to authority than any specific political issue or goal. Instead, there was and continues to be an odd veneer of business-as-usual in the galleries, museums and the streets, even as people privately profess deep anxiety about the direction of the country and the impact of the election on their individual and collective future.

Why is it so different this time? There are several factors to consider. One is a sense of disappointment with Obama among those who last time embraced his message of hope and change. Equally important is the lopsided nature of the economic recovery. At the 2008 election, the global economic meltdown had just occurred and uncertainty engulfed all segments of society. In 2012 the upper reaches have recovered nicely, while the great majority still stare down the edge of the cliff. The result, in the words of the Occupy movement, is a stand-off between the one per cent and the 99 per cent.

For the art world, these factors have created a peculiar situation. Mirroring the statistics, the art world has also become divided into winners and losers: as a general rule, while individual artists, art students, not-for-profit institutions and commercial galleries struggle, the high end of the art market has soared back, thanks to the pervasiveness of one per centers in the collecting classes. Auction houses keep recording record profits, with Edvard Munch's *The scream*, 1895, going to an anonymous buyer for $119 million in May this year. The most successful galleries operate like banks or multinational corporations, opening branches around the world. Damien Hirst's January 2012 'spot painting' extravaganza that took place simultaneously in Gagosian's eleven galleries in eight cities on three continents was a dramatic manifestation of this phenomenon.

This schizophrenia has muted the political edge that was so discernible in the New York art world four years ago. But dominance of money hasn't completely blotted out other concerns. Even some of the most ardent boosters of the art market seem to be having second thoughts about current priorities. This was evident in April when *New York Magazine* turned a large chunk of its pages over to resident art critic Jerry Saltz for an issue titled 'How to Make It in the Art World'. Saltz has long been a proponent of the status quo, maintaining, at one panel discussion I attended, that 'you can't escape the market. The market is the air we breathe'.

The special issue offered lots of advice, much of it at least partly tongue-in-cheek, for success in the contemporary art world. The counsel included such tidbits as: 'Know These 100 People', 'Stay on Trend' (with things like video-game art, candy-coloured sculpture and trash), 'Get Born Into It', and 'Pack Your Bags, Fly Around the World, and Hang Out With Everyone You Know From New York'. Yet, in his introduction to the section, Saltz expressed a gnawing discontent with the way things are heading:

opposite, clockwise from top:
Fatimah Tuggar, At the Meat Market, 2000, Computer montage (inkjet on vinyl), 83.8 x 243.8 cm, courtesy BintaZarah Studios, New York;
Martha Rosler, Garage sale, 2000, installation at Nederlands Foto Instituut, Rotterdam, Holland, 2000, courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York;
Martha Rosler, Garage sale, 1999, installation at Generali Foundation, Vienna, Austria, 1999, courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York;
Martha Rosler, Travelling garage sale, 1977, installation at La Mamelle Gallery, San Francisco, 1977, courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York;
Martha Rosler, Garage sale, 2000, installation at New Museum, New York, courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York.

It remains to be seen whether high prices are the global warming of the art world, imperilling an entire ecosystem. Perhaps the planet will adapt. Perhaps not. But shouldn't we be alarmed that one work by Murakami now costs more than masterworks by Constable, Courbet, Delacroix, Fuseli, Géricault, Ingres, Rubens and Turner combined?[1]

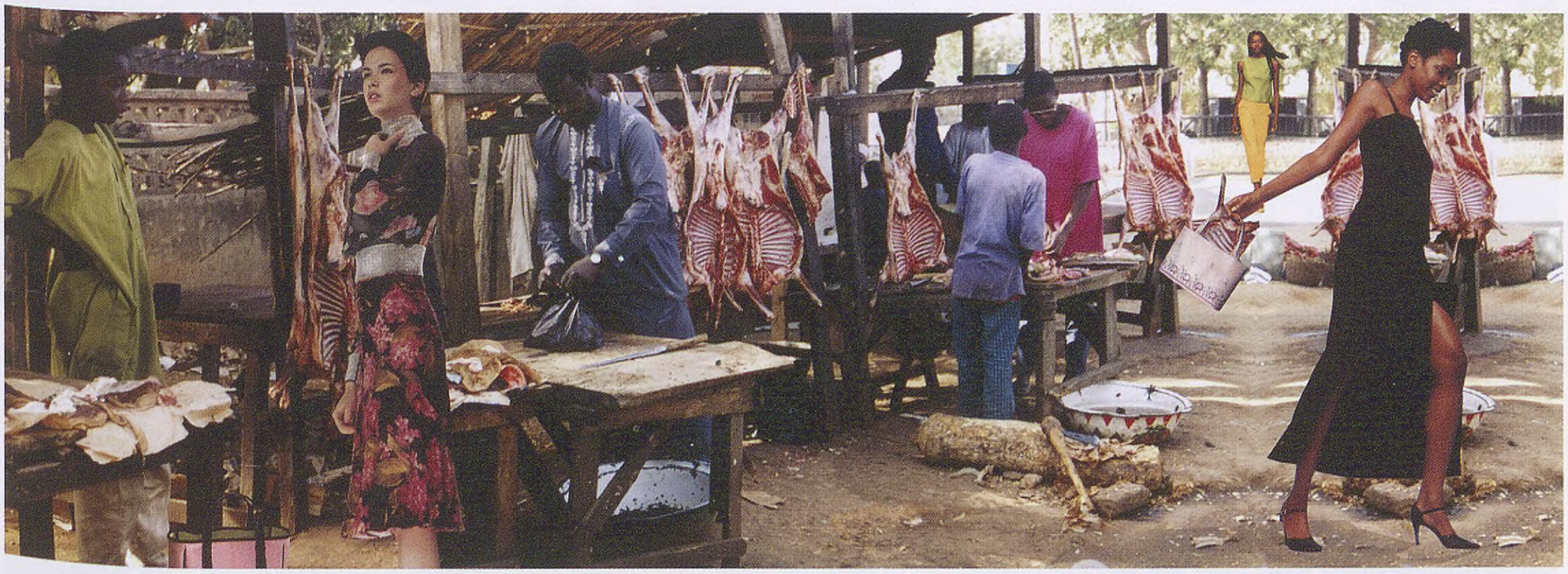
A third reason for the strange silence from the art world's political flank may be the disappointing outcome of so many highly vaunted political protests, from the elections following the Arab Spring to the failed effort to recall Wisconsin's union-busting governor, Scott Walker, in June 2012. The most visible protest movement in New York has been the Occupy Wall Street movement, which gained worldwide attention last year when a ragtag group of protesters, many of them artists, camped out for two months in Zuccotti Park in downtown Manhattan. Following their forced removal by New York City Police on 15 November 2011, the Occupy movement disappeared from public view during the northern winter. In the spring they re-emerged with guerilla actions of varied effectiveness.

The artistic wing of the Occupy movement has dubbed itself Occupy Museums. Spearheaded by artists, it engages in street theatre, targeting museums and art fairs as centres of 'the rampant financialisation of art', as one adherent has publicly described it. Occupiers have held protests at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), The Armory Show and the Frieze Art Fair, in some cases framing their actions in terms of solidarity with unions involved in labour disputes with these institutions. In recognition of their growing notoriety, the organisers of Occupy Museums were invited to this year's 7th Berlin Biennale, where they turned the main hallway into a 'human zoo' consisting of a poster-making station, a radio station, and a 'sleeping room'. Following an intervention, they were thrown out of the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. Other Occupy artists have focused on graphics and posters. These appear here and there on the streets of New York, but none have had the impact of Shepard Fairey's beatific Obama four years ago.

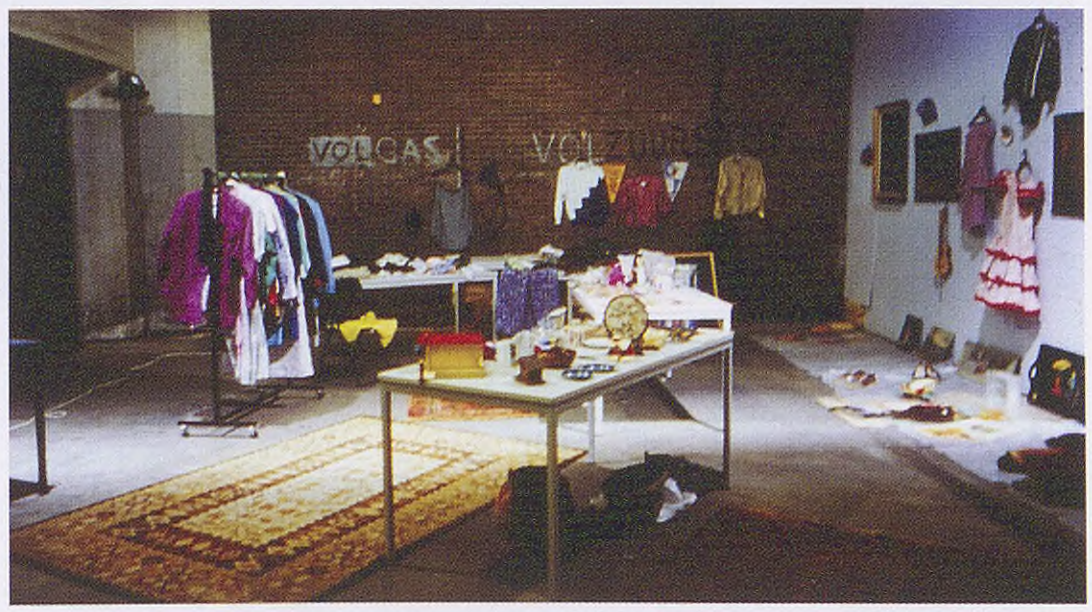
However, somewhere along the way, the moral clarity that gained the Occupy movement its worldwide press last year has been muddied by internal disagreements, a focus on publicity stunts and a general unwillingness to take a stand on specific issues. Much of this orientation has emanated from the group's decision not to participate in electoral politics. Two of its young adherents recently reported to me that the question of voting has created a lot of conflict within the group, with many members (some of whom were very active in the last presidential election) declaring that elections are meaningless because the two sides are essentially the same. (I recall this discussion with similar young idealists during the election in 2000 when the third party progressive, Ralph Nader, siphoned off enough Democrat votes to give an ambiguous victory to George W. Bush.)

The outcome of all this is an odd disconnect between the cultural and political climate in the city as the election looms. Among the major museums, one senses a pattern of consolidation and retrospection. The inevitable blockbuster opened at the Guggenheim Museum – a show titled 'Picasso Black and White'. The Whitney presented the work of abstract painter Wade Guyton, whose canvases offer reconsiderations of late modern and post-pop artist Richard Artschwager. At the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the season's contemporary offering is a potentially interesting but hardly daring show called 'Faking It: Manipulated Photography Before Photoshop'. In late November, MoMA will present 'Tokyo 1955–1970', a historical look at the postwar Japanese avant-garde.

As a result, it has been left to the smaller institutions to acknowledge the local and global complexities that confront us at this moment of economic and political uncertainty. Judith K. Brodsky and Ferris Olin, the co-directors of the Rutgers University




GARAGE
Sale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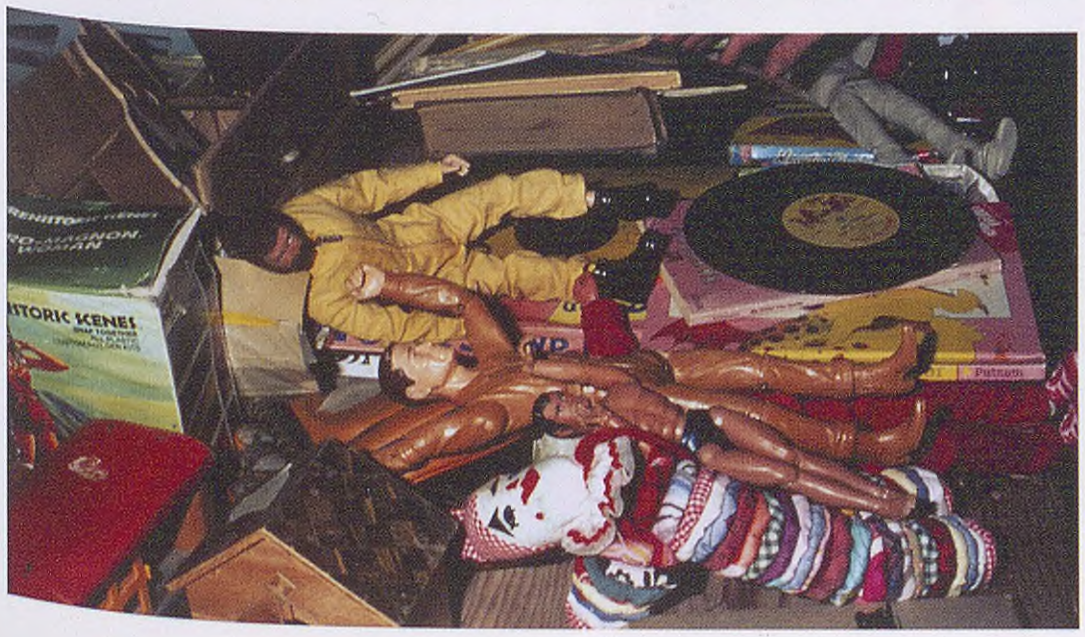
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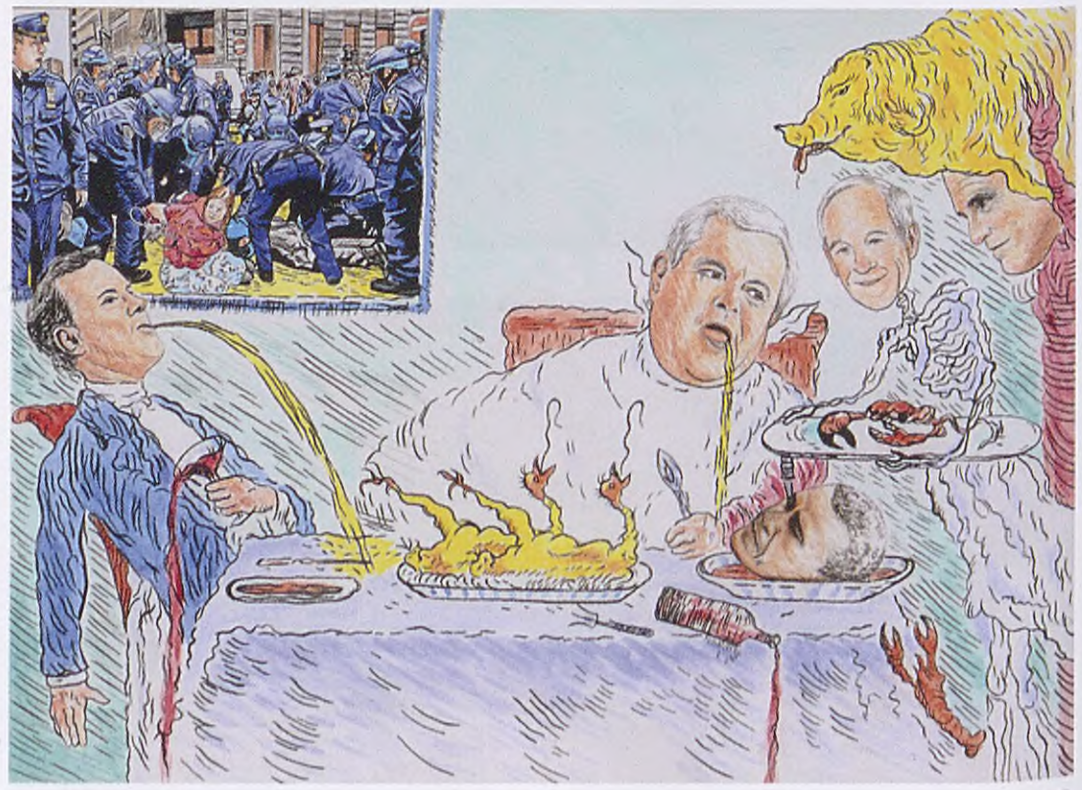
Putnam

The Head ache



Institute for Women and Art, curated a season-long series of exhibitions and projects. Presented in multiple venues throughout New Jersey, 'The Fertile Crescent: Women, Art and Society' illuminates the political, familial, erotic and social challenges facing women in the Middle East, a rapidly transforming part of the world. The Grey Art Gallery's 'Toxic Beauty: The Art of Frank Moore' celebrates the practice of an intriguing artist who succumbed to AIDS in 2002. Moore gained attention in the 1990s for his often satirical neo-naive paintings that touch on issues of environment, health care, greed and personal relationships. The New Museum mounted 'Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos', an intellectually challenging exhibition of an artist known for her wide-ranging concerns, among them gender, art history, philosophy, theology and the natural sciences.

To give MoMA its due, in addition to its big Japanese show, it will present an installation by veteran political artist Martha Rosler (in conjunction with PS1, MoMA's still scrappy contemporary art affiliate) in late November. 'Meta-Monumental Garage Sale' is a re-creation/reinterpretation of a work first created in 1973. In the context of MoMA, this work, in which audience members haggle with the artist for various second-hand goods in the grand tradition of the suburban-American garage sale, promises an implied critique of the museum's lofty aspirations to aesthetic, social and economic elitism.

While the specific issues currently facing the American electorate were not addressed by any of the exhibitions held in the lead-up to the election, these exhibitions at least reflected a world where the clashing values represented by our stark political divisions have real and powerful consequences. In these confusing and conflicted times such shows serve as a reminder that art has most to say when it engages our social, political and economic contradictions and forces us to reassess our place in the world.

Picasso Black and White, Guggenheim Museum, 5 October 2012 – 23 January 2013; **Wade Guyton OS**, Whitney Museum of American Art, opens 4 October 2012; **Faking It: Manipulated Photography Before Photoshop**, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 11 October 2012 – 27 January 2013; **Tokyo 1955–1970**, Museum of Modern Art, 18 November 2012 – 25 February 2013; **The Fertile Crescent: Gender, Art and Society**, Institute for Women and Art, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, mid-August 2012 – mid-January 2013; **Toxic Beauty: The Art of Frank Moore**, Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 6 September – 8 December 2012; **Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos**, New Museum, 24 October 2012 – 13 January 2013; **Meta-Monumental Garage Sale**, Museum of Modern Art, 17–30 November 2012.

1 Jerry Saltz, 'How to make it in the art world', *New York Magazine*, 22 April 2012, *http://nymag.com/arts/art/rules/*.

opposite, clockwise from top
Occupy Museums at the 7th Berlin Biennale, 2012
Courtesy Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art
© Marta Gornicka

Kara Maria, Gluttony (after Ensor), 2012
Ink and watercolour on paper, 26.7 x 37.2 cm
Photograph John Wilson White / Studio Phocasso

Enrique Chagoya, The head ache, 2010
Digital etching with Chine colé, plate size 38.1 x 43.2 cm
Digital production by Magnolia Editions in Oakland, CA
Published by The Rosenbach Library and Museum and Philagrafika, Philadelphia

page 227
Rosemarie Trockel, Prima-Age, 2012
Digital print 42 x 42 cm
Courtesy Sprüth Magers, Berlin/London
© Rosemarie Trockel / VG Bild-Kunst Bonn, 2012

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Brett Whiteley *The pink heron* 1969 (detail) Art Gallery of NSW. Gift of Patrick White 1979 © Wendy Whiteley

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Fiona Lowry
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www.ondarteresidency.com

IMAGE: Lynne Roberts-Goodwin **'Cloud #9' (2012)** Ed. 3 Inkjet on Photo Rag, 1600mm x 1600mm

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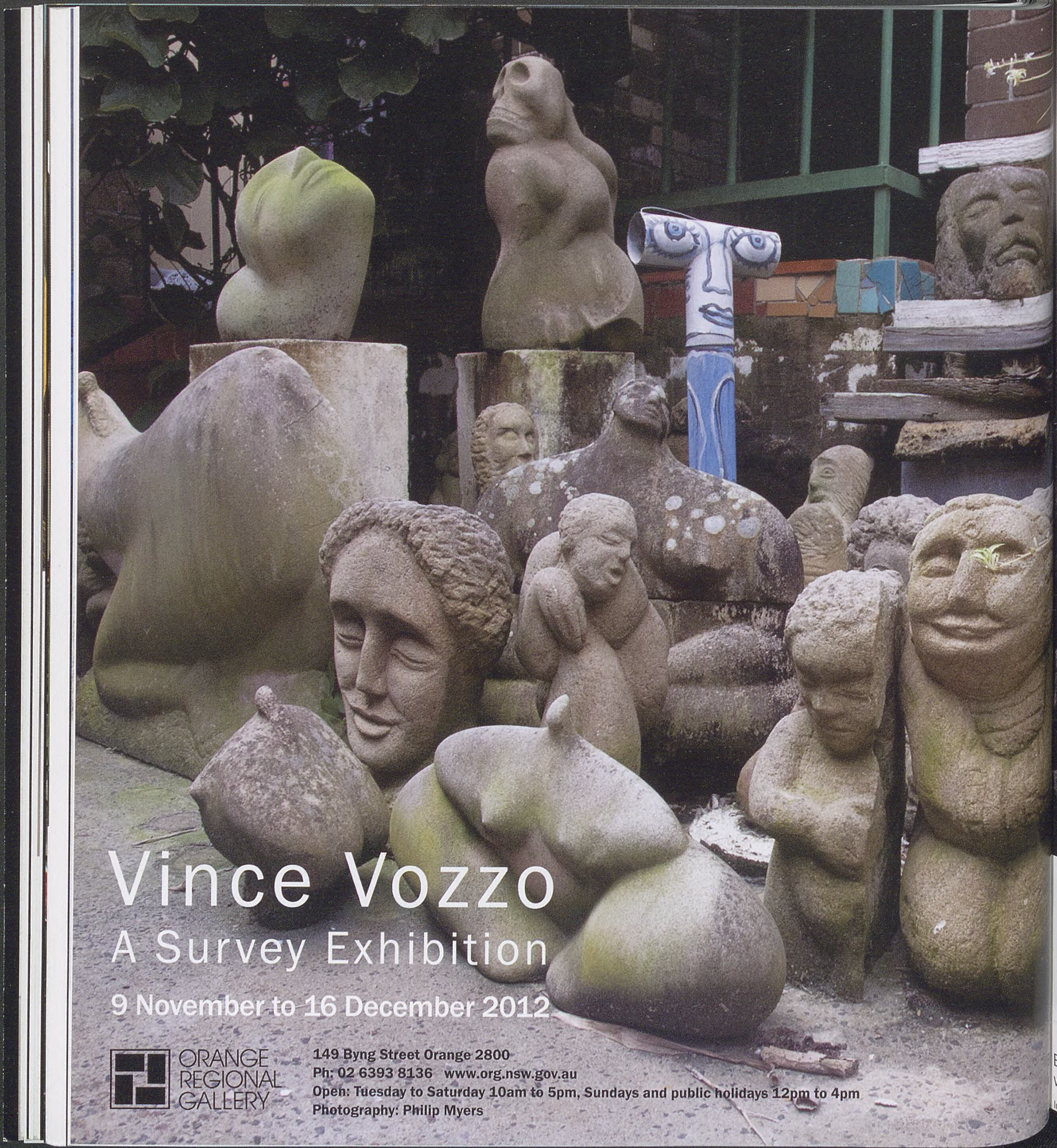
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Image: Andrew Merry *Valley of the Grose* (detail) 2011 © the artist

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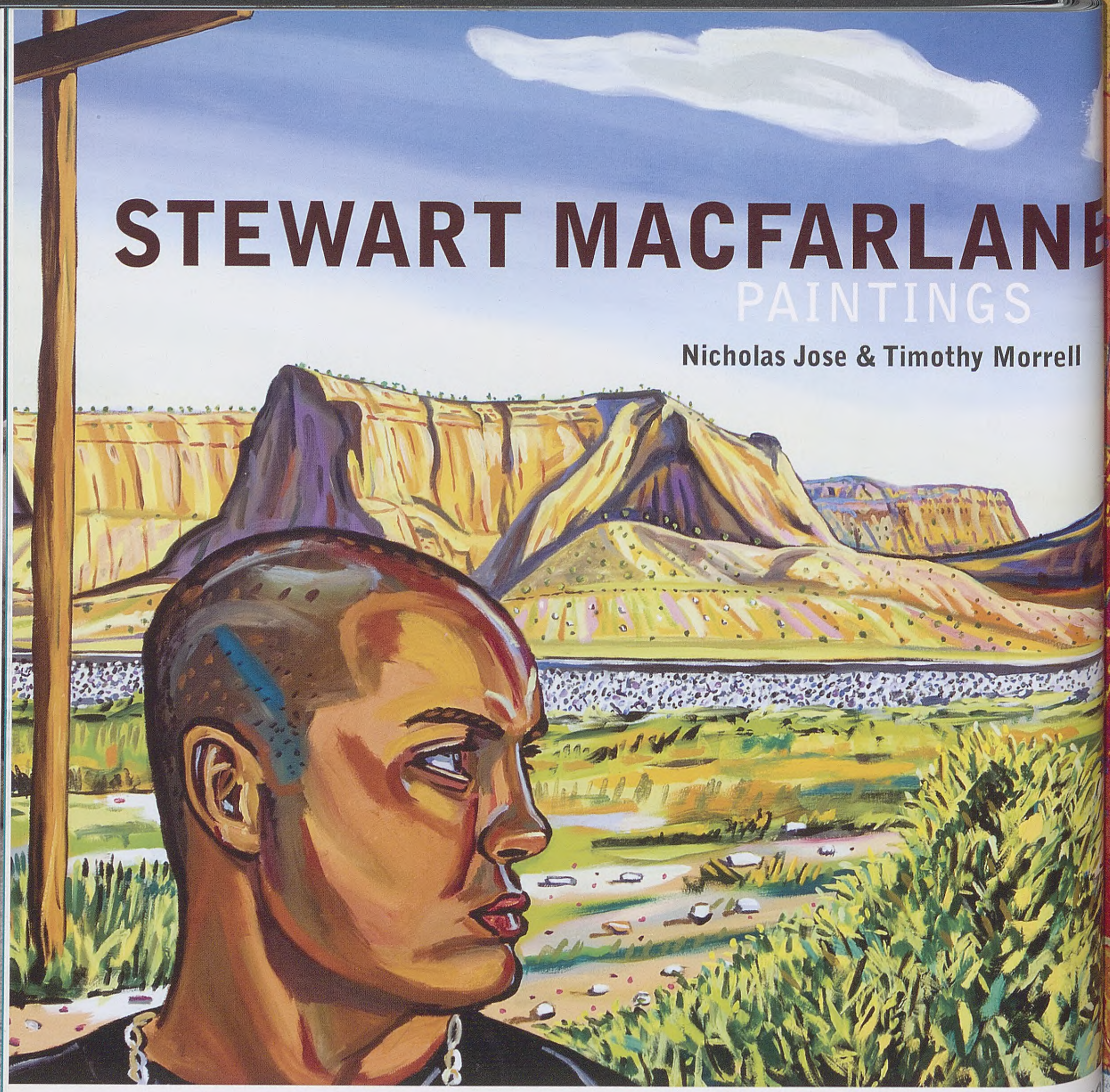

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Essay, Summer 2012

Graham Fletcher and the domestic uncanny
Ella Mudie

New Guinea in the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial
Diane Losche

Joana Vasconcelos
Fae Brauer

Theaster Gates
Lilly Wei

Yuan Goang-ming
Iris Shu-Ping Huang

Gao Rong
Summar Hipworth

Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro
Jacqueline Millner

Graham Fletcher's 'Lounge Room Tribalism' and the domestic uncanny

Ella Mudie

opposite
Untitled (lounge room tribalism), 2009
Oil on canvas, 162 x 130 cm
Collection James Wallace Arts Trust
Courtesy the artist and Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland

pages 252–3
Untitled (lounge room tribalism), 2011, detail
Oil on canvas, 125 x 100 cm
Courtesy the artist and Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland

Framed by an open door at the top of a staircase, André Breton, with fist pressed against cheek, gazes out from his writing table in the study at 42 Rue Fontaine. Behind him is that famous wall, now memorialised in its re-creation at the Centre Pompidou, densely packed with an array of objects and artworks that defies an obvious classificatory logic. A painting by Picabia, tribal artefacts, totems and statuettes from Oceania and the Americas rub shoulders with found objects, curiosities, and a framed photograph of Elisa Claro, Breton's third wife, in an altar-like assemblage that sprawls along irregular shelving. Taken from a distance, Sabine Weiss's c. 1955 photograph is less a portrait of an iconic intellectual than an image of a thinker, collector and dreamer encased in a personal museum which reveals a mysterious intermingling of identity, creativity and objects among the domestic interior.

Despite the collection's eclectic appearance, when Graham Fletcher encountered the arresting sight of the Breton wall at the Pompidou he recalls being struck by an appreciation of the 'harmonious dialogue between such disparate objects'.[1] A New Zealand artist with mixed Samoan and European heritage, Fletcher has, since the late 1990s, responded to ethnographic research in his practice and developed a fascination with the complex relations between myth, mimicry and authenticity and how they interact within what he terms the 'cross-cultural imaginary'. Identifying in Breton's collection the surrealist devotion to the idea that a magical transference arises from a startling or enigmatic object's capacity to emit surreal energies to the viewer, Fletcher also noted correlations with the South Pacific concept of *mana*.[2] In the wall at the Pompidou, Fletcher observed what was in fact the careful arrangement of 'communicating vessels', as Breton had deliberated over the ideal placement of found objects, artefacts and artworks to generate the maximum charge of *frisson* capable of setting the imagination in motion.

For Fletcher, the encounter with Breton's wall is one among a number of antecedent threads that informs his 'Lounge Room Tribalism' (2009–11) series in which tribal artefacts collaged into 1950s and 1960s modernist interiors assume an ominous, unsettling and at times vaguely menacing presence that simultaneously conjures the generative energies of the collecting impulse and mourns the separation of artefacts from their native cultural context and meaning. Five paintings are presented in the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT7) at the Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane, drawn from a larger body of work which includes sculptures that recast idol objects into organic hybrid forms. Fletcher's paintings inflect APT7's central theme of our relationship to place with compelling cultural and temporal dislocations. A time-capsule effect emerges from the artist's re-creation of vintage interior furnishings and decor sourced from 1950s and 1960s architectural journals, periodicals and design books. Seeking to disrupt rather than reproduce, however, Fletcher gives the 'lived-in' interior new meaning when an anthropomorphic item, such as a Maori mask, peers out into a living space with a shocked expression that inverts the typical observer and observed economy. In another setting, a striking Papua New Guinea Baining mask is sited on a wall near a luminous white lamp and appears bathed in a haunting spectral glow, disturbing the comfort and control we might typically associate with the domestic space.

