

un. magazine

ISSUE 1

art review magazine

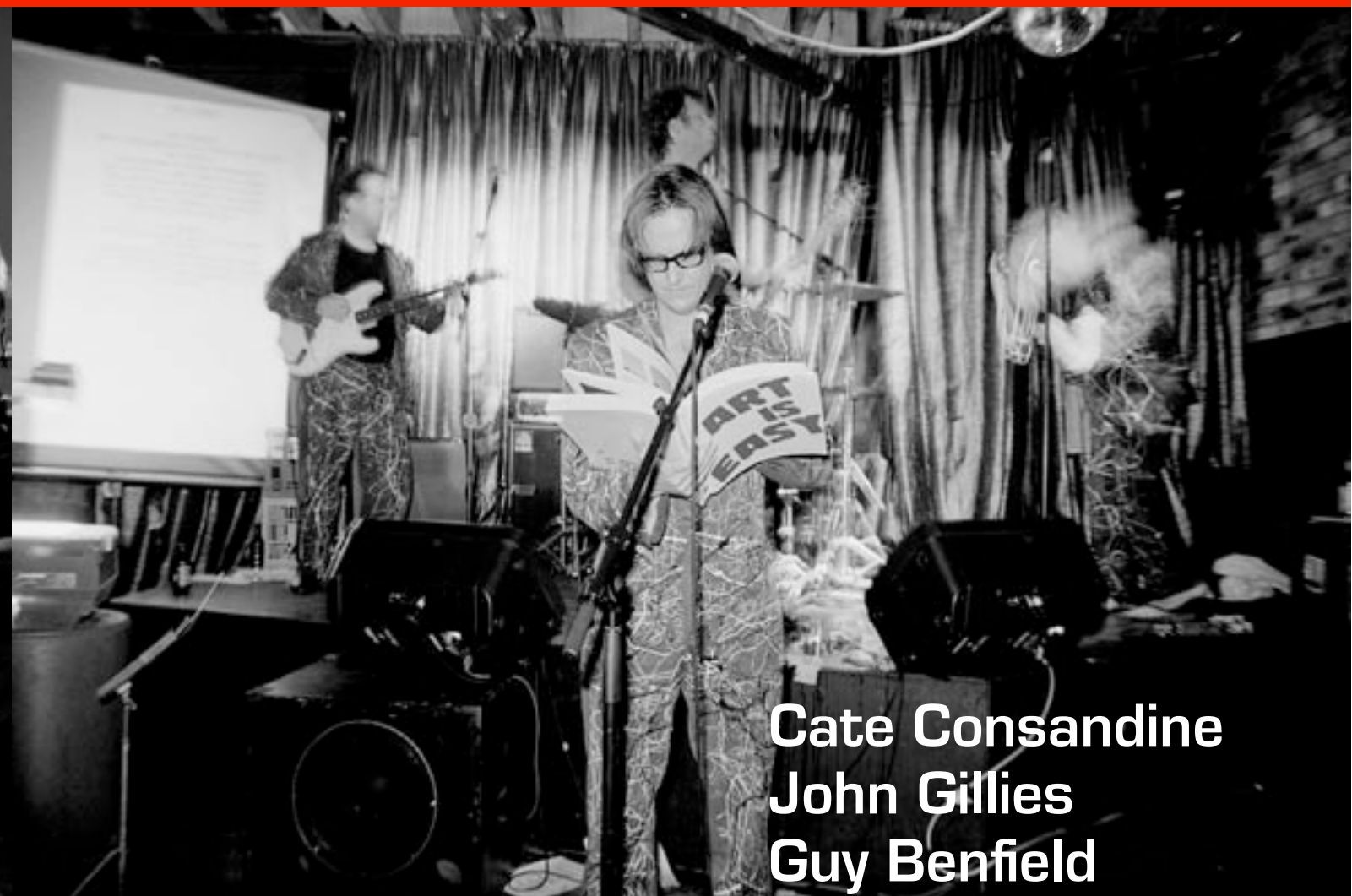
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John Gillies  
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Vito Acconci



