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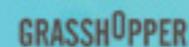
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IMAGE
4A CINEMA ALLEY 2009
Parker Street, Haymarket
Presenting Ming Wang
Hanchessomeit (2006)
single channel video

COVER IMAGE

Elizabeth Corkery
I is for Pulsating Flowers (2010)
Image courtesy of the artist

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DAS BUMPER

For me, this is an ideal Das Superpaper. Its pages are plentiful, its ideas are far reaching – the works speak for themselves. In this, our affectionately known ‘Summer Bumper’ issue, I’m going to let the pages speak for themselves. I hope you find a moment to ponder the plethora of emerging and more established Australian artists... because they really are very good. We have interviews with a sparkling compendium of artists including the ever insightful curator, collaborator, and artist Bindi Cole, and New York living printmaking master Elizabeth Corkery. We have Melbourne’s own Gothic-animation and sound mistress Joel Zika, Berlin-based photographer to the stars Sam Hodge, and Helen Pynor, the painter of lustful biology-meets-art, art. Beyond this we have the a bundle of pictorial essays for you to visit from the comfort of your jacuzzi (or sauna, pool, fireside etc) and a splash of Das500 critical responses to get your summer bumping with a contemporary art groove.

2010 has been a wonderful year for the Das team – we have been very proud to welcome the vivacious Das Cinema, the poignant Das500, and the first Critical Issue into our lives. We look forward to sharing more of these initiatives and the artists that they profile in the coming year. From all the Das Family, have a wonderful summer. Or winter. Have a wonderful new years – and we thank you, very deeply, for your support throughout this year.

BRONWYN BAILEY-CHARTERIS



THE STORY OF A WINDOW

PICTORIAL MATT KEEGAN & DANE MITCHELL

NEON PARC, Melbourne
In association with Starkwhite, Auckland and Altman Siegel, San Francisco
20 Oct to 20 Nov 2010

>>

• Matt Keegan & Dane Mitchell
The Story Of A Window (2010)
Installation view
images © the artists

Matt Keegan & Dane Mitchell
1 Week, 7 Days, 168 Hours, #4 (2010)
Type C Print 44.5cm x 36.5cm
images © the artists

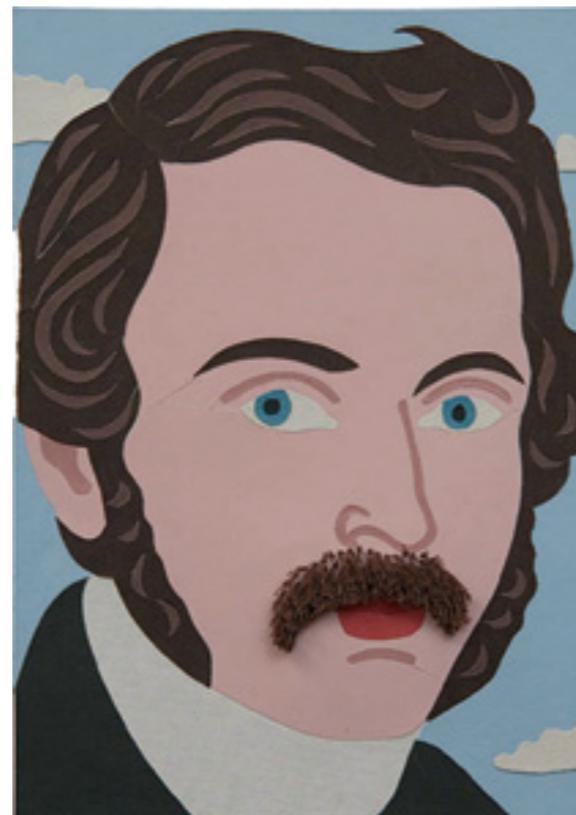
• Matt Keegan & Dane Mitchell
The Story Of A Window (2010)
Installation view
images © the artists



KINGFISHING

PICTORIAL GAVIN HURLEY

Boutwell Draper Gallery, Sydney
11 Mar to 17 Apr 2010



- Gavin Hurley
Albert with real fake moustache (2010)
Paper Collage 38x28cm
Image courtesy the artist

Gavin Hurley
Three Kings (2009)
Oil on linen 70x55cm
Image courtesy the artist

- Gavin Hurley
Cpt. Moonlite with Blue Bellied Parrot (2010)
Oil on linen
Courtesy the artist





SISTAGIRLS

INTERVIEW GENEVIEVE O'CALLAGHAN

Bindi Cole's iconic portrait series, shown recently at Tandanya in Adelaide, profiles the Sistagirls – the transgender community of the Northern Territory's Tiwi Islands. A Melbourne-based photographer of the Wathaurung nation and a romantic at heart (her favourite movie is *Chocolat*) Cole connects to the Sistagirls in obscure ways, her wistful photographs illuminating their beauty and character. I interviewed her to find out just how she does it.

What drew you to the Sistagirls of the Tiwi Islands?

I was interested in, and began documenting Aboriginal drag queens a few years back and then I met an Aboriginal drag queen called Foxy Empire who is the alter ego of Jason De Santis. I was immediately taken with Foxy, having just spent time creating artwork that was about reconciling my identity with the world, and I wondered how Foxy reconciled hers. You couldn't be more of a minority than being Aboriginal, gay and a drag queen - and to be so strong and proud was something that immediately resonated with me. So I photographed Foxy, and Jason told me about the community that he came from on the Tiwi Islands and about the Sistagirls and how he had always wanted a photographer to go there to capture them.

How long had the project been developing?

The project took about a year and a half to get off the ground from conception to actually going to Tiwi.

How do you see yourself connecting with your subjects? The Tiwi Islands are remote and the Sistagirls would be considered by many as 'authentically' Aboriginal, whereas you are from an urban area and are 'not really Aboriginal' (to quote your 2008 project) – yet you are both treading the same line.

I think that's an interesting question. There are many people who don't see the Sistagirls as authentic as well, and I guess that's where I'm coming from. The stereotypical Aboriginal person is definitely not transgender. That's why I relate.

They are also outside of the stereotype. They also struggle for acceptance. I feel a connection to them in such a big way. I think in many ways both myself and the Sistagirls are 'not really Aboriginal' and that it was a natural progression for me to move from reconciling my identity with the world to looking at how they reconcile theirs.

Some of your Sistagirls images are reminiscent of Tracey Moffatt's 1989 *Something More* series – in setting and execution – and Brenda L Croft's 1994 series *Strange Fruit* – in tone. Would you cite either of these leading Aboriginal female photographers as influences?

I am in awe of their work. There was no intention of creating similarities between my work and theirs, but their work has most definitely been an inspiration to me over the years. I'm more than happy to think that I have somehow made something that reflects their efforts.

Who are your other influences?

My family, friends, community and ancestors have been my greatest influences. In particular, my mum (Vicki Reynolds) who was a writer and who taught me how to make yourself vulnerable by examining through art things that are difficult to look at. There have been many others that have had a huge influence on me and the way I work and that have also provided real life opportunities and helped me to where I am today. I have had a few mentors such as Ponch Hawkes and Donna Jackson – strong women who have had amazing careers and are completely generous with themselves and their time. As well as other artists who constantly inspire me. A real mix of people that I admire from afar, people >>



that are a part of my life and artists from history: Brook Andrew, Ponch Hawkes, Gordon Hookey, Maree Clarke, Megan Cadd, Reko Rennie, Vicki Couzens, Richard Bell, Vernon Ah Kee, Donna Jackson, Paola Balla, Destiny Deacon, Tracey Moffat, Adam Hill, Yoko Ono, Ash Keating, Fiona Foley, Ricky Maynard, Tony Albert, Gary Lee, Sue Ford, Tracey Emin, Troy Anthony Bayliss ... gosh, I could go on and on.

In *Sistagirls* you construct your subjects' setting with cultural objects from their country. In some images there are bird carvings, others feature tungas (bark baskets), while others show more secular objects like a clothesline, fabrics and a parasol. How did you arrive at choosing these 'props' and how did you go about placing them?

Each shoot was carefully planned with a costumed theme and the artworks were chosen according to what would best suit the theme. I worked with Tiwi Design2 to borrow the artworks and my inspiration was to make a connection with early ethnographic images such as those by JW Lindt where traditional objects, artworks and dead animals had been used. I also wanted to show the connection between the contemporary representation of the Sistagirls and their very strong connection to their culture and cultural practices.

The wall text that accompanies the exhibition – the voice of each Sistagirl – alludes to a sense of isolation and marginalisation. Do you think these photographs will help people, Tiwi and beyond, to accept transgender people?

The wall panels were written by Jirra Lulla Harvey through interviews that she did. I hope that the photos help people to understand and accept transgender people. I also hope that other transgender people are inspired by them, particularly other Sistagirls around Australia. I also think the documentary that has been commissioned by the ABC and was filmed showing the process of me making the work will help too. It's due to be shown nationally on ABC in February.

Has *Sistagirls* been shown on the Tiwi Islands? If so, how has the series been received?

Yes, the photos were shown on Tiwi before they were shown anywhere else and the Sistagirls loved them!

Are you planning an ongoing photographic relationship with the Sistagirls of the Tiwi Islands? Would you consider returning in a few years to shoot their portraits again?

I have not planned any more portraits of this stage. However, since my first trip to Tiwi I have already been back a number of times and will be back every year of my life if I have my way. So in that way, I hope to document them for as long as I can and love them for as long as I can.