This tension sparked by the encroachment of the unfamiliar into the home points to the inherent instability of the domestic which, as it is understood today in the West, is intertwined with the emergence of a modern subjectivity defined as the private, autonomous, inward-looking individual. The domestic flourished in the nineteenth century when, in a departure from previous eras such as the seventeenth century during which time life was conceived largely in public terms, the home began to represent stability, security, freedom from intrusion, a space for contemplation and inner refinement as well as the embodiment of family life, social order and the laying down of roots. Across Europe, and most prevalently in cities, domesticity became inseparable from

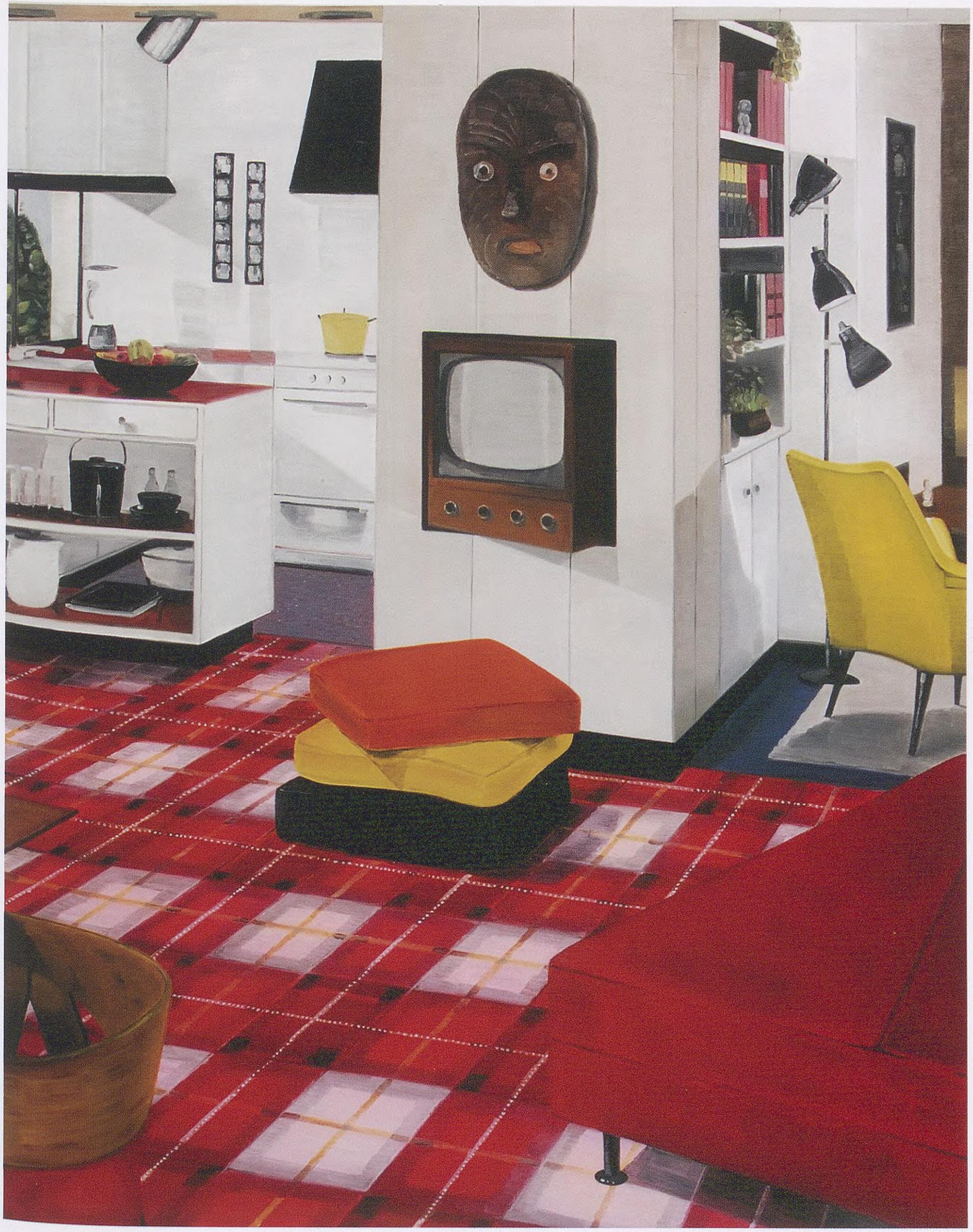
the rise of the bourgeois interior, which today still evokes cocoon-like images of cluttered interiors filled to the brim with collections of photographs and bric-a-brac, hemmed in by heavy draperies and peopled with restrained, often solitary, dwellers, captured in moments of repose. Design historian Charles Rice linked the nineteenth-century bourgeois interior with attempts at self-definition, urging acknowledgment of its historical formation and an abandonment of the dangerous tendency to conflate the domestic with eternal, universal or unchangeable ideals of dwelling. Considering the bourgeois home in nineteenth-century France, social historians Michelle Perrot and Roger-Henri Guerrand astutely gauged its oppositional currents:

> *Fortress of privacy, the home was protected by walls, servants and darkness. But it was also a place seething with internal conflict, a microcosm through which ran the tortuous boundary between public and private, male and female, master and servant, parent and child, family and individual.*[3]

For those with a nostalgic temperament, the destabilising influence of the outbreak of war cast a seductive aura over the perceived gentle homeliness of the belle époque bourgeois interior. But the seething internal conflicts only became more pronounced as the twentieth century unfolded, increasingly finding expression in art in a visual language of alienation, confinement and spatial isolation and, in psychology, becoming the vital focus of Freudian psychoanalysis, in particular the notion of the domestic uncanny which continues to permeate representations of the home in contemporary art. As Anthony Vidler suggested, the uncanny finds its metaphorical home in architecture, yet its sensation is in fact provoked by slippages in representation. Rice noted how 'a confusion between a two-dimensional reflection and the three-dimensionality of space provided the spur to Freud's theorisation of the uncanny and, at the same time, his articulation of the psyche in terms of the double'.[4]

Such slippages both intrigue and disarm the viewer of Fletcher's 'Lounge Room Tribalism' paintings. In *Untitled (lounge room tribalism)*, 2011, a pair of matching yellow armchairs faces towards the warm hearth of a crackling fireplace where a traditional Poli currency textile from Papua New Guinea hangs overhead. The homely scene of a lit fire (a recurring motif in Fletcher's paintings) is rendered eerie by the absence of a human presence; or is someone there? A tribal statue guards the entrance to the home like a sentry, but is the warrior-like figure a protector or a threat? Most disconcerting, though, is the painting's point of view, which implies an intruder or outsider watching the house from beyond the picture plane. It is this redoubling of object and gaze that transforms the imaging of the domestic interior into such a highly charged psychic landscape. For Fletcher, 'the medium of painting offered me the freedom and immediacy to create imaginative combinations within a borderland world'.[5]

By situating his animated ethnographic artefacts within the modernist interior, Fletcher also revisits a period in which the avant-garde exhibited an especially uneasy relationship with the home, a time when, according to Christoper Reed, 'the domestic realm, seen as simultaneously popular and old-fashioned, became a perfect foil for architects aspiring to avant-garde status'.[6] Within the sphere of modern art, Reed pinpointed anti-domestic currents in such movements as 1950s abstract expressionism's aversion to kitsch, popular culture and the decorative, and the predilection for vast canvases that rejected painting on an intimate scale. Yet images of domestic life soon returned to visibility as pop artists began to pluck liberally from mass media and consumer culture, although there was no nostalgic return to home as sanctuary or private refuge. In Richard Hamilton's 1956 collage *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* the erotic re-situating of a muscled body builder and a nude burlesque dancer within a *Ladies' Home Journal* advertisement living-room interior reveals the penetration of advertising and mass media into every facet of home life. Later, Martha Rosler disrupts middle-



class American domesticity by placing it in direct proximity to the realities of war through the splicing together of war photographs from *Life* magazine with sleek interiors of *House Beautiful* in her series 'Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful' (1967–72).

In both Rosler's and Hamilton's domestic collages, the home is a permeable space where communications technologies unravel the boundaries between public and private, the self and the world at large that the house was once thought to maintain. Fletcher's interiors are similarly open-ended and susceptible to 'alien' influences from outside; however, the latent energy of the tribal objects also creates fields of possibilities where the grouping together of seemingly incongruous elements suggests both a creative and elegiac act as well as a generative inter-cultural sensibility. In 2003, Jacques Derrida protested the auction of Breton's vast personal collection from his home, describing the apartment as 'a space made up of creation and desire … when you went into the flat, you discovered both the secret of a life and a movement of thought'.[7] There may be nothing universal or eternal about the ways in which we inhabit our homes yet Fletcher's 'Lounge Room Tribalism', like Breton's study, reveals how the domestic space, as an imaginative realm where we dream, invent, remember and negotiate increasingly complex identities, remains undeniably potent.

7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, 8 December 2012 – 14 April 2013.

1 Rhana Devenport, Graham Fletcher, James Pinker and Caroline Vercoe, *Lounge Room Tribalism*, exhibition catalogue, Mangere Arts Centre Ngā Tohu o Uenuku, Auckland, 2012, p. 10.

2 While employing a catch-all explanation of *mana* is problematic, the *New Penguin English Dictionary* offers a basic definition of the concept as: 'in Polynesia and Melanesia, the power of elemental forces embodied in an object or person'; Penguin, London, 2001, p. 844. For an account of the varied European usages and interpretations of mana, a useful starting point is Jonathan Z. Smith's *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2004.

3 Michelle Perrot and Roger-Henri Guerrand, 'Scenes and places', in Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby (eds), *A History of Private Life IV: From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War*, Belknap of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1990, p. 346.

4 Charles Rice, *The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity*, Routledge, New York, 2007, p. 51.

5 Devenport et al., op. cit., p. 17.

6 Christopher Reed, *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture*, Thames & Hudson, New York, 1996, pp. 10–11.

7 Jacques Derrida quoted in Dagmar Motycka Weston, 'Communicating vessels: André Breton and his atelier, home and personal museum in Paris', *Architectural Theory Review*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2006, p. 106.

page 257
Untitled (lounge room tribalism), 2010
Oil on canvas, 162 x 130 cm
Collection Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane
Courtesy the artist and Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland

opposite
Untitled (lounge room tribalism), 2011
Oil on canvas, 150 x 120 cm
The University of Auckland Art Collection
Courtesy the artist and Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland

Ephemeral splendour

New Guinea in the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial

Diane Losche


RETORT

opposite
Iatmul, Wolimbit, Ngego (spirit house)
Kanganaman, East Sepik, Papua New Guinea
Photograph courtesy Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane

pages 260–1
Abelam artist Kano Loctai marking out Abelam korombo facade, January 2012
Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane

THE WORDS HOME AND DOMESTIC conjure visions of cosiness and the everyday, not grandeur or the sublime. They suggest the private not the public houses for spirits. But one need not go too far, only to the great island north of Australia, New Guinea, to find these binaries displaced in spectacular structures which are at once ephemeral but of great longevity, domestic and sacred, public but not open to everyone.

This year the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT7) at Brisbane's Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art (QAG/GOMA) will feature architectural forms from the Sepik region of Papua New Guinea as key objects in an exhibition that focuses on ephemeral structures, not just material and architectural, but political and economic. Nowhere is the strength and endurance of the temporary and malleable more in evidence than in the many diverse language groups (over 740 languages have been identified) and cultures found in New Guinea. APT7 will focus on two kinds of forms found in the nation of Papua New Guinea: masks from nine different cultural groups from the island of New Britain and the Sepik River area, and architecture from the Sepik River region.

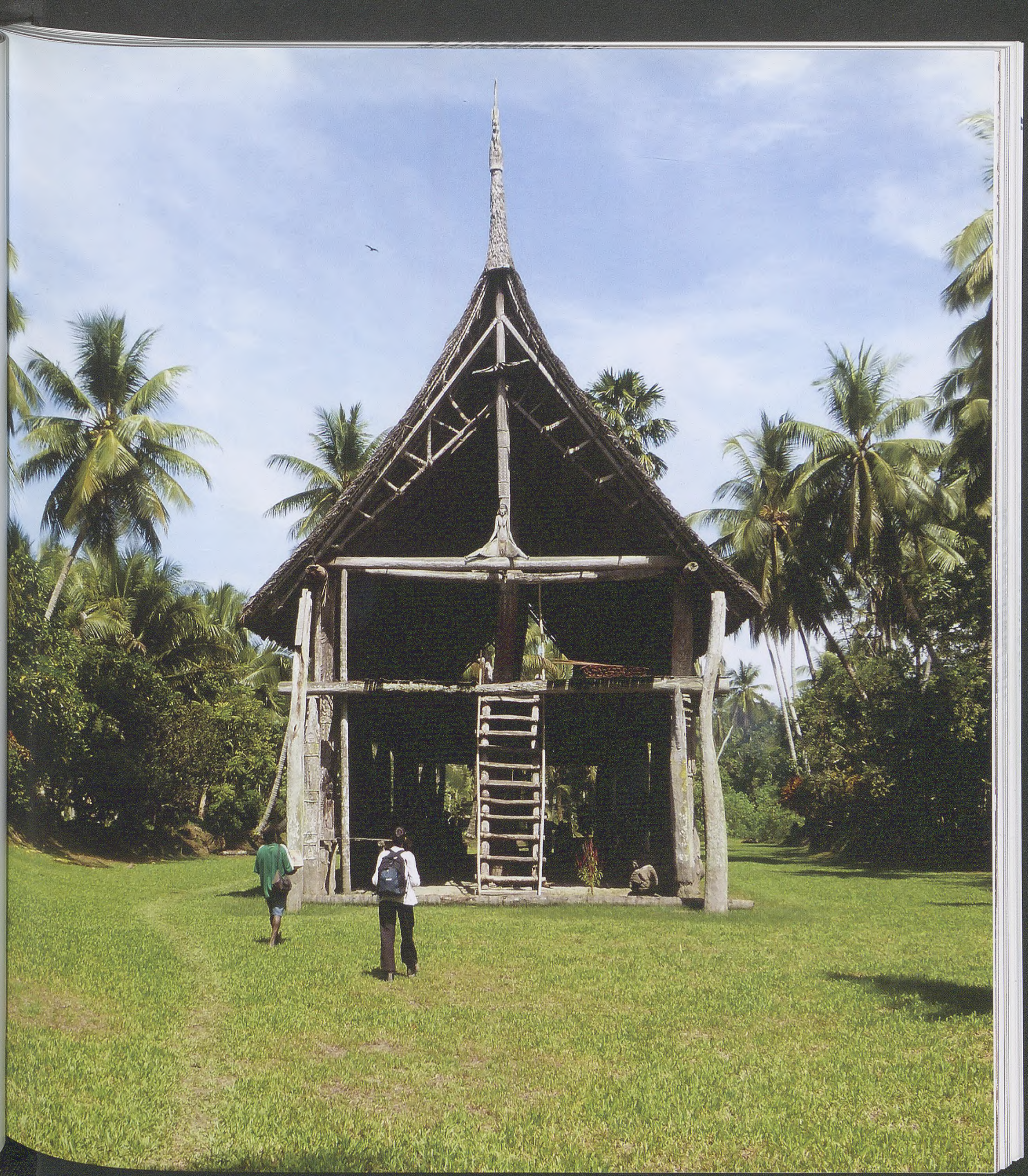
The architecture of two language groups from the Sepik region will feature in the multi-storey atrium and entrance hall of GOMA. While they occupy adjacent territories and share broad similarities in language and cultural forms, the Kwoma – a small group of a few thousand people living in the Washkuk Hills along the Sepik River – and the Abelam – a much larger group of about 50,000 occupying the plains and foothills to the north – are variations on a template. The inclusion of both gives a good sense of the range of cultural styles in this region, which has been celebrated in museums around the world for its striking polychrome painting, sculpture and architecture.

Objects from the Sepik have been collected in large numbers since the early twentieth century when German explorers first visited the area, yet neither the iconography of the art, nor the social and political organisation of the societies which produce these objects is easily understood. Behind the eye-catching and expressive forms lie complex and labyrinthine social structures which form the organisation of the many villages that make up the Abelam and Kwoma regions. Spectacular paintings, sculptures and architecture are produced by and for secret men's cults and are maintained by and for spirits, which are called on to assist humans in their endeavours.

In both areas the architecture of these cults have a public and a closed face, in that only parts of the houses of both regions are able to be seen by women and children. The designs of the spirit houses from the two areas differ substantially. Kwoma spirit houses are composed without sides, with carved and painted posts supporting a roof that is painted on its underside.[1] In contrast, the Abelam spirit house is a three-sided completely closed structure with two thatched sides and a cantilevered front facade of painted images of *nggwal* (ancestral) spirits.[2] While women and children can see the bark paintings that comprise the architecture of these buildings, in both areas only men can create and view the sculptures and paintings associated with secret ceremonies held within.

In the Kwoma area these ceremonies revolve primarily around the display of yams at certain times of the year, but among the Abelam, men are initiated into stages of a spirit cult from youth until old age. Such initiations are significant events which involve not only the work of creating spectacular ensembles of paintings and carvings but also exchanges of yams (the most important food crop, yams also contain ancestral clan spirits) and parades and dancing of the initiates. Women are excluded from direct participation in the cult, never entering the spirit houses of the Abelam after initial opening ceremonies.

One of the most startling aspects of initiation ceremonies is their ephemerality – carvings and paintings are brought together by



groups of men for installation into the spirit house (called *korombo* by the Abelam) in various kinds of assemblages appropriate to different stages of the cult, but these assemblages only last for a few days before all the materials are disassembled and given to men in surrounding villages who sometimes use the central sculptures in a variety of practices used in yam growth, rain-making and other activities. Thus the assemblages are extremely fleeting, leading to the question: Why so much effort (and these activities do take the skill and labour of many men for some weeks or months) for such an ephemeral spectacle?

From the Abelam perspective the point of all this carving and painting is to create men who, after the initiation has occurred, have certain powers, skills and abilities delivered to them by a variety of spirits who have been summoned into the korombo for the initiation. After initiation these men are better able to undertake successful gardening of yams, better sculpting and painting, and architectural construction. Thus the point of these activities is to create and maintain the powers of men to ensure the continuity of the distinctive practices of Abelam survival. Once the initiation is complete and the materials have served their purpose they can be distributed. This form of art, which may seem incomprehensible to those used to the notion of preserving valuable objects, up-ends notions of permanence; once the powers and abilities of men are renewed it is not necessary to maintain the objects since they can be created again.

The demise of traditions such as those found among the Abelam and the Kwoma was often predicted after the advent of colonialism, but some Sepik traditions have survived remarkably well even under the assault of many missionary groups throughout the twentieth century. Although the number of spirit houses has diminished and certain objects, such as cassowary bone daggers, are not of the same elaboration as they once were, nevertheless the tradition is still vital, especially given the many other institutions which rival the spirit cults for people's attention: schooling, cash crops such as coffee, and other religions. Despite the predictions of doomsayers about their imminent demise, these cults are surviving.

The cults are also transformed as they interact with individuals and institutions outside the traditional sphere such as the upcoming APT7, which will see both Abelam and Kwoma architecture transcribed and translated into forms which, while reflecting the traditional, are remodelled to fit into and show themselves to best advantage in modern buildings of glass and steel such as GOMA.

This project of translation and transcription of traditional practices is itself a fascinating cultural project. The display of Abelam and Kwoma architecture in APT7 is not as straightforward as simply lifting traditional materials from one space and transporting them to another. One can perhaps envision some of the myriad problems involved in considering the following questions: How to display objects that are usually seen outdoors against the backdrop of tall coconut trees and bright sunlight, or in darkness by the light of flickering bamboo torches, to a glass-and-steel interior? How to convey the works' 'presence' and grandeur in such different surrounds? How to access materials, hardwood, vines, traditional paints, rare flowers and unusual plants outside a local area? How to transport materials that are ephemeral and fragile?

It has taken all the resources of a combined team of Abelam and Kwoma men and museum workers to bring this project to fruition and the process is an example of the way in which cooperative social groupings can enable the translation of cultural forms of great complexity. From Maud Page, QAG/GOMA's Curator of Pacific Art, who had the idea of displaying the spectacular ephemeral structures of the Pacific, to APT7 co-curators, Ruth McDougall and Martin Fowler, who visited Papua New Guinea, and exhibition designer Michael O'Sullivan; from the on-site construction team of three Abelam men, Waikua Nera,

Nikit Kiawaule and Kano Loctai, and seven Kwoma men, Kevin Apsepa, Simon Goiyap, Jamie Jimok, Nelson Makamoi, Rex Maukos, Terry Pakiey and Anton Waiawas, to the conservationists and many other assistants; every stage of construction has involved decisions about transcription and translation and much of the work has been carried out within the gallery.

The artforms of New Guinea have often been valued by collectors who hold in most esteem those materials that they take to be ruled by custom and tradition and marking a supposedly unchanging nature. However these artforms have always embodied elements of rapid adaptability. The societies from which these forms come greatly value exchanges of goods and information between one group and another, belying notions of primordial unchanging cultural forms. The upcoming APT7 project itself embodies this notion, so highly valued in the Sepik, of exchange and transformation across cultural boundaries.

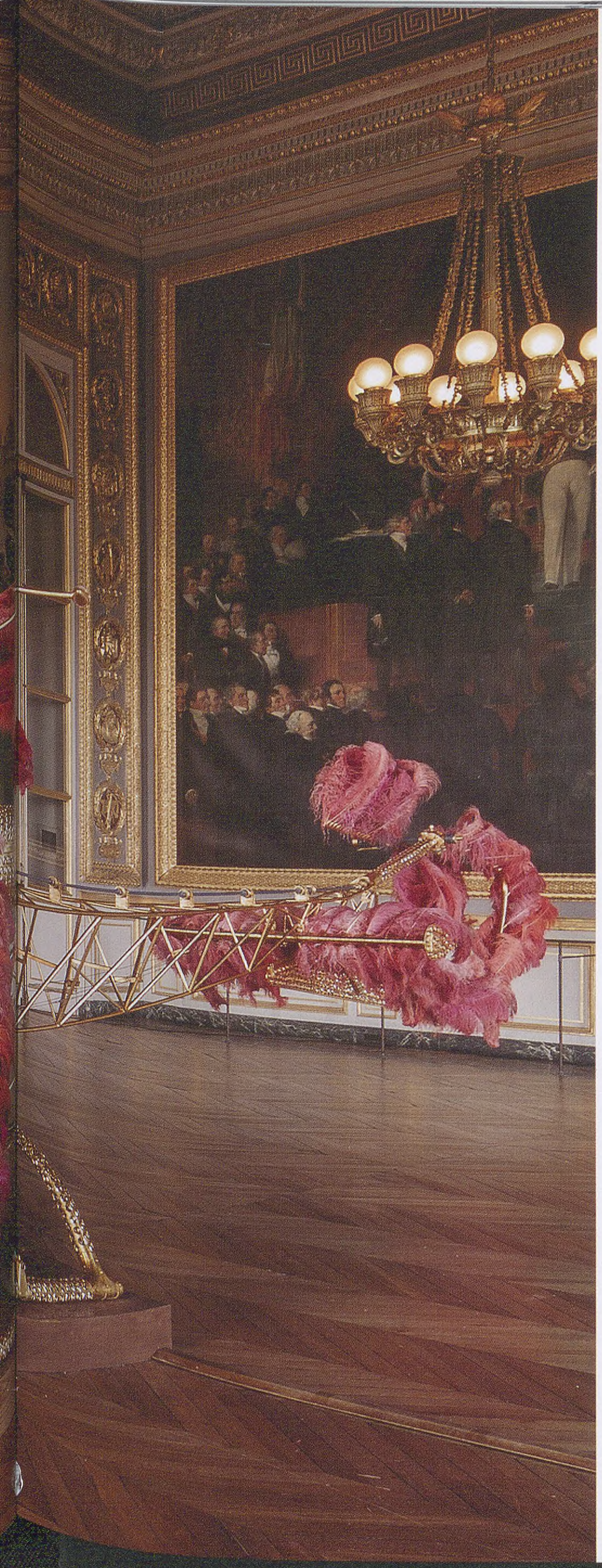
7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, 8 December 2012 – 14 April 2013.

1 Ross Bowden, 'Art and gender ideology in the Sepik', *Man*, vol. 19, no. 3, 1984, pp. 445–58.
2 Diane Losche, 'What do Abelam images want from us? Plato's Cave and Kwatbil's Belly', *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 8, no.1, 1997, pp. 35–49.

pages 264–5, left to right
Nelson Makamoi, Ap tok (rooster), 2012, detail
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 120 x 84 cm
Collection Queensland Art Gallery, commissioned for the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (2012)
Photograph courtesy Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane

Kwoma, ceiling of Koromb (spirit house)
Tongwinjamb village, East Sepik, Papua New Guinea
Photograph courtesy Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane

Simon Goiyap, Yambi kwat, 2012, detail
Carved blackbutt, 350 x 55 cm
Collection Queensland Art Gallery, commissioned for the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (2012)
Photograph courtesy Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane



Rupturing Versailles:

JOANA VASCONCELOS'S DISEMBODIMENT, FEMINISATION AND KITSCH

Fae Brauer

Valkyrie trousseau, 2009
Drawn-thread work and other embroideries, felt appliques, bobbin lace, tatting, quartz-decorated pottery, handmade woollen knitting and crochet, fabrics, ornaments, polyester, steel cables, 400 x 530 x 1400 cm
Produced in collaboration with the artisans of Nisa, Câmera Municipal de Nisa
Photograph Luís Vasconcelos. © Unidade Infinita Projectos

CHOOSING *MARY POPPINS*, 2010, TO INTRODUCE Joana Vasconcelos's installation at Versailles may seem puzzling. Yet, like the magical umbrella-wielding Poppins, this tentacular body of industrial fabrics and handmade textiles suspended above Ange-Jacques Gabriel's monumental marble staircase provoked alternative perspectives of its histories. Rather than celebrating the affluence, culture and conquests of the Bourbon dynasty, and commemorating the King's body, it signalled the disembodiment, displacement and exclusion of women and working-class cultures at this Royal Court opened by Louis XIV in 1682. 'The objects used in my works are disembodied', admitted this Paris-born, Lisbon-based artist, 'lost in their ordinariness and from which regular use has obliterated all of their potential aura.'[1] Deceptively appearing to adhere to the 'extravagant and excessive aesthetics' of this glittering 700-room, 2000-windowed palace, in being made of 'everyday objects', her artworks deny expectations of rare gems and precious materials and defy the imperatives of high culture.[2]

Dissimulating the ways in which Versailles functioned as a living entity filled with silks, satins, laces, pearls, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, gold, silver, feathers, ruffles and wigs, Vasconcelos conducted 'a game of subversion'. By making what look like icons of privilege with 'commonplace things', the 'game' played by Vasconcelos at Versailles entailed subverting its spectacles of excess and its sensorial stimuli. Through this process she redressed the cultural exclusion of the women and commoners who ran this estate, intended as a stage for the performance of the Bourbon dynasty's absolute power.[3] Through her dialogues and counter-dialogues with the cultural politics of Versailles, the rhizomatic sprawl of her installations ruptured its official history, particularly the success stories extolled daily to rapturous tourists. 'Of course my work also represents something of a rupture', she acknowledged, 'but the pieces adhere to the extravagant and excessive aesthetics.'[4]

That the King was subject to no earthly authority was pictured in some 300 official portraits and medals of Louis XIV alongside multitudinous statues and tapestries. The Sun King's 'divine right' was imaged throughout the War, Peace and Apollo Salons at Versailles, as well as the Hall of Mirrors. Ranked as nothing more than the King's dutiful subjects, the women of Versailles who organised its fetes, concerts, banquets and decorative arts are conspicuously absent. Nevertheless, Vasconcelos found their impact on the chateau omnipresent: 'For me, Versailles feels much closer to the female universe than to the male ideal, and I invade the chateau bringing in objects related to femininity.'[5]

Every dinner at Versailles was a public performance, the ushers welcoming all who were neatly dressed. After witnessing the Dauphine eat her soup, they would watch the Dauphin crack open his lobster, as signified by Vasconcelos's two ceramic lobsters perched on the crimson damask-covered table in the Grand Couvert. Entitled *Le Dauphin* and *La Dauphine*, both 2012, the lobsters are feminised by the lace crochet covering their bodies and the fishnets pulled over their claws. The feminisation of male icons was even more apparent, with white crochet draping the Port Laurent black marble lions guarding the Queen's Chamber. 'Lace decorates and protects', Vasconcelos explained, 'but protection is but another manifestation of imprisonment.'[6] In *Perruque*, 2012, she illuminates how the Queen was never able to escape her incarceration in this 'golden cage'.[7]

Every meal taken by the Queen was a public spectacle; every birth in her Bedchamber was an aristocratic one, with her body never free from prying eyes and listening ears. That her body was never her own to nurture and possess is illuminated by the conjugal debt incumbent on the Queen to secure the dynasty through the legitimate and public birth of sons who, as soon as the umbilical cord was severed, were paraded in silver dishes and removed from her sight. As the cocoon shape of *Perruque* suggests, the Queen was inscribed as nothing other than a royal uterus. That her womb was the subject of constant monitoring and surveillance is signified by the numerous ear trumpets or funnel-shaped foetal monitors glued to its bulge,

Gardes, 2012
Port Laurent marble (Pakistan) lions and bases,
Azores crocheted lace, each 200 x 65 x 110 cm
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris and Brussels,
and Haunch of Venison, London
Photograph Luís Vasconcelos. © Unidade Infinita Projectos

Golden valkyrie, 2012
Handmade woollen crochet, industrial knitted fabric, fabrics, ornaments, polyester, steel cables, 650 x 1140 x 1360 cm
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris and Brussels, and Haunch of Venison, London
Photograph Luís Vasconcelos. © Unidade Infinita Projectos

from which tresses of different coloured and textured hair cascade.[8] Yet the humiliation did not stop there. Even after Louis XIV's Queen, María Teresa of Spain, had endured this corporeal invasion for six pregnancies, she still had to bear the further indignity of having to take the King's *maîtresse en titre* into her household and ennoble her, as illustrated by the notorious Marquise de Montespan, Athénaïs, conjured by Vasconcelos's *Marilyn*, 2011.

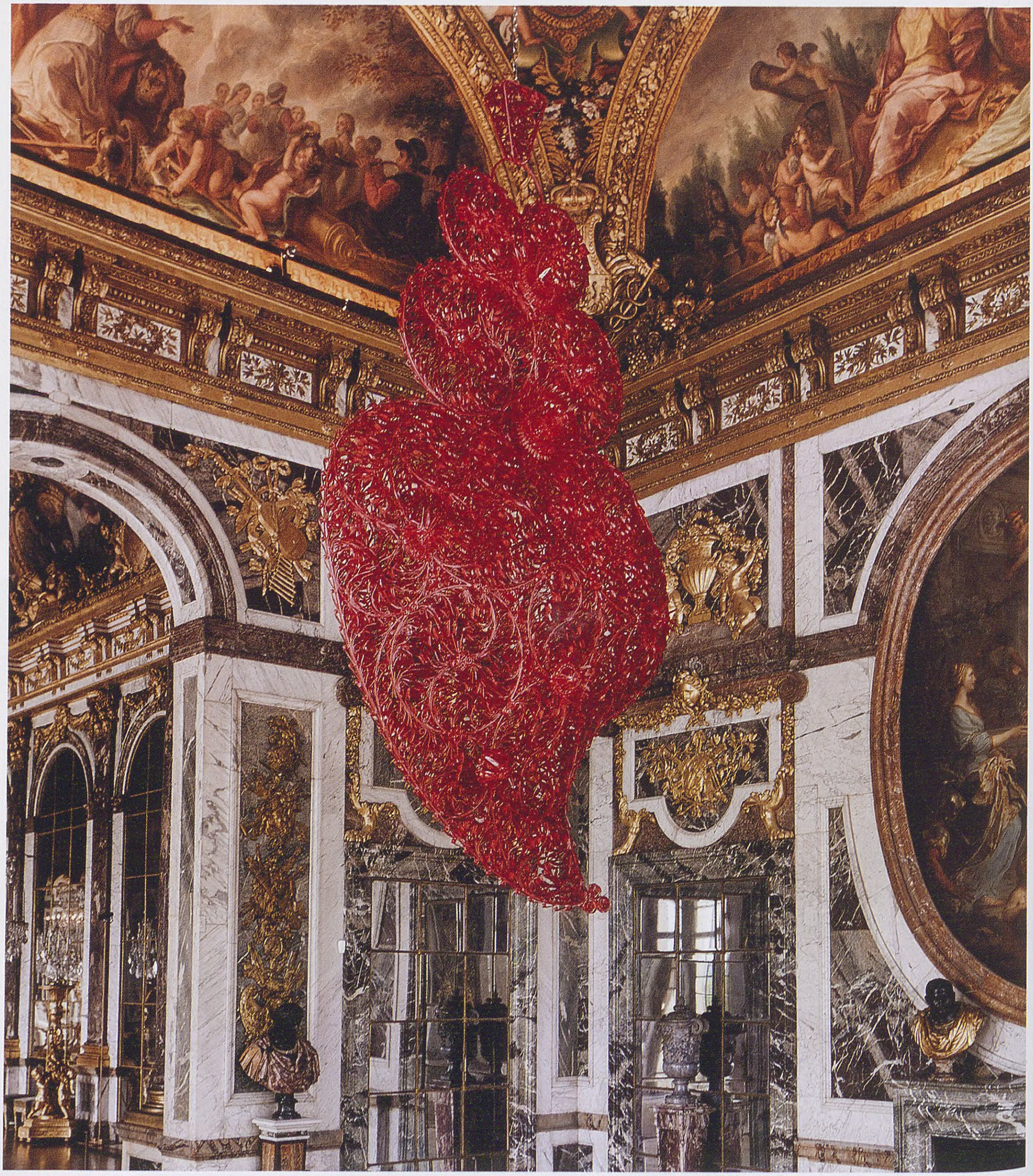
Known as 'the real Queen' who gave birth to six children fathered by Louis XIV, Athénaïs patronised La Fontaine, promoted Molière, organised elaborate festivals at Versailles, commissioned rococo furniture, was painted by Le Brun and sculpted by Étienne Le Hongre – but never as a court official and only ever as a shepherdess.[9] Nicknamed 'the torrent', the palatial apartment given to her by Louis XIV overlooking the Royal Court had convenient access to his bedroom. Voluptuously dressed in diaphanous gowns that never seemed able to cover her breasts, she became notorious for her high-heeled silken mules in which she strutted through her fabulous Appartement des Bains – only removing them to enter her octagonal bath cut from a single block of marble, and lined with linen and lace.

Vasconcelos's title – *Marilyn* – links the high-heeled silk mules of Athénaïs and Marie Antoinette to the pearl and diamante sandals of Marilyn Monroe. Located in the setting for the most prestigious of all court events and as monumental in scale as the 357 mirrors, it announced the kind of shoes that would have been worn by Versailles women at receptions then as now. With French soldiers heroised by Le Brun's murals of the Sun King's military victories and women relegated to the role of gilded *guéridons* in the Hall of Mirrors, Vasconcelos's installation acted as a disembodied trace of woman's phenomenological presence at these events and her performance as a major participant, if not an empowered player. Yet instead of consisting of precious gems and rare silks as would befit the marble and bronze, chandeliers and mirrors – the most expensive of all items – this monumental pair of sandals is made of stainless steel casserole pots and lids.

As reflective as the mirrors and as metallic as the armour and shields painted by Le Brun, these pots not only illuminate the amount of food that would have been served at these spectacles but also the way in which it would have been prepared by women carefully concealed in kitchens located out-of-sight in Versailles's far wing. 'The subversive force of my works', Vasconcelos explained, 'surely resides in the fact that they brandish the trappings of luxury without the means. I cultivate this ambiguity – this interaction – between the saucepans and the pumps. I take the pots out of the palace kitchens and place them in these areas.'[10] Through the installations *Independent heart*, *Lilicoptère*, 2012, and *Valkyries*, in which luxury is made over as kitsch, this pinnacle of high culture is also infiltrated by the commodities of mass consumerism and femininity.