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**un Cover image:**  
*Danius Kesminas and The Histrionics*  
"ART IS EASY & all music is the same"  
Cherry Bar, Melbourne, June 2004  
Photography by Paul Batt ©2004

**un Back cover image:**  
Lane Cormick  
LUVTHETHIRD  
Kings ARI, May 2004  
Photography by Danny Lacy ©2004

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2004

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# un Editorial

Contrary to popular myth, many Australian artists work incredibly hard. un Magazine is a tribute to the talent and dedication of these artists.

On any given day, in any number of regional and capital centres, you do not have to go far to find good contemporary art. Although the work displayed in public institutions and commercial galleries is often more noticeable to mainstream audiences, there is a critical undercurrent in the artist-run scene. A tremendous amount of significant work is exhibited in these spaces, and yet these shows are rarely even seen as a blip on the media radar. There are many reasons for this lack of critical discourse on emerging art, but primarily it is a shortage of designated publication space. Another factor is that, in the existing forums, the force comes from outside the artistic community, and hence the content is delivered from a populist perspective (it sells). Mind you, there are a couple that are getting it right: they tend to lo-fi and free to the public, but they are national journals and consequently cannot cover the huge turnover of small shows.

un Magazine is an attempt to redress this dire need for response. Our mission is to provide a discourse for work that is not normally reviewed. un Magazine will also allow emerging and established writers to publish unpredictable articles and to create an archive for our time. un Magazine will not suffer from the imposition of thematic editions; because art is not like fashion and we don't need to forecast trends. Each issue will be a reflection of the artwork that is actually out there, in galleries, studios and on the street.

Why hasn't anyone started a new journal until now? Well, I think it is because we have been waiting for a sponsor with a big wad of cash. But who ever said that it should cost pots of money? The backbone of a good read is in the content and, in the case of art mags, the relevance of the subject matter to the community. The support and inspiration for this magazine comes from the grass roots: the incredible artists that surround us, and the brilliant and dedicated writers who have volunteered their articles. So if you know any of these artists or contributors, you should thank them... and buy them a drink. In the meantime, it is our job to keep you informed, enlightened and entertained. Here we go.

**Lily Hibberd**

*un Magazine issue#1 is a limited edition of 1000. Grab a copy and hang onto it – it's a collector's item. If you know anyone who has missed out, direct that person to un Magazine online at [www.projekt.com.au](http://www.projekt.com.au)*

*Prospective contributors should contact the editor for the submission guidelines. [lilyhibberd@eudoramail.com](mailto:lilyhibberd@eudoramail.com)*

## *The Histrionics*

*use the ubiquitous Australian trope of "the cover band" as the framework for the collision of rock'n'roll, performance art, pedagogy and humour. On Wednesday 16th of June the un Magazine editorial team attended the 'Concept-Art-[Heritage]-Rock-Covers' Farewell Australian Gig before the 'Old and New Europe Tour' at the Cherry Bar, Melbourne. The following photographs (and cover image) were taken by Paul Batt on this wild night. Note special guest appearances by Stepas Levickis and Jon Campbell. The Histrionics European tour commences in Vilnius, Lithuania on the 4th of September 2004 and the new album, Museum Fatigue, is to be released by Revolver in September 2004.*



# Picture Perfect Political Art

by Philip Brophy

Here's a picture of me. I'm on the right. I think this was taken when I was working on a public art commission. Maybe it was the one that was pulled down. Maybe it's the one you can still see down by the Yarra. Oh that's right, it's now down at Merri Creek. I think a lot of leftie-retro family BBQs are held there. They keep inviting me down cos they think my art is important because it was removed. I never reply to their emails.