●

- Bindi Cole
Ajay (2010)
 - Bindi Cole
Crystal (2010)
 - Bindi Cole
Bimbo (2010)
 - Bindi Cole
Nicola (2010)
- All images courtesy of the artist.

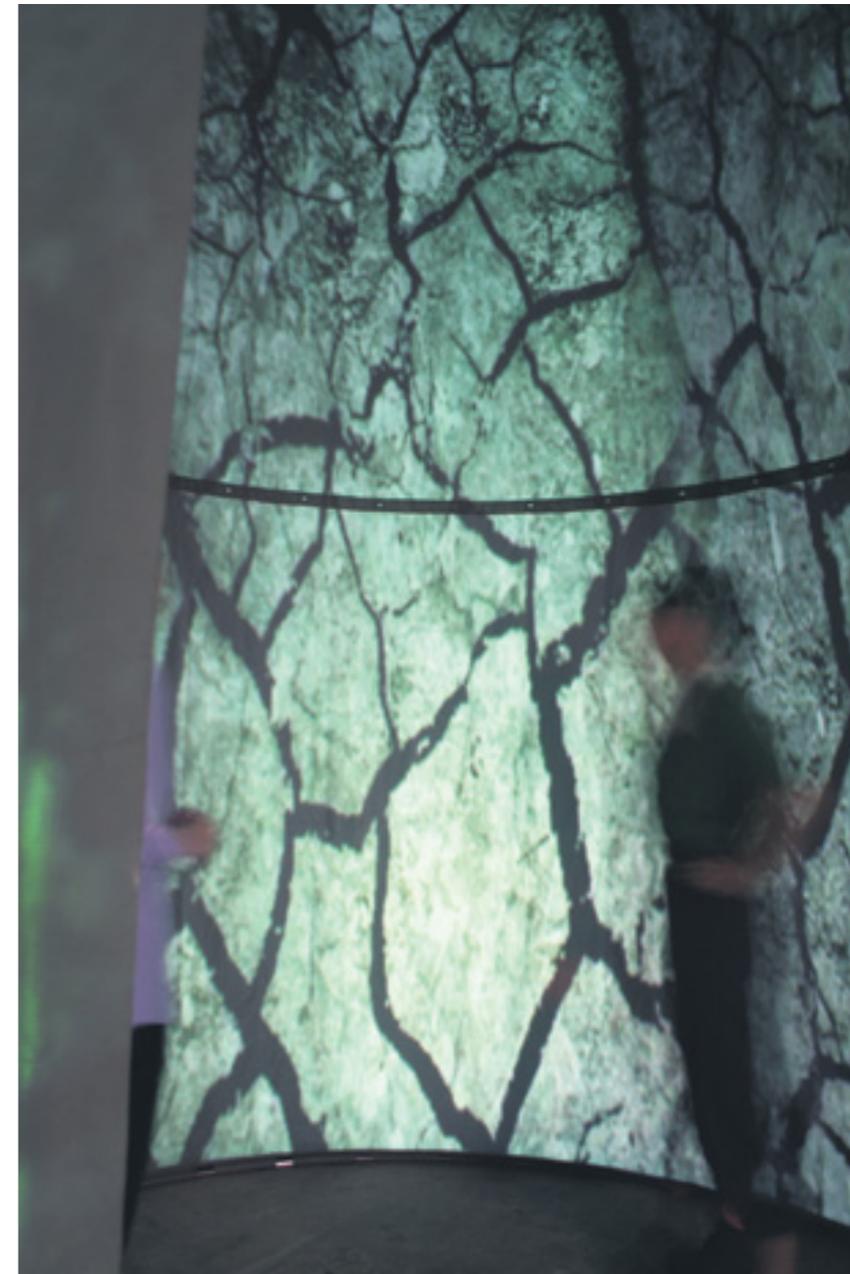




• Joel Zika
Terrorarium (2010)
Installation views
Image courtesy of the artist

JOEL ZIKA

INTERVIEW BRONWYN BAILEY-CHARTERIS



Joel Zika is an art man about Melbourne. His most recent work in October 2010, *Terrorarium*, featured a giant tube of projected animation in the concrete bunker of No Vacancy Gallery in downtown Melbourne. The devastating and eerie sound work blew my mind, as did standing in the middle of this projection tunnel, while the gothic, the abject and the spooky engulfed me. Zika is also a collaborator, this year alone he has been hooking up with the Safari Team as part of Next Wave Festival, Melbourne Fringe and NotFair 2010. Zika's unique amalgamation of animation, sound and installation provide gothic nightmarish experiences for his audiences, and his diverse collaborative practice places Zika in that exciting group of Melbourne-based contemporary artists we just can't get enough of.



•|• Joel Zika
Facade #1 (2010)
 Photo print
 Image courtesy of the artist

Tell us about *Terrorium* and how you got to this work?

I grew up really enjoying illusionistic toys like Viewmasters and holograms and also toys that stored miniature worlds like snow domes. I had a bug catcher that had a magnified fish eye lid so that when you put your face up to it you felt like you were inside - I'd put spiders and lizards and stuff in there.

That same fascination led to an attraction with digital art and animation and my research has centred around finding ways to explore that digital content - which is virtual - in a real world spatial way.

I'm always looking for a format for display that is engaging not just as a sublime physiological experience but that offers a new structure for sequential narrative.

Terrorium is inspired by an article I found in a 1907 copy of the New York Times - it describes a panoramic amusement that takes the audience on a 'journey into hell', starting in the coffin and ending with an audience with Lucifer himself. Part of a strong turn of the century tradition of mechanized panoramas, this ride appeared to be the first that transported the audience into a fictionalized world rather than a historic re-enactment.

Terrorium creates three stages of this descent and presents it in a format where the audience/riders are captured inside a bug catcher, or terrarium, a claustrophobic tunnel that first sinks, then spins and then carries them into the mouth of a neon demon.

What have you been working on previously?

I'm working on a set of prints based on the story of Pinocchio and the sites of vice that are portrayed in that narrative.

Have you always been interested in the gothic?

Growing up in Tasmania you are constantly engaging with the horrors of history represented through myths and narratives - I think that is the role of the gothic and it's always there with me. I'm not that interested in nature walks but a ghost tour will have me lining up every time.

What do you find rewarding about working with animation and video?

It can be limiting and you have to be quite rigorous about using the techniques that are appropriate to tell the story. The really positive thing about animated

installation projects is that you can work on an illustration then adapt it to form a component that can be brought to life in a projection environment. If the physical space has to change you can move that element around like a character in a story.

Who are some of your art idols?

Paul McCarthy is a guy who has a unique appreciation for illusion and at the same time can make visceral and horrifying installation work, and I'd like to be influenced more by him. Gary Hill, James Turrell and Callum Morton rock my world.

Ah, what a great selection of artists. Where would you like to take your work?

I've been able to install work into some great venues, public and private, but I want more freedom to install in places that have a pre-conceived cultural reading like historical sites and corporate buildings. ●

Visit joelzika.wordpress.com

• Joel Zika
Untitled #1 (2009)
Photoprint
Image courtesy of the artist



Visit joelzika.wordpress.com

ELIZABETH CORKERY I IS FOR PULSATING FLOWERS

INTERVIEW EMERSON BOWYER

>>

- Elizabeth Corkery
I is for Pulsating Flowers (2010)
Installation view
Image courtesy of the artist
- Elizabeth Corkery
Floral Reflection 3 and *Floral Reflection 3*
from *I is for Pulsating Flowers* (2010)
Digital prints
Image courtesy of the artist



Elizabeth Corkery likes to play with our senses. The young printmaker's recent New York installation, *I is for Pulsating Flowers*, plunged its viewers into the barrel of a giant kaleidoscope. Within this ecstatic environment, brilliant and tessellated shards assaulted the eye, dissolving normative structures of figure and ground, of line and color. Space itself became elastic in the rhythmic interplay of colors and shapes. One could almost hear it. Or feel it. Those blues, reds, greens and yellows, all throbbing and thrumming and humming together. Corkery's delirious essays in the language of synesthesia do not simply activate our perceptual apparatuses, they provoke in the observer an acute awareness of perception as a bodily and cognitive process, an eccentric series of stops and starts, trials and errors and, ultimately, of rationalization. But in the brief moment before that rationalization, amongst a garden of pulsating flowers, the world is made strange again.

A kind of re-enchantment.

You've just had your first solo exhibition in NYC, no small feat for a young Australian artist who had only recently arrived in the country. For better or worse, NYC remains a central site for the production and consumption of art. As an emerging artist in the city, has it been difficult to gain exposure?

It can be tricky if you don't have a huge amount of money at your disposal. It isn't simply a matter of renting a space. If you are not a name that will attract an audience, it is beneficial to be affiliated with a bigger project that has an organized set-up and a pre-existing system of marketing and promotion. My latest project was given the breath of life when I was awarded a grant from the Brooklyn Arts Council. Every year they offer a certain number of artists support for a specific project that must take place the following calendar year. And the installation itself was part of the DUMBO Arts Festival, a large and increasingly well-known series of events.

What was the impetus for your exhibition?