To bolster the concept of 'divine right' during the Parisian insurrections of La Fronde, the nexus between the King's heart and God's will was constantly affirmed by such quotes from the Bible: 'The king's heart is like a stream of water directed by the Lord; he guides it wherever he pleases.'[11] The prime organ of the mortal body through which God supposedly directed the King, the heart was removed from the King's body after death and enshrined in a silver casket. Its power to legitimate the King's right to rule directly from God, independent of the will of the people, is exposed by *Black independent heart*, 2006, and *Red independent heart*, 2005. Twirling from the ceilings, the red passionate heart in the Salon of Peace and the black deathly heart in the Salon of War signalled the two compulsive obsessions of Louis XIV: sex and war.

Despite the central cameo in the Peace Salon showing Louis XIV giving peace to Europe, his reign was marked by wars, as signalled by Vasconcelos's black heart that dangled in front of his war trophies and the huge equestrian medallion in the War Salon depicting the Sun King mercilessly trampling his enemies.[12] That militarism was inherent to Versailles was also conveyed by *Lilicoptère* and by the juxtaposition of *Royal valkyrie*, *Golden valkyrie*, both 2012, and *Valkyrie trousseau*,



opposite
Red independent heart, 2005
Translucent red plastic cutlery, painted iron, metal chain, motor, sound installation, 371 x 220 x 75 cm
Collection Museu Colecção Berardo, Lisbon
Photograph Luís Vasconcelos. © Unidade Infinita Projectos

pages 268–9
Lilicoptère, 2012
Bell 47 helicopter, ostrich feathers, Swarovski crystals, gold leaf, industrial coating, dyed leather upholstery embossed with fine gold, Arraiolos rugs, walnut wood, wood grain painting, passementerie, 300 x 274 x 1265 cm
Produced in collaboration with Funadação Ricardo do Espírito Santo Silva, Lisbon
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris and Brussels, and Haunch of Venison, London
Photograph Luís Vasconcelos. © Unidade Infinita Projectos

2009, with the thirty-five war paintings in the Gallery of Battles. Yet as if to redress the absence of any signifier of femininity, this installation is named after the women who in Nordic mythology are not vanquished in battle but granted the power to decide who wins and loses and who can be brought to the hall of afterlife.

Defying the rectilinearity of this Battle Gallery, the three *Valkyries* seemed to spread like water beneath the vaulted ceiling. As distinct from the armour depicted in each battle painting, the *Valkyries* are made from the gold fabrics and exuberant floral brocades associated with femininity. Although they appear to glow with luxuriousness, just as *Red* and *Black independent heart* seem to glisten like intricate filigree and to radiate like the iconic Portuguese jewellery piece, the Heart of Viana, both are made over as kitsch.[13] While *Golden valkyrie* consists of false gold and industrial rather than handmade lace and textiles, and while *Lilicoptère* is coated with salmon pink and orange ostrich feathers and thousands of rhinestones, a close-focus lens on the *Black* and *Red independent heart* reveal that they are made of plastic mass-produced cutlery – the kind of chintzy knives, forks and spoons to be found at the cultural opposite of Versailles: McDonald's.

Just as Mary Poppins ruptured the Bankses' family, so Vasconcelos's installations threatened the official histories of Versailles by constantly alluding to their absences: the stories that are not told, the workers who are denied, the women who are disavowed and the kitsch that was banned. Replicating the spectacles of excess inside while stacking thousands of blue bottles of champagne outside until they reached the height of the fountains, Vasconcelos evoked the sated Versailles nobility and the starving commoners. As she explained: 'In the palace, in the court, money was spent like water, while at the same time, beyond the walls, people were wasting away.'[14]

Seeming to burst like clouds across these sumptuous spaces, Vasconcelos's rhizomatic artworks conjured her-stories rather than his-stories, metanarratives rather than grand narratives, to rupture the continuous, progressive and teleological histories of Versailles unfolded daily to thousands. Analogous to Gilles Deleuze's rhizome, they have no beginning or end.[15] With multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points, they appear 'always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo',[16] and able to transgress what Michel Foucault identifies as the rigid order of things in this classical episteme.[17] Hence in exposing the patriarchal militarism, the subjugation of women, the ostracism of commoners and their cultures of kitsch, Vasconcelos's rhizomatic installations ultimately ruptured the official histories of Versailles.

Joana Vasconcelos Versailles, Palace of Versailles, 19 June – 30 September 2012.

1 Rebecca Larmarche-Vadel, 'Interview with Joana Vasconcelos', in *Joana Vasconcelos Versailles*, exhibition catalogue, Skira Flammarion, Paris, 2012, p. 185.
2 ibid., p. 181.
3 ibid.: 'My work has long had Versailles as a subtext; it has its natural place in this environment, it's just that my pieces are made out of everyday objects, from commonplace things, and so the essential is a game of subversion.'
4 ibid.
5 ibid., p. 184.
6 ibid.
7 ibid.: Vasconcelos correlates this ambivalence with the ways in which protection not only incarcerated Portuguese women within the domestic sphere but also became 'a tool of emancipation'.
8 The ear-trumpet invented in the seventeenth century consisted of long horns, shaped as funnel-like cones, with a large opening at one end and a smaller one at the other. Sound pressure waves entering the large end were considered to be condensed into a smaller volume at the ear end to increase the audible sound pressure.
9 Antonia Fraser, *Love and Louis XIV: The Women in the Life of the Sun King*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2006, pp. 144–45. Molière's rehearsals for *Alceste* were held in her apartments in November 1673; she also promoted Molière's *Tartuffe*. I thank *ma belle mère*, the late Dr Gwen Fleming, for giving me this book.
10 Larmarche-Vadel, op. cit., p. 182.
11 Proverbs 21:1.
12 The main ones were Franco–Dutch, League of Augsburg and Spanish Succession wars.
13 'Coração Independente', in *Joana Vasconcelos Versailles*, exhibition catalogue, p. 24.
14 Larmarche-Vadel, op. cit., p. 182.
15 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi, Continuum, London and New York, 2004.
16 ibid., p. 23.
17 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences/Les Mots et les Choses: Une Archaéologie des Sciences Humaine*, Pantheon Books, London/Editions Gallimard, Paris, 1970/1966.

The pragmatic poetics of Theaster Gates

Lilly Wei

pages 278–9
12 Ballads for Huguenot House, 2012
Deconstructed timbers and other construction materials from 6901 South Dorchester, Chicago, video, sound
9.14 x 18.29 x 36.56 m
Courtesy the artist, Kavi Gupta, Chicago and Berlin, and White Cube, London
Photograph Nils Klinger

Invited to participate in documenta (13), Theaster Gates settled into Kassel as if it were Chicago's South Side. Born in 1973 and raised in Chicago's East Garfield Park, the charismatic Gates is what a renaissance man looks like today: a multi-tasker – an artist, designer, musician and composer – who works in multiple media. He is also an urban planner and developer, community organiser and cultural consultant and producer who oversees community-driven, neighbourhood revitalisations.

Gates's contribution to dOCUMENTA (13) was *12 ballads for Huguenot House*, 2012, a rehabilitation (he says 'mending') of a historic Kassel building that is closely related to his most exemplary work, the long-term, ongoing Dorchester Project. In 2006, Gates bought into Chicago's Grand Crossing neighbourhood, where many buildings remain vacant, boarded up, and gunshots can still be heard. He owns three handsomely, if quirkily, renovated multi-family dwellings from the late nineteenth century that constitute the Dorchester Project, which houses a 14,000-volume art and architecture library, a slide archive and a record collection. *12 ballads*, like the Dorchester Project, was a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. It exemplified Gates's memorable interpretation of Beuysian social sculpture-cum-urban renewal and restoration, with a nod to Houston's Project Row Houses, Gordon Matta-Clark, Rirkrit Tiravanija and relational theory, while quoting his other significant influence, Cesare Brandi, who wrote the standard text on the renewal of cities.

Huguenot House is a generously sized, sturdy, four-storey residence built in 1826. Located on a quiet street near the centre of town and not far from the Fridericianum – the eighteenth-century museum that is documenta's principal venue – the house later became a hotel. During the Second World War it sustained Allied bombing but remained intact while the buildings around it were reduced to rubble; however, not having been lived in since 1970, Huguenot House appeared a physical wreck. Before the one hundred days of dOCUMENTA (13), Gates and his team worked on it for over a year. Now he wants to turn it into an artists' residency for future documentas, maintaining the space he established – a gathering place where, every night, workers, artists and anyone else who wanders by will be welcomed; an ethos of hospitality that is similar to that of Dorchester. Gates said of the work:

> *Making space is something I feel really committed to. For dOCUMENTA, we built a space and I thought that would be the project – but it wasn't. Once the space was built, my team found that it had also created a community of dOCUMENTA artists and assistants and, before you knew it, there would be 150 people at a potluck.*[1]

One surprise visitor who knocked on the door was a former inhabitant, now in her seventies, who as a child hid in the cellar during the bombings, terrified. Gates keenly appreciated her many recollections of the house and neighbourhood.

Entering the courtyard from the street, visitors to dOCUMENTA (13) discovered an outdoor space designed by Gates and his team that was covered with fragrant cedar chips and furnished with tables, benches and a barbecue pit for community dinners. Across the way, Tino Sehgal could be found rehearsing his performance in the hotel's former salon. To the right, entering the house (and among other spaces), a study/schoolroom was in progress, with a green chalkboard and rescued, reconfigured schoolroom chairs. On two of the upstairs floors, comprising bedrooms and bathrooms, Gates designated a room for performances, a screening room with stepped seating, and an ample kitchen where food and drink seemed always in preparation. The place was bustling with young artists who were there to help Gates's assistants and his Chicago team.

Everything at Huguenot House was repurposed salvage, much of it stripped from Dorchester. In turn, Gates will take some of the scrap material from Kassel and ship it back to Chicago to

pages 282–3, clockwise from left
Dorchester house (front), 2006–, Dorchester Project, Chicago, photograph Peter Skvara; **View of Theaster (foreground) and Mikael during 12 Ballads for Huguenot House**, 2012; **View of Khari during 12 Ballads for Huguenot House**, 2012; and **Installation views of 12 Ballads for Huguenot House**, 2012. Courtesy Kavi Gupta, Chicago and Berlin, all photographs Young Sun Han; **12 Ballads for Huguenot House (front)**, 2012, deconstructed timbers and other construction materials from 6901 South Dorchester, Chicago, video, sound, 9.14 x 18.29 x 36.56 m. Courtesy the artist, Kavi Gupta, Chicago and Berlin, and White Cube, London, photograph Nils Klinger.

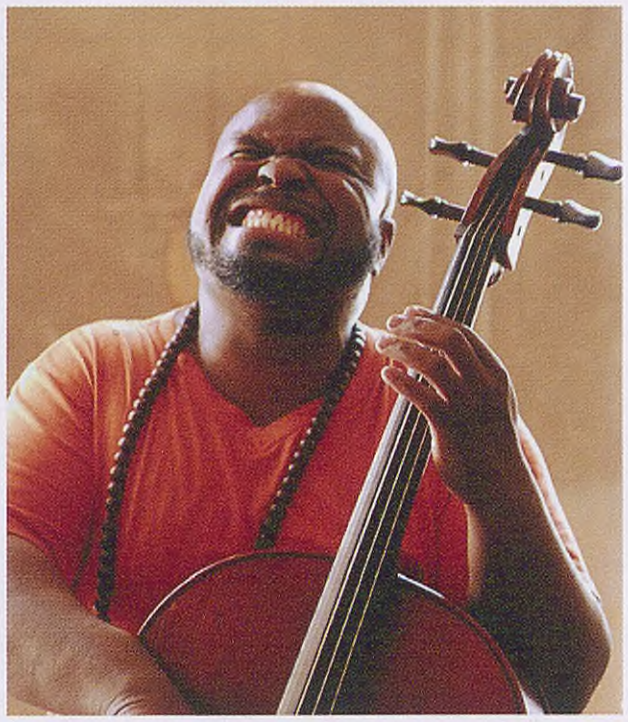
refurbish his project there, a completion of the cycle of exchange that is both ideological and clear-eyed. These abandoned buildings function 'like a palette, like other forms of raw material; they are cultural collateral. Dorchester has good bones and [is] in a lively neighborhood but it has no precedence, no provenance.'[2] Leveraging his dOCUMENTA (13) venture to elevate the value of these buildings so that they are perceived differently on the cultural scale, Gates's aim is to attract investors to further assist in the neighbourhood's restoration.

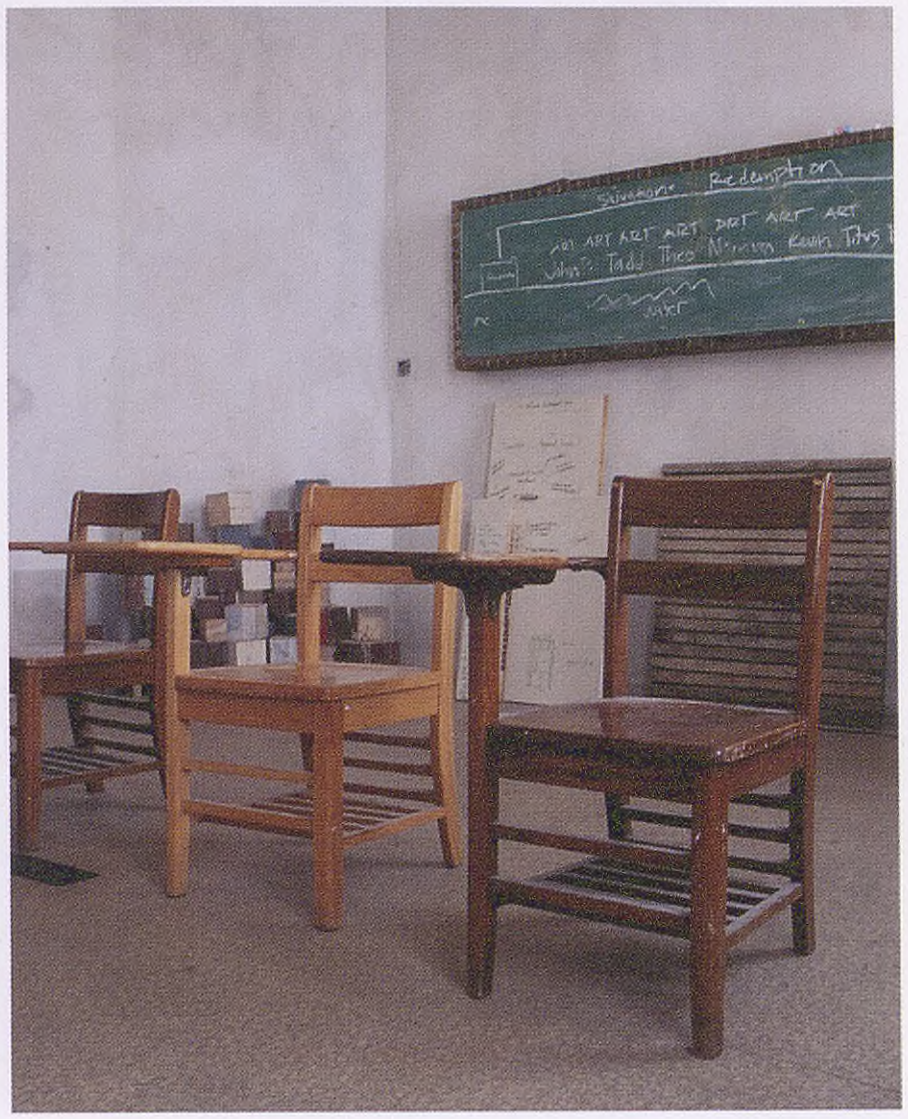
Huguenot House's interior looked homespun at first but that impression was quickly dispelled by its sophistication, shaped by an artist's sensitivity to scale, placement, the juxtaposition of materials, to colour, texture and light. Parts of the wall and ceiling had been removed to reveal the building's construction, to underline its past, effectively contrasting with the faded patterned wallpaper. Felt was carefully replaced by strips of wood to make wall art, ceiling art, floor art – all of which became aestheticised, framed by the artist's attentiveness. One detail that was particularly appealing was an illuminated glass-lantern slide (part of the archive at Dorchester) embedded in the wall at one landing. Another was a beautifully designed, gleaming white tile door, its rectangular sections outlined in oxblood red, like a variant on de stijl. There was also a small, charmingly idiosyncratic room with two narrow staircases facing each other. These were resplendently carpeted in old fabric and made for innovative chairs, places to lean against or to lay down a cup or book. Gates's sculptures were in abundant evidence: elegant assemblages made from Chicago cast-offs saved from the homes of African–Americans, freighted with the 'potent' narratives of their past histories. A minimalist of sorts, although an epic hoarder, Gates also works with stacks of plates embedded in concrete blocks and framed, tightly furled fire hoses, all of which (though not seen here) refer to black history and the contemplation and valorisation of black life.

Positioned on monitors throughout the house were twelve videos of performing jazz singers. Ingeniously installed, the sound muffled but reverberant, it was as if the resurrected house were breathing, remembering and rejoicing in its new life. The Black Monks of Mississippi, an ensemble that Gates has worked with for many years, were on hand and performed every night for the week of the preview, playing to a packed house, with rehearsals in the afternoons that kept the place filled with music. *12 ballads for Huguenot House* was the most communal event at dOCUMENTA (13), its jubilance underscored by a layered subtext of suffering, injustice, loss and endurance that is part of the poignancy of both sites' legacies.

Gates does not restrict himself to any one kind of venue or platform. What he finds exciting is the creation of new platforms, both non-profit and those that are financially sustainable: 'Art is one platform but if the art world isn't interested, aren't there other ways to grow outside of it?'[3] He is not troubled, for instance, by the commercialism of The Armory Show, for which he was the official, if unlikely, artist this year – although perhaps it was not such an odd choice since there is an acknowledged entrepreneurial side to his practice, essential to his urban renewal projects. The Armory Show, no less than dOCUMENTA (13), he believes, offered an opportunity for something 'poetic' to happen as well as something pragmatic. 'I don't know if I pulled it off but I was able to sit down and people – museum people, collectors, the curious – came to discuss things that were important to them.'[4] Even at an art fair, not every exchange is monetised, he said, although some necessarily are.

Gates works within institutions, of course, but often treats them as an active community space, as he did at the Seattle Art Museum recently. 'The Listening Room', a seven-month solo exhibition, transformed an upper-floor gallery into a Gates-style record store stocked with his distinctive, rehabilitated works and furnishings. The heart of the exhibition was a generous selection from the

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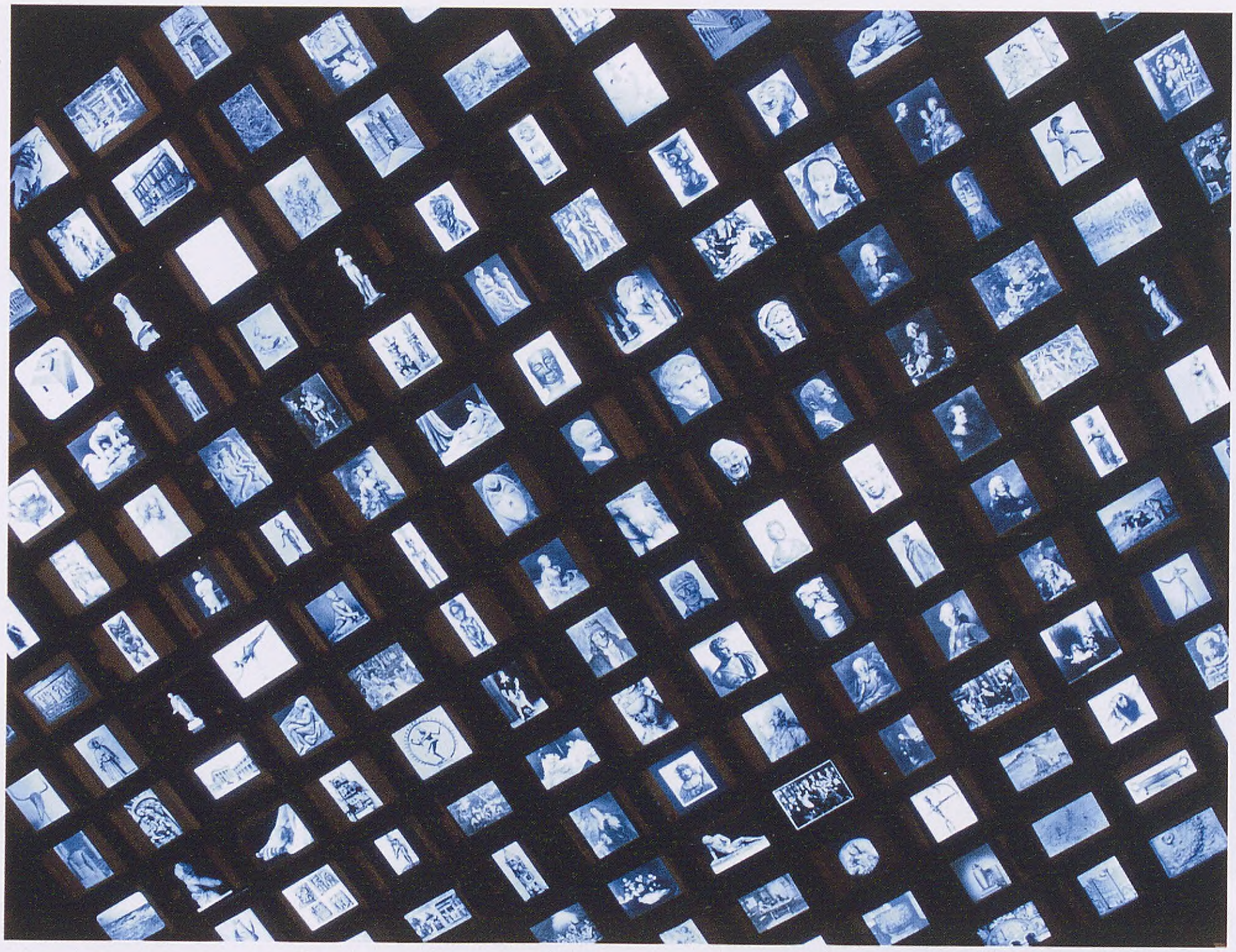
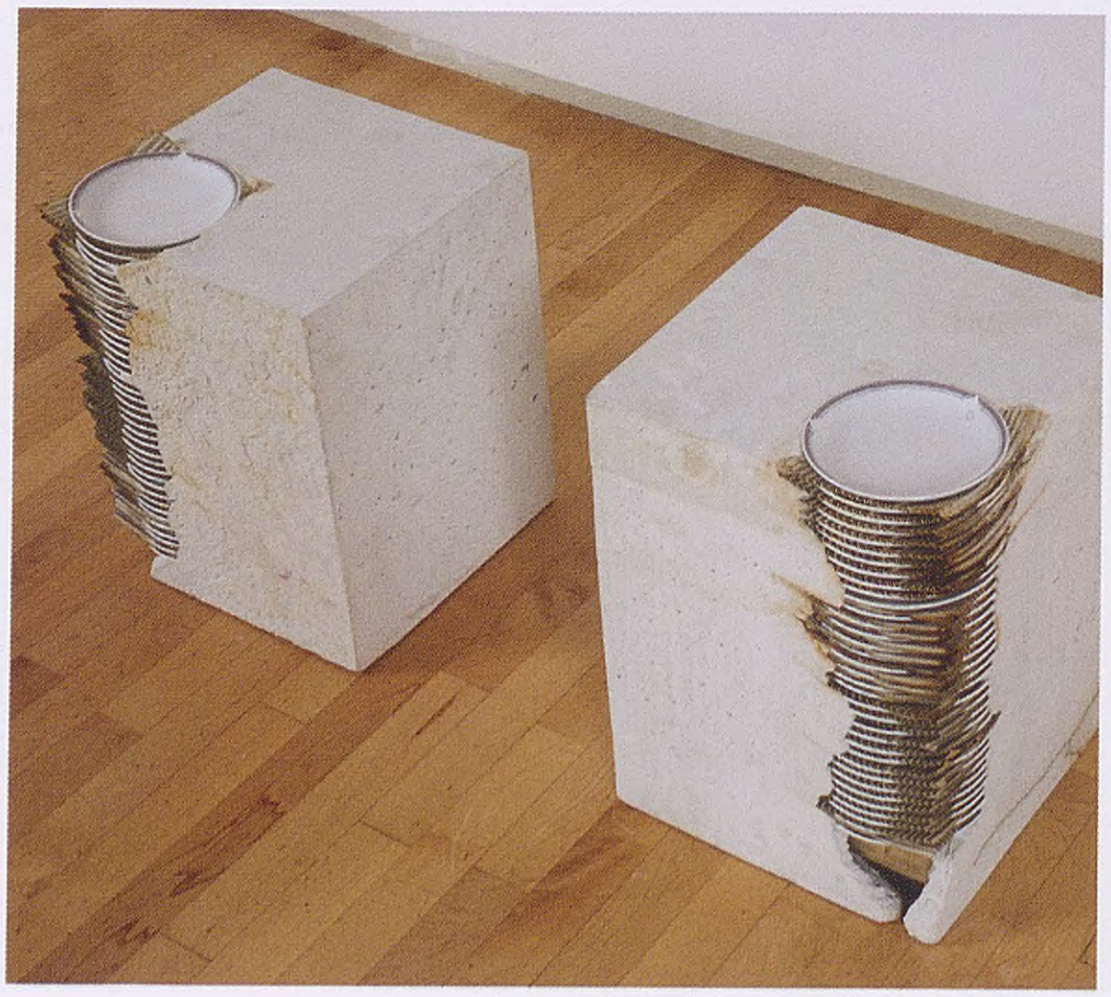




opposite, top and bottom right
Glass-lantern slide pavilion, 2011
Reclaimed wood, hose, wire, metal, 245 glass-lantern slides, LEDs
243.8 x 213.4 x 213.4 cm
Courtesy Kavi Gupta, Chicago and Berlin
Photograph Young Sun Han

opposite, bottom left
Epitaph for Civil Rights and other domesticated structures, 2011
Installation view
Courtesy Kavi Gupta, Chicago and Berlin
Photograph Young Sun Han

8000-plus vinyl records stored at Dorchester that represents four decades of black music, of jazz, blues and R & B. This selection was purchased from Dr Wax, a legendary South Side Chicago record store before it shut in 2010. Visitors were encouraged to play the records, highlighting music's role in the dissemination of culture and political protest and revealing how archiving and sharing contribute to cultural memory and the creation of new voices. Gates explored these same themes at New York's Whitney Biennial in 2010, which he was invited to by biennial curator Francesco Bonami after his visit to the Dorchester Project in 2009.

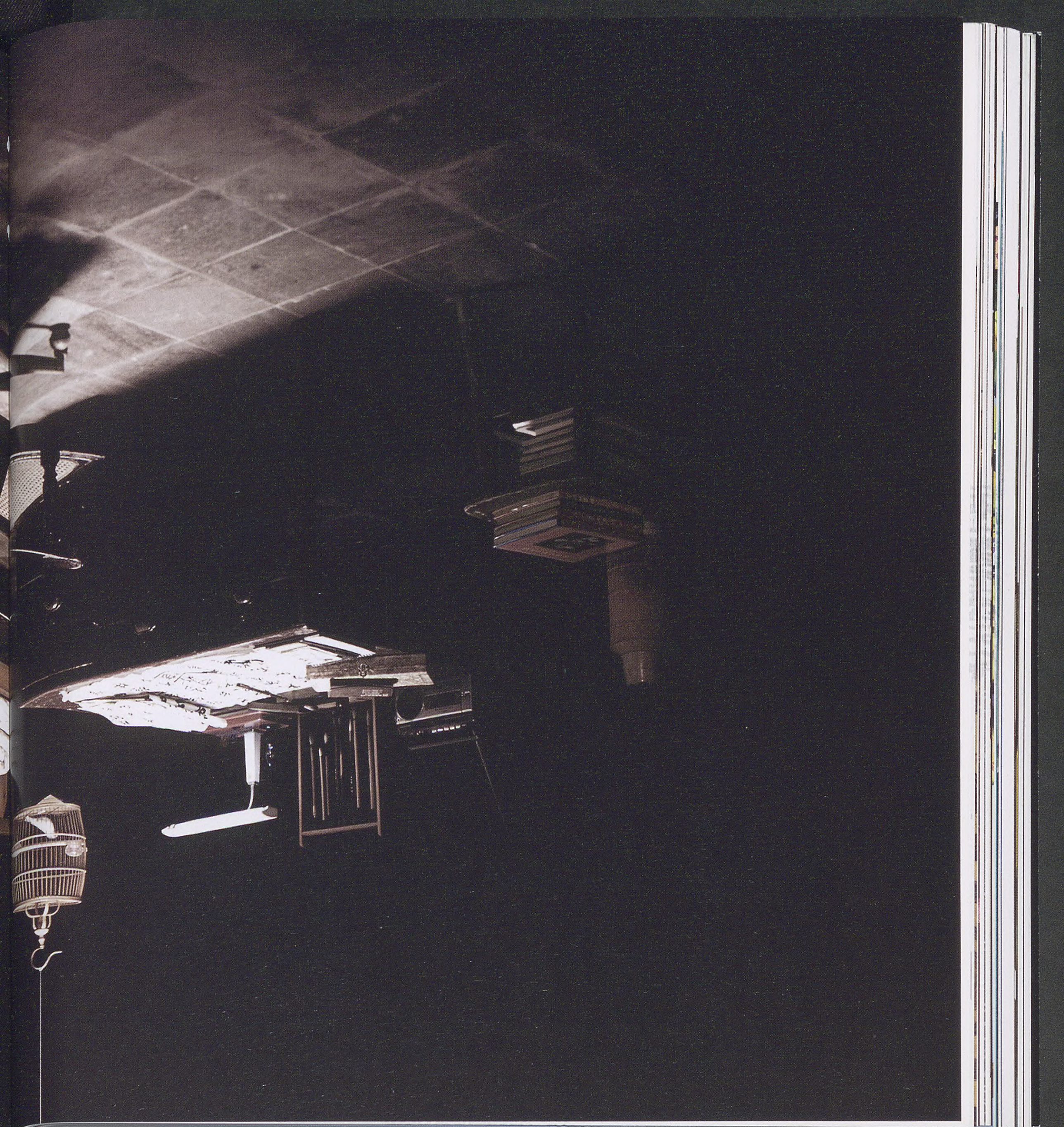
Just five years ago, Gates was unable to find a gallery that would show his hybrid projects, so he held his own event, a tightly choreographed dinner party that was also a performance called *Plate convergence*, 2007, at the Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago. 'People came', he said of the locals, artists and other art-world figures in attendance, 'they all came.'[5] Gates created a story for the performance centred on a fictive pottery commune in Mississippi founded in the 1960s by a fictive Japanese ceramicist, Yamaguchi, who had fled Hiroshima, married a black civil rights activist, and instituted a ritual called Plate Convergences – conversations over dinners regarding race, political differences and social inequities. Yamaguchi made ceramic plates specifically for the 'black food' served at the dinners and these plates (actually made by Gates) became part of the so-called Yamaguchi Institute Collection. The collection was represented with a video at the Hyde Park Art Center. Broadening and concluding the tale, Gates claimed Yamaguchi as his mentor and explained that he and his wife died in a car accident in 1991; the couple's 'son' then founded the Yamaguchi Institute to continue their vision of social transformation. Gates said of the performance:

> *I made ceramic plates, videotaped highly curated dinners and found a space for an exhibition of the ceramics and video. We gave a huge Japanese soul-food dinner, made by a Japanese chef and my sister, in honour of the Yamaguchis … A young mixed-race artist enacted the role of their son and thanked everyone for coming. The whole thing duped a lot of people.*[6]

It was Gates's breakthrough and, from local celebrity, he soon became a national and international name with exhibitions that followed at the Milwaukee Art Museum, the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. From February to June of 2012, Chicago's Smart Museum of Art featured a series of dinner parties that Gates organised in the group exhibition 'Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art'.

But for Gates, *Plate convergence* will always be his most important show. From it he learned that 'if I had the courage to make work outside the institution, then institutions might actually be interested in the work'.[7] It taught him that culture comes in many guises and these guises are never irrelevant. Gates wants to continue to share what he believes has value – making music, listening to it, making objects, talking, preparing and eating food together, creating a place. He wants to make it as widely, as potently accessible as he can, so that it is about opportunity, easing the bitterness of African–American exclusion specifically, and of human exclusion universally; history re-set.

1 Conversation with the artist at Huguenot House, Kassel, 6 June 2012.
2 Conversation with the artist at his studio in Chicago, 4 August 2011.
3 Conversation with the artist at Huguenot House, Kassel, 6 June 2012.
4 ibid.
5 Lilly Wei, 'Theaster Gates: In the studio', *Art in America*, December, 2011, p. 121.
6 ibid., p. 122.
7 ibid.