It's really a further development of an installation I mounted a couple of years ago, *Visual Notes on Synesthesia*. In that project I dealt generally with what I identified as 'the language of synesthesia.' Scientists have identified key visual motifs or 'form constants' that reappear with surprising regularity in accounts of synesthetic experience — spirals, starbursts, geometric shapes, honeycomb patterns, orbs. This uniformity in what are considered extraordinary perceptual experiences fascinated me. During the creation of *Visual Notes* there was one story that I wanted to include but it didn't seem visually appropriate at the time. It was the testimony of a woman with synesthesia >>



who would see pulsating flowers in and around her personal space whenever she heard the ignition sound of her gas oven. For my latest installation I wanted to investigate the visual possibilities of this scenario.

Is the installation an attempt to reconstruct the historical experience of this woman?

No. I was adamant about that from the start, particularly after researching the works of other artist who had dealt with synesthesia. A lot of them were multi-media artists, like Adam Sandover, whose installation *Synesthesia* (Nuclear Families) emitted smells while screening video. I knew I wasn't going to find meaning in mimicking synesthetic perception because there's never going to be any authenticity. What I did find exciting was the woman's vocabulary of shape and color.

Your interest in the structure of synesthesia, its 'language of form,' provokes complex questions concerning the relationship between difference and repetition, between the extraordinary and the ordinary. How does *I is for Pulsating Flowers* engage with these issues?

The design and production of the installation explicitly address such problems. This is because concepts like difference and repetition are also at the heart of printmaking. The installation is comprised of 150 masonite panels, each measuring 16x24 inches. And yet, none of their surfaces present the same image. I didn't want identical panels that fit together in a pre-determined form, so once

they were constructed I painted a series of stenciled triangle patterns on each, applied with aerosol paint. This was done in a kind of reductive manner — I masked areas I wanted to keep and exposed areas in which I wanted to alter the color. Finally, I screenprinted a floral design on the panels, but not with any pre-conceived system of application.

As exhibited, the work also initiates a slippage between the conventionally two-dimensional nature of print media, and a more volumetric, architectural space. Your prints weren't merely hung on walls, they became walls!

There is a long tradition of printed wallpapers and wall-covering, one that has recently experienced a renaissance. I've resisted moving into the wallpaper realm. With my recent show, the construction of solid, printed panels produced objects that can be removed from the installation, re-configured and re-installed. They exist as wall-covering when exhibited as such, but can also be presented as individual art pieces. They weren't disposable, as my previous wall-coverings had been. I think the rigidity of the new prints was an important development in my practice.

As exhibited in NYC, the installation revealed its own construction, its existence as an ephemeral assemblage of parts. Was this a conscious decision?

I'm very interested in the relationship between installation art and set design. As far as inventive commercial and editorial work is concerned, set design has really exploded in the last few years. The kind of ambitious projects >>





undertaken by designers and their photographers —people like Tim Walker and David LaChapelle — create remarkable worlds for photographic imagery. I could see my work moving into that realm. I'm fascinated with the idea of seeing the backside of these constructions.

• Elizabeth Corkery
Visual Notes on Synesthesia (2008)
 Installation view
 Image courtesy of the artist

Of pulling back the curtain.

Exactly. I would like to pursue that kind of exposure much further, showing the process of the thing, not trying to hide its workings. I was just reading Venturi's *Learning from Las Vegas*, an examination of Las Vegas as a constructed city, a kind of stage set where a lot of thought has gone into the facades of buildings, but very little to their backsides which face out toward the empty desert.

These are the kinds of spaces Foucault called heterotopias. As a garden-within-a-kitchen-within-an-art-gallery, your installation certainly intersects with the heterotopic. In fact, your collaborator on the physical construction of the installation's architecture, Dan Quinn, is also a creator of heterotopias!

Dan is the Director and Curator of his own artistic project, called Stand Alone Gallery. It's a project that presents art work out of the traditional realm of the gallery space, more often than not on the street. He hates the phrase, 'pop-up gallery, but ultimately that's exactly what it is. It's particularly fun when he sets it up on the street in front of traditional galleries. The proximity is kind of cheeky.

Speaking of cheekiness, I very much like the title of your new project. The idea that space can pulsate is very interesting. Unfortunately, we still tend to consider an architectural environment as merely a static backdrop, against which experience happens. Your use of prints seems to both activate and problematise architectural spaces.

It is interesting that you mention the 'activation' of space, given that my first major project was much more dependent on an existing architectural framework. In my recent installation, on the other hand, I had complete control over the scale and dimension of the constructed space. I'm giving a lot of thought to which of these scenarios is most potent for my practice. I'm not sure I would ever install the current work the same way twice. Next time I install the piece I will play with the dimensions, perhaps making the internal space smaller to enhance the experience of immersion. ●

More of Elizabeth's work can be seen at elizabethcorkery.com



KIRAN SUBBAIAH

INTERVIEW ROBYN STUART

Kiran Subbaiah is a Bangalore-based artist who has worked extensively with sculpture, video and new media works. He was in Sydney recently for the installation of his video work *Suicide Note* as part of the group exhibition *Last Words* at 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, and found time to talk in the days after the show's opening. The voice of the deadpan narrator of *Suicide Note* (played by Subbaiah) filtered through from the background, providing occasional unexpected interjections ("Outright plagiarism!"), as we discussed his video works, his belief that art doesn't have to serve any purpose, and the fascinating world of downloadable viruses.



- Kiran Subbaiah
Still image from *Suicide Note* (2006)
Single-channel video with projector panner
and semicircular screen
Courtesy of the artist
- | As Above.

Can we start out by talking about your video works? I really like the humour in your videos, and the irreverent way you treat everything – from life to death to bureaucracy to celebrity, and art especially. It seems to me that you like to surprise the viewer.

The surprise element in my videos could be compared to video works in which, for a long time, nothing happens. And you know nothing's going to happen. It's like a still painting, or a photograph. My works are more like cinema than video. Cinematic works are always accentuated, punctuated with various emotions, and the surprise element is always important to keep people engaged.

It is very engaging. There are many video works where you look at it for a couple of seconds and think, okay, I get it. Whereas with yours you feel inclined to stay and see what's going to happen.

In fact, I like to make fun of video art. I like to pretend like nothing's going to happen, and then something happens – and maybe a lot of people miss that because they've already walked away. I'd actually prefer an auditorium setting, where you have the beginning and the end, and people stay for the whole screening like they do with films. That's the way that I like to watch video art. I would rather be watching it at a cinema than a gallery.

The way that *Suicide Note* is set up in 4A gallery is a bit like that. There are cushions in front of the screen so that people can sit, and the curved wall that the video is projected onto makes it feel like an auditorium.

Yes that's just it, it's a makeshift cinema.

***Suicide Note* is showing at 4A as part of the group exhibition *Last Words*. Can you talk about the significance of the work to the themes of the show?**

One of the things I wanted in *Suicide Note* was a properly looped narrative. There are a lot of looped video artworks that still have a recognisable beginning and end, and then because it's all shown in galleries where people can enter and leave in the middle, there's no sense of that loop. So the way I did it was to conceive each scene as the last scene, and every word as the last word. And the title, *Suicide Note* – that ties in with the *Last Words* theme as well.

You've said a few times in the past that you believe very strongly that art does not have to serve any purpose. Can you explain that belief?

It's got to do with context. When I was leaving art school, art had to be invested with a political usefulness, and one of the most important things was to make 'Indian art'. It was kind of a post-colonial hangover – there was a kind of patriotism

that didn't really mean anything anymore. I was trying to break away from the idea that you have duties as an artist. I used to believe that this was true. I used to think that if you want to do something important in art then it should change the world in some way. So it was very liberating when I first arrived in Europe and saw that people didn't give a damn about all that. You could do anything you wanted. After that, it turned into play, it was not work anymore.

You didn't have to subscribe to fashionable ideologies or a preconceived Indian identity to make art.

Yes. Although of course there's a lot of art that's socially or politically motivated in some way, which I like. It's just difficult to find it. Most of the time, the artist is cashing in on a situation, and it can be trite and uninteresting. There's lots of art shows at the moment dealing with the environment, for example... I mean, I think that particularly with something like environmental art, it's not really doing what it preaches. Activism would be more effective.

Was that ever a choice that you made, between activism and art?

I just spent a lot of time trying to make art that deals with issues as a student. That's kind of a given thing for students to do. Breaking away from that? When it happened, it only took a moment, and then I was free. >>

KUDOS AWARD 2010

PICTORIAL KYLIE BANYARD

**You were liberated from having to ‘mean something’.
Do you try to make fun of activist art then?**

To a large part yes, although often I find myself taking part in some aspects of it as well. Especially when working on the internet, because there’s a lot of grey areas about what you can and can’t do, issues of censorship and ownership and intellectual property. I’ve worked with a lot of lawyers and software engineers – this is a problem we all face when using the internet as a medium. When I make art I come across these types of issues, but I can always find my way around, maybe by doing things anonymously or under a pseudonym. So in some sense I am an activist. But you know that this is not really making art. If something’s not allowed you can find a way of doing it, while you try and fight for it to be legalised.

But you’d class those activities as activism rather than your artistic practice?

Yes, I would.

Aside from video, you’ve also worked with sculpture, and quite a lot with the internet. I’m especially fascinated by the downloadable viruses that you made (I didn’t want to download any in case they wrecked my computer). Can you talk about these?

I spent a lot of time making sure they wouldn’t ruin anyone’s computer. It’s really easy to make things go wrong. I was really interested when the internet came about as to how I could use it as my primary medium, and get all the advantages of not having to go through a gallery, of not having mediation. Put your work online and your show lasts a lifetime. Especially when you’re making sculpture, each time you show a work you have to take things physically to the spot. Because of that I felt a real euphoria about the internet. Very soon I knew I wanted to make viruses – partly because it was a new side to explore and also because I was very disappointed with the viruses that I’d seen, because by the time you find out what’s happening it’s too late. I wanted something very graphic, what I fantasised a virus to do.

So you made viruses that make your computer scream with pain.

Yes. The one that’s available now is one I put to together from various others – I kind of composed them like a DJ.

Is there a conflict between the great euphoria you described when you discovered the potential of the internet and computers as a medium, and the creation of viruses that destroy the computers?

No, because the viruses don’t actually destroy the computers. I never destroyed any computers, partly because if you make a virus like that it destroys your own computer. Also it’s very difficult to physically destroy a computer.

What are some of your upcoming projects?

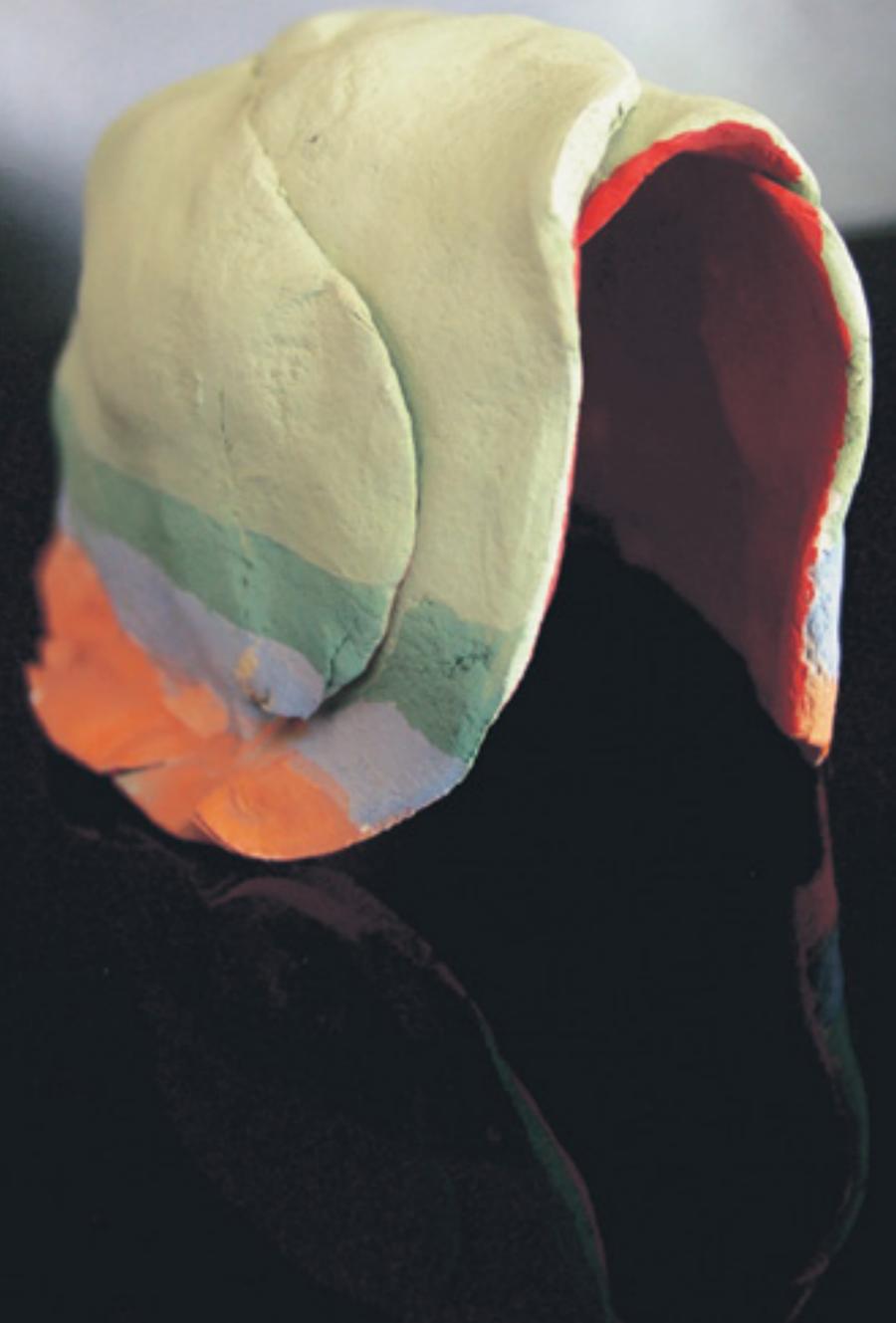
I always have a lot of projects which are at least 5 years old that I still need to finish. When new ideas happen it surprises me, I don’t really plan for it. I’ve been working on a robot called the Spectator, which isn’t quite finished yet. The idea is that it tries to exchange the roles between people and art objects. It looks at humans as though they are the art object. It’s almost ready.

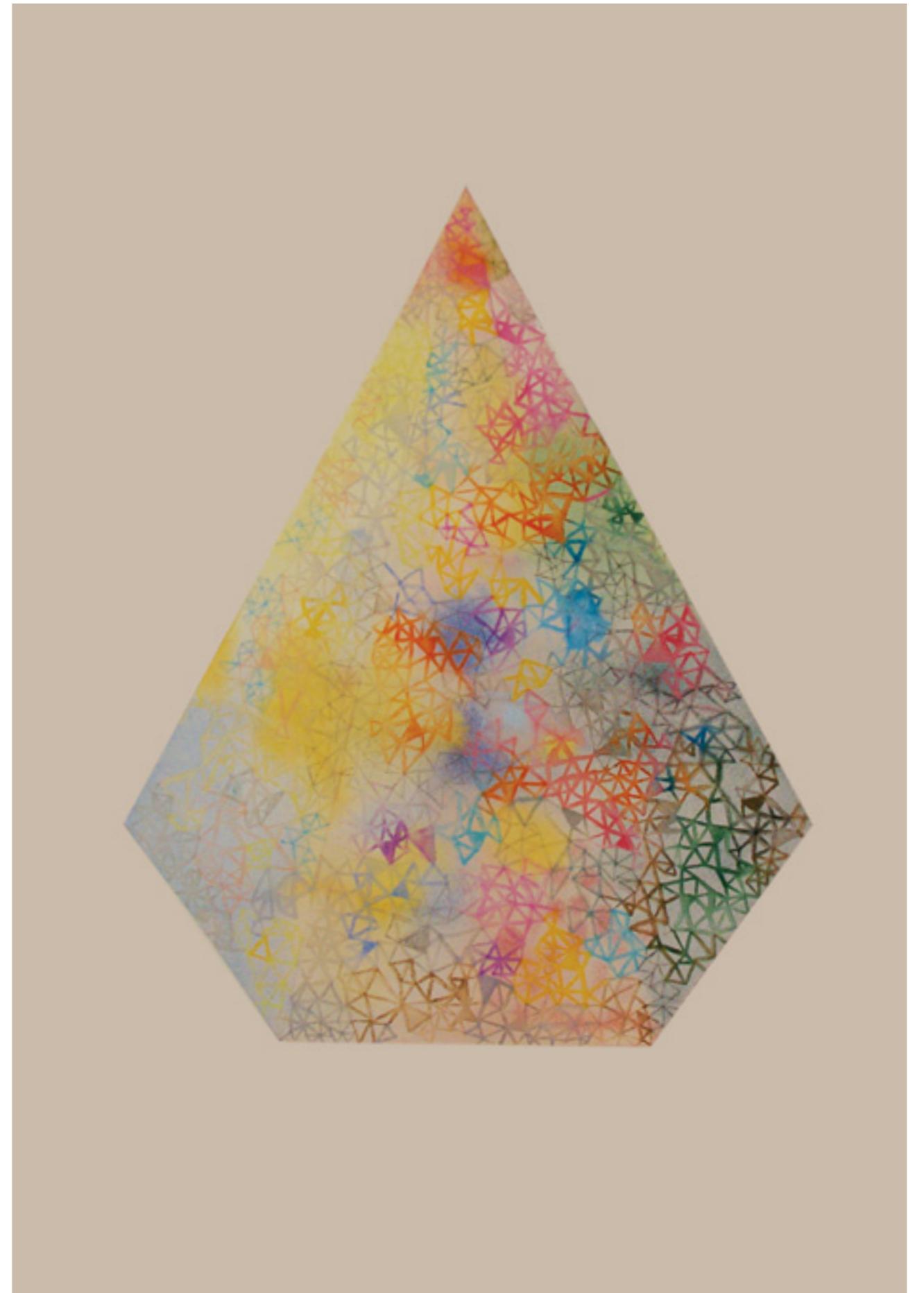
Does it look like a person?

Not really. It’s just got the minimal things that it needs to work, it doesn’t try to look like anything.

It looks at the people through a camera... reversing the direction of expectations?