A restless mind:

The video art of Yuan Goang-ming

Iris Shu-Ping Huang

opposite
The reason for running, 1998
Video projection installation, projector, screen with phosphor powder, custom device, computer
Courtesy the artist and TKG+, Taipei and Beijing
© Yuan Goang-ming, 2012

City disqualified: Ximen District at night, 2002
Digitally altered Lambda photograph, 255 x 320 cm
Courtesy the artist and TKG+, Taipei and Beijing
© Yuan Goang-ming, 2012

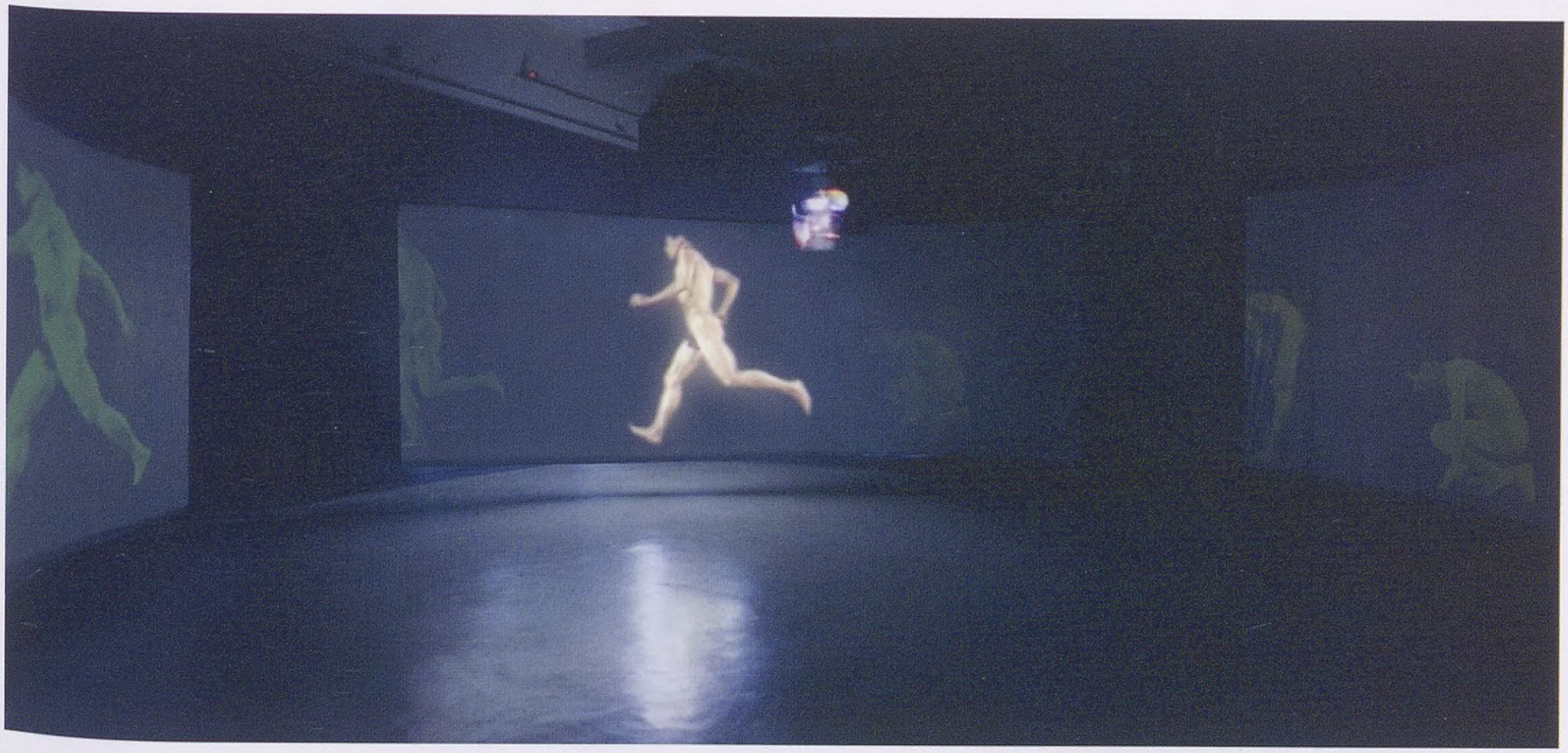
THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER, Taiwan-based artist Yuan Goang-ming has framed his critical thinking on *Dasein*[1] with a perpetual condition of anxiety. He takes inspiration from everyday experiences, the kind that activate human intuition and instinct, and focuses on the phenomenological in his practice. Yuan favours the juxtaposition of an extraordinary vision with ordinary, mundane elements. His techniques of expressing and manipulating inner states of mind often involve speed, which embodies a tension in his connection with the external world. In Yuan's early works from the 1990s, *Fish on dish*, 1992, and *The reason for running*, 1998, he exploits moving images to convey an inner state of fatigue that nonetheless persists in a constant forward movement: the fish swimming incessantly in the restricted space of a round dish, or nonstop running with no beginning. Both works indicate the artist's state of mind during that period, as well as representing the contemporaneous Zeitgeist desperately in search of a raison d'être.

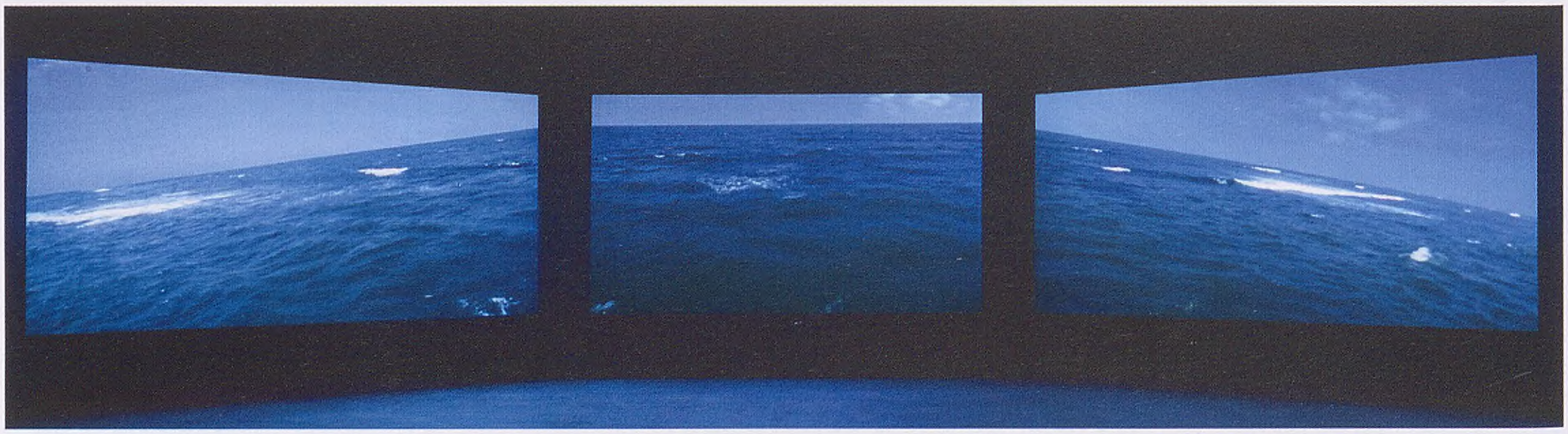
The narrative of Yuan's 2011 work *Disappearing landscape: Passing II*, which appears at Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, for the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, is reconstructed to centre on 'home'. Here the artist's anxiety and restlessness seem to have found a reason for passing through or experiencing *being*, or Dasein. In past works such as *City disqualified*, 2002–04, and *Disappearing landscape: October*, *November* and *December*, all 2007, Yuan focuses largely on his own internal states. He disrupts the potential of the everyday, the visible traces of which are regularly edited out through post-production, and this extremely compressed imagery exposes the everyday Dasein in vacuous solitude. In the past the artist has antagonised the uncanny of the everyday through a subversive lens, but now, in *Disappearing landscape: Passing II*, this infinitely disrupted state of compression/suppression undergoes a significant transformation.

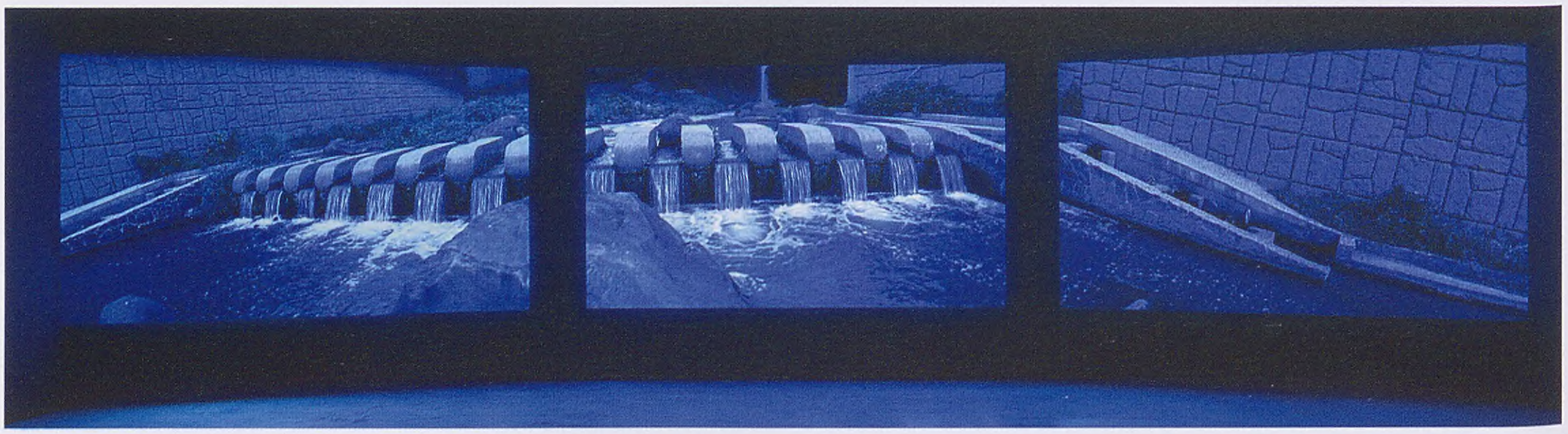
Disappearing landscape: Passing II engages the 'home'. In a continuation of *Disappearing landscape: Passing I*, 2007, all the features – the father, wife and daughter; the newly constructed family house among the ruins; as well as the sea that embraces all these beings – allow Yuan to frame an even more complete picture of his cultural context: a kind of *Sorge*[2] close to his own heart. In 2007 the artist chose to move from inner-city Taipei to the estuarial Tamhai New Town, where numerous crumbling villas had been built with concrete contaminated by marine sand. Compared to the overdeveloped Taipei City, this new area of ill-conceived and hasty developments bears, in the artist's opinion, a poetics of decadence as well as a spatial quality of contradiction belonging to its locality. Through the disappearing landscape – the ruins – Yuan illustrates a space betrayed by history, a wound awaiting cure. The symbolic image of 'hole', as depicted in one of Tsai Ming-liang's films,[3] is an outlet of desire, an escape from alienation; in Yuan's work, the hole is a metaphor for the abandoned homes riddled with hurt. It is also a window through which the artist forever glimpses the unknown and anxious future; the hole is a penetration into the subconscious.

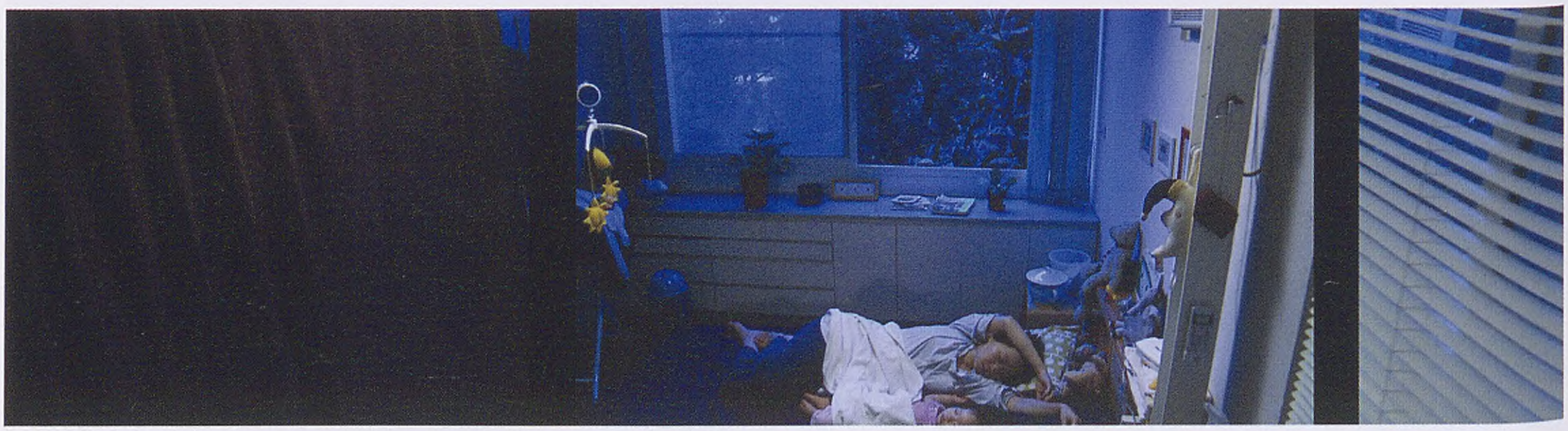
The video *Disappearing landscape: Passing II* opens with a state of drifting, as if buoyant near the surface of the water; it then dives into the deep darkness of the ocean, where the image of home slowly emerges. Next, an underground culvert appears, where running water directs our vision from the cavernous interior to the external world. Flowing through the artist's reminiscence of the past and the present house, we are again confronted with imagery of the sea. These symbols – the sea and flowing water – are undoubtedly key to the context of *Disappearing landscape: Passing II*. The sea is cast not only as the nightmare that has haunted the artist for many years ('I have a recurring dream that goes like this: On a late, cold and moonlit night I gradually become aware of a body floating on a boundless sea'[4]), but also as the origin of his art – the anxiety for the endlessly drifting Dasein, as well as his struggle and resistance against this condition.

The imagery and meaning of the sea motif, which Yuan has returned to throughout his practice, becomes clear in *Disappearing landscape: Passing II*. The sea is where the artist's *origin* lies (*yuan*









opposite
Disappearing landscape: Passing II, 2011
installation views and video stills, three-channel video installation with sound, 9 mins 14 secs duration
Courtesy the artist and TKG+, Taipei and Beijing
© Yuan Goang-ming, 2012

pages 286–7
Disappearing landscape: Passing II, 2011
Video still, three-channel video installation with sound, 9 mins 14 secs duration
courtesy the artist and TKG+, Taipei and Beijing
© Yuan Goang-ming, 2012

in Chinese, which could also mean 'circle', 'completeness', 'contentment'); it also resonates with the connotation of 'home' as Taiwan, a home that undergoes a never-ending series of changes in the rolling waves of history. From the artist's family – his father, Japanese wife and newborn daughter – to the new home built with the artist's own hands, as well as the surrounding empty houses deserted after the failed urban regeneration, the meaning of 'home' is represented in *Disappearing landscape: Passing II* in various, complex and contrary ways.

To the artist's aged father, the diaspora caused by the Chinese Civil War meant that 'home' only existed in memory. In 2009, Yuan experienced both the joy of his daughter's birth and sadness of his father's passing. This image of disappearance in *Disappearing landscape: Passing II*, when the camera glides over the father's vacant bed, is coupled with a passage from the celebrated Peking opera *Yang Silang Visits His Mother*.[5] Imagery that represents the home or origin of the past is overlaid with a singing voice reverberating a tune that expresses forlorn hope for return to the hometown and for reunion with the mother. At the same time, it echoes with the artist's father's nostalgia for the hometown in mainland China, and with Yuan's dear memories of his father.

In *The cage*, 1995, and both *Disappearing landscape* works the father's influence on Yuan's visual language is made apparent. *Disappearing landscape: Passing II* was created in memory of his father and in it 'father' is a metaphor for the home/origin of the artist. His father's passing induced in Yuan a longing for home, a 'home' that can only be reconstructed through the emptiness of being. In the bed, where the memory of the father lingers, where his silhouette is absent, now rest peacefully the artist's wife and daughter; this is now the new home/origin. In the new home Yuan built on the ruins, he experienced the nature of disappearance and rediscovered the veins of his identity, contextualising the French urban theorist Henri Lefebvre's remark, 'if space is produced, if there is a productive process, then we are dealing with history'.[6] The imagery of home Yuan creates, either the newly built home or the representation of his father's house from memory, or even the work *Disappearing landscape: Passing II* itself, deals with Taiwan's tangled history through the 'disappearance' and 'passing' of time. *Disappearing landscape: Passing II* interlaces the natural qualities, regionalism and social dimensions of space in a temporal and spatial matrix, creating a new cultural landscape slowly reborn in the gaping wound of decay; it is a self-generating context that belongs to Yuan Goang-ming.

If we interpret the headlong tracking shots in *Disappearing landscape: Passing II* as an ideological passing-through, as well as a thoroughfare to and penetration of the meanings of home and Dasein, an opening or window is necessary as the current of time *in passing* riddles the home with myriad breaks and breaches. Through these penetrating passages, through the flows of sea water, we may find the origins of our never-ending state of drifting.

7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, 8 December 2012 – 14 April 2013.

1 *Dasein* is German word that literally means 'being there'. Dasein philosophically refers to the experience of being. It is a term that encompasses the issues of being-in-the-world for a human being: personhood, mortality and the dilemma of living in the world. By using this expression, I explore the notion of existential identity.
2 *Sorge* is a concept initially described by German philosopher Martin Heidegger. It means care, worry: the anxiety that refers to being-in-the-world. Sorge signifies a meaningful existence through authentic concern and the awareness of temporality that constitutes the relationship of a human being to the world.
3 Tsai Ming-liang is a Malaysia-born Taiwanese art director. In his several renowned films, such as *Vive L'Amour* (1994) and *The Hole* (1998), he places great emphasis on the state of human relations in the postmodern urban dystopias of Taiwan in the aftermath of the 'economic miracle'. Alienation is an essential subject and he particularly likes to express the uncanny quality of 'home'. In his fourth feature, *The Hole*, the image of the 'hole' indicates an emptiness to be filled, awaiting repair.
4 'Artist statement', *Before Memory*, exhibition catalogue, Tina Keng Gallery, Taiwan, 2011.
5 *Yang Silang Visits His Mother* is a classic of the Peking Opera. The story follows Yang Silang, a general's son who was captured in battle and lived under a different identity for fifteen years, as he finally returns home to visit his mother.
6 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Blackwell, London, 1991, p. 46.

To hold a memory:

Gao Rong's 'static eternity'

Summar Hipworth

A humble single-roomed home occupied the Art Gallery of New South Wales as part of the 18th Biennale of Sydney: all our relations. Gao Rong's installation, *The static eternity*, 2012, invites you in, not as a guest but, more importantly, as a witness. As you scan across the seemingly worn surfaces of furniture, photographs and personal items, you sense a strange stillness: every object seems heavy with history, yet something is missing. Slowly, you realise that the eroding surface of a chimney flue is not rust-eaten metal, but meticulously embroidered fabric. Every object, every surface, has been re-created to scale with almost perfect simulacrum. You are not standing in someone's reconstructed home; you are submerged in the artist's memory, materialised stitch by stitch through the painstaking process of embroidery.

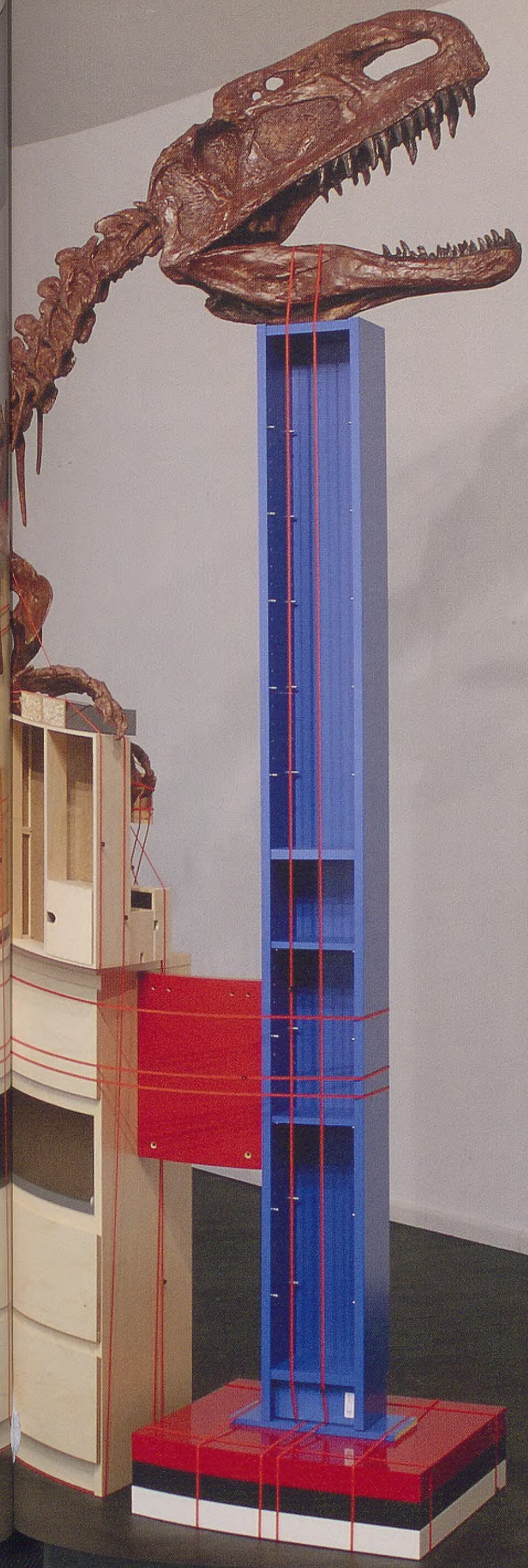
Following the loss of her grandparents, Gao Rong returned from Beijing to Inner Mongolia in search of their home. For Gao Rong, the relationship between the domestic interior and the internal self is significant. The orchestration of space through the arrangement of objects, no matter how basic our needs or belongings, embodies who we are. In our absence, it stands as testament to those small everyday actions that hint at the grander narratives defining our lives. *The static eternity* also comprises documentary footage of Gao Rong's search. She discovers that

her grandparents' home had 'sunk', had just slid away with other debris and only a door remained, propped up against a sheep pen. With determination she declares that they must find another example of a home that reconciles with her memory of the space she inhabited as a child. Her earnest pursuit, as she rummages through local homes searching for entranceways, furniture, and peeling paint to trigger her memory, is heart-rending. There is a moment when she stops in front of a long crack in a wall. Her eyes slowly trace its erratic spread across the surface, as if she is mentally following a crack she once knew intimately in her grandparents' home. With this, Gao Rong is satisfied she has found the necessary references to give sculptural form to her longing.

It is poignant that Gao Rong identifies with the memory of her grandparents in the material characteristics of their home. A self-described homebody, Gao Rong understands the domestic interior as a refuge. In a 2010 work entitled *Level 1/2, unit 8, building 5, Hua Jiadi, North Village*, Gao Rong re-created with great care the entrance to a cheap inner-city apartment where she had lived alone. Through her needlework the front door becomes symbolic of the threshold between the outside world and the interior space. Protectively, this interior is not revealed. In *The static eternity*, however, the complete inner room is laid bare, allowing you to witness the possible tender moments that her laboured technique so lovingly evokes.

There is a beautiful moment towards the end of the film when Gao Rong, her mother and her siblings attend the grandparents' gravesite to give thanks and pray for the health and happiness of their family. A little boy asks the cameraman if ghosts are afraid of rocks being thrown at them. When the cameraman asks him if he's scared, he bravely admits that he is. The cameraman responds with kindness, telling the boy that, yes, ghosts are scared of rocks. The boy seems satisfied that with a rock in hand, for now, he doesn't have to confront any ghosts. Yet for Gao Rong, *The static eternity* is a deliberate act of calling up ghosts, a way of facing loss by materialising loss itself. By giving sculptural form to what is otherwise ephemeral, where every single stitch is considered, Gao Rong captures a memory, in order to safely return to it later. It is nostalgia but in its most honourable form – a memorial to family that a home so completely encapsulates.

Gao Rong, The static eternity, 2012
Cloth, wire, sponge, cotton, steel support, board, 500 x 400 x 300 cm
Installation view, Art Gallery of New South Wales for the
18th Biennale of Sydney: all our relations (2012)
Courtesy the artist
Photograph Ben Symons



Dreams of home:

CLAIRE HEALY AND SEAN CORDEIRO

Jacqueline Millner

opposite, top
Cordial home project, 2003
Six type-C LED prints, each 50.8 x 76.2 cm, installation of an entire house at Artspace, Sydney
Courtesy the artists and Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney
Photograph Liz Ham

opposite, bottom
Wohnwagen (Flatpack / Past times), 2006–07
Six Lambda prints, each 29 x 42 cm, process and installation photos, entire deconstructed caravan, euro pallets and crates; **Flatpack** at Kunstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, and **Past times** at Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne
Courtesy the artists and Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney
Photograph the artists and John Brash

According to the UNHCR, less than 1 per cent of the world's refugees are resettled in any given year. In 2009, more than 5.7 million refugees remained trapped in protracted situations with little hope of finding a solution in the near future.[1]

The five IKEA stores on Australia's east coast reportedly get 10 million visitors a year. The chain plans to open a third Sydney store in the near future, citing Australia's relatively young median age and high birth rate by OECD standards as ideal for business.[2]

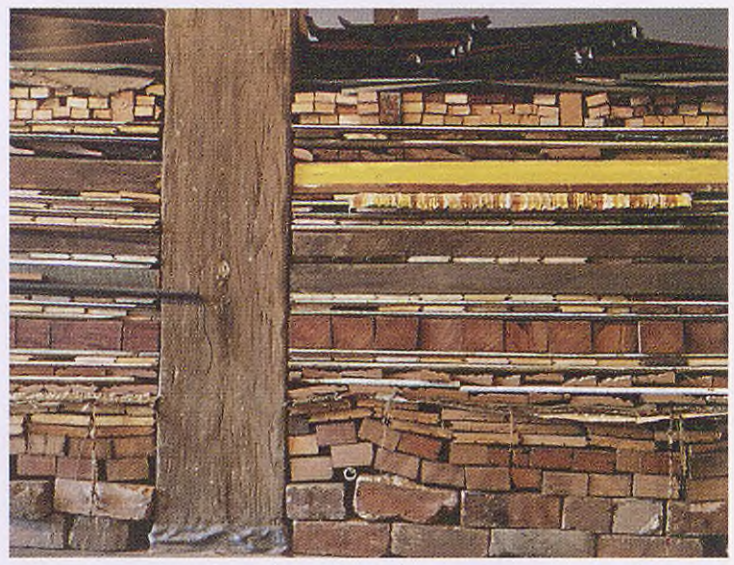
'Home starts by bringing some space under control', according to eminent sociologist Mary Douglas.[3] To feel 'at home' in the world means to sense that what we do has some effect and what we say carries some weight.[4] Dreams of home are hence dreams of agency and belonging. Consumerism promises us agency and belonging through the purchasing decisions we make, a message most effectively delivered in relation to the private sphere that coheres in our homes. By contrast, to be suspended in the agonising limbo of not knowing if or when we will ever have a home is to be utterly without agency.

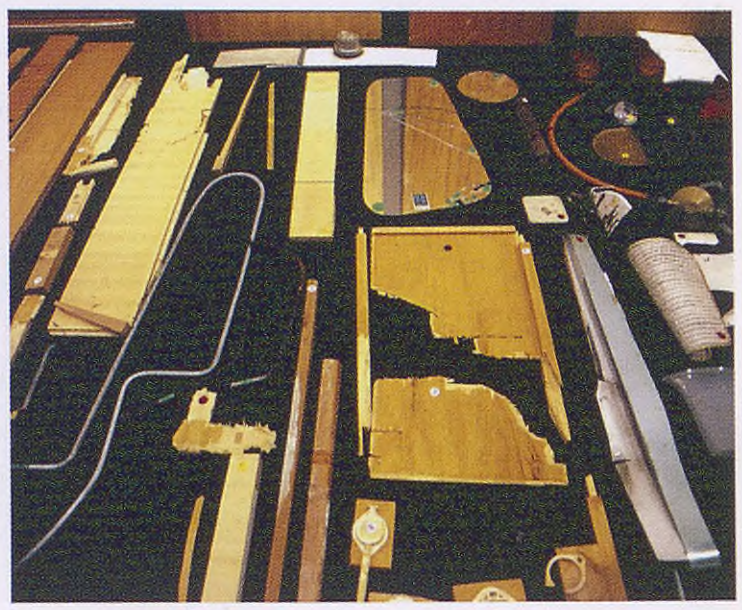
Home – whether we think of it as a dwelling, a homeland, or a network of relationships – is a fundamental human need that is constitutive of us as subjects. In certain postcolonial writing, home is conceived as a clearly defined space where the subject feels secure and free of desire, while migration is represented as exceptional encounters with strange people and places associated with perpetual feelings of homelessness and loss of identity.[5] Yet home is defined by the very movement away from it: when one ventures into the world, the movement itself occurs in relation to home. Movement and dislocation are intrinsic to home; home always involves encounters between those who stay, those who arrive and those who leave.[6] Yet, whether we *control* the circumstances of our passage appears to be key to our capacity to make ourselves at home.

For some 'exiles', choosing displacement can signify privilege rather than loss of agency. John Berger recently underlined this when he visibly winced at the suggestion that his decision to leave England for France several decades ago granted him a particularly empathetic perspective for writing about the plight of the *sans papiers*.[7] This is not to say, however, that even the displacement we choose is without trauma. In examining her own history of adult migration, writer Nancy Huston concluded that despite her expert grasp of the language and culture of France, she will always be regarded as an outsider because she did not have a French childhood. No matter how close or far in time, our childhood is always with us, over-determining notions of home.[8] For Gaston Bachelard, our childhood home is our 'first universe'.[9] Whether or not in reality a place of refuge, it 'shelters our daydreaming, cradles our thoughts and memories and provides us with a sense of stability', remaining throughout our lives 'physically inscribed in us'.[10]

Home, then, has profound political, economic and psychological dimensions, bringing together 'memory and longing, the affective and the physical, the spatial and the temporal, the local and the global'.[11] It is central to the concerns of a globalised world marked by massive displacements of people, structural inequality, and ever-escalating consumption despite shrinking resources and ecological crisis. And home remains integral to notions of self and personal agency. Little wonder then that contemporary artists have been drawn to home as a theme, although few have explored it with as much wit, aesthetic verve and ethical complexity as Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro. Over the past decade, the constantly travelling pair's practice has embodied the politics of consumption and displacement at the heart of 'home', while always foregrounding the role of art and the artist in negotiating this terrain.

In much of Healy and Cordeiro's work, home is figured as a process of ordering, arrangement and aesthetic evaluation: although nothing is discarded, everything is accommodated within the composition.





opposite
Not under my roof, 2008
Floor of entire farmhouse from Millmerran, Queensland, wood, linoleum, and photograph, 107 x 101 cm (framed), installation view, the Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, for 'Contemporary Australia: Optimism' (2008)
Courtesy the artists and Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney
Photograph Natasha Harth

For the artists, making a home is about finding an appropriate place for all the random elements of their lives, about claiming their own space, identity and story by artfully accumulating what others have left behind, or the waste they themselves have created over time. It is a raking over, a re-evaluation, of the traces of everyday living. In *Deceased estate*, 2004, and *Takadanobaba*, 2006, the artists, while clearing a space to begin their own residency, transformed the entire detritus left by the previous artist-occupants into sculptures of compelling colour and composition. *Hoard* and *Hamper (9 months and a hangover)*, both 2006, by contrast are formal and material reflections on the artists' own consumption, their eating, drinking, reading, packing and shipping. In *Self-storage*, 2006, the artists arranged all the trappings of the domestic life they were leaving behind in Australia within a glasshouse.

The analogy between home-making and making art is consistently evident in Healy and Cordeiro's work. This analogy is rendered literal by the incorporation of IKEA products in a number of their sculptures and installations, including the series 'Lack' (2006), comprising books displayed according to idiosyncratic categories on standard shelves, and the tongue-in-cheek *Dust to dust*, 2008, featuring pulverised Lack coffee tables encased in glass and oak vitrines. It is clear that Healy and Cordeiro have themselves participated in that quintessential contemporary consumer ritual of following the arrows through the megastore's affordable design showroom, impelled by dreams of a better home. Their work captures the ambivalent relationship many of us have with IKEA: a complex bundle of self-abjection, hope and bemusement. IKEA constructs us as conformist mall-rats focused on enhancing the tiny private realm within our control, and keeps us from grappling with the outrages of the public sphere, including the fact that many millions have no home. But on the other hand, IKEA can be seen as part of the Bauhaus tradition of democratising the best design and seeking to improve social conditions through aestheticising everyday domestic environments. IKEA's dreams of home reflect and even help to nurture real affective relationships, as well as providing sometimes rare opportunities for creativity.

In *Future furnishings*, 2011, the artists reiterate their ambivalence towards this purveyor of mass-consumption ideas of home. An enormous dinosaur fossil stands astride a mound of neatly strung IKEA storage units, recalling Godzilla monstering the Tokyo skyline; on an adjacent wall are IKEA-style pictorial instructions for assembling the dinosaur model. At one level, the contrast between the timeless monumentality of the dinosaur and the casual disposability of the furniture highlights the illusion at the heart of IKEA's home-making ideals; on another, the same juxtaposition – together with the instruction diagram – speaks of the childlike pleasure of bringing together whatever disparate elements are at hand to construct spaces for new imaginaries. The conjunction between home-making and making art is once more underlined, not only in the artists' own practice but also of the creativity inherent in everyday activities.