Generally people don’t know what to expect. You know you’re being looked at but you’re not sure what information it’s collecting or what it does with it. Originally I had it follow people around the gallery, but people would get scared and run away, so now it just stands and swivels on the spot, so if you walk around it, it will follow you. I think people find it uncanny. ●







- Kylie Banyard
Pre-Fab Model #1 (2010)
 Boxboard and acrylic paint, 26cm x 20cm x 16cm
 Image courtesy and © the artist

Kylie Banyard
Constructing Sky (2010)
 Watercolour and watercolour pencil on Saunders paper, 45cm x 56cm
 Image courtesy and © the artist

- Kylie Banyard
Homage to the Comune (2010)
 Charcoal, ink and acrylic paint on Stonehenge paper, 150cm x 57cm
 Image courtesy and © the artist

PRETTY TELLING I SUPPOSE

INTERVIEW SAM ICKLOW

Samuel Hodge is a photographer from Sydney who has recently relocated to Berlin. I met up with him a couple of months ago when he was in town to see how he'd adjusted to the move. We took the train to Potsdam together to visit the rambunctiously rococo Sans Souci palace, and chatted along the way about people, porn, and wedding photography.

***Pretty Telling I Suppose* is your latest book. It's a beautiful book. How did you get it published?**

There was a publisher in Sydney — a young publisher, two guys — and they saw my stuff on the internet and they emailed me. First of all they wanted to use a photo of mine to put up on the front page of their website, and then they emailed me and just said, 'Hey, do you want to do a book?'

ON PEOPLE

Most of your photos are of people, wouldn't you say?

Yeah, mostly just portraits and bits. But I'm kind of sick of people's faces. Now I'm moving into doing, I don't know, whatever... I'm interested in creat-ing things like the *Do You Still Love*, ink drops of water. Get drops of water and paint and create — it's like your classic text work. I take a photo of it and then wipe it away. So it's a picture of a painting that I destroyed, and then I just have the photo. Stuff like that. I want to get into video work, and sculpture as well. I want to go back and do the things I couldn't do when I was a kid, things that I tried to do. Like dam my creek. So I'm going to go home and dam the creek again. But this time with sand-bags instead of rocks. I'm going to conquer it. >>





• Samuel Hodge
Her name was Elvis (2010)
 Photograph courtesy of the artist

• Samuel Hodge
What on earth am I doing (2010)
 Photograph courtesy of the artist

ON WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

The cover image is from a film set, right, Drowning?

Yeah I just went on that for my friend.

Were you the on-set photographer?

No, they already had a stills photographer. I just came on to do my own thing. People are letting me do that now. Like weddings and stuff like that. Like I'm going to this wedding and I'm allowed to just do what I want.

So they already have a wedding photographer?

No - they're just gonna have me!

That's great though.

That's the way it should be. That's how everyone should be able to do it. There'll just be pictures of cars and plates...

Are they paying you?

Yeah. I said, I'll do it but noone's allowed to call me the wedding photographer or tell me what to do. And I want to get drunk.

How do you find working in commercial environments considering your technique.

Pretty ridiculous.

But people seem to want it?

Yeah, they're starting to. But they still, you know - they want it but then they actually don't want it. They're like, 'So, we've got you here, we really want your style, let's do it like this!' And you're like, 'Fuck off,' you know. Once someone said if I didn't do this shoot for this magazine, they were going to show my photos to another photographer and get them to do something like me.

That's a bit off... So did you do it the way they wanted it?

Yeah, and I just needed the money, I was going overseas the next day. And I never showed the photos, never told anyone I took them

ON PORN

So there's only one porny shot in the book.

Yeah.

Are you 'de-porning'?

Well, I just haven't had an opportunity.

To be porny?

Yeah.

Your blog is called *TRUTH BEAUTY COCK*, and a lot of your earlier stuff was sexy. Did that become a bit of a trademark for you?

Yeah, it was. I mean, it helped because at that time I was starting off in a relationship and I was documenting this relationship, and it was all really comfortable, and sexy. Taking photos of the first time we peed together, and stuff like that. And then at the same time I just happened to get a job work-ing on a porno set. And so it all just mixed together.

What were you doing on the porno set?

Just taking stills. I totally tricked them. They were like 'We need a photographer,' and I was like 'I'm a photographer,' and I didn't really know much. I just took a camera on set and shot on film, and made them pay me \$5,000 in cash. It was amazing. For like three weeks.

How old were you?

I was 23, 24. It was my first photography job.



ON GROWING UP

What did you think you were going to be when you were little?

A homeless person.

**Why did you think you were going to be homeless?
Were there a lot of homeless people where you grew up?**

No, none. I just thought that I didn't have the ability to function as an adult. (Laughs) When I was a kid I was so afraid of getting old, I thought 'how on earth am I going to get a job?' I was so bad at maths, I thought if I can't do maths I can't do anything. Because my school, and my parents especially, said, 'You need maths, you've got to be good at it.' And I really sucked, I really sucked. At one stage I said I wanted to be an actor, and they said 'You can't be an actor, you have to be really good at maths to be an actor.' That was their trick with everything.

That's so mean!

So I just assumed that I couldn't do anything, basically had no skills to survive

It's hard being a kid.

(Laughs) How am I ever going to survive? That's what I keep saying about coming to Berlin. I keep going, well, so many people seem to have lost their shit and ended up on the streets here — in the snow. I've got a bit of a pessimistic view with stuff like that, I assume that everything's going to turn out for the worst.

But things are going quite well, you've been having some meetings here in Berlin. Tell me about that, about DIE ZEIT?

Well, they told me they really liked my stuff, and invited me in for a meet-ing. It was nice because it seems like they only have Jürgen Teller or Wolfgang Tillmans or people like that. I went in for this meeting sweating like a pig, because it was so hot last Friday.

Not because you were nervous?

Yeah. But then I went into the meeting ... the way that he looked at the photos — for a major newspaper — and was like, 'It's very sensitive, I really like the emotion behind these.' He really really just looked at it for what it was and for the first time a photo editor of a magazine could really see that. I mean there's only a couple of places in Australia that have been so open to me like that. Most places are like 'You'll never work, this is dirty and not glossy.' >>

ON TIME

What do you think makes a good photo?

Well I always know when I take a good photo, a photo that I really like. And if it's not, then it's just bad luck.

What are the main principles that you use when editing?

Just that I have to love it. I think that's it. Trying not to use every single photo just because you can take a photo and know it's a good photo technically and stuff, but it just doesn't feel right. Because in the end I'll never be happy with it. And I always do that. If I put stuff up I'll go back and take it down off my blog within a year, because I'll be like, Oh God I hate that photo.

I'm working on a project for the next exhibition where I want to do a series of photos that I hate, funnily enough. I want to do stuff like make a book of photos where I don't ever show the work, where the book... I'll be working on it this year... where the book is printed and then boxed up in perspex or something and released ten years from now. I'll put the book up for sale on like July — I was thinking for my 42nd birthday or something — July 31, 2020... -22 or whatever.

That makes me feel kind of warm and fuzzy inside, I'm not sure why.

Yeah I know. Because it's just that other thing of... it's all about giving time to things, because people like to look at photos in a time. You know, you can take a photo and not think anything of it, and then you'll look at it 30 years later and be like, 'Oh my god, look at what everyone's wearing'.

It's also not being afraid of time, not being afraid of the future. I think that's why I got a warm fuzzy feeling, because I was like, 'Yeah, that's great, there's nothing wrong with 2020, being 42, it's exciting.'

No it is exiting! And it'll be really fun, it'll be a big party. And in fact I was thinking that I could do this every year. So for ten years, everything is exhibited ten years out of time. I was thinking maybe I will just do ten years worth of exhibitions like that.

So that by the time you get to the end, you'll have caught up kind of thing.

But they'd also serve as sculptures as well. I like the waiting, you know.

I know, so much waiting!

It's a bit — I like the anticipation as well, and the disappointment if everyone hates it.

Very provocative. 'Photography that aims to disappoint.'

(Laughs) I know, so many times I have! Like for this wedding for my friend, I just already said it, 'So this is what it will look like, just so you know - out of focus - sometimes they don't work...' Or like when I've done those commercial jobs, where people have been like, 'How's it looking?' And I'm like, 'I don't know.' ●



PICTORIAL

Jan 11- 15, 2011, The Paper Mill
1 Angel Place, Ash St, Sydney

WRAPPING PAPER SUIT ALEX CLAPHAM AND CELIA CURTIS
WRAPPING PAPER CORSET AND TOP HATS JASMINA BLACK AND PENELOPE BENTON
PHOTOGRAPHY PENELOPE BENTON

All images courtesy of the artists



LESSONS IN PAPER

:101 (ON PAPER. WITH THE SMALLEST CUT IN THE WORLD THAT PACKS THE MOST PUNCH.)

PAPER. FOR DAS PAPER.)

1 WATCH OUT PAPER CAN BITE YOU, ALSO KNOW AS A PAPER CUT, THE SMALLEST CUT IN THE WORLD THAT PACKS THE MOST PUNCH.

2 WHEN USING VARIOUS SHARP UTENSILS TO CUT PAPER IT'S EASY TO GET DESTRUCTED WITH HOW PRETTY IT IS, DON'T CUT YOUR FINGER OFF.

3 IT'S ALWAYS BETTER TO USE RECYCLED PAPER AND CARDBOARD, CARE FOR YOUR TREES AND PAPER WILL BE GOOD TO YOU.

IF YOU FEEL YOU HAVE ALL OF THIS UNDER CONTROL THEN TRY OUR LITTLE PROJECT, IF YOU DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE GET THE SUPERVISION OF A RESPONSIBLE ADULT OR GUARDIAN.

SO TAKE A STRIP OF PAPER AND FOLD IT BACK AND FORTH LIKE AN ACCORDION, USING ONE OF OUR ~~SUGGESTED~~ SUGGESTED SHAPES TO THE RIGHT AS A TEMPLATE (YOU MAY WISH TO ENLARGE IT). PLACE ON TOP OF YOUR ACCORDION, KEEPING THE SIDES IN TACT AND THE SAME WIDTH AS YOUR ACCORDION, CUT AROUND THE REST OF IT. YOU SHOULD HAVE MULTIPLE SHAPES THAT ARE JOINED TOGETHER.





LIQUID GROUND

INTERVIEW JULIET GAUCHAT

Helen Pynor is an Australian artist whose practice incorporates sculpture and more recently photography. Drawing on her dual backgrounds in Biology and Visual Arts, Pynor's works explore the interiority of the body and other living organisms. In her recent photographic series, *Liquid Ground*, Pynor has created a suite of Type-C prints that are face mounted to glass, creating a cool, watery atmosphere. Her images of visceral bodily organs floating through gossamer garments underwater are unerringly beautiful and melancholic, in narratives past and present.

Pynor was the winner of the RBS Emerging Artist Award 2009 and also the joint winner of the Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Photography Award 2008. *Liquid Ground* was on show during November/December 2010, at Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney.

>>



- Helen Pynor
Liquid Ground 2 (2010)
C-Print, diasec on glass,
- *Liquid Ground 1* (2010)
C-Print, diasec on glass
- *Liquid Ground 4* (2010)
C-Print, diasec on glass

All images courtesy the artist
and DOMINIK MERSCH GALLERY

Science and the human body play a fundamental role in your works and your research. You have completed a Bachelor of Science (Hons), a Bachelor of Visual Arts and a PhD in Philosophy. Do you see yourself as an artist, a scientist or both?

You could say that both of these disciplines are motivated by a sense of curiosity and spirit of enquiry, although the constraints and methodologies used in each discipline are entirely different. In my case my methodologies and the questions that I ask are very much framed within an artistic practice, not a scientific one, hence I see myself as an artist.

Most of the materials in your works are organic, including human organs, hair and blood. When did you first become interested in using these materials?

I've been using organic materials ever since I studied sculpture at undergraduate level. I've always been drawn to organic materials or forms, even before I had a fully formed notion of what I was dealing with in my practice. I've always been interested in working with the meanings and implied histories embedded in these materials, and for me there's a tactile pleasure in these materials, even in some of the more squeamish ones.

What is the inspiration behind your most recent series, *Liquid Ground*?

There are several layers to this body of work, some which came earlier and more consciously and some which crept in later. The initial inspiration was my experience of living and working besides the Thames River in east London over the past year. Although sometimes pictured as a benign and picturesque river the Thames is extremely dangerous and treacherous, especially in its tidal reaches from east London to the coast. I became interested in the thousands of people who have lost their lives through drowning in the river, especially in the case of accidental drowning. I spent time in the newspaper archives of the British Library researching incidents of accidental drowning over the last two centuries and turned up a litany of stories and circumstances in which the river becomes an animated character in a human tragedy. I was interested in the collective experience of this, rather than in any particular incident.

>>

As the work developed it became more loosely tethered to this material and began to address my ongoing concerns about the ambiguity of our status as biological and as cultural beings, and the impossibility of drawing a clear line between these. Even at the cellular and genomic level there is no clear line between the influence of cultural and biological processes in our bodies or psychological selves.

Another concern that emerged was with the way we perceive and experience the interior of our bodies. Evocations of the interior body tend to be either shocking and bloody, or hyper clinical. I'm interested in rendering the interior body in ways that avoid these representations, which I think distance us from our interiors. In this work I attempt to foster a sense of wonder about our interior selves without avoiding their biological nature, which can be confronting.

Your images are beautiful and alluring but at the same time morbid and disorientating. How do you construct them?

I try to maintain some kind of balance between something that is alluring and something that is biologically 'real' enough to take the images beyond being simply attractive. My engagement with fabrics, water, and biological materials during the construction of the images is important to me as it lends a tactile and sculptural dimension to the making of the work. It's important to me that the final works depict something that is possible in the real world, so that they don't hover in the space of pure fantasy.

You have won a number of prestigious grants and artist awards over the years, which have enabled you to travel and conduct research. You recently received the Australia Council Visual Arts New Work Grant and an Interarts Project Grant in collaboration with artist Peta Clancy. This grant will be used to fund your joint project, *The Body is a Big Place*, exploring the phenomenology and medicine of organ transplantation. How did this project come about?

This project began as conversations between Peta and myself, when we identified many sympathies between our conceptual interests and our aesthetic sensibilities. We began quite speculatively with the intention of exploring the complex and ambiguous responses people have to organ transplants, especially people who have received donated organs. We were interested in the ontological and phenomenological questions raised by organ transplants. Since starting the conversation the project has attracted good interest and support, and we are currently at SymbioticA in Perth undertaking a residency to further develop the project. We will be exhibiting the work to date at Performance Space in Sydney at the end of 2011.

Finally, what would you like your legacy to be?

Ultimately I'd like my work to contribute to the re-imagining of our own interior bodies and the re-imagining of other life forms. I believe that our culture has inscribed many distortions about the nature of our visceral selves, and those of other organisms, that have had profoundly damaging consequences to our own physical and emotional health, and to the way we relate to the world around us. In my PhD thesis I drew heavily on a number of philosophers of biology who are contributing to this re-imagining, by emphasizing the enormous inventive and improvisatory capacities of biological organisms, from microorganisms through to us. I hope that my work can embody some of these notions and, alongside my own imaginings, to contribute to the reframing of our understandings of life. I want to present a notion of living beings that affirms their capacities without avoiding or sanitising the pain inherent to the experience of being alive. ●





ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK

PICTORIAL JOAN ROSS

Enter At Your Own Risk presents an extraordinary, uncanny tableaux which entices the gaze but also offends. Exposing a creeping colonisation of the mind and the eye, is this a history lesson or harbinger? Past, present, or future? All three.



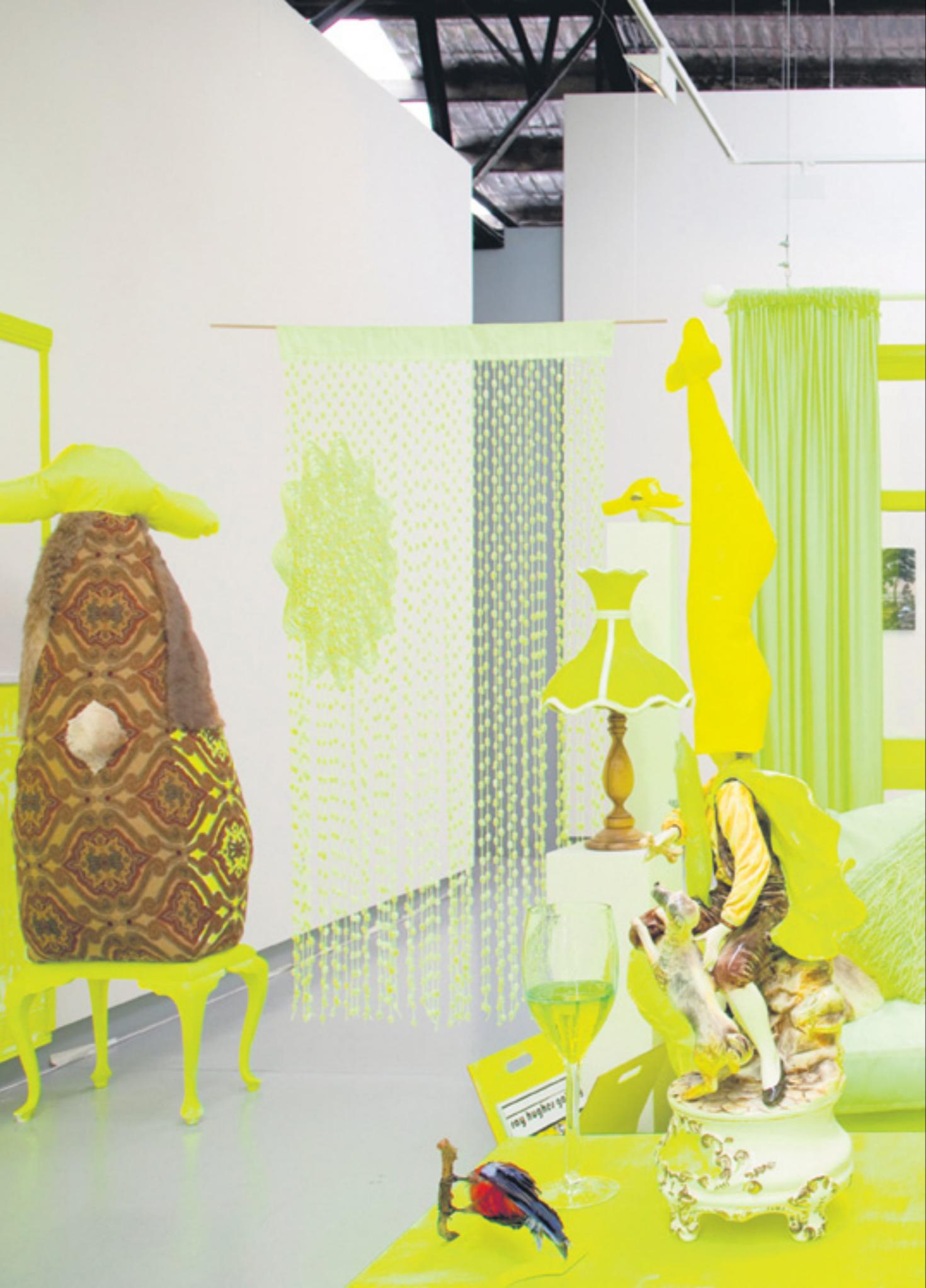
- Joan Ross
Enter At Your Own Risk (2010)
Installation view