Healy and Cordeiro explore the creative possibilities of home, but also its melancholy foreclosures, notably in a series of works that literally take apart once-functional dwellings. In *The cordial home project*, 2003, the artists dismantled an archetypal 1950s suburban house, carved up its components, and stacked these into a compact formal monolith, mobilising a still resonant set of questions. What is the relationship between physical house and social household? Where does the affective register of home reside? How is 'home' reified and commodified? The finished work compressed the house's former presence to oblivion so that not even its minimalist bravado could cover a sense of loss. Loss and the ethical dilemma of witnessing the meagre remains of a stranger's life also pervade works made from a dismembered caravan that was once an elderly woman's long-time home. *Flatpack*, 2006, displayed the chainsawed parts in neat stacks on palettes awaiting shipment, while *Past times*, 2007, splayed them as if in a post-mortem examination.

The artists' complex evocation of home as a space of


AUSATLAS
WESTERMA
BERKELEY CENTRAL
Deutschland
Ferienparadie
kalifornien
BEAUTIFUL
DER NEUE GROS
tur verstehen
REISE U
Natur erleben-
ELLATLAS 83 84
Südsee
TENEBRE
Hongkong
Naturwunder u
Neuer großer
Weltatlas
1988 LETS GO:US
DIE GROSSE S
DIE SCHÖNSTEN REIS
FERIENZIELE IN DEU
BERTELSMA
M DIE WELT
TOATLAS 1993/94
BAYERN
Schweiz Suisse
Schönes Deutschla
Europa
EISELEXIKON
holistic london
Neuer großer

unavoidable contradiction that is 'lived in the tension between the given and the chosen, then and now, here and there',[12] was particularly poignant in *Not under my roof*, 2008 – the floor of an abandoned farmhouse displaced to the gallery wall. With shouts of domestic conflict echoing in its title and traces of private lives physically embedded in the carpet and lino, this work is acutely discomforting: it materially enacts the severance of bodies from both the space and the ideal of home.

Combining virtuosic responsiveness to space and materials, acute self-awareness of their role as globally connected artists, and humour-laced empathy for our enduring desire to feel at home in the world, Healy and Cordeiro bring to their treatment of the fundamental human experience of home a unique perspective.

Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 4 October – 2 December 2012. A&

opposite, top
World lack, 2006
Customised travel books and IKEA (Lack) bookshelves, 79 x 110 x 27 cm
Private collection, Sydney
Courtesy the artists and Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney

opposite, bottom
Self storage, 2006
Lambda print, 26 x 41.5 cm, installation of the artists' personal possessions and glasshouse at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Courtesy the artists and Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney
Photograph Jenni Carter

page 296–7
Future remnant, 2011
Dinosaur fossil replica, cable binding, IKEA items
285 x 180 x 485 cm (irregular)
Courtesy the artists and Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney

1 Federal Parliamentary Library fact sheet, Jan., 2011; 'Campaign under way to increase refugee resettlement places in Europe', *The Guardian*, 16 August 2012.
2 Rosalie Higson, 'A nation of flatpackers', *The Australian*, 3 December 2011.
3 Mary Douglas, 'The idea of a home: A kind of space', *Social Research*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1991, p. 289, cited in Shelley Mallett, 'Understanding home: A critical review of the literature', *Sociological Review*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2004, pp. 62–89.
4 M. Jackson (ed.), *At Home in the World*, Harper Perennial, Sydney, 1995, p. 123.
5 Mallett, op. cit.
6 S. Ahmed, 'Home and away: Narratives of migration and estrangement', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1999, p. 340.
7 John Berger interviewed by France Culture, Avignon Festival, July 2012.
8 Nancy Huston, *Nord Perdu*, Lemeac Editeur Inc., Paris, 1999.
9 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1969.
10 Jackson, op. cit., p. 86.
11 N. Rapport and A. Dawson, *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement*, Berg, Oxford, 1998, p. 8.
12 Jackson, op. cit., p. 148.

Robert Hughes (1938–2012), 1996
Photograph Rex Dupain. Collection National Portrait Gallery, Canberra

Review, Summer 2012

Exhibition reviews

The 18th Biennale of Sydney: all our relations; Ai Weiwei: Interlacing; Damien Hirst; Australian Symbolism: The Art of Dreams; Ancestral Modern: Australian Aboriginal Art from the Kaplan & Levi Collection; La Triennale 2012: Intense Proximity; Made Active: The Chartwell Show; Beyond Likeness; No Added Sugar; Animal/Human; In-Habit

Books

Permanent Revolution; Contemporary Art: World Currents; Art After Deconstruction; Cosmopolitanism and Culture; Four Honest Outlaws; Australian Art and Artists in London, 1950–1965; The Longing; Autumn Laing; Denise Green; Nest; An Opening; Sunday's Garden; Rosemary Laing; Hossein Valamanesh; Tim Storrier; Rebecca Salter

Tribute

Robert Hughes, Adam Cullen, Michael Callaghan, Gulumbu Yunupingu, David Band

Gertrude Contemporary and Art & Australia Emerging Writers Program

Ash Kilmartin

Art & Australia / Credit Suisse Private Banking Contemporary Art Award

Britt Salt

The 18th Biennale of Sydney: all our relations

Daniel Palmer

The 18th Biennale of Sydney: all our relations was the first in its almost forty-year history to be jointly curated. Much was made of this curatorial conversation, with Belgian Catherine de Zegher bringing her expertise in drawing to the task, and Canadian Gerald McMaster mining his experience of working in museological and Indigenous contexts. Together, they assembled more than one hundred artists from forty-four countries – including many less familiar non-western names.

'All our relations' is a term borrowed from North American Aboriginal ceremonial events, emphasising the interconnectedness of all living things. The curators linked it to a larger claim: namely, that where twentieth-century modernist thinking was divisive, more 'fluent dynamics' are emerging in the twenty-first century, marked by connectivity, collaboration and interdependency. In the catalogue, press material and interviews, it was boldly asserted that critique and negativity belong to the past. In other words, this set out to be an upbeat biennale.

The selection of works included a striking bias towards the use of paper and textiles, as well as various organic and recycled materials. The idea that everything is interconnected has an ecological dimension, and many works featured animals, water or some other reference to the natural environment.

Each of the four main venues functioned as a mini-exhibition, with its own subtitle. The most satisfying instalment, 'In Finite Blue Planet' at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW), focused on the endangered environment in terms of rising urbanism and migration. Memorable work here included Hassan Sharif's piles of thongs and other items of everyday domestic life; Gao Rong's life-sized embroidered replica of her grandparents' living room in Inner Mongolia; and Nipan Oranniwesna's *City of ghost*, 2007–12, a room-sized map of various large cities created in baby powder. These works and others, such as Ricardo Lanzarini's pencil drawings on cigarette papers and Yuken Teruya's paper forests created from shopping bags, belong to a form of extremely laborious artmaking that reappeared frequently in this biennale. Also notable was Thai artist Sudsiri Pui-Ock's risky performance video depicting her rubbing manhole covers on a busy road as trucks swerve by, and Guido van der Werve's dramatic wall-sized video projection of a solitary figure casually walking ahead of an immense icebreaker ship. The collective Postcommodity, five Indigenous American artists, cut a perfect square hole into the concrete of the AGNSW's Yiribana Gallery to expose, quite literally, the land of the Gadigal people below, in *Do you remember when?*, 2009–12, although this potent intervention was somewhat undermined by the theatricality of a hanging microphone and accompanying soundtrack.

By contrast with the AGNSW's moody tracings, 'In Possible Composition' at the Museum of Contemporary Art promoted a sanctified form of cosmopolitanism through more formal, colourful and even decorative work. The mood was epitomised by David Aspden's abstract canvases, Tim Johnson's cross-cultural painting, Gabriella Mangano and Silvana Mangano's video performance with brightly coloured checked fabric, Park Young-Sook's porcelain vases and Yeesookyung's opposing sphere of porcelain fragments. Of course there were some intriguing works but, contrary to the rhetoric of 'sensual encounter' and 'engagement', the display felt sterile, and what came across as an emphasis on materials over ideas produced an unwelcome preciousness. Some works simply lacked vitality in the flesh: Gade's photograph of a melting ice Buddha looked more impressive as bus-stop advertising, while Zoe Keramea's nine wooden blocks suggested interactivity but were presented behind a museum rope. Even Lee Mingwei's *The mending project*, 2009, a charming performance–sculpture which invites visitors to have their clothes mended with coloured thread, was tucked into a corner with a dejected-looking assistant at work.

The overtly spectacular works of the biennale were reserved for

Cockatoo Island, collected under the subtitle 'Stories, Senses and Spheres'. Worryingly, the island is becoming a victim of its own success, and the experience felt commercialised, with corporate banners, queues and barriers that often prevented intimate engagement. The atmospheric works were most successful, such as Fujiko Nakaya's fog 'sculpture', located near the Asahi Super Dry Noodle Bar, and Jonathan Jones's *untitled (barra)*, 2012 – fluorescent tubes criss-crossing a tunnel ceiling to map the migration of long-finned eels through Sydney Harbour to the Coral Sea (far more engaging than Daan Roosegaarde's field of interactive neon rods in the neighbouring tunnel).

Two of the major media-friendly works left me completely cold: Peter Robinson's *Gravitas lite*, 2012, a 25-metre chain of polystyrene among industrial ruins; and Philip Beesley's *Hylozoic series: Sibyl*, 2012, a responsive installation of electro-orgasmic feathery chandeliers. Elsewhere, a bizarre number of works involving paper-cutting became repetitive, like so much of the sincere but sentimental pieces using fabric and stitching. More complex work, such as Jananne Al-Ani's *Shadow sites II*, 2011, an aerial video of a Middle Eastern landscape fusing archaeological and military techniques, was easily overshadowed. Lyndal Jones's *Rehearsing catastrophe: The ark in Sydney*, 2012, although a rather literal response to forced migration necessitated by rising sea levels, introduced some refreshing ambiguity: a large wooden ark poked out of an old shipbuilding shed, accompanied by an audio recording of sawing coming from somewhere within; an absurdist performance ensued with people wearing makeshift animal headdresses and carrying suitcases. The 'animals', resolutely non-interactive, awaited their pair.

With its feelgood and vaguely hippy philosophy, even if supported by enlisting philosophers Bruno Latour and Brian Massumi in the catalogue, the 18th Biennale of Sydney: all our relations not only abandoned criticality, but also wit and irony. One of its primary logics – handwork produced at large scale to function as literal symbols of community – quickly felt repetitive (the most overheard comment was 'that must have taken a long time to make'). Given all the collaborative labour involved, perhaps it may have been more thought-provoking to witness more of the work in production. Instead we were offered a mythical fixed image of collaboration. Ironically, and in contrast, it was an open secret that the curatorial relationship had broken down even before the show began. Differences and conflicts exist, despite 'all our relations'.

The 18th Biennale of Sydney: all our relations, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Carriageworks, Cockatoo Island, Museum of Contemporary Art and Pier 2/3, 27 June – 16 September 2012. A&

above, from left
Postcommodity, Do You Remember When?, 2009–12
Site-specific intervention and mixed-media installation (cut concrete, exposed earth, light and sound) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, dimensions variable
Photograph Ben Symons

Guido van der Werve, Nummer acht: Everything is going to be alright, 2007
Video, dimensions variable, 10 mins 10 secs duration
Courtesy the artist and Luhrung Augustine, New York
Photograph Ben Geraerts

Ai Weiwei: Interlacing Damien Hirst

Anna Waldmann

TWO EXHIBITIONS BROUGHT ART LOVERS OUT IN DROVES earlier this year – 'Ai Weiwei: Interlacing' and 'Damien Hirst' at Jeu de Paume, Paris, and Tate Modern, London, respectively.

Ai Weiwei – architect, installation artist, blogger, photographer, cultural critic, twitterer, and social and political critic – holds a mirror up to Chinese society and, in the process, produces evocative and revealing works. In 1981 he left China for the United States and spent a decade in New York. At Jeu de Paume there was a selection from some 10,000 photographs of this period: pictures of urban life, of neighbours, friends and artists; 'aimless hanging around', as Ai described it.

Included in the exhibition was the well-known *June 1994*, the intriguing image of the artist's partner lifting her skirt in front of Chairman Mao's portrait at Tiananmen Square, and the iconic *Dropping a Han Dynasty urn*, 1995, and *Exchange*, 1999. The series 'Study of Perspective' (1995–2010), which defines Ai's challenge to authority by giving a middle-finger salute to all things iconic, including the White House and the Eiffel Tower, also featured. Numerous images from Ai's archive of 'Blog Photographs' (c. 2005–09) and 'Cell Phone Photographs' (2009–10), and the very moving 'Earthquake' (2008–10), which records the names of school students who died in a catastrophic Sichuan province earthquake, concluded the exhibition.

The sheer volume of work was breathtaking, even with the careful selection by curator Urs Stahel. It represented only one aspect of Ai's work, what writer Carol Yinghua Lu, in the exhibition catalogue, called his 'climbing out of the bottle of ink'. This is documentation as a way of remembering and questioning, as archive and memorial; photography as a diary and a form of sketching.

A very different exhibition, curated by Ann Gallagher at Tate Modern, surveyed the work of Damien Hirst – the darling of auction houses, commercial galleries and collectors. It covered most of his work since the Goldsmiths days: spot paintings, spin paintings, butterfly paintings, medicine cabinets, and a small herd of formaldehyde-pickled animals. All hark back to 1988 and the artist's now-legendary 'Freeze' group exhibition, which he curated.

It was, surprisingly, Hirst's first substantial public show staged by the Tate (he once told David Bowie he never wanted to show in the Tate as he associated it with dead people), where it appeared as part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

But the exhibition wasn't to everyone's taste. Curator and art critic Julian Spalding wrote in *The Independent,* 27 March 2012: 'Damien Hirst isn't an artist. His works may draw huge crowds … at Tate Modern. But they have no artistic content and are worthless as works of art.' Hirst replied in the *London Evening Standard* within the week: 'even Degas and Picasso were initially dismissed by critics.'

The titillation in the media should not detract from what was a substantial and challenging exhibition. Hirst's paintings and installations have defined two decades of young British artists, showing a consistency and indifference to trends that is seldom seen in contemporary art. The show's most interesting works were the vitrines, the medicine cabinets, and the installations of thousands of cigarette butts. Loaded with *memento mori* anxiety, these works show the logic of Hirst's interpretation of our daily dose of horror and reveal a turn-of-the-century relevance in his visual syntax.

The two infamous conceptual artists – *agents provocateurs* Ai and Hirst – delivered, with exhibitions that made queuing patiently in the ticket line worth the wait.

Ai Weiwei: Interlacing, Jeu de Paume, Paris, 21 February – 29 April 2012; **Damien Hirst**, Tate Modern, London, 4 April – 9 September 2012.

Left to right: **Ai Weiwei, Fairytale 1, 2007**, from 'Fairytale' (2007), inkjet print, 92.5 x 92.5 cm © Ai Weiwei; **Damien Hirst, Beautiful, childish, expressive, tasteless, not art, over simplistic, throw away, kid's stuff, lacking in integrity, rotating, nothing but visual candy, celebrating, sensational, inarguably beautiful painting (for over the sofa), 1996**, household gloss on canvas, electric motor, 365.8 cm diameter © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. Photograph Prudence Cuming Associates.

Australian Symbolism: The Art of Dreams

Joanna Mendelssohn

In 1899 James Green wrote 'The Poetry of Our Painting', in which he claimed that the essential flavour of new Australian art was its distilled poetry and muted tones. Times change and over the years fin-de-siècle Australian art has become honoured more for sunshine than twilight. This exhibition attempted to define Australian symbolism using paintings, prints, photographs and sculptures of figurative works with literary overtones.

The entrance to the Art Gallery of New South Wales was dominated by the large version of Bertram Mackennal's *Circe*, 1892–93, which served as an introduction to the way Edwardian men were threatened by women's sexuality. Other works by Charles Douglas Richardson and George Lambert continued the theme, which culminated in Charles Conder's *Hot wind*, 1889, where a female sprite and her slithering serpent are painted in the high tones of a drought summer. The conjunction of works enabled an easy demonstration of Conder's fluid superiority over Arthur Streeton's blocky brushstrokes in the derivative *Spirit of the drought*, c. 1896.

There were some real pleasures here, including key works by the Portuguese artist Arthur Loureiro, who lived in Australia for almost two decades, and is thus claimed as one of our own. Symbolism is one of those movements whose edges are significantly blurred by both geography and intent. Rupert Bunny's religious and mythological works and Mackennal's sculptures were some of the most powerful works in the exhibition but if they were made and exhibited in Europe, can they really be called Australian? Because this was academically popular art, and both Bunny and Mackennal were successful, news of their fame was relayed home, so there is a connection. But the turn of the century was a time when distance was more than a minor irritation, and absences lasted for decades, making these claims of 'Australian'-ness slightly problematic.

Bizarrely, Lionel Lindsay's work was not included in the exhibition. A local artist, Lindsay began his career with an intense involvement with French symbolist writers and *The Yellow Book*, an illustrated quarterly published from 1894 to 1897 by Mathews and Lane, London. Most Australian artists who made works relating to symbolism, however, simply adopted the popular visual language of simplified decorative classicism. Their sources were mythology, popular poetry, *Studio* and other imported publications, and music and theatrical productions. This led to an informed popular taste, but not avant-garde work. Works tend to owe more to the standard repertoire of late-nineteenth-century art. Paintings of Breton peasant caps are not in themselves evidence of symbolist intent.

One joy was to see Sydney Long's *Pan*, 1898, and *Spirit of the plains*, 1897, hanging side by side; to marvel how the flat shapes and muted tonality of *Spirit of the plains* give it a truly spine-tingling beauty. The strange elongated *Sadder than a single star that sets at twilight in a land of reeds*, 1899, which was mocked by critics when first exhibited and later renamed 'Decoration' by the artist in his conservative old age, sat well with these. There was, however, one inexcusable omission: Sydney Long's *Flamingoes*, 1902, a densely coloured ambiguous study of girls and birds. The curator did not see this as a symbolist work. In appearance it has a stronger claim than the artist's 1904 portrait of Vivienne Powis-Stewart as Keats's 'Isabella', which was included. And as for meaning, it does not take too much drilling down to discover that Long had no interest in the ideas that created symbolism, but happily played on the surface.

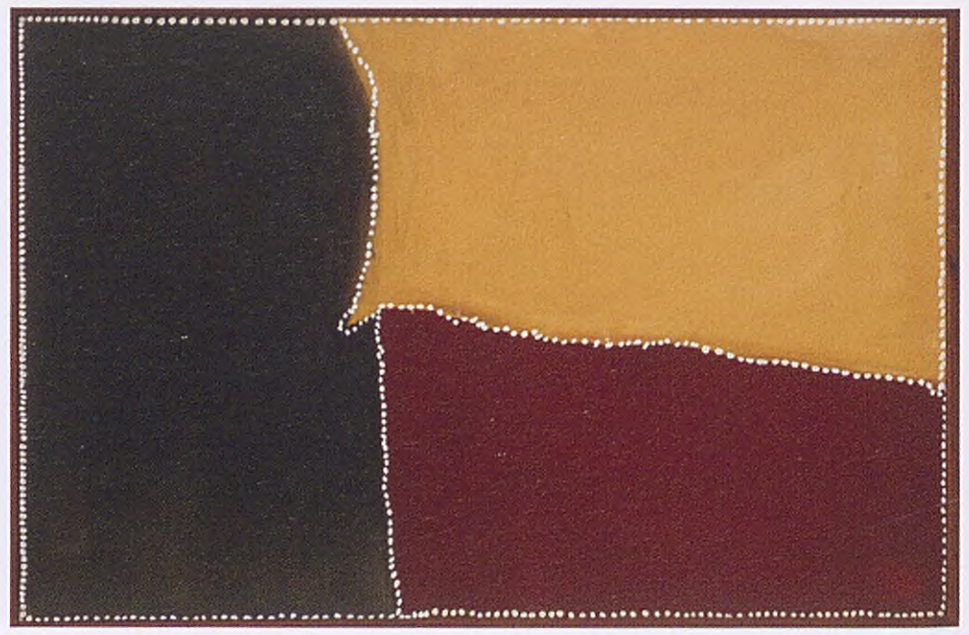
'Australian Symbolism' is only the third exhibition to attempt to scope the poetic art of fin-de-siècle Australia. The first was Ballarat Fine Art Gallery's 'Art Nouveau in Australia' (1980), the second the Art Gallery of New South Wales's 'Stampede of the Lower Gods' (1989). It should be examined more often.

Australian Symbolism: The Art of Dreams, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 11 May – 29 July 2012.

Sydney Long, Pan, 1898
Oil on canvas, 107.5 x 178.8 cm
Collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

Ancestral Modern: Australian Aboriginal Art from the Kaplan & Levi Collection

Brenda L. Croft



Margaret Levi and Robert Kaplan are passionately vocal advocates of contemporary Indigenous Australian art. In May this year they eagerly shared details of their two-decades-long journey to an appreciative, if somewhat overawed, Seattle public at the opening of 'Ancestral Modern' at the Seattle Art Museum (SAM). This exhibition had been more than a decade in development, with Kaplan and Levi determined to nurture a similar yearning in uninformed audiences.

Collections of this stature are echoed in Australia through the respective visions of the late gallery dealer Gabrielle Pizzi, Colin and Elizabeth Laverty, and more broadly in those of the late Robert Holmes à Court and media magnate Kerry Stokes, the latter collection extending far beyond the parameters of contemporary Indigenous art.

In North America, major collectors have followed a similar pattern. The most notable came to prominence in the late 1980s, when American billionaire and serious philanthropist, John W. Kluge (1914–2010), was knocked for a metaphorical six on spying his first Aboriginal paintings at the seminal 'Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia' at the Asia Society Galleries, New York, in 1988. Together with the acquisition of Edward L. Ruhe's (1923–1989) collection and archives, Kluge developed one of the most renowned private collections of Aboriginal art in any continent – since 1997, the Kluge–Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection. Other significant collections include the John and Barbara Wilkerson collection, presented in the touring exhibition 'Icons of the Desert: Early Aboriginal Paintings from Papunya' (2009); and the private collection currently on show at Dartmouth College's Hood Museum of Art, 'Crossing Cultures: The Owen and Wagner Collection of Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Art'.

'Ancestral Modern' exemplified what the majority of significant Indigenous art collectors continue to be drawn to: artwork that reinforces a notion of the *exotic*. From an aesthetic and conceptual perspective, the exhibition was thoughtfully and sensitively curated by SAM Curator of African and Oceanic Art, Pamela McClusky, with support from long-term Australian art museum, and now independent, curator Wally Caruana. The overwhelming majority of works on display, however, represented the expected desert and northern locales, including the Western Desert, Central Australia, Arnhem Land, Top End and the Kimberley – all regions that qualify as 'remote'.

More on these works later. For me, the pulsing heart of 'Ancestral Modern' was the unexpected works: a small number of exquisite 1960–1980s Arnhem Land bark paintings; Yvonne Koolmatrie's quirky, masterful, woven Ngarrindjeri objects; the late Thancoupie/Thanakupi's (1937–2011) distinctive ceramics; and Ricky Maynard's poignant images of Wik Elders who have since passed away and his series 'Portrait of a Distant Land' (2005), which includes a heart-rending self-portrait. These broadened the scope of the exhibition and seriously engaged the audience. (A concern for me was that Maynard's Wik Elder images were included more for their subject matter than to emphasise Maynard's acknowledged reputation as one of Australia's leading documentary photographers and an internationally renowned artist in his own right.)

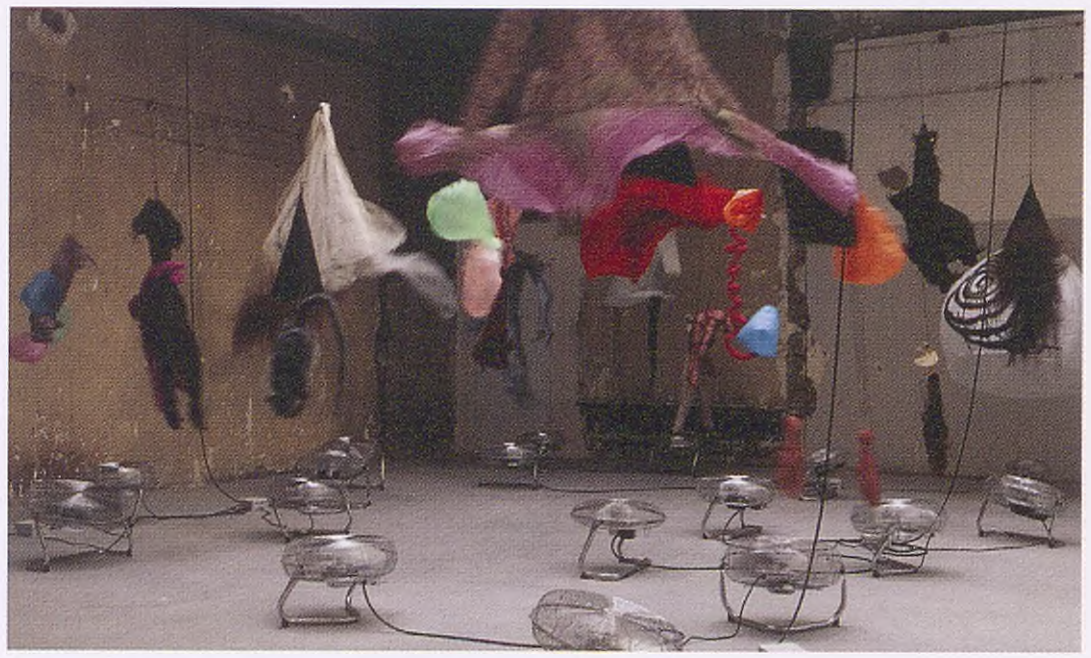
The works of 'Ancestral Modern' are unarguably outstanding pieces, but personally I wanted to see a greater representation from artists associated with regions other than those deemed the most 'authentically' Aboriginal. The focus on the remote is, of course, the imperative of the collectors. The generosity of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi in gifting a small number, and presenting a greater aspect, of their private collection to Seattle's premier art museum is to be applauded, particularly as the antipodean equivalent is yet to be seen, although Australia's public galleries have been supported by a smattering of generous benefactors of individual or smaller groupings of key works.

Ancestral Modern: Australian Aboriginal Art from the Kaplan & Levi Collection, Seattle Art Museum, 31 May – 2 September 2012.

Rover Thomas, Home country, 1984
Natural pigments on canvas, 134.6 x 172.7 cm, promised gift of Margaret Levi and Robert Kaplan, Seattle Art Museum. © the estate of Rover Thomas

La Triennale 2012: Intense Proximity

Anne Ferran



Annette Messager, Motion/Emotion, 2012
Clothes, ventilators, installation view Palais de Tokyo, Paris
Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York. Photograph André Morin

Late last year in Wellington, New Zealand, Okwui Enwezor gave a lecture. Had I not heard him speak at the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand conference, I may not have seen what was a stunning and important exhibition.

As artistic director of the then-approaching third Paris Triennale, Enwezor discussed the ructions around the 2011 'soupe au cochon' controversy in Paris, casting it as an effect of tensions arising from the increased proximity of incompatible identities and communities. (The incident emerged when right-wing nationalists protested – not for the first time – against a municipal ban on serving pork soup, also commonly referred to in France as *la soupe identitaire*, to the homeless, whose ranks include Muslims and Jews.)

At the lecture Enwezor proposed the term 'intense proximity' to describe a new volatile state of dwelling among incompatible realities, and foreshadowed an exhibition that would explore contemporary art's capacity to shape a discourse for it. Adding what was personally appealing, Enwezor elaborated the exhibition's scope by giving central place to early-twentieth-century ethnographic photography.

In Paris six months later, an exhibition of near overwhelming scale and complexity was mounted. Driven by Enwezor and his four associate curators, it featured 113 artists at the newly expanded Palais de Tokyo exhibition space and seven satellite venues.

The triennale's artists related to the idea of intense proximity in a multitude of ways. The exhibition was itself an experiment in intense proximity, crammed full of disjunctions that it attempted, mostly successfully, to sustain without falling apart. Thus it was a political show but in no way dogmatic or hectoring; it was, rather, complex, nuanced and multi-layered. That the individual works mainly stood up well in this context of overlapping and clashing voices contributed.

One highlight was the ethnographic material. Produced mainly in the 1930s by French ethnographers such as Marcel Griaule and Claude Lévi-Strauss, these drawings, films and photographs are broadly appreciated for the profound effect they have on contemporary art. In this context they were valued not only for their reflexive role, but for the bridges they build. This is stunningly so in the case of Helen Levitt's short black-and-white film 'In the Street', shot in 1940s Lower East Side, New York – one of the exhibition's most poetic and ethnographic works.

Among the 113 participating artists, the business of identifying standout works can only be idiosyncratic. My picks extend the photo thematic: Walker Evans's severely beautiful photographs of African masks, commissioned by the Museum of Modern Art's Alfred Barr in 1937; Ariella Azoulay's 2010 line drawings and accompanying texts based on archival photographs (the reproduction of these alongside their captions has been banned by the International Committee of the Red Cross); David Maljkovic's sombre and strange 2009 video where couples dance silently in the grounds of Peugeot's experimental car-design site; and Guy Tillim's detailed photographs of present-day Polynesia, bathed in a weirdly flat, bright, dry light. Other works indicate the enormous range: declamatory, as in Rirkrit Tiravanija's giant painted slogan 'Fear Eats The Soul'; quasi invisible, as in Jason Dodge's, *In Nova Scotia, Jan de Graaf chose wool yarn the colour of night, and wove the distance from the earth to above the water*, 2011, a blue woven blanket, folded and left on the floor.

'Intense Proximity' was exhilaratingly demanding of its audience, conceptually and imaginatively. Unlike exhibitions that dictate and direct, 'Intense Proximity' demanded that its audience figure it out. Enwezor's question was not about how to share a common space or how to live together; it was about how we might all live in a world of incompatible disjunctions.

La Triennale 2012: Intense Proximity, Palais de Tokyo and other venues, Paris, 20 April – 26 August 2012.

Made Active: The Chartwell Show

Tessa Laird

Chartwell have amassed one of the most prominent independent collections of contemporary art from New Zealand and Australia, comprising 1300 pieces on long-term loan to the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. 'Made Active' was not just about recent acquisitions and used the rubric of 'activity' to spark a thoughtful selection. Nevertheless, curator Natasha Conland's choices were still lessons in Zeitgeist: three of the four finalists for this year's Walters Prize were also represented in 'Made Active'. Simon Denny's *Performance video*, 2008, re-presents a 1979 text by Wystan Curnow which responds to a performance by Peter Roche: the aggressive machismo of the original work is twice mediated, and Curnow's quote, 'My criticism of the piece is that I got bored with my boredom', is knowingly coopted by Denny. Alicia Frankovich's *Orpheus*, 2010, is the poster child for precariousness: a tray of eggs sagging over an aluminium door frame. Sriwhana Spong's *Actions and remains*, 2012, transformed the sculpture court into a minimal set to be activated by contemporary dance.

The cool spareness of these and other works was suggested by several factors, the most immediate being Daniel Malone's *Black market next to my name*, 2007, which exceeds notions of cool simply by being *too much*. This is the first outing of Malone's magnum opus of baggage – ten years worth of phenomenal hoarding – in five years. Reconfigured in a custom-built space, *Black market* seems bigger and crazier than ever. The work is 'made active' each time it's reassembled, opening itself to radically new formations. Before *Black market*, Malone's practice was primarily performative, barely hinting at his long and intense relationship with objects. There are empty milk cartons, takeaway boxes, disposable coffee cups, toilet-roll cores, used toothbrushes and razor blades. But there are premium items too: thousands of great records, hundreds of good books, and racks of carefully chosen op-shop jersies. Viewers resist a strong urge to get among it, to activate the work by wearing, playing, reading, touching.

Another quirk of 'Made Active', which was also a coup, was the inclusion of a survey of paintings by the late abstract expressionist Allen Maddox (1948–2000). His signature X motif, combined with his difficult, drunken persona, came to stand for the worst excesses of the movement in New Zealand, and in recent years his works have been obscured by a cloud of unfashionability. Conland stretched her definition of activity to include action painting. I never thought I'd crave to see a Maddox but these colourful, angry, dripping canvases were a welcome foil to the more cerebral works.

The third point of difference was that the mostly mute and static works were invigorated by a program of performances, filling the gallery with Seung Yul Oh's exploding balloons, Finn Ferrier cataloguing rocks, and Hannah Valentine climbing up and down ladders. The last and perhaps most poignant performance of the series was by Luke Willis Thompson. Taxis drove audience members from the art gallery to a suburban car workshop which had once been a funeral parlour. Viewers were seated inside a reeking automotive spray booth to watch footage of a grieving son and a father's coffin: Thompson himself, a couple of years earlier in this very space. Watching this filial struggle, which took place in front of riotous floral drapes, I was suddenly transported back to the show's most obvious 'crowd pleaser', Campbell Patterson's *Lifting my mother for as long as I can*, 2006–11, in which Patterson does just that, on his mother's birthday, in front of equally florid curtains. The charming relationship between mother and son is laid bare for the camera: giggles, bemusement, pride. Thompson's stark portrayal provided a counterpoint to Patterson's feelgood familial sketch. Between them, the two sons covered the gamut of love and loss, creating surprising but welcome encounters with emotion.