- Joan Ross
Wrapped up like a douche (2010)
ceramic figurines, vinyl, fabric, fluorescent paint
100 x 79 x 24 cm

- Joan Ross
Enter At Your Own Risk (2010)
Installation view

All Images Silversalt photography,
courtesy the artist and Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney





- Joan Ross
Enter At Your Own Risk (installation view), (2010)

Joan Ross
Fly me to the moon (2010)
Ceramic figurine, fluorescent paint, plastic, vinyl,
44cm x 18cm x 10cm

- Joan Ross
Hi-fido (2010)
Cast resin, acrylic paint, fluorescent paint,
104 x 53 x 70 cm (irregular)

All Images Silversalt photography, courtesy the artist
and Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney



LOUISE BOURGEOIS I HAVE BEEN TO HELL AND BACK. AND LET ME TELL YOU IT WAS WONDERFUL

ARTIST PROFILE MARISSA BATEMAN

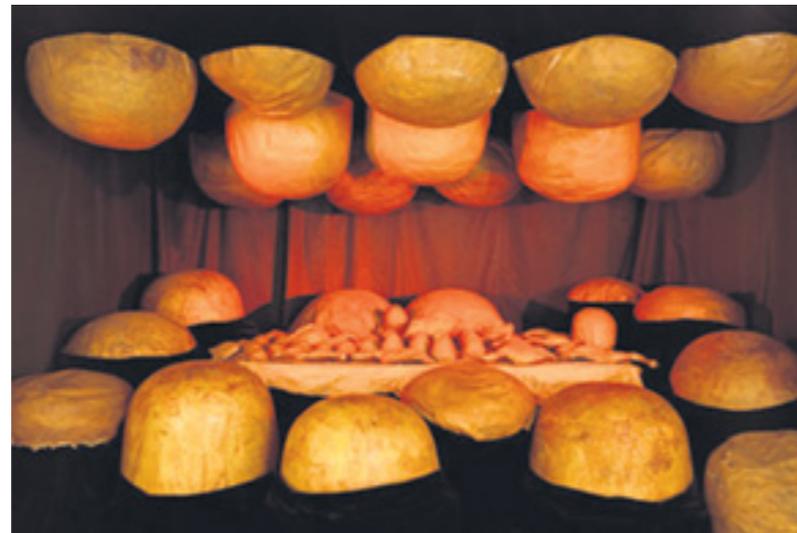
World renowned French-born, American artist and sculptor, Louise Bourgeois, who died on May 31 this year in New York at the age of 98 has been described by art historians as 'the singularly most important female artist of the last century'. Regarded as a pioneer of autobiographical and confessional art, Bourgeois channeled the frustrations and tensions of her childhood to create visceral, stimulating pieces, showing the way to younger female artists such as Jenny Holzer, Sophie Calle and Tracey Emin. Often organic in form and sexually explicit, emotionally aggressive and witty, her sculptures covered many stylistic bases, but all shared a set of themes centered on the human body and its need for nurture and protection in a frightening world.



*Life is made of experiences and emotions.
The objects I have created make them tangible.*
Louise Bourgeois

- Louise Bourgeois
Maman (1999)
Installation view

Louise Bourgeois
The Destruction of the Father (1974)
Plaster, latex, wood and fabric, 237.8 x 362.3 x 248.6cms
Courtesy Saatchi Gallery
© Louise Bourgeois



- Louise Bourgeois
Seven in Bed 2001
Fabric, stainless steel, glass and wood
Image courtesy Cheim and Read,
Galerie Karsten Greve and Galerie Hauser
© Louise Bourgeois

- Louise Bourgeois
Blind Man's Buff (1984)
Marble
Courtesy Saatchi Gallery © Louise Bourgeois

In the art world where women artists were discouraged from dealing with overtly sexual subject matter Bourgeois' images of the body - sexual, grotesque and fragmented - quickly assumed an emblematic presence. In some cases the body took the abstract form of an upright wooden pole, pierced by a few holes and stuck with nails; in others it appeared as a pair of women's hands realistically carved in marble lying, palms open on a massive stone base. Among her most widely exhibited was *Nature Study* (1984), a headless sphinx with powerful claws and multiple breasts. Perhaps the most provocative was *Fillete* (1968) or *Little Girl*, a two-foot long detached latex phallus which Bourgeois insisted was like a little girl, 'an extremely delicate thing that needs to be protected.'

For Bourgeois, protection often translated into images of a shelter or home. A table-like wooden structure with stilt-like legs resembled a house ever threatening to topple. In *Femme Maison* (1940s) a number of half-women-half-house images show female figures trying to escape the confines of their domestic settings. The dream-like 1980/90s series *Cells* - room-size, sanctum installations filled with found objects and sculptures, such as hands cut off at the wrists, caused audiences who entered them to feel an intense claustrophobia, to the point of necessitating escape; a feeling meant to be an evocation of the artist's childhood.

Born in Paris in 1911 to antique tapestry dealers, the young Bourgeois' life was far from idyllic. Her practical and affectionate mother was a positive influence. Yet, as a child she was painfully aware of her father's 10 year long affair he continued with the English governess he employed to teach her. At the age of twenty-one Bourgeois' mother passed away and this traumatic event inspired her to abandon her mathematics degree at the Sorbonne to study art. Bourgeois never recovered from her father's betrayal and later spoke of her early, emotionally conflicted family life as formative to her practice, an unending exorcism. The 2007 retrospective at the Tate Modern (London) opened with a marble model of her parent's chateau *In Choisy* (1993), over which hung the blade of a large guillotine, while her earlier nightmarish tableau *Destruction of the Father* (1974) resembled the inside of a huge shoebox covered on all sides with fields of phallic forms, breast like bumps and other biomorphic shapes in soft-looking latex, lit with a red light, suggesting the sacrificial destruction of a human body.

At 71, Bourgeois had her first major retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1982). Some might have taken this as a sign that it was time to retire, but Bourgeois went on to produce her most ambitious large-scale works including perhaps her most famous sculpture *Maman*. French for 'Mummy', *Maman* is a seminal piece from the late 1990s which saw the spider introduced as a central motif to her work. For Bourgeois, the spider was a creature associated with her mother. Like the spider her mother was a weaver, the persistent repairer of the family home and a woman of ever-changing mood swings. Standing over nine metres tall, *Maman* looms ominously over visitors on its spindly steel legs and cage of white marble eggs clutched protectively to its underbelly. The immense sculpture is an image of maternity that is both nurturing and terrifying, an example of Bourgeois' constant exploration of the binary conditions present in life.

Drawing on a skill learnt from her mother, Bourgeois was one of the first modern artists to make extensive and strikingly inventive use of the thread and needle. She stitched androgynous human dolls and shaped grotesque faces with their eyes gouged out or lips parted out of frayed tapestry, and sewed witticisms onto clothes: 'I have been to hell and back. And let me tell you it was wonderful'. Writing on Freud, Bourgeois said the psychoanalyst 'did nothing for artists or for the artist's torment. Artists repeat themselves,' she observed, 'because they have no access to a cure.' While many feminists have claimed Bourgeois as their own, her art cannot be pigeon-holed; it is about sex, humour, jealousy and pain, the things that make life worth living and times that make life unbearable. 'The subject of pain is the business I am in,' she said, 'to give meaning and shape to frustration and suffering.' Indeed, it is Bourgeois' gift of universalising her interior life as a complex spectrum of sensations that has made her art so affecting and captivating. ●

STUART'S EROGENY

PICTORIAL BRONWYN BAILEY-CHARTERIS,
SAM ICKLOW, ALISTAIR WATTS
& JEN VALLENTINE



*Stuart stumbles,
a white explorer in a red landscape,
the lost intruder.*

A playful prod at the outsiders who colonised this land,
through installation, projection and portraiture.







In order of appearance
*Untitled (Outback Explorers 3),
Untitled (Queens 1), Untitled (Queens 2)
Untitled (Outback Explorers 1) Untitled
(Outback Explorers 2)*

Images courtesy of the artists

DAS500

Das500 is an online and inprint critical arts writing space - a platform for the generation and presentation of new ideas and dialogues within the arts.

Find out more, including how to contribute, at das500.com

- | Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan, *In-flight* (Project: Another country) (2009)
Photo courtesy of Aaron de Souza



CONTEMPORARY ART FOR CONTEMPORARY KIDS

DAS500 ANNALICE CREIGHTON

What is it made of? How did they do that? Why is it here? What does that mean?

There is something about art that brings out a childlike curiosity in almost anyone. It can render the most world-weary grown-ups wonder-struck. Contemporary Art for Contemporary Kids invites young audiences to go one step beyond wondering, to be the generators and collaborators in the making of art.

At Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation (SCAF) the usually cool, untouchable slate grey façade is hung with a fluorescent banner. Inside, instead of the buzz of complex video narratives or the hushed darkened ambience of painting, sculpture, or installation, there are many tiny voices, screams, laughs, whines and squeals.