Made Active: The Chartwell Show, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 14 April – 15 July 2012.

Left to right: **Seung Yul Oh, The ability to blow themselves up, 2012**, photograph, courtesy the artist; **Daniel Malone, Black market next to my name, 2007**, mixed media, dimensions variable; Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki.

Shaun Gladwell, I also live at one infinite loop, 2011, detail
Video still, 25GB Blu-ray, 21 mins 11 secs duration
Courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Sydney

Beyond Likeness

Erin Coates

An ambitious and multifaceted exploration of portraiture, this exhibition included works from mid-century to today that span a range of mediums: from text to holographic printing, wood carving to painting. Curator Ted Snell brought an erudite, reflexive approach, probing the nature of contemporary portrait-making and the manifold strategies artists deploy to reach 'beyond likeness'.

One room was dedicated entirely to moving image. Highlights included Andy Warhol's hypnotic and deceptively simple *Screen tests*, 1964–66; Daniel Crooks's liquid time–space mapping of an elderly Tai Chi practitioner in a Shanghai park, titled *Static no. 12 (seek stillness in movement)*, 2009–10; David Rosetzky's intriguing and superbly realised anti-portrait *Heart forever*, 2010; and Robert Wilson's beautifully shot, quirky video portrait *BRAD PITT Actor*, 2004, which shows the scantly clad movie star bathed in blue studio light and drenched in rain.

A work that could have benefitted from more screen space was Shaun Gladwell's aircraft video projection. Holding one camera in front of another and filming from an L39 fighter jet, *I also live at one infinite loop*, 2011, is set against a backdrop of horizon-warping aerobatics. The artist's face is completely obscured by his helmet and our gaze is drawn into the cycle of video feedback. While Gladwell remains concealed, the jerky movements made as he tries to steady the camera give us a very real sense of the extreme and thrilling velocity he is experiencing. Portraiture here takes on the perspective used insidiously and effectively in gaming to corporeally subsume the player into military technology.

While it suffered somewhat from the limitations of the space, this was an enjoyable and generous exhibition that provided insight into how artists are constantly evolving the nature of portraiture and seeking diverse means to articulate the human condition.

Beyond Likeness: Contemporary Portraits, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, Perth, 26 May – 28 July 2012.

Zeina Iaali, You complete half your religion when you get married, 2012
Porcelain clay, 16 x 10 x 15 cm (each)
Courtesy the artist

No Added Sugar

Lisa Worthington

The exhibition 'No Added Sugar' developed out of a creative network of contemporary Muslim women artists in Australia. Featured in the seminal exhibition, Asiya Sian Davidson, Fatima Killeen, Idil Abdullahi, Marwa Charmand, Mehwish Iqbal, Resala Alazzawi, Zeina Iaali, artist collective Crooked Rib Art and poet Eugenia Flynn explore personal and collaborative stories and reflect critical questions of self-determination.

Zeina Iaali's *You complete half your religion when you get married* and Idil Abdullahi's *Loss*, both 2012, are particularly illustrative of the way the artists have been able to engage with taboo themes. Iaali's artwork features a porcelain hand missing its ring finger, making an interesting commentary on the unnecessary importance placed on marriage in the Arab Muslim society. Abdullahi's work, a collection of exquisitely crafted wire-and-ceramic vessels, represents the feeling of coming to an unfamiliar and sometimes unsympathetic land but needing to be silent and carry on; culturally, such feelings usually remain hidden.

'No Added Sugar' was not your stereotypical Muslim women's arts show. In a report aired on 12 May 2012, *ABC News* even described it as controversial. The artists did not conform to any preconceived visual or conceptual frameworks that are often placed on them as Australians or as Muslims. This freedom is particularly important in the light of countless stereotypical representations of Muslim women in the news media and in other forms of cultural production. Importantly, there was no token commentary on the *hijab* or *niqab* here. 'No Added Sugar' did something very new: it created a safe space for Muslim women to express themselves in an uninhibited, uncensored way.

No Added Sugar: Australian Muslim Women Artists, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney, 12 May – 8 July 2012.

Sam Leach, Self as Zip, 2009
Oil and resin on linen and wood, 35 x 25 cm
University of Queensland collection, Brisbane

Animal/ Human

Carol Schwarzman

In bringing together the work of fifty-eight artists, 'Animal/ Human' explored that which curator Michele Helmrich has referred to as a 'hot topic': since prehistory we've defined ourselves as a species through our relationship with animals, and we now know that our interactions with Nature effectively create our collective future.

Works such as Patricia Piccinini's *Eulogy*, 2011, and Sam Jinks's *Small things*, 2012, employ the artists' well-known, silicon-based, sensational realism – self-congratulatory, yet so discomforting. These works confront issues of authenticity, emotional attachment and disconnect: *Eulogy* depicts a life-sized man cradling the endangered blobfish; *Small things*, a pedestal piece, presents a life-sized sleeping infant and three bright green frogs. Both sculptures play with the eye's ability to act as arbiter of empirical observation, and of empathy.

Pat Hoffie's mixed media wall installation entitled *Brother beast #1 (Water Buffalo/looks like Guernica with home-heart)*, 2011, is a primer on process and materials as meaning, as well as a Pilgrim's Progress calling for a moral, interspecies symbiosis. *Self as Zip*, 2009, painted by Sam Leach, pictures the artist in a furry suit as the American freak-show performer Zip, who exhibited himself from 1857 to 1926, exemplifying a conflicting primal prurience.

The mythic presence of animals, both heroic and evil, in storytelling and creation epics had a huge presence. But in a knock-out linocut, *Good Co-Op, Bad Cop*, 2011, by Ryan Presley and in Arlene TextaQueen's incredible *'Attack of the Under Water Woman' starring Fez Fa'anana*, 2011, irony overshadows spirituality.

Finally, wild animals caught on camera in the Indonesian forest depicted in Janet Laurence's multi-screened video *Fabled*, 2012, affirm that while art can cross the divide to imagine the animal Other, our planet/garden lives only if we tend it carefully.

Animal/Human, UQ Art Museum, University of Queensland, Brisbane, 12 May – 22 July 2012.

Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan, **In-Habit, 2012**
Multimedia, installation view
Commissioned by Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation
Photograph Jacob Ring

In-Habit

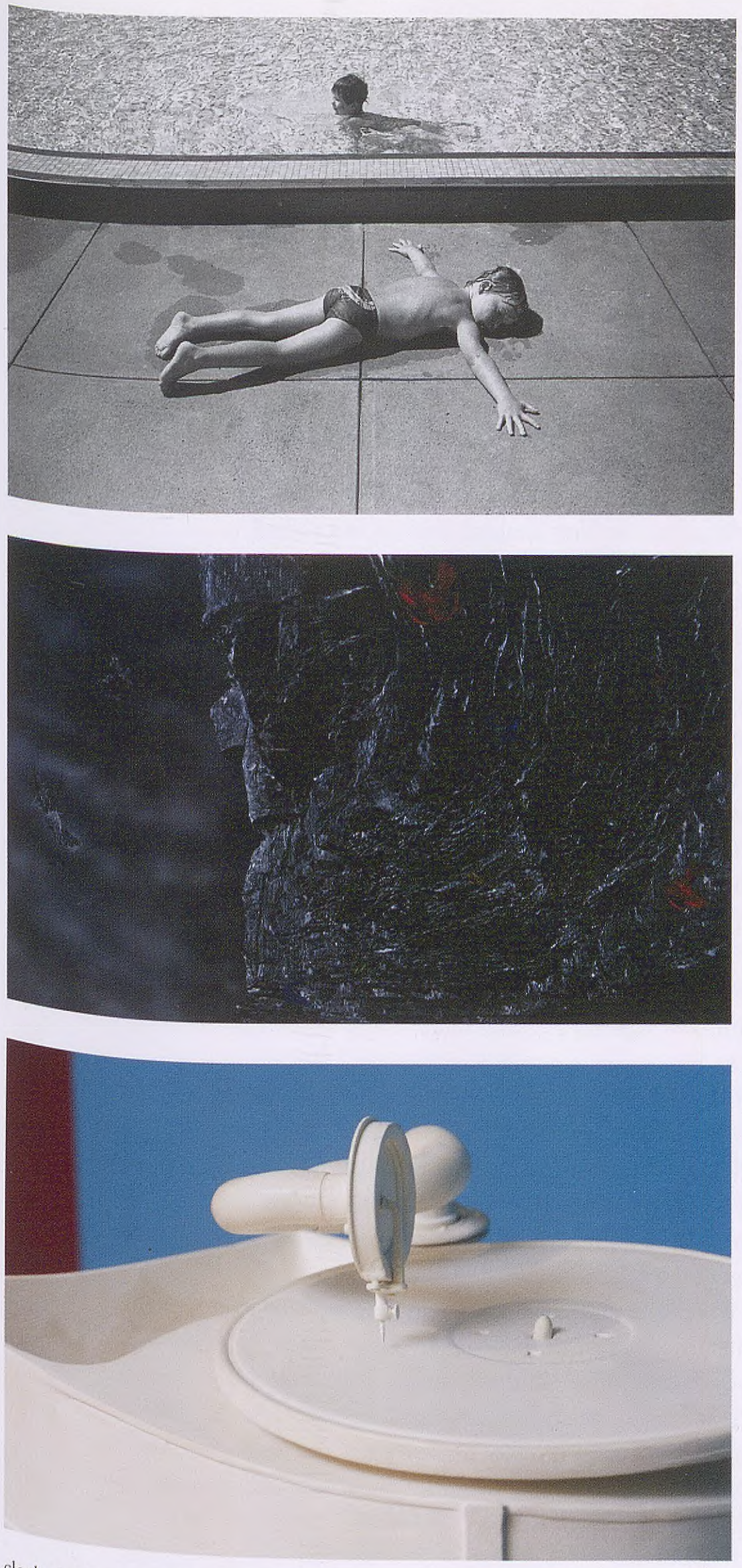
Susan Gibb

For its fourteenth commission the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation engaged the Brisbane-based Filipino artistic duo Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan.

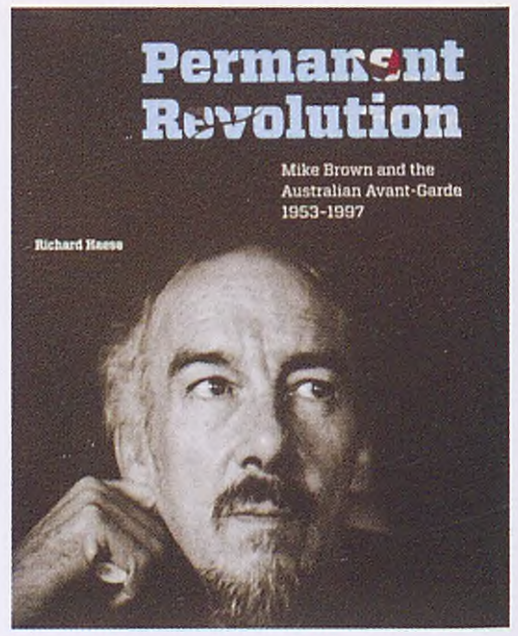
For the installation *In-Habit*, 2012, the Aquilizans took as their key provocation the Indigenous ethnic group the Badjao. Originally a nomadic seaborne people, the Badjao have more recently come to inhabit makeshift stilt houses along the coast of the Sulu archipelago in the Philippines in response to changes in agricultural practices and border controls of waters. Using cardboard boxes reshaped into houses, the gallery was transformed into a constantly morphing canopy of miniature worlds as visitors added to the installation. Resembling the Badjao's shantytowns, the installation was punctuated by videos of Badjao children performing rap routines in local dialects and playing handmade tin drums. The video component marked a shift in the Aquilizans' practice, from the more allegorical and broad-reaching associations of their sculptures to the documentary detail of video.

The Philippines is a complex country, with 7107 islands, a population of over 94 million people of diverse ethnicities and cultures, and a fractured history of colonisation and authoritarian power. Like Australia it is characterised by competing Indigenous, regional and international identities, in which ideas of the centre and the periphery are constantly played out. *In-Habit* raised many questions about the function of art: how it is used by cultures; how it translates from one culture to another; and the ethical implications of the aestheticisation of culture and classes, particularly in regard to profit and power. These are difficult conversations to have and something from which contemporary art is not exempt.

In-Habit: Project Another Country, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney, 22 June – 25 August 2012.



clockwise from top left: **Ingeborg Tyssen, Ryde Pool, Sydney, 1981**, courtesy John Williams and Sandra Byron Gallery, in 'Ingeborg Tyssen', Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne, 23 November 2012 – 3 February 2013; **Nora Wompi, Kunawarritji (Well 33), 2011**, courtesy the artist, in 'We Don't Need a Map', Freemantle Arts Centre, 17 November 2012 – 20 January 2013; **Elizabeth McAlpine, Black Noise, 2006**, detail, courtesy the artist and Laura Bartlett Gallery, London, in 'First Among Equals (Part II)', PICA, Perth, 3 November – 31 December 2012; **Shane Cotton, Takarangi, 2007**, courtesy Christchurch Art Gallery, Te Puna o Waiwhetu, in 'Shane Cotton: The Hanging Sky', IMA, Brisbane, 8 December 2012 – 2 March 2013.



Permanent Revolution: Mike Brown and the Australian Avant-Garde 1953–1997

Imants Tillers

'Fellow countrymen – there's not a shred of hope.' This pronouncement from the celebrated Austrian writer Thomas Bernhard may well have been the subtext to Terry Smith's much-quoted article 'The Provincialism Problem', first published in *Artforum* in 1974. Addressed to an international audience, the article primarily used Australian art by way of example, explaining how provincialism exists everywhere (even in New York).

It was unfortunate that Smith illustrated his article with work from the open-air Mildura exhibition 'Sculpturescape' (1973), featuring artists such as Kevin Mortensen, John Davis, Ti Parks, Bert Flugelman and Ross Grounds, giving the perhaps unintended impression that these Australian artists were pale provincial versions of the international originators of this new art: Christo, Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, et al. In later reprints, the illustrations were changed or excluded, giving a more accurate, less inflammatory version, which today seems quite reasonable and perceptive. To a young artist, such as myself, this article with its original illustrations was both a provocation and a challenge – tantamount to declaring the implausibility of an Australian avant-garde. In the early 1970s my peers (Mike Parr, Peter Kennedy, John Armstrong, Tim Johnson, Aleks Danko, Tim Burns, David Smith, Neil Evans, Ian Milliss, Alec Tzannes among others) and I believed that we *were* part of the new avant-garde. Thus I was excited to come across Richard Haese's *Permanent Revolution: Mike Brown and the Australian Avant-Garde 1953–1997*; it proposes not just the possibility of an avant-garde but provides a detailed delineation of it.

The genius of Haese's book is that it traces the development of Mike Brown's art in relation to the evolving cultural and artistic contexts in which he lived and worked, particularly its portrayal of the counter-culture and the social and political upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s – one of the most 'vital, disputatious and creative periods of Australian art'. To this I can attest personally.

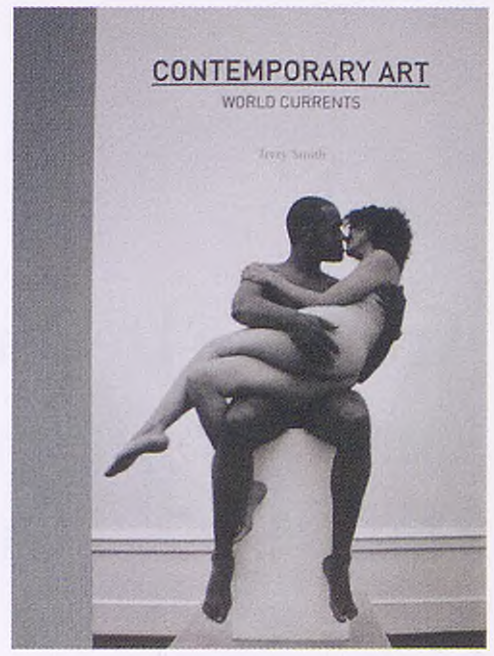
The story begins in 1961, 'when the twenty-two-year-old Mike Brown joined the New Zealand artist, Ross Crothall, in an old terrace house in inner Sydney's Annandale and filled the house with a remarkable body of work'. Haese believes that their first exhibition, 'Annandale Imitation Realism' (1962), which included the work of Colin Lanceley, laid the groundwork for an Australian postmodernism. The show, and the movement it represents, pioneered collage, assemblage and installation.

Interestingly, Brown and Crothall were among the first artists in Australia to respond in a profound way to Aboriginal art, the tribal art of New Guinea, and Maori and Polynesian art of the Pacific region, and their interaction resulted in a particularly fruitful cross-fertilisation between an Australian and a New Zealand artist. We can perhaps even see in the text-based works of Brown the influence of the great New Zealand artist Colin McCahon, notwithstanding that Brown's quotes are from Buddy Holly rather than from the Bible.

As Haese points out, Brown spent the last twenty-eight years of his life in Melbourne – in stark contrast to, say, Ian Burn, Australia's most significant conceptual artist who lived for many years in New York and whose artistic trajectory was far more international. Yet despite Brown's insularity (and dare I say provincialism), he was, through his multiplicity of styles, able to cement a considerable reputation in Australia.

Whether Imitation Realism was actually a crucial movement in the history of Australian art, as Haese argues, and Brown a worthy successor to Sidney Nolan and therefore a key artist in the pantheon of Australian art, does not need to be answered definitively in order to enjoy Brown's art. His work continues to resonate with certain significant trends in contemporary Australian and international art today. A&

Richard Haese, Permanent Revolution: Mike Brown and the Australian Avant-Garde 1953–1997, The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2011, hardcover, 297 pp., $49.99.



Contemporary Art: World Currents

Souchou Yao

Your mind calls up Rodin's *The kiss*, c. 1882, but you are not sure if it pays homage or insinuates sly mocking. You recognise the couple's iconic pose: both naked, she on his lap, his arms on her back guiding her body to his, their lips moving towards a kiss. As in Rodin's work, this too catches the moment of blissful transport. Yet the figures are so full of pugnacious eroticism that you fear the fragility of it all. Cocooned in intimacy, they seem to bear an edginess, as if they are ready to get into some emotional scrape with the outside world.

When South African artist Tracey Rose's photograph *The kiss*, 2001, comes to grace the cover of this ambitious, monumental book, you know you are in for a choppy ride of shifting paradigms and inventive freedom. You need a work of such lush confidence to show up the end of the mode of modernist narrative. Terry Smith casts widely the web of inferences and fills your head with a bagful of recognitions: cultural diffusion, identity and self-fashioning, the way we are made special by our own being.

With contemporary art, imitation is no sin, neither is abstruseness for its own sake. Work of this kind fills the book; and since this is about art's 'world currents', the geographic terrain it covers is exhaustively wide – from the United States to western and eastern Europe, South and Central America to the Caribbean, East to South-East Asia, Oceania to Africa.

Barbara Kruger's installation *All violence is the illustration of a pathetic stereotype*, 1991, is included here to exemplify postmodernism's suspicion of photography's imperial claim to realism. Anselm Kiefer's *Germany's spiritual heroes (Deutschlands geisteshelden)*, 1973, too enters the pages for its brave, if controversial, meditation on the nation's Nazi past. In regard to East Asia, Chinese artist Yue Minjun's *Execution*, 1995, finds its place as a powerful illustration of the cultural ennui and political cynicism of contemporary Chinese art. From page to page, the chosen artworks press on you with their crustiness, their national preoccupations and transnational ambitions, their diversity of form and execution, their narrative freedom lurching towards chaos.

We recognise them as work of the fin de siècle after the end of the Cold War. And it is postmodernism's retreat from the covenants of the Enlightenment that gives rise to a different mode of artmaking. If all this props up what Smith calls 'contemporary art', it is because there are in its conception and practices 'twisted citations' rather than 'plain speaking', 'irony within irony' rather than simple deployment of words and ideas. The artwork is the practices and executions as much as the products themselves.

This is a book of encyclopedic ambition, but much stands in the way of achieving it. For one thing, comprehensiveness invites perhaps unfair nitpicking: the brief entry on the foreign occupation of Taiwan misses out the half century of Japanese colonialism from 1895 to the arrival of the Nationalists in 1945; in addressing the art of South-East Asia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore are notably missing. Smith introduces each region by spiking up the particular social and political conditions, but there is little sociological explanation in what follows.

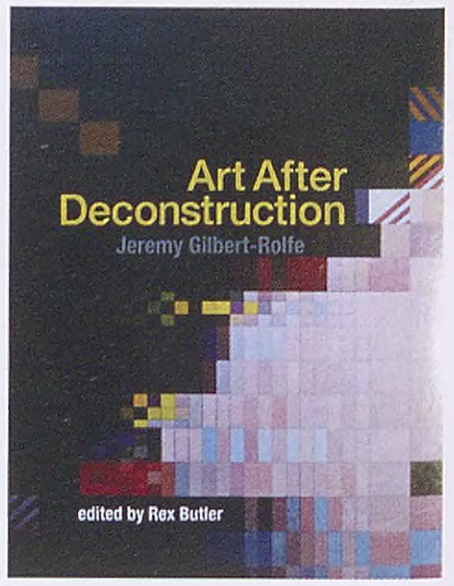
For all that this is a useful book that surveys the mind-boggling melange of the current 'state of the art'. Postmodernism, postcoloniality and globalisation are quite rightly the beasts in the lair of 'the contemporary'.

And since form is the art itself, a less conventional academic language would better express the blend of confusion and excitement in the artwork that peoples the pages. A book like this calls for a particular writerly strategy, one that answers to the very impotence of narrative transparency and explanation, yet firming up the conviction that the world can be made sense of.

A&

Terry Smith, Contemporary Art: World Currents, Lawrence King Publishing, London, 2011, hardcover, 248 pp., $60.

Art After Deconstruction Justin Clemens
Cosmopolitanism and Culture Max Delany
Four Honest Outlaws Rex Butler



Art After Deconstruction: Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe

NOW WE'RE ALL SO POST-POSTMODERN in the expanded terrain of the globalised contemporary art market, we should expect some of the hoary old things that certain postmodernists thought they had definitively dealt with would be back on the table; or at least back in the newly bleached cubicles of our twenty-first century high-end aesthetico-business-centres.

And so it's come to pass: Beauty has raised its pretty little head again and is parading about the place as if its bad reputation had merely been the consequence of spite, not thought. Along with a motley crew of heterodox fellow-travellers such as Dave Hickey and Elaine Scarry, Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe is one of the grand hierophants of this revivified beauty, not only as a critic but as practitioner.

Cognoscenti of our constantly-festivating art-globe will surely already be familiar with his appealing paintings and their appealing names: such as *The Chameleon and the Wraith*, 2003–04, or *Owl's Happiness (King of the Wends)*, 2003. If this book provides decent-enough reproductions of a handful of these paintings, it's basically an orienting entrée to Gilbert-Rolfe's polemico-theoretical proclivities. Alongside three papers by Gilbert-Rolfe, we find an interview with Bonnie Clearwater, contributions from Rachel Kushner, Penny Florence and the great Rex Butler, as well as the artist's impressive-ish CV.

If I was wearing my anal philosopher's hat, I could get irritable at some of the claims made by our artist–painter. As Butler puts it in his punchy 'Introduction', part of the problem is that 'those interested in beauty are merely another constituency in art, like the various sexual and ethnic identities that also seek their chance to be heard'. But when I realised Gilbert-Rolfe's writing is an ingenious way of clearing the ground for his own painting practice, (almost) all is forgiven – especially given his admirable courting of intelligence and complexity. J.C.

Cosmopolitanism and Culture

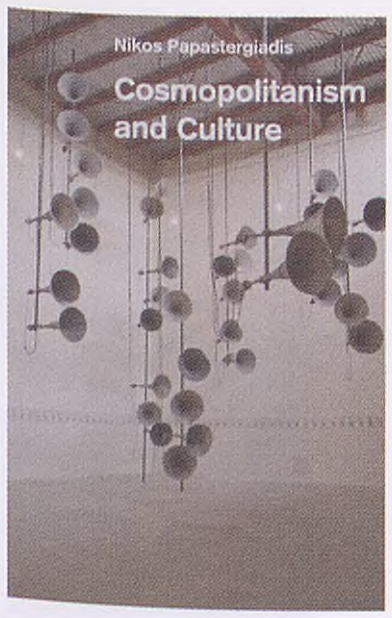
OUR NARRATIVE BEGINS IN 2001 with arrival of the Tampa in Australian waters, carrying 433 refugees, the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Centre, and the subsequent elaboration of 'ambient fear' as a kind of dread, when 'being alert to stranger danger was elevated to a crucial civic duty'.

In *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*, the motif of the journey recurs in the role of migrants as pioneers, plotting journeys to dignify their lives, and the idea of mobility as freedom. Homeric journeys, and the duty of hospitality, are identified as markers of justice. But we are equally reminded of the monstrous Cyclops, who would devour his guests, standing for the capacity of every culture to colonise the other. In socially engaged and collaborative art practice Nikos Papastergiadis identifies the moral and aesthetic function of art as emerging from an interest in difference and others, and everyday acts of curiosity, attraction and play.

Papastergiadis argues that art practice is a process that is world-making rather than world-describing. Art is a carrier of difference, and purveyor of paradox, embraced as positive terms. Art sees ephemerality and intensity as virtues. Like the coming together of new communities, creation emerges, out of nowhere, to produce newness and value.

Defining cosmopolitanism as referring to the social transformation that arises from the mixture of different cultures, Papastergiadis adopts the role of translator and mediator, establishing new dialogues and transcending disputes. Adding to formalist, biographical and social modes of art history, Papastergiadis's cosmopolitan approach introduces new readings where art becomes a medium for constituting the social.

Papastergiadis notes that 'Cosmopolitanism without multiculturalism is just an ivory tower. Multiculturalism without cosmopolitanism becomes a nasty ghetto. Putting them together gives politics a whole new agenda'. This simple formulation reveals the transformative political necessity of the author's insight. M.D.



Four Honest Outlaws: Sala, Ray, Marioni, Gordon

AFTER THE COMPLEX TRIUMPH of his 2008 *Why Photography Matters*, American art historian and critic Michael Fried returns to somewhat safer waters in *Four Honest Outlaws*. The book continues Fried's engagement with contemporary art after the long series of historical works throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and, given his almost-confession in the 'Introduction' to his 1998 collection *Art and Objecthood* that he gave up writing art criticism because 'I had pretty much said what I had to say', represents a reaffirmation by Fried that those issues of 'absorption', 'theatricality', 'objecthood' and 'literality' that he pioneered in the 1960s are still relevant today.

Certainly, the American colour field painter Joseph Marioni – the encounter with whose work caused Fried to break a twenty-year critical silence – is an obvious enough choice for Fried. Fried argues in the chapter devoted to him here that Marioni's is, in effect, post-minimal painting, which means not only that it comes after minimalism but that it is able to engage it within the 'wider' project of modernism. But Fried's other choices are not so obvious. Who could have predicted that Fried would respond to the over-sized mannequins of sculptor Charles Ray? And of Philippe Parreno's postcolonial *The Boy from Mars* (2003), which features a pavilion set in Thailand lit by electricity generated by buffalos, about the least obvious thing to say about it is Fried's suggestion that it is an allegory of a newly 'autonomous' or 'self-sufficient' art.

But the least obvious thing is not necessarily wrong, and Fried's virtually unchanged take since the 1960s is looking better and better. It's not to say he's right – truth is fundamentally uninteresting as an intellectual category – but that he has offered through the long period of modernism an unswerving, laser-like insight that, like it or not, has allowed us to think about art differently.

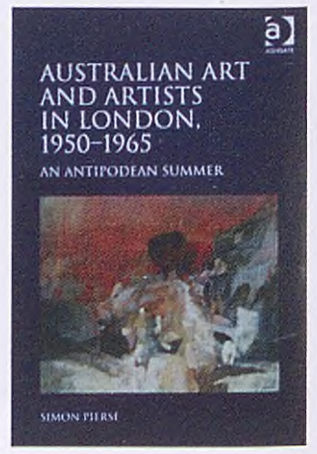
R.B.

Rex Butler (ed.), Art After Deconstruction: Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, Editions 3, Brisbane, softcover, 2011, 176 pp., $24.95.

Nikos Papastergiadis, Cosmopolitanism and Culture, Polity, Cambridge, United Kingdom, and Malden, Mass., softcover, 229 pp., $34.95.

Michael Fried, Four Honest Outlaws: Sala, Ray, Marioni, Gordon, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2011, hardcover, 224 pp., $59.95.

Australian Art and Artists in London, 1950–1965: An Antipodean Summer



Christine France

The success of Australian painters in London between the late 1950s and early 1960s has been the subject of academic debate as to whether the vitality of work which appealed so much to English audiences was the product of Australia's isolation or due to the fact that Australian art held its own in an international context.

Simon Pierse's book is a welcome addition to Australian art history. In his account of Australian art in London from the postwar years to the swinging sixties, we are presented with an English perspective that draws on previously untapped archival material from prime players such as Sir Kenneth Clark (later Baron Clark) and Bryan Robertson, former director of London's Whitechapel Gallery. Pierse enables us to look thoroughly at the role of curators, critics, bureaucrats and their friendships. He examines the effect of postwar austerity on artists and the transition from Empire to Commonwealth, which, at times, resulted in art being used as cultural export. Pierse's inclusion of a certain amount of anecdotal material brings the text to life.

Pierse discusses the networks of contacts: Clark's friendship with Joseph Burke, chair of fine arts at the University of Melbourne, and his support of Sidney Nolan and Russell Drysdale; his mentorship of Robertson during the early years at Whitechapel Gallery; and Clark's early contact with art historian Bernard Smith, who was, later, frustrated in his efforts to hold an Antipodean exhibition there. (Clark had suggested Smith try Whitechapel but Robertson wanted a broader exhibition which reflected the diversity of Australian art, including both abstract and figurative work, developing instead the 1961 exhibition 'Recent Australian Painting'.)

Robertson's interest in Australian painting went back to the early 1950s when as a friend of artist Roy de Maistre, Harry Tatlock Miller and set designer Loudon Sainthill he met a number of Australian artists. In 1957 he held a large retrospective for Sidney Nolan's fortieth birthday. He had a great sympathy for young artists and, as Lawrence Daws relates, would introduce them to major art figures. It was Robertson who chose Charles Blackman, Daws and Brett Whiteley to represent their country at the 1961 Biennale des Jeunes in Paris. 'Recent Australian Painting' has become the most discussed exhibition of the period but, as Pierse rightly points out, the catalogue essays by Robertson (emphasising the diversity and the exotic) and Robert Hughes (on the isolation of the country) were the most influential.

One of the many interesting aspects of Pierse's research is the inclusion of both English and Australian criticism of 'Recent Australian Painting' and the official exhibition 'Australian Painting: Colonial, Impressionist, Contemporary' (1963), which was held at the Tate Gallery under the auspices of the Commonwealth Art Advisory Board. First shown at the Adelaide Festival of Arts, 'Australian Painting: Colonial, Impressionist, Contemporary' was widely criticised for the lack of consultation with state galleries and the under-representation of contemporary art. It was this criticism, and the pioneering role of Robertson's exhibition, which influenced lukewarm comments from a number of English critics.

Where most Australian histories have concentrated solely on the above two exhibitions, Pierse discusses the peripheral examples: 'Twelve Australian Artists' (1953) at the New Burlington Galleries; 'Fifteen Contemporary Australian Painters' (1960) at the New Vision Centre Gallery; 'Commonwealth Art Today' (1962–63) at the Commonwealth Institute; and Alannah Coleman's 'Australian Painting and Sculpture in Europe Today' (1963), which travelled from the United Kingdom to Frankfurt, Germany.

At times the structure of this book can be confusing, with references to artists such as Whiteley and Daws preceding details of how and when they arrived in London. Nevertheless it is a valuable resource, essential for anyone interested in the period or in the development of an Australian school of painting – if indeed such a school exists. &

Simon Pierse, Australian Art and Artists in London, 1950–1965: An Antipodean Summer, Ashgate, London, 2012, hardcover, 314 pp., $160.

The Longing

Sally Blakeney

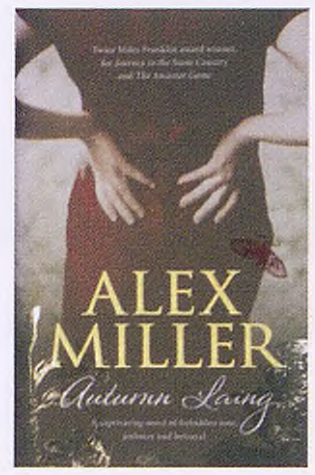
Art history is a great training ground for novelists. Bruce Chatwin and Anita Brookner have put their curatorial experience to good use. So has another visual scholar, Candice Bruce, in her first work of fiction, a gripping mystery set in Victoria's Western District. *The Longing* tackles European settlement and Aboriginal dispossession. It owes its originality to scholarship, not a passing glance at history. Bruce has spent more than thirty years looking at images and archives.