The gallery is overrun with small children.

Scattered on tables, grasping at textas, smudging keen fingers on touch screens and furiously colouring. Concrete floors festooned with Ikea furnishings, plywood bench shelves and brightly patterned wallpapers transform the space almost beyond recognition. A little piece of the Queensland Art Gallery's (QAG) children's art centre has been transported into an unsuspecting patch of inner city Sydney. With the memory of exploring the kid's space at the last Asia Pacific Triennial fresh at hand, this all seems a little less spectacular. The works and their environs are small scale, but seemingly still captivating to the children. The more wondrous thing is to behold this scene - a once was solemn commercial gallery space that has taken on the new identity of a public institution, from a temple of high art to a playground of contemporary culture. It is all part of SCAF's latest philanthropic ventures into art education, from tiny tots through to tertiary

institutions, the less controversial of which is found here in a collaboration with QAG to bring five of the most successful Children's Art Centre projects to the contemporary kids of Sydney.

Foam, cardboard, bottletops, wire and fabrics are fashioned into airplanes for the Aquilizan's In-Flight project; flat-set computer screens invite the interactive design in Patterns of Infinity. Yang's Australia Now asks children to create self-portraits and record narratives of family history and migration. Paper sheets are layered with crayon rubbings from upended tables and chairs in Kunavichayanont's Classroom Upside Down; elsewhere, children colour cartoon playing cards of taxi drivers and garbage collectors in TextaQueen's Unseen Superheroes Of The Working World.

QAG is renowned for creating interactive environments for children. It's not hard to see why - here is almost everything a gallery could hope to create in a learning environment - the children manipulate materials for kinaesthetic thinking, have physical and emotional responses to subject matter through storytelling, artmaking and personal reflection, and the participatory challenges invite a sense of ownership.

The art and the atmosphere are not lacking, yet I'm still left wondering why a program that can afford to provide free access is in the middle of a culture-saturated and privileged metropolis? Why celebrate this as the ultimate in kids programs when you can travel a distance in any direction and find public and regional galleries that do just as well on a smaller budget?

Wonderings aside, more opportunities, access to, and enjoyment of art for children is always a good thing.



THE VIEWER'S VIEW

DAS500 ROBYN STUART

There's a strange thing happening at the moment at New York's Museum of Modern Art. It's also happening at the Met, the Guggenheim and the Whitney. It's been going on for a while, and it'll probably go on for a lot longer. It's not surprising that the visitors to these museums are armed with cameras, but it does seem strange that they are not photographing the works themselves – they're shooting the labels next to them. Picasso's *Three Musicians* must be the most photographed placard in the city after the Ground Zero sign. And the label reading 'Claude Monet, Waterlilies' is giving the waterlilies themselves a fair run for their money.

Why is this? One could argue that there's no point coming all this way if you can't remember which of the blue smudges you saw was really famous. Or that your photograph of Kandisky is never going to be as good as a professional print, so you're better off just documenting the names so you know what to buy at the gift shop. Or perhaps the names have surpassed the works: a celebrity-obsessed culture more interested in Van Gogh the person than *Starry Night* the painting. The camera has been described as a hunting-and-gathering device, compiling lists of things seen. It has also been described as a distancing device, a way of shielding the eyes from direct exposure. Similar to looking at an eclipse through a pinhole, people can translate originals into representations on the fly.

Of course, people photograph the actual artwork as well. With most great artists, we see their work in photographs long before the real thing; the frame provided by the camera is much more familiar than the heavy ones on the walls. Armed with a camera, anyone can reframe a famous painting through the choice of lighting and cropping. Framing becomes a personal decision, and with this control, responses shift from the general to the particular. This habit of walking through a gallery with eyes firmly fixed behind the viewer might be the easiest way to simultaneously engage with and distance yourself from the art.

Placing a changeable frame around a classic subject is an appealing concept. It's been taken up by Monika Behrens in her latest show *Double Dutch* at Breenspace. The exhibition consists of a series of paintings in the style of Dutch still-life, each presented in a colourful frame of Lego blocks built to resemble ornate gilt. Behrens frequently uses toys to represent political and historical messages in her painting, and these frames are a continuation of that. The paintings in *Double Dutch* focus on the political relationships between neighbouring European countries, and the Lego frames suggest the mobility of borders and political allegiances.

The modular framing of Behrens and the user-controlled frames imposed by hundreds of visitors' cameras are both interesting devices. To delineate is to define, so we could read these DIY frames as a concise statement against absolutist definitions. ●





• Monika Behrens
Milk 2010
 oil on canvas, Lego
 30 x 25 cm
 Image courtesy the artist and BREENSPACE, Sydney

• Monika Behrens
Split fig 2010
 oil on canvas with Lego
 32 x 28 cm
 Image courtesy the artist and BREENSPACE, Sydney

WHAT'S ON

19 Nov to 27

Mar Annie Leibovitz: A Photographer's Life 1990 – 2005
MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
 Circular Quay, Sydney, NSW

26 Nov to 18 Dec

Llawella Lewis – 'Curtain Place'
INFLIGHT ARI
 100 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS

26 Nov to 29 Jan

Sumptuary: Garth Knight, Deborah Paauwe, Farrell & Parkin, Alexia Sinclair and Robyn Stacey Decline and Fall: Gerard O'Connor and Marc Wasiaak
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY
 257 Oxford Street, Paddington NSW

27 Nov to 18 Dec

Anastasia Klose
TOLARNO GALLERIES
 Level 4, 104 Exhibition Street, Melbourne VIC

27 Nov to 21 Jan

Home Open: Fremantle Artists and their Collections
FREMANTLE ARTS CENTRE 1 Finnerty Street, Fremantle WA

01 Dec to 19 Dec

Emmanuela Prigioni and Luke Tipene, Yasmin Smith, Kristin McIver
FIRSTDRAFT
 116-118 Chalmers Street, Surry Hills NSW

02 Dec to 19 Dec

Sherrie Knipe
SULLIVAN + STRUMPF FINE ART
 44 Gurner Street, Paddington NSW
 (new address in 2011)

03 Dec to 19 Dec

Kate Scardifield, Heath Franco, Camille Serisier
MOP
 2/39 Abercrombie Street, Chippendale NSW

03 Dec to 30 Jan

Across Country: Ken Hinds Cultural Collection
QUT ART MUSEUM
 2 George Street, Brisbane QLD

10 Dec to 20 Mar

New Acquisitions In Context; Bardayal 'Lofty' Nadjamerrek AO
MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
 Circular Quay, Sydney, NSW

17 Dec to 23 Dec

Annual Members Exhibition
4A CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART
 181-187 Hay Street, Sydney NSW

17 Dec to 06 Jan

Persons of Interest, Luke Stambouliah
GALLERY EIGHT
 12 Argyle Place, Millers Point NSW

20 Dec to 27 Feb

Joseph Kosuth 'Waiting for --)' Texts For Nothing'
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART
 111 Sturt Street, Southbank VIC

07 Jan to 27 Jan

Julie Burke
GALLERY EIGHT
 12 Argyle Place, Millers Point NSW

14 Jan to 05 Feb

Front Gallery: Georgina Cue Middle/Side Galleries Deb K. Williams, Reiko Myazawa, Alice Parker & Georgina Ward
KINGS A.R.I.
 Level 1, 171 King Street, Melbourne VIC

14 Jan to 12 Mar

Edge of Elsewhere (Sydney Festival)
4A CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART

16 Jan

Sunday Speak Easy: Will Coles
 181-187 Hay Street, Sydney NSW (&)
CAMPBELLTOWN ARTS CENTRE
 Art Gallery Rd, Campbelltown NSW

23 Jan: 2PM

Movie Club: In The Mood For Love (2000)
WHITE RABBIT GALLERY
 30 Balfour Street, Chippendale

20 Jan to 20 Feb

Earth: Ho Tzu Nyen
ARTSPACE
 43-51 Cowper Wharf Road, Woolloomooloo NSW

21 Jan to 05 Feb

Sandy Benjamin: Glass Art
CHALK HORSE
 94 Cooper Street, Surry Hills NSW

27 Jan to 26 Feb

Alexandre Prado, The Smallest Of Things
GALLERY SMITH
 170-174 Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne VIC

29 Jan to 19 Feb

Group Show
BREENSPACE
 289 Young Street, Waterloo NSW

29 Jan to 24 Feb

Guy Peppin
LIVERPOOL STREET GALLERY
 243a Liverpool Street, Darlinghurst NSW

Feb 2011

Art + Architecture 201: 11 Artists + 11 Architects
BOUTWELL DRAPER GALLERY 82-84 George Street, Redfern NSW

01 Feb to 27 Feb

Jess MacNeil
GALLERY BARRY KELDOULIS
 285 Young Street, Waterloo NSW

04 Feb to 26 Feb

Matt Warren – 'Sönaris'
INFLIGHT ARI
 100 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS

05 Feb to 02 Mar

Guy Gilmour & Karen Choy
ROBIN GIBSON GALLERY
 278 Liverpool Street, Darlinghurst NSW

27 Nov to 26 Feb

Luke Roberts | Ian Haig
INSTITUTE OF MODERN ART
 420 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley QLD

05 Mar to 30 Apr

Let the Healing Begin
INSTITUTE OF MODERN ART
 420 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley QLD