Her novel opens in 2002 with a brilliantly realised scene in the National Gallery of Victoria, where a young assistant curator, Cornelia, is researching for an exhibition of the state's leading nineteenth-century landscape painter, S.P. Hart. A parallel narrative, exploring the world behind his art, is set in 1856. Ellis MacRorie is trapped on a remote property, battling depression in a loveless marriage to a man thirty years her senior. Louisa, her Aboriginal maid, is also a prisoner of her time. She's survived a massacre and rape, only to have her daughter taken away from her by white people. Hart's arrival to take up a painting commission changes their lives. Cornelia's hunt for one of Hart's key paintings leads her to the house where Ellis entertained the artist more than a century earlier.

Bruce has worked as a curator at the National Gallery of Australia and the Queensland Art Gallery. She has written two art books on Eugene von Guérard, so it is not surprising to find two of his paintings acknowledged as visual inspirations for this novel. Sharing the billing are works created by Aboriginal artists of the same time. They depicted a way of life destroyed by the pastoralists who paid European painters. Bruce's achievement is her convincing portrayal of both views.

Candice Bruce, The Longing, Vintage Australia, Sydney, 2012, softcover, 368 pp., $32.95.

Autumn Laing



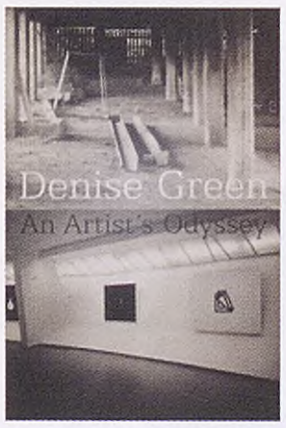
Sally Blakeney

Artists are always behaving badly in novels and the hero of Alex Miller's *Autumn Laing* is no exception to this familiar Byronic mould. Pat Donlon is suitably mad; any character who believes he can make it in the 1930s Melbourne art scene without learning how to draw at the academy has to be. And he's definitely dangerous. A Rimbaud-reading son of a Melbourne tram driver, Donlon swaps genteel penury with his pregnant wife for great sex, good wine and conversation with Autumn Laing, his wealthy patron's spouse, only to dump his muse after she's turned midwife and helped him produce the paintings which make him world famous.

All this should be familiar to Australian art lovers. Miller has made no secret of the fact that the inspiration behind this book is Sidney Nolan and his relationship with Sunday Reed, so part of the fun is joining the dots, starting with the play on the artist's name. But as Miller's previous award-winning fictions have shown, there's more to his writing than romance and roman à clef. He's chosen to tell his story in the unforgettable voice of Autumn Laing, a cantankerous and feisty eighty-five-year-old whose remorse about her role in the break-up of Donlon's marriage is triggered when years later she catches a glimpse of the woman they wronged. And because Miller is passionate about moral philosophy as well as art, he has her present the book's core in its opening: 'But you will have to ask, as I have had to ask, whether what we destroyed in the service of his creations was of greater value than what he and I produced.'

It's this question and Miller's skill in exploring it that makes this novel a cut above today's crowded field of artist romances with their fruitless lust for life.

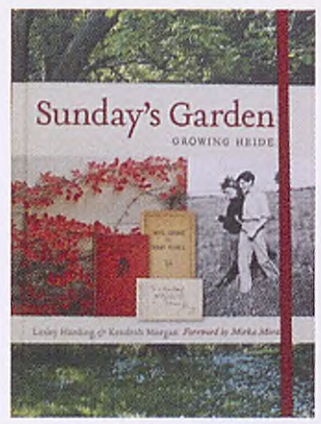
Alex Miller, Autumn Laing, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2011, hardcover, 464 pp., $39.99.



Denise Green: An Artist's Odyssey

Nest: The Art of Birds

An Opening: Twelve Love Stories About Art



Sunday's Garden: Growing Heide

COMBINING formal analysis, autobiography and bibliographic sections, *An Artist's Odyssey* is similar in form to Green's 2005 publication *Metonymy in Contemporary Art: A New Paradigm*.

Green's dissection of the art worlds in New York and Australia during the 1970s and 1980s makes for an engaging read. Short texts by Ingrid Periz, Peter Timms, Anthony Bond and Lilly Wei, and a discussion between Green and collector Kerry Stokes about the influence of curator John Stringer add context to the understanding of Green's work.

Born and raised in Brisbane, Green moved to Paris and then New York in the 1960s. This book chronicles her artistic progression from the beginnings in a lower Manhattan studio to exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

Denise Green: An Artist's Odyssey, Macmillan Art Publishing, South Yarra, 2012, softcover, 192 pp., $39.95.

JANINE BURKE, art historian, self-described amateur naturalist and author, brings her many years of birdwatching to bear in this appreciation of the nest.

Calling nests 'flamboyant little miracles of design', Burke reads them as artwork crafted by nature. She interrogates the site as an architectural feat, as home, a place for observing and being observed, with unique and eccentric examples to make her point. Marrying her interests in art and nature, Burke cites sculptures and installations, such as Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, and literature and poems, including Emily Dickinson's 'For Every Bird a Nest'.

Although Burke's words do not call for illustration, colour plates picture a stork's haunt atop a peaked roof in France, and the hanging home of the Lesser masked weaver from southern Africa.

Janine Burke, Nest: The Art of Birds, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2012, hardcover, 182 pp., $32.99.

REPRODUCTIONS OF ARTWORKS on calendars have been a source of inspiration for Stephanie Radok throughout her life as an artist, writer and editor.

Taking the form of twelve chapters, each representing a month of the year and finishing with an anecdote drawn from her daily walk with her dog around the suburbs of Adelaide, this book encompasses Radok's meditations on art and its integration into her life.

Partly memoir, *An Opening* also takes on broader art-world topics, considering Australian art within a global context and the emergence of contemporary Aboriginal art. The strength of this book is Radok's conversational tone and the central investigation of the way an artwork can provoke an emotional response leading to, potentially, an 'opening' of the mind.

Stephanie Radok, An Opening: Twelve Love Stories About Art, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2012, softcover, 184 pp., $24.95.

OVER THE COURSE OF FIFTY years, Sunday and John Reed transformed a former dairy farm into a personal self-sustaining Eden complete with exotic and native flora and a cottage-style kitchen garden.

From the 1930s onwards, Heide, as it is affectionately known, became a refuge for a coterie of artists, including Sidney Nolan, Albert Tucker, Joy Hester, Charles Blackman and Mirka Mora.

In *Sunday's Garden*, Heide Museum of Modern Art curators Lesley Harding and Kendrah Morgan present a companion to *Sunday's Kitchen: Food and Living at Heide* (2010) with anecdotes, photographs and detailed plant lists.

This book captures the essence of why this site is important in the history of Australian modernism.

Lesley Harding and Kendrah Morgan, Sunday's Garden: Growing Heide, The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2012, hardcover, 283 pp., $45.

Rosemary Laing

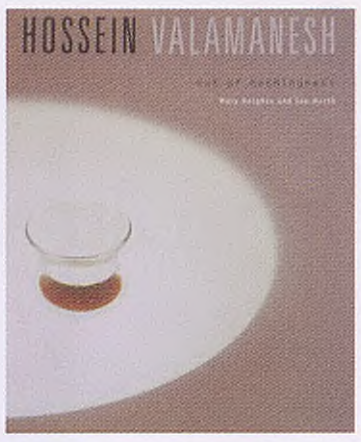
In a format that echoes the layout and orientation of the artist's photographs, *Rosemary Laing* is a comprehensive monograph.

The essay by Abigail Solomon-Godeau takes readers through the evolution of Laing's practice, stopping at significant images and series to draw out some major themes.

Punctuating the essay throughout is a small map of Australia, dotted in places to represent the location and origin of photographs and series, which helps the reader in understanding the lengths Laing has gone to in her practice: dots mark remote spots in the deserts of South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Over two-thirds of the publication's pages are dedicated to full-colour images, dating from the late 1980s, and it ends with the artist's impressive CV.

Abigail Solomon-Godeau, Rosemary Laing, Prestel Verlag, Munich, and Piper Press, Dawes Point, 2012, hardcover, 176 pp., $69.95.



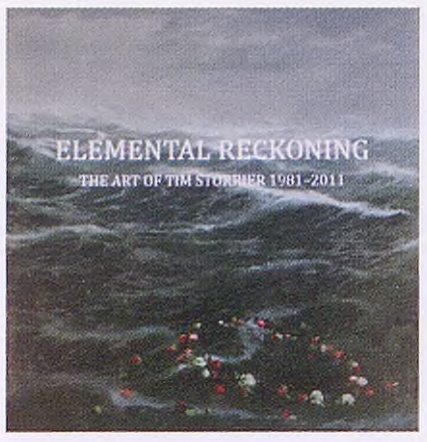
Hossein Valamanesh: Out of Nothingness

Published in the South Australian Living Artists book series, *Out of Nothingness* presents an artistic practice spanning four decades.

It features a comprehensive essay by Mary Knights and an extensive interview between the artist and Ian North, which covers Hossein Valamanesh's beginnings in Tehran, his grounding as an actor in the theatre, and his encounter with Aboriginal art and the influence it has had on his work. Exquisite illustrations of the work follow, showing the breadth of the artist's visual language.

Documentation of large-scale public works, made in collaboration with Angela Valamanesh, such as *An Gorta Mór: Memorial to the Great Irish Famine*, 1999, located at Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney, demonstrates the artists' subtle interventions into history.

Mary Knights and Ian North, Hossein Valamanesh: Out of Nothingness, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2011, hardcover, 176 pp., $49.95.

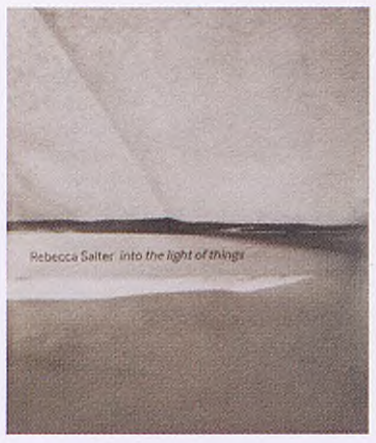


Elemental Reckoning

Despite the evident concentration on country in his iconic paintings, Tim Storrier has never considered himself a landscape painter. We learn this, and other insights, from Gavin Wilson's comprehensive essay on Storrier's past three decades of work. The artist admits he identifies as the surveyor/explorer; this and black-and-white photos add to the character portrait that the catalogue provides.

Half the book is given over to full-colour spreads of Storrier's paintings, many of which benefit from tight focus. From the burning rope experiments, undertaken at Lake Mungo in 1981, and the resulting works, which Wilson terms an 'ongoing phenomenon', to his later garland paintings, *Elemental Reckoning* establishes a complete picture. It accompanies the first major Storrier survey, held in 2011 at S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney.

Gavin Wilson, Elemental Reckoning: The Art of Tim Storrier 1981–2011, Jam Press, Eglinton, 2011, softcover, 94 pp., $32.99.



Rebecca Salter: Into the Light of Things

Published to accompany an exhibition at the Yale Center for British Art, *Into the Light of Things* features essays by Gillian Forrester, and Sadako Ohki, who considers Rebecca Salter's time spent in Japan.

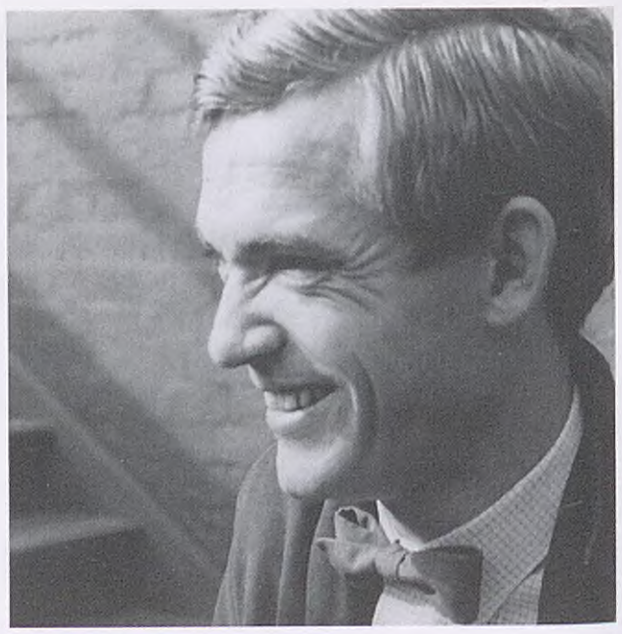
Salter refers to artmaking as 'passage' rather than process and in the chapter dedicated to her 2009 commission *Calligraphy of light* for the foyer of St Georges Hospital in London, her interrogation of the liminal space is discussed. Richard Cork describes it as 'a sacred space for hospital patients, as if to follow the model of Japanese Shinto priests and priestesses, who demarcated sacred space for the descent of divinities'. The catalogue's extensive display of colour plates, drafts and final images of *Calligraphy of light* provide the reader with insight into Salter's artistic passage.

Gillian Forrester (ed.), Rebecca Salter: Into the Light of Things, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2011, hardcover, 272 pp., $79.95.

Robert Hughes

1938–2012

Catharine Lumby



In his introduction to *The Shock of the New* (1980), the companion book to the iconic television series, Robert Hughes quotes Baudelaire who, after seeing a Wagner opera, wrote: 'I set out to discover the why of it, and to transform my pleasure into knowledge.' For Hughes, the desire to communicate the connection between aesthetic pleasure and intellectual knowledge was the foundation of art criticism. It was equally what compelled him to continue writing prolifically despite a near-fatal car accident in 1999.

A sensualist with an unparalleled eye and capacious visual memory, Hughes consumed art with relish and told his story to an exceptionally wide audience. He was the first genuinely modern public intellectual in the field of art.

Hughes's aesthetic passions were grounded in Courbet and Goya: virtuoso and self-punishing artists who were excoriating interrogators of their social and political times. Hughes took the time to disinter the conceptual bones that made Marcel Duchamp a hinge point in modernism. Yet, Duchamp's calculated irony and penchant for game-playing left him cold. Of Duchamp's *The Large Glass*, 1915–23, he once said: 'It was also a sad machine, a testament to indifference – the state of mind of which Duchamp was the master.'

Much has been made, often by sparring art journalists, of Hughes's apparent dismissal of postmodernism. In reality, he didn't care much for theoretical and ideological spats between artists or critics. He lived to see the works. And he constantly revised his view of what he'd seen. I stood with him once in front of one of Cézanne's 'Bather' pictures, which he had seen many times before. He was quiet, then said: 'Now why should that figure have one misplaced, misshapen spotty nipple on the left and an almost suppressed one on the right?' Why indeed? Hughes taught us to start with the art and work backwards to the ideas.

In the final segment of *The Shock of the New*, Hughes faces the Eiffel Tower in a chair and turns theatrically to face the camera wearing one of those hilariously wide 1970s ties. He finishes his audience off with a ghost of a grin, reminding them where modernism began. 'At the foot of the Eiffel Tower', he says in polished upper-class Sydney vowels, 'history teaches us one certain thing – that critics when they fish out the crystal ball and start trying to guess what the future will be are almost invariably wrong …'.

I once interviewed Hughes for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He said, 'the image on the television doesn't mean a damn thing from the point of view of experiencing art: it's a shrunken head', pointing out an obvious paradox. It was Hughes's mastery of the medium – his natural ability to make every viewer feel as if he was talking directly to them – that fuelled an appetite for modern art in thousands of people who'd never encountered it before.

Hughes was affected by artists who sought to make sense aesthetically of the deeply messy business of being human. His book on Goya is evidence: 'He was the first painter in history to set forth the sober truth about human conflict: that it kills, and kills again, and that its killing obeys urges embedded at least as deeply in the human psyche as any impulse towards pity, fraternity or mercy.' When Hughes was near death in a Perth hospital he had visions of living in a Goya-inspired prison. He saw the urgent truth in the artist's etchings: human beings are capable of terrible things; there is nothing metaphysical about evil.

Robert Hughes was one of those rare individuals who never put himself 'above' the quotidian. It was always the everyday, the shock of the new day, that he fed off and that drew new generations to him. He is the most enduring Australian public intellectual on any measure. There are many equally well known from his era, but Robert Hughes kept writing the books, never resting on the clichéd laurels of *The Fatal Shore* (1987). He changed Australian culture.

Robert Hughes, 1963

Adam Cullen

1965–2012

Charles Waterstreet

Failure as a theme was a brilliant success in the pale hands of Adam Cullen. An abundant wordsmith and brilliant evoker, Cullen saw art as a form of palliative care, a way to distract a child from the immediate pain of the splinter before it is extracted by the mother.

Ingrid Periz, in her penetrating and powerful book on Cullen, *Scars Last Longer* (2004), said: 'Metaphorically, a lot of Cullen's paintings strip off the performer's rug – Cullen himself is bald – in an effort to stop the show.' In fact Cullen starts the show, intending to hold attention while cunningly making his point, getting you to watch in wonder; to watch and wonder.

He was always ahead of his early critics, and soon gathered many excellent reviews from serious observers who realised his panto painting was built on formidable academic knowledge. Moving the boundaries forward by breaching them, Cullen created fresh images in new territories while standing on the shoulders of giants he worshipped.

Family visits to Spain and Italy when he was ten years old, to the Prado to see the Goyas, and Michelangelo's *David*, inspired him and he returned to Australia an artist in embryo. He had always drawn. After these trips he knew his destiny, its damned destination, and embraced his trade with all he had.

According to Sebastian Smee, Cullen held up the mirror on himself, on us, and it revealed 'all the untethered fragments of our quietly imploding culture', producing what Bruce James called 'delayed melancholy'. Cullen was fiercely Irish, as rebellious as Gerry Adams, as determined as Bobby Sands and as brave as Ned Kelly. When he created injustice on canvas, his intent was to expose it and rile the watcher to rise up in rejection. His *Working Dog (Growler)*, 1999, is a beautiful example of Cullen's mastery of the medium: the gently dripping tongue, the eye (both loving and needing), the head in perfect position, strong black ears, all on a yellow background. When Cullen died, I found his father's phone number in *My parents' telephone no. is 99821626* from 1996. All his paintings were as precise. Cullen wrote: 'the entire history of western painting can be re-conceived in a bedroom in a suburb in Australia.' He was on target; a place where dreams and nightmares play in alternate sessions, where a large percentage of murder and violence is experienced, where love turns into hate and the world reveals its true underbelly. His *Landscape*, 2005, an etching on paper of a skewered kangaroo and a severed human torso, is worthy of his trip to the Prado.

Cullen graduated with a Diploma of Professional Art Studies in 1987 from the City Art Institute, and a Master of Fine Arts from the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, in 1999. In his numerous solo and group exhibitions the wheel was constantly reinvented in ways yet to be imagined by his contemporaries. Making magic from the mundane, painting the physical and portraying the psyche, his best work simultaneously shows the front and back of the tapestry, the clock and its innards, using superficiality to create depth, using obsession as its own target. His drawings and paintings of fighters, especially black boxers, hit you in the face, not with a slap, but with elegant empathy.

Cullen called himself, in words typically self-deprecating, 'a colour technician', with a wink. His *Windmill Contractor*, 2003, in green and red dab, traces the figure of a grey-felt-hatted man, glorifying, sympathising and creating a real peopled Australia.

Martin Kantors's photo of a young shaved Cullen in 1994 with *The otherness when it comes*, 1993, shows a handsome artist with delicate hands, holding his work like a stole around his neck. His eyes, not blue in Kantors's black and white, fully know what is behind and what is ahead. It shows a nascent artist about to bloom.

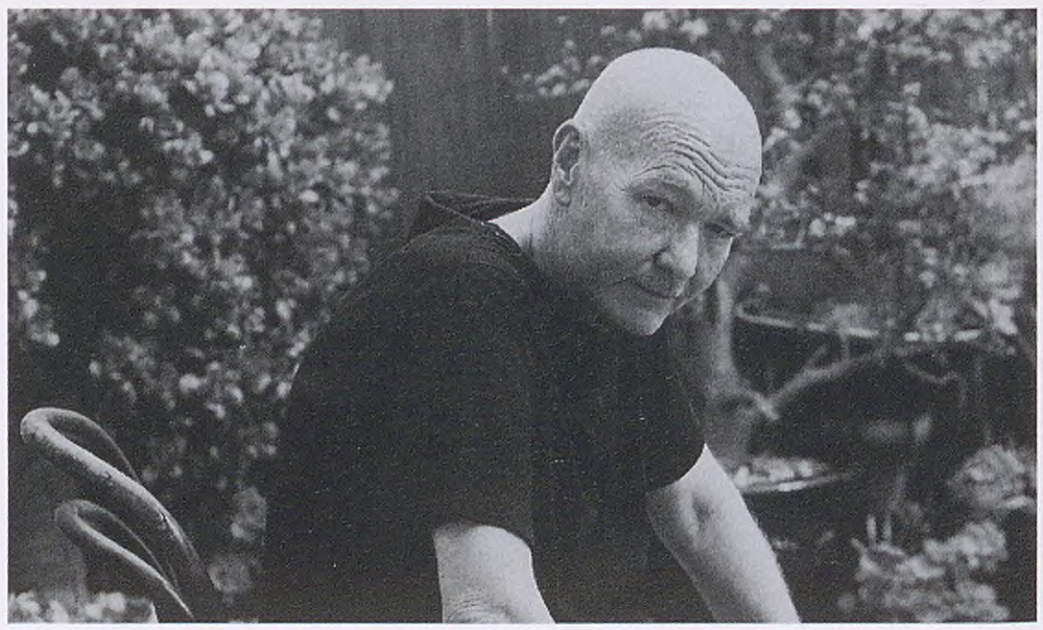
A&

Adam Cullen at Gallery Ecosse, Exeter, New South Wales, December 2011,
Photograph Andre de Borde

Michael Callaghan

1952–2012

Anna Zagala



Michael Callaghan was a lover of words and pictures from an early age; these two passions would shape his life. He met his life-long friend, Philip Batty, at pre-school and as teenagers the two founded the concrete poetry magazine *Box* – a dada-influenced socially engaged magazine that they wrote, designed and distributed on Sydney street corners. Michael brought this same sense of commitment, confidence and initiative to the screen-printing studio Redback Graphix (1979–2010).

Michael attended the National Art School in Sydney, where he met Aleks Danko and Mike Parr, collaborating with both on performance and film projects. He gravitated to the Tin Sheds, which housed a printing and etching workshop, and painting and ceramic studios. Lloyd Rees, Imants Tillers, Joan Grounds, Mike Parr, Tim Johnson, Tim Burns, Vivienne Binns and Ian Burn would pursue conceptual, performance and language-based projects out of its dilapidated studios. Michael's strong design sensibility, typographic nous and biting satirical humour quickly found expression in screen-printing posters at the Sheds. He formally joined the Tin Sheds Earthworks Poster Collective in 1976 before taking the opportunity to establish a screen-printing studio at Griffith University, Brisbane, as its artist-in-residence in 1979. Here he produced the now iconic poster, 'If the unemployed are dole bludgers what the fuck are the idle rich?' – the first of the Redback Posters.

Returning to his hometown, Wollongong, to produce and art direct his sister Mary's short film *Greetings From Wollongong* (c. 1981), Michael met Gregor Cullen, his partner in the first five years of Redback Graphix. Their studio produced dozens of remarkable posters for the community groups of the city.

Political agitation and pop pastiche characterised Redback Graphix's posters but it was the studio's openness to collaborative relationships – and Michael's natural gift for drawing people together – that won its many admirers and friends. Ray Young, Marie McMahon, Leonie Lane, Peter Curtis and Alison Alder joined for short-term projects and extended periods. In 1985 the studio relocated to Sydney, where Michael, Alder and Lane oversaw a successful design business, finding like-minded clients in the arts, health and not-for-profit sectors.

Redback Graphix's posters were recognised in both the art and advertising worlds: the studio was twice named as a finalist in the London International Advertising Awards. Exhibiting in France, Japan and the United States, it was the focus of two major national retrospectives in the late 1980s: 'Redback Graphix Posters: 1979–1985' at Wollongong City Gallery; and 'Now We Are 10: Redback Graphix A Retrospective 1979–1989' at the Tin Sheds Gallery.

In the late 1990s, dividing his time between Sydney and the country home he shared with his wife, Bronwyn Barwell, Michael refocused his attention on design and his own art practice. He continued to make art despite serious health problems, facing an uncertain future with stoicism and panache.

In 2006 the Manly Art Gallery held 'Michael Callaghan: A Survey 1967–2006', which included both posters and new paintings, prints and installations that extended his abiding interest in *memento mori*, Mexican graphics and the politics of war.

Michael was awarded the Australian National University's prestigious H. C. Coombs Creative Arts Fellowship in 2009 and embarked on a body of work focusing on the Iraq war, bringing together his compassion for the victims of war and violence and contempt for the doublespeak of the perpetrators.

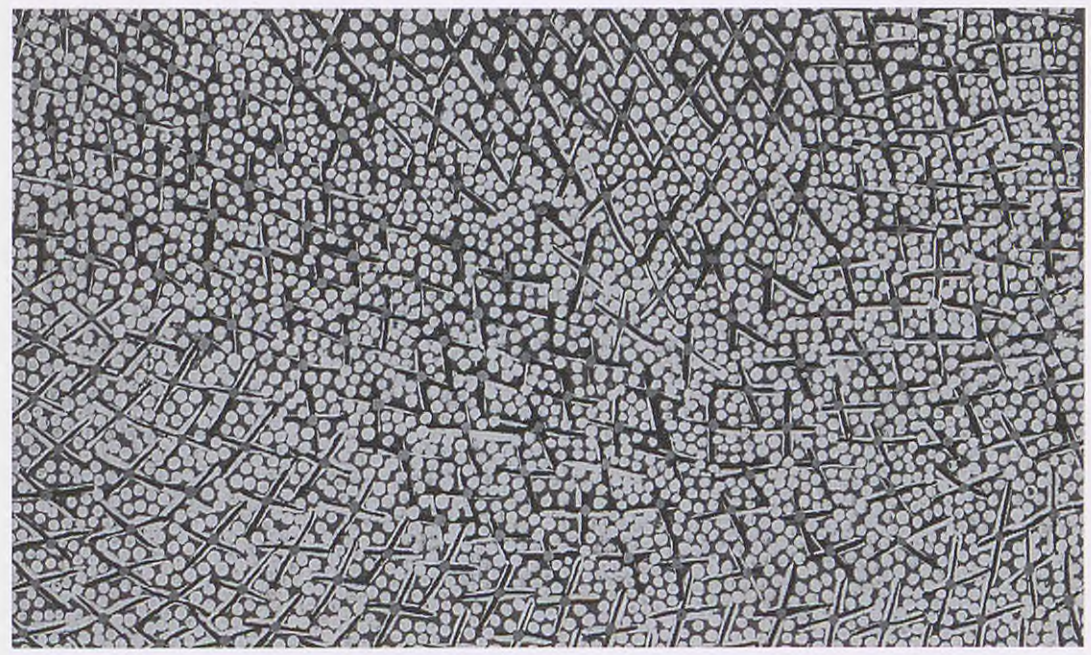
Some individuals are born to influence others through the sheer force of their personality, integrity and vision. Michael was one of those people. At his funeral, family and friends gathered to celebrate his remarkable life; the program described him as Artist – Raconteur – Reader – Collector – Pleasure Seeker – Holder of Hearts. He is survived by his sister, Mary, and his wife, Bronwyn.

Michael Callaghan in Elizabeth Bay, Sydney, contemplating life, the universe and getting married, 27 January 2012 (the morning of his wedding), detail
Photograph Jackie Cooper

Gulumbu Yunupingu

1945–2012

Dhalulu Ganambarr



Gulumbu Yunupingu was an innovator who could make new things happen while staying true to her traditions.

She worked throughout her life. In the Yirrkala community she helped her little brother, Mandawuy Yunupingu, establish the bilingual school by developing and implementing a new curriculum that meant the children could learn two cultures and two languages – English and Yolngu matha.

She used to live at a place called Biranybirany. There is a waterhole there that leaches the poison from cycad nuts so that bread can be made from the nuts and eaten safely. Her older sister, her brother and she spoke about the cycad bread and this process as a metaphor for the curriculum: everything has to be processed so that the two – the English and the Yolngu matha – go side by side equally and there is no poison; one is not above the other.

After having done so much for the community, she decided to do something for herself and that was art. She would paint at Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre at Yirrkala in north-east Arnhem Land for the rest of her life. She chose the stars, the heavens – the *garak* – for her subject because as a child she was so inquisitive about the stars and what they mean to the Yolngu. She always used to say: 'We grow up. We look up. Everything is upright, growing towards the stars. Trees stand up; plants grow up, not down, towards the stars, towards the heavens.'

Sixty small bark paintings she had painted of the Seven Sisters constellation were shown in Hannover, Germany, in 2000. Six years later her painting *Garak IV (The Universe)*, 2004, would adorn the ceiling of the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris. That same year, in 2006, she was named Deadly Visual Artist of the year. She went on to feature in 'Culture Warriors: National Indigenous Art Triennial' (2007) at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 'Floating Life: Contemporary Aboriginal Fibre Art' (2009) at the Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, and the 2010 ABC Television documentary 'art + soul'.

She never knew that she would get to that stage of achievement. She painted not knowing that art would take her places she had never dreamed of, to meet people she never thought she would, and to make new friends. Despite all this, she would come back from a trip and still go hunting with her friends, still sing and still dance.

In October 2010 she and other women from Yirrkala staged 'Ngathi' at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney. The 'Ngathi' is a crying ceremony that happens in our community and it was the first time that we had performed it in public, for other people.

When we cry, crying is like a welcome. Crying can be joyful. Crying is a goodbye. All those things that happen in life, like new birth, you cry, people cry because the baby is born. It is a new soul, and we cry that new soul. We cry when people die. We cry for people who come to our community who we haven't seen for a very long time. You cry if someone's leaving; you cry because they present you with something. It is just the way of life, of existing. We cry because we believe that crying makes someone or something exist. If we don't cry then it is just forgotten from the memory.

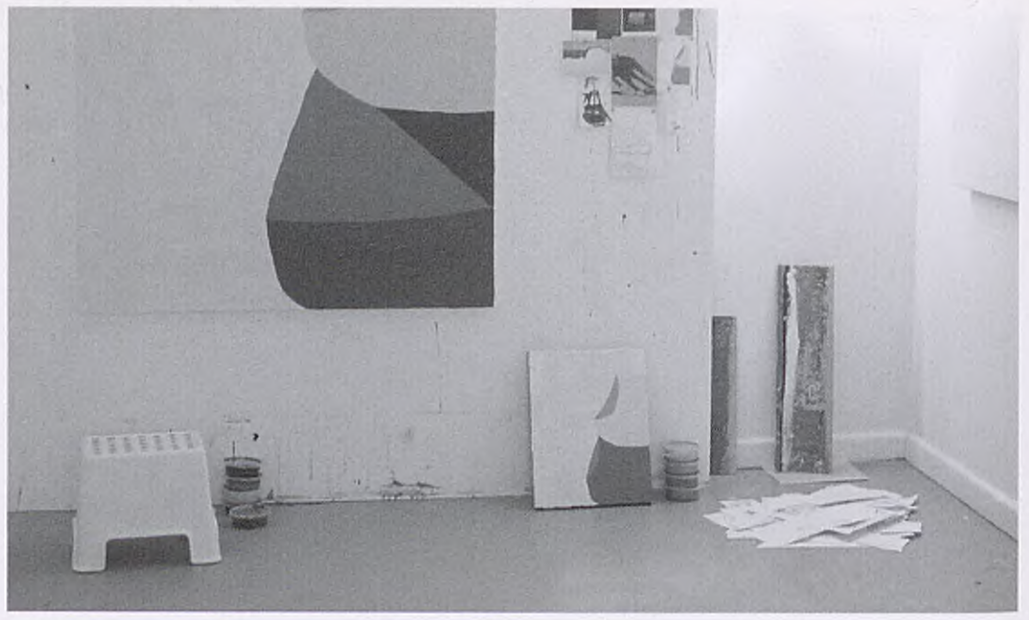
The act of crying – the 'Ngathi' – is a generous thing. As soon as women in the community cry, as soon as they open their mouths, everything that's happening, that's in the vicinity of where a woman cries, of when she keens, everything stops. Everything has to stop, even the children; they stop, they sit down, and everyone is quiet, until that particular woman stops and then it's back to normal.

Gulumbu Yunupingu, Garak IV (The Universe), 2004, detail
Earth pigments on eucalyptus bark, 54 x 146 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2005. © Gulumbu Yunupingu
Courtesy Buku-Larrnggay Mulka

David Band

1959–2011

Jeremy Kibel



The first time I met Dave was in the early 1990s at Australian Galleries. I was about twenty-five, the typical strung-out young artist looking for answers. David pulled me aside and gave me some very kind words of support that I have always carried with me. He gave me a strange kind of faith, suggesting that maybe there was a way for me to both survive and succeed.

I invariably attended David's shows over the years with anticipation and excitement, wondering what kind of wonderful things I was going to witness. There was always an abundance of beauty, which went against the art of the day that was, by nature, highly cynical and cool. Over the years Dave and I became great friends and held numerous discussions and (friendly) arguments about various shows around the world: Philip Taaffe, Donald Baechler, Brice Marden and Terry Winters were subjects of rigorous conversation. I also remember marvelling at David's immense achievement in design from the heady heights of The Cloth to designing record covers for international bands like Spandau Ballet and being offered to set up a studio in New York (he told me that they were too drunk to understand what they had been offered).

For all the humour, David was an insanely serious artist with an iron will and rigorous work ethic. Painting, drawing and running a cutting-edge design firm, as well as being a doting husband to Fiona and father to Alfie, was all in a normal day's work for David. He told me that he had followed Fiona back to Australia and asked me if I would have done the same. I replied after few whiskeys that I would follow a woman into a swamp! Of course we both agreed in a fit of laughter.

After many years had passed, David walked into my gallery, amused that I had this new, flash space. I told him that he didn't want to know what I had done for it. He then asked me if I would like to work together with him. Of course I agreed on the spot and we then began to pick on each other over the lack of hair we both had left.

'Acid Tongue' (2010) was the first show we held of Dave's. It consisted of beautiful organic forms piled on each other, painted in pinks, reds, baby blues and hot greens. These forms were underpinned by beautiful sweeps of thick impasto paint, creating this wonderful tension. I loved the title; David's sharp wit making comment on the art world. By the time the second show, 'Mile's Mode' (2011), had come around dark clouds were gathering: he had been fighting cancer and was losing the battle all too fast. Despite the impending doom, the work was so full of life and beauty that you could hear the music David loved so much emanating through the images.

A week before David's last opening I held an intimate gathering for his family and friends. They flew from around the world to spend the afternoon with him. From this event I could see what an amazing life he had lived through the incredible strength of friendships that he had forged with all these people. That was simply David; he even managed to like me.

These have been harsh times when the good have fallen: Peter Walsh, David Larwill, Adam Cullen and Dave in fairly close succession. But these Brothers of the Brush live on, both in our hearts and on the gallery walls.

During my last studio visit David showed me his neatly packed Rod Stewart record collection and we discussed all the musicians that had inspired us while we painted. I leave you with the lyrics from Rod Stewart's song 'Sailing'; whenever I hear this it reminds me of Dave with that wicked Scottish grin.

I am sailing, I am sailing,
Home again cross the sea.
I am sailing, stormy waters,
To be near you, to be free.

David Band's studio
Courtesy Blockprojects, Melbourne

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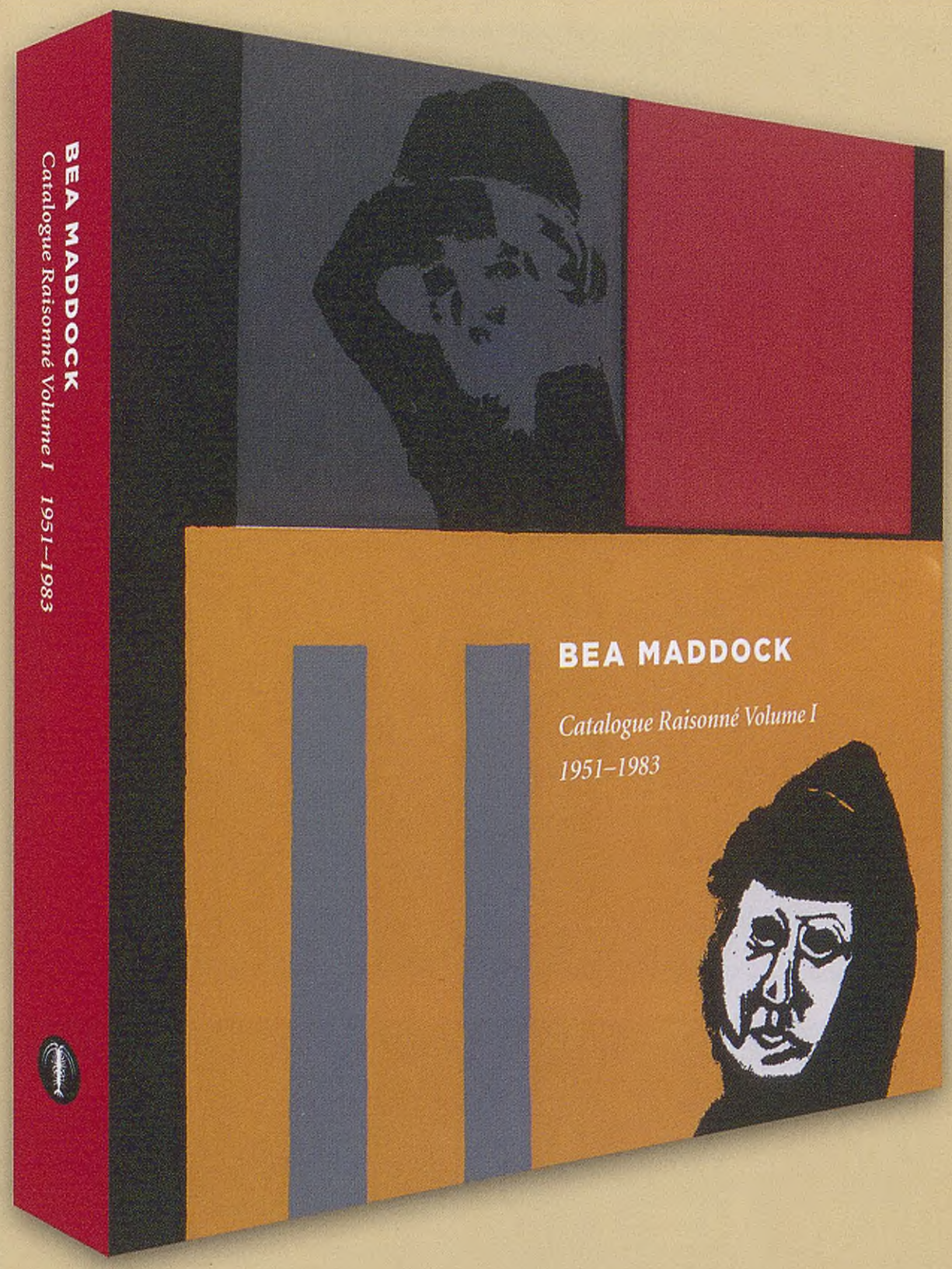

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Image caption: Barbara Heath, *Hanging crown (detail)*, 2010. Hand fabricated copper with partial tinning. 52.5 x 21 x 21 cm. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Rod Buchholz.

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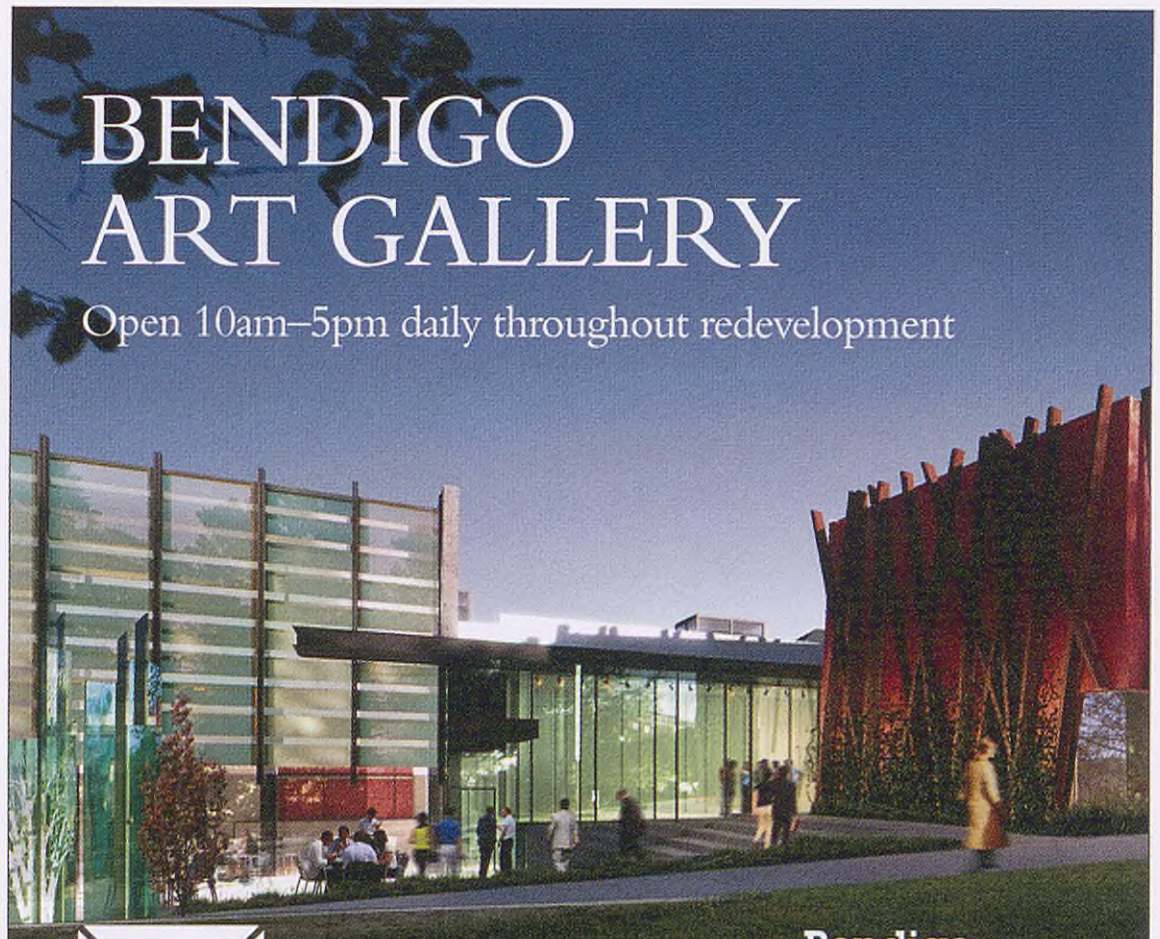

Architect's impression of the Gallery redevelopment

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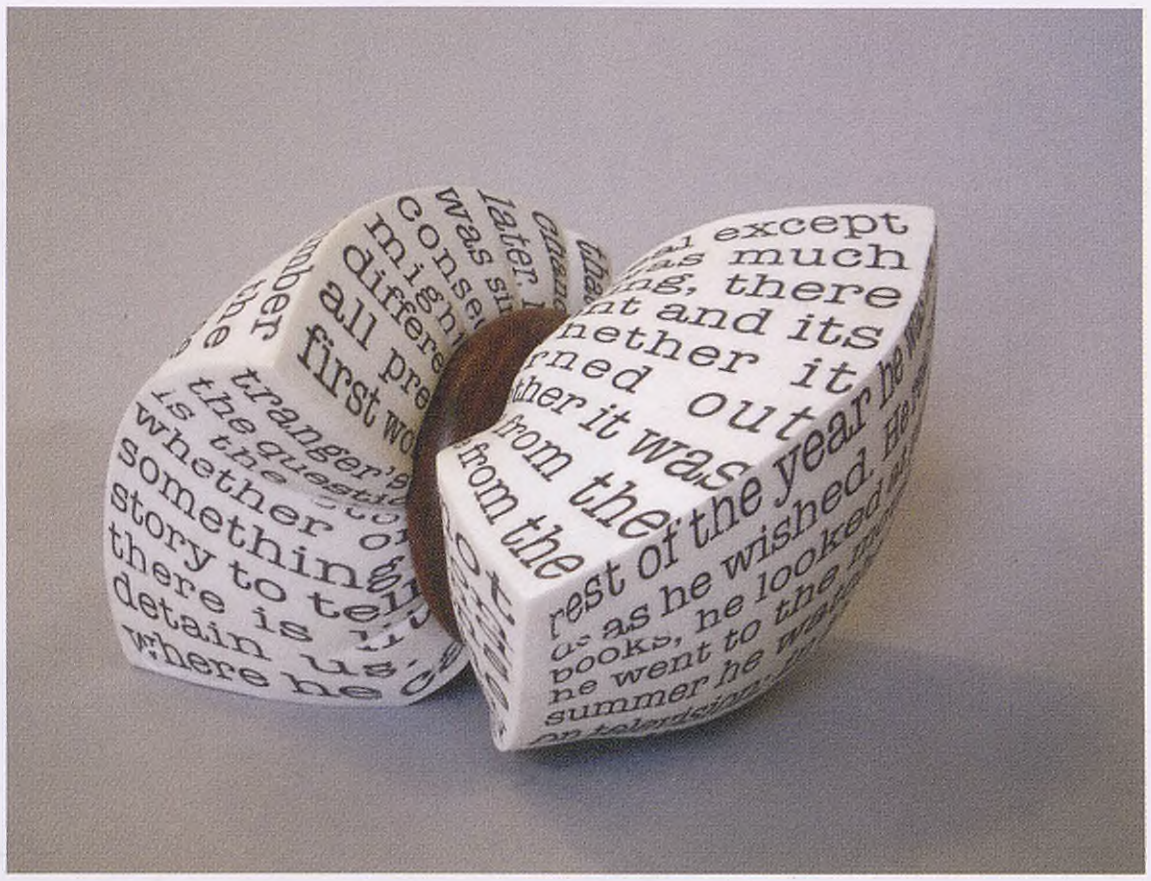

Lluís Cera, *Engagement*, 2012,
Sivec marble & iron, 29 x 21 x 21cm

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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

Maitland Regional Art Gallery
230 High Street, Maitland 2320
Tel 02 4934 9859 Fax 02 4933 1657
artgallery@maitland.nsw.gov.au
www.mrag.org.au
7 Dec – 10 Feb: Look! The art of Australian picture books today
Tues–Sun 10–5, closed Mondays and public holidays

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, David Lawrey & Jaki Middleton, Tonee Messiah, Adam Norton, Jade Pegler, Michael Taylor, Jelena Telecki, Jelle van den Berg, Craig Waddell, Jake Walker, Bradd Westmoreland, what, Andrzej Zielinski
Wed–Sat 11–6, and by appointment

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

King Street Gallery on William
177 William Street, Darlinghurst 2010
Tel 02 9360 9727 Fax 02 9331 4458
Mob 0412 294 866
art@kingstreetgallery.com
www.kingstreetgallery.com
Director: Randi Linnegar
Representing: John Bokor, Andrew Christofides, Elisabeth Cummings, Jayne Dyer, Robert Eadie, John Edwards, Rachel Ellis, Paul Ferman, Salvatore Gerardi, Madeleine Hayes, Robert Hirschmann, James Jones, David Keeling, Jan King, Martin King, Joanna Logue, Rod McRae, Idris Murphy, Peter O'Doherty, Amanda Penrose Hart, Leo Robba, Jenny Sages, Wendy Sharpe, Adriane Strampp, Kensuke Todo, John Turier, Richard Wastell, Shona Wilson.
Extensive stockroom selection.
Approved valuer for the Cultural Gifts Program. ACGA member.
Tues–Sat 10–6, and by appointment

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, the Wik and Kugu Art Centre in Aurukun, Israel Birch, Andrew Browne, Liyen Chong, Peter Cooley, Jim Cooper, Michael Cusack, Paul Dibble, Adrienne Doig, McLean Edwards, Neil Frazer, Brent Harris, Linde Ivimey, Charles Karubian, Ildiko Kovacs, Tim Maguire, Karl Maughan, Alexander McKenzie, Kirsteen Pieterse, John Pule, Simon Strong, A. J. Taylor, Simon Taylor, Guan Wei and the estate of Colin McCahon.
Tues–Sun 10.30–6

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

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

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
Mon–Fri 10–5, Free admission

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, Tracy Le Cornu and Alicia Parlby
Mon–Fri 9–5.30; free appraisals Wed 2–5 (no appointment necessary)

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
Tues–Sun 11–5

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

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia
140 George Street, Sydney 2155
Tel 02 9245 2400 Fax 02 9252 4361
mail@mca.com.au
www.mca.com.au
Director: Elizabeth Ann Macgregor OBE
The MCA dedicated to exhibiting, collecting and interpreting the work of today's artists.
Until 2 Dec: Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro; Primavera 2012
20 Dec – 1 Apr: Anish Kapoor
Daily 10–5, Thurs 10–9, Free Admission

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

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 Ann Lewis gift of seventy works by contemporary Australian Aboriginal artists.
Mon–Fri 10–5, Sat 10–1,
Free admission

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

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

Peloton
78A Campbell Street,
Surry Hills 2008
Tel 0421 522 190
info@peloton.net.au
www.peloton.net.au
A program of exhibitions and exchange projects of national and international contemporary art and artists.
Thurs–Sat 1–6

Robin Gibson Gallery
278 Liverpool Street, Darlinghurst 2010
Tel 02 9331 6692 Fax 02 9331 1114
robin@robingibson.net
www.robingibson.net
Stephen Bowers, Gina Bruce, Robert Clinch, Criena Court, Lawrence Daws, David Eastwood, Erwin Fabian, Simon Fieldhouse, Catherine Fox, Guy Gilmour, Steve Harris, Geoff Harvey, Oliver Hopes, Andrew Hopkins, 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 (estate of), Robyn Stacey, Warwick Thornton, Stephanie Valentin and William Yang.
Tues–Sat 11–6

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

Yuill | Crowley
Eastern Exchange
318-320 Liverpool Street
Darlinghurst 2010
Tel 02 9211 6383 Fax 02 9211 0368
Mobile 0418 634 712
yuill_crowley@bigpond.com
www.yuillcrowley.com
Contemporary art.
Wed–Fri 11–6, Sat 11–4.30

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
Until 11 Nov: Sydney Long: The Spirit of the Land; Divine Worlds: Indian Painting
Until 28 Jan: Carol Jerrems, photographic artist 1968–1978
14 Dec – 2 Apr: Toulouse-Lautrec, Paris and the Moulin Rouge
Daily 10–5

Tim Olsen Gallery
63 Jersey Road, Woollahra 2025
Tel 02 9327 3922 Fax 02 9327 3944
ellie@timolsengallery.com
www.timolsengallery.com
Directors: Tim Olsen and Katrina Arent
A cultivated stable of artists that presents a comprehensive and poignant view of the contemporary arts in Australia. Exhibiting the work of both emerging and established artists with a continually changing calendar.
Representing John Olsen, one of Australia's most esteemed living artists.
Tues–Fri 10–6, Sat 10–5, Sun 12–5

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
31 Oct –17 Nov: Margot Hutcheson; Alan Jones
21 Nov – 15 Dec: Ken Whisson; Bridget McLean
16 Dec – 15 Jan: Gallery closed
From 16 Jan: Tony Tuckson
Wed–Fri 10–7, Tues and Sat 10–5

Australian Capital Territory

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

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 4 Nov: Drill Hall Gallery 20th Anniversary Exhibition
8 Nov – 16 Dec: AIATSIS Collections: Likan'mirri II
Wed–Sun 12–5, Free admission

National Portrait Gallery
King Edward Terrace, Parkes, Canberra 2600
Tel 02 6102 7000 Fax 02 6102 7001
www.portrait.gov.au
Until 17 Feb: Go Figure! Contemporary Chinese Portraiture
Daily 10–5
Free admission, Disabled access

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.
Until 18 Nov: Resident Artist Program 20th Anniversary
1 Dec – 17 Feb: What Tomorrow Brings
Tues–Fri 10–5, Sat–Sun 12–4, closed public holidays, 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.
8–27 Nov: Peter Boggs; Les Blakesbrough
29 Nov – 23 Dec: Christmas collection
Gallery closed 25 Dec – 15 Jan inclusive
Tues–Fri 10–5, Sat–Sun 9–5

Solander Gallery
10 Schlich Street, Yarralumla 2600
Tel 02 6285 2218 Fax 02 6282 5145
solander@netspace.net.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

Victoria

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

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 workshop setting where the public can also view works in progress. Tours $10, bookings essential.
Mon–Fri 9–5, Free admission to galleries, entry to viewing mezzanine $5

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

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

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

Bendigo Art Gallery
42 View Street
Bendigo Victoria 3550
Tel 03 5434 6088 Fax 03 5443 6586
bendigoartgallery@bendigo.vic.gov.au
www.bendigoartgallery.com.au
Established in 1887, Bendigo Art Gallery is one of the oldest and largest regional galleries in Australia. The Gallery's collection is extensive with an emphasis on 19th century European and Australian art from 1880s onwards, alongside a strong collection of contemporary art.
Daily 10–5 closed Christmas Day

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

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.
7–9 Dec: Art at Burnley Harbour, Richmond. Melways 58F1
Regularly changing 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
FLG has been exhibiting the work of collectable and exceptional indigenous and non-indigenous Australian artist since 1989. The exhibition program incorporates both emerging and established artists' practices. Our website is extensive, user friendly and updated daily.
Tues–Fri 11–6, Sat 11–4

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

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
Melbourne's premier contemporary art space, presenting a changing program of exhibitions, events and education programs. Visit the website for updated information.
Tues–Sun 11–6
Open public holidays except Christmas Day and Good Friday,
Free admission

Charles Nodrum Gallery
267 Church Street, Richmond 3121
Tel 03 9427 0140
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, public and private collections.
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 do Prado, Sue Lovegrove, Chris Pease and Arlene TextaQueen. Tues–Sat 11–5

Geelong Gallery
Little Malop Street, Geelong 3220
Tel 03 5229 3645 Fax 03 5221 6441
geelart@geelonggallery.org.au
www.geelonggallery.org.au
The Gallery's outstanding collection of paintings, sculpture and decorative arts spans Australian art from 'colonial' to present day. Interspersed throughout the nine galleries are exhibitions of decorative arts, including 18th and 19th century English porcelain, British art pottery, colonial Australian silver, as well as contemporary Australian paintings, sculpture and ceramics.
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

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)

Mossgreen Gallery
310 Toorak Road, South Yarrra 3141
Tel 03 9826 0822 Fax 03 9826 1255
mail@mossgreen.com.au
www.mossgreen.com.au
Directors: Paul Sumner and Amanda Swanson
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 artists.
Mon–Fri 10–5.30, Sat 10–4

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

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

National Gallery of Victoria
The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia
Federation Square
Corner Russell & Flinders Streets
Melbourne 3000
Tel 03 8620 2222
www.ngv.vic.gov.au
16 Nov – 17 Mar: Radiance: The Neo-Impressionists
30 Nov – 17 Mar: Jeff Wall Photographs
NGV Kids Corner: Time Catcher
Daily 10–5, closed Mondays

Karen Woodbury Gallery
Lvl 1 / 167 Flinders Lane
Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel 03 9639 5855, info@kwgallery.com
www.karenwoodburygallery.com
Director: Karen Woodbury
Representing contemporary Australian and International Artists. Lionel Bawden, Jane Burton, Michael Cusack, Michael Doolan, Marie Hagerty, Titania Henderson, Sam Jinks, Locust Jones, Elisabeth Kruger, Fiona Lowry, eX de Medici, Lara Merrett, Derek O'Connor, Simon Obarzanek, John Pule, Lisa Roet, Kate Rohde, Alex Spremberg, Heather B. Swann, Monika Tichacek, Aida Tomescu, Philip Wolfhagen.
Opening hours: by appointment only

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
Set in sixteen hectares of bush and landscaped gardens in Langwarrin, the gallery presents a vibrant program of exhibitions and public programs and is home to the McClelland Sculpture Survey and Award. McClelland Gallery Cafe is available for functions. Guided tours Weds and Thurs at 11 and 2, Sat and Sun at 2, bookings essential. Tues–Sun 10–5, Entry by donation

Monash Gallery Of Art
860 Ferntree Gully Road,
Wheelers Hill, 3150
Tel 03 8544 0500 Fax 03 9562 2433
mga@monash.vic.gov.au
www.mga.org.au
Director: Shaune Lakin
Holding one of the finest collections of photography, MGA also represents a range of exhibitions, educational programs and events.
Tues–Fri 10–5, Sat–Sun 12–5

LUMA La Trobe University Museum of Art
La Trobe University, Bundoora 3086
Tel 03 9479 2111 Fax 03 9479 5588
www.latrobe.edu.au/luma
LUMA engages in historical and contemporary art debates and seeks to make a significant contribution to contemporary critical discourse. LUMA also manages the University Art Collection, one of the most significant university collections in the country, which charts the development of Australian art practice since the mid-1960s.
Mon–Fri 10–5

[MARS] Melbourne Art Rooms
418 Bay St, Port Melbourne 3207
Tel 03 9681 8425 Fax 03 9681 8426
andy@marsgallery.com.au
www.marsgallery.com.au
MARS showcases outstanding contemporary Australian art from emerging and established artists. Two-level state-of-the-art gallery space with an extensive stockroom.
Tues–Sun 10–5

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 15 Dec: Artist Proof #1
Until Apr: Emily Floyd
Tues–Fri 10–5, Sat 12–5,
Free admission

National Gallery of Victoria
NGV International
180 St Kilda Road, Melbourne 3004
Tel 03 8620 2222
www.ngv.vic.gov.au
Until 28 Jan: The Four Horsemen: Apocalypse, Death and Disaster
Until 24 Mar: Confounding: Contemporary Photography
NGV Kids Space: An Excellent Adventure
Daily 10–5, closed Tuesdays

National Gallery of Victoria
NGV Studio
Federation Square
Flinders Street
Melbourne 3000
Tel 03 8620 2222
www.ngv.vic.gov.au
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 involve Melbourne's youth.
Sun–Wed 10–5, Thurs–Sat 10–10

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, Claudia 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

Art Gallery of South Australia
North Terrace, Adelaide 5000
Tel 08 8207 7000 Fax 08 8207 7070
www.artgallery.ag.gov.au
Daily 10–5, Bookshop and Art Gallery Restaurant, daily 10–4.45, Free admission, charges may apply to special exhibitions

Nellie Castan Gallery
Level 1, 12 River Street,
South Yarra 3141
Tel 03 9804 7366 Fax 03 9804 7367
mail@nelliecastangallery.com
www.nelliecastangallery.com
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www.flinders.edu.au/artmuseum
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www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au
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Western Australia

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info@pica.org.au
www.pica.org.au
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Tasmania

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Daily 10–5

Gertrude Contemporary and Art & Australia Emerging Writers Program

Ash Kilmartin

Invited by Macquarie University Art Gallery to build an exhibition with works by Stephen Birch in the university's collection, Alex Gawronski constructed 'Enigmas', an arrangement of eight of his and Birch's works. Friends and colleagues until Birch's death in 2007, the artists approach the world in divergent ways. Birch's installations, often comprising finely crafted cast objects with animated moving parts or video screens, purposefully evade any definitive subject; Gawronski's sculptures and installations are more self-reflexive, consciously engaging their context as a subject.

Two works by Birch operated as an index for the artist's wider oeuvre in 'Enigmas'. Of these, *Untitled (bookcase)*, 1989, seemed incidental to Gawronski's purposes. By contrast, Birch's 2006 installation *No man's land* was positioned as a point through which so many streams of the artist's thinking – the concepts, materials, processes characteristic of his output – could be channelled.

No man's land was made for Birch's solo exhibition of the same title at Macquarie and is composed of cast and painted objects: a life-sized costumed Spiderman figure missing its lower left leg, a 'wooden' soapbox, an impossibly elongated 'leg' shaped to look like a whittled branch, and a full washbasin. A projector and a monitor, each displaying one or two static images, supply a false 'moving image' presence. Allusive, mimetic and comical, Birch's installations at once compel and refuse efforts of logical analysis.

In 'Enigmas' Gawronski took up the conceptual and visual motifs of Birch's work and remodelled these in a logic which, while evoking the loss and lostness that are present in much of Birch's work, reads as something entirely Gawronski's own. In discrete sculptures Gawronski adopts individual moments of Birch's broader practice: his wall-mounted *Bird/Mouse*, 2012, is an interspecies high-rise version of Birch's 1995 work *Pets*; the tobacco pipe of Birch's smoking fungi in *The trip*, 2005, reappears as *This is not/Hegel's holiday*, 2012; the rough-sawn wooden box in Gawronski's *Lying down*, 2012, is a horizontal prototype for *Bird/Mouse*, but also a crate or coffin large enough to hold Birch's Spiderman; and an axe handle sprouting from the plaster tree-stump of *Homily*, 2012, reads as a deleted scene in the mixed-up narrative of *No man's land*. With each new work, Gawronski responds directly to the limblessness of Birch's Spiderman. Visual puns on themselves too, each work is so perfectly incorrect that it becomes whole.

Less literally, *This is not/Hegel's holiday* deploys animation as a false shortcut to meaning, a strategy particular to Birch's storytelling. The dripping pipe, like Birch's videos, functions as a distraction from the core conceptual workings of the piece. Gawronski's application is uncanny, an effect drawn on in Birch's work. But if a sense of misdirection occurs in Birch's works, Gawronski doesn't allow us to get lost. These works are tidy riddles, literal and linguistic sight gags about their own relationship to identifiable, if absent, works by Birch.

'Enigmas' was neither a simple re-presentation of a key work by Birch, nor an exhibition of works simply influenced by him. Gawronski's decision to make works in response to Birch's practice, and to exhibit these alongside the entirety of *No man's land,* suggests a model less easily defined than collaboration, retrospective or tribute. Nor was 'Enigmas' a patching-over of the missing pieces of Birch's work, given the deconstructive nature of Gawronski's approach. It proposed a reinterpretation of one artist's articulation of the failure of objects to be interpreted. Gawronski offered a kind of ekphrasis, a translation from one practice into another, without denying Birch's vision of the fragmented nature of experience.

Ash Kilmartin was mentored by Blair French, Executive Director, Artspace Visual Arts Centre, Sydney; **Enigmas: Birch/Gawronski,** Macquarie University Art Gallery, Sydney, 9 May – 22 June 2012.

Stephen Birch, No man's land, 2006
Fiberglass, polyurethane, screen print, lycra, acrylic polymer paint, video, dimensions variable. Courtesy the estate. Photograph Effy Alexakis

Art & Australia / Credit Suisse Private Banking Contemporary Art Award

Britt Salt

Jane Button

Britt Salt is on an upward trajectory. Awarded the Freedman Scholarship in 2010, Salt has also conducted residencies in China and France and has had regular exhibitions in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne. Her artworks are also held in collections such as Artbank and feature nationally as commissioned pieces. All this Salt has achieved at only twenty-seven years old.

The materiality of Salt's artworks is both innovative and deceptive. Sourcing material largely from industrial and hardware stockists, Salt both utilises and subverts the inherent 'heavy-duty' qualities of commercial products, such as powder-coated aluminium and industrial mesh, to create instead sculptural and light-based interplays of patterned forms. An heir to a tradition of optical and kinetic art, her practice contains elements of chance and unpredictability.

Suspended from the ceiling, an early work such as *Monoform manifold 0.01*, 2008, whimsically hovers in space, its multilayered configurations of cascading folds revealed as people walk into and around the room. Attuned to this environmental flux, the sculpture is engaged with kinaesthetic processes and the optical play of light and shadow. At the moment that an aspect of the artwork becomes illuminated via the filtering of light through transparent mesh, the surrounding creases become enveloped in cavernous spaces. These oscillating degrees of perspicacity are especially evident in *Monoform series 2 (No. 2)*, 2008, as are the structural tensions between strength and fragility. These works challenge our modes of perception. The layers of pleating in *Monform (S.040)*, 2008, or contortion in *Monoform manifold 0.001*, call attention to how the eye recognises and integrates recurring and discontinuous motifs.

More recently, Salt has expanded her playful adoption of materials to include the bouncy ball, commonly known in Australia as 'Space Hoppers'. Salt was inspired to use such a form – a first in her practice – after an invitation to create a site-specific work at Linden Centre for Contemporary Art in May 2012. Her underlying premise for *Puzzlethèque* was for visitors to experience the installation space in unexpected and novel ways as 'something at odds with the gallery environment and the pristine architecture'.[1]

The possibilities afforded by these buoyant forms and their potential for movement captivated Salt's attention, especially in relation to interactivity when the objects were simply activated into a revolving state by passing air currents, began to sway through a visitor bumping into them, or when they became a mode of transit for the audience around the gallery space. Inherent in such a participatory logic was the fact that 'visitors then had the opportunity to relocate the hopper back within the [installation] space, allowing them to question how the shapes and form "fit" together as a spatial whole'.[2] Of course, in Salt's work, this act of spatial repositioning is muddied through forms of optical illusion, insofar as *Puzzlethèque* consists of completely immersing the installation space, from wall to ceiling, in ribbons upon ribbons of black-and-white geometric stripes. The eye therefore is constantly tricked into how these all-encompassing lines actually relate to and are arranged around the other in an endless game of joining the stripes.

What can be gathered from Salt's practice is her abiding interest in the interaction between spatial and material dynamics. A phenomenologist of sorts, Salt finds special significance in how 'the qualities of a space become known via the matter which interacts with it'.[3] Perhaps it is no surprise that Gabriel Orozco's *Roof to roof*, 1993, *Breath on piano*, 1993, and *Pinched ball*, 1993, are cited as some of her favourite works, given their simplicity of form and moreover their ability to act as vessels that give space a place. And it is to the spaces and the places that Britt Salt next chooses to venture; with her driving momentum, that will be well worth watching from here. A&

1 Correspondence between the author and Britt Salt, 10 July 2012.
2 ibid.
3 ibid.

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Art & Australia / Credit Suisse Private Banking Contemporary Art Award

Britt Salt

Puzzlethèque, 2012
Hand-painted PVC, vinyl, steel, dimensions variable
Installation view, Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne
Courtesy the artist and Helen Gory Galerie, Melbourne
Photograph Jeremy Dillon

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