See that woman near the left in the picture? The one with the Malvern bob hair-do? She's using henna, but you can't see the colour in this picture. See how she's pinching my right nipple? That's to make me political. It kind of works. It gives me a slightly tingly feeling that both hurts and exhilarates. We worked it out as an 'artistic strategy', a kind of 'think-global-act-local' deal. But this is an old picture. I'm really more of the 'fuck-me-fuck-you' school of politics. My nipples are tough.

I forget her name now. All I remember is how she crapped on about getting drunk with Gough Whitlam one night. Shame they weren't driving at the time, really fast on a winding gravel road during a thunderstorm. She ended up being a radio broadcaster for drive-time ABC – like how Camille Paglia. I swear you could hear her pearl necklace clink on air. She then went on to the truest form of the theatrical arts: she became a politician.

Here's another picture. It's her again. See how she's holding that poker? Obviously it's up my arse, but I'm only pretending to grimace. She's holding the red-hot end. She said she'd do anything to raise consciousness about – well – actually I can't even remember what this work was about. All I know is, I got federal funding for this one. I guess I'm 'Australian'. She only agreed to this pic because it was for federal funding. Man, all I can remember is that same whining po-toned voice going on and on about how important it is for art to be political. What word didn't she understand in the short sentence,

"Shut the fuck up"?

Now here's a pretty boring picture. It was taken after I gave a 'guest lecture' at some dorky art school. I remember getting there early. Of course there was no staff around. I pretended to be a student and grabbed an easel and 'pushed paint around'. I really 'worked my craft' for that hour. Then a fat bearded fart came up to me and sternly looked over my shoulder for ten seconds. He made sure I saw his 'concentration'. He then mumbled through his smelly beard, "Keep up the good work". I told him to shut his cakehole, do up his fly, and go back to dry-humping the female bimbo students old enough to be his daughters. Then one of the casual staff came and ushered me away while the beard suffered a mild stroke. He looked really funny puffing on the ground while a group of bimbos circled him in tears. "Keep up the good work", I yelled back. The bimbos started howling in romantic agony.

Back to this boring picture. It's after the lecture. See the kid on the extreme left there with a goatee? Well, he won the raffle ticket to be that year's graduating 'political artist'. Man, what a suck. The guy on the left won the 'sensitive gay artist' and the punky looking girl at the back won the 'feminine/not-feminine op shop artist'. There was no 'multi-cultural cry-baby artist' that year. The goatee dork is the one who bought up those crappy rugs that hang in banks and are apparently painstakingly copied from crappy 80s abstract paintings. He had some media fame cos he then painted political slogans on them. A bit of Mabo here, some Islam stuff there, the odd Zionist/PLO flick here, some Detention Centre cry there. So goatee dork came up to me and said something profound like how Lisa Gerrard is as great as Enya and how wonderful Australia's art community is. All I can remember was noticing how many bits of carrot were in the involuntary vomit I spewed over his Mooks t-shirt. I called my vomit, "Pro Hart – Political Artist".



See this picture? Yep, that's our sucky Mr Politico with our whining Political Mama. You can really see her henna dye in this pic. He doesn't have his goatee any more. Apparently people kept thinking he was in Big Brother and he got all defensive. This pic was taken after she defended his crappy carpets in support of, you guessed it, political art. This was taken before I vomited on his carpets. That chuck I called "Philip Brophy – Political Artist". She said she was very disappointed in me, I was once such a promising artist. Gee, I cried all night long.

Hey, here's a funny pic. It's some dumb bitch from your city council. She looks like she's in pain because she is. See her mangled left foot? A garbage truck ran over it. I was so lucky to be there at the time. It was one of the funniest things I've seen. The truck was picking up all this crap people had dumped on the street where one of my public commissions was installed, you know, that four storey-high, giant t-shirt with flock lettering that said, "Philip Brophy Fucks Your World". It covered that apartment building that won all those poncey 80s architecture awards. I did it just to cover the ugly fucker up cos I hated looking at it every time I went to the Vic Market. You'll remember this councillor was the one who whinged about how public-funded art should not be 'avant-garde' and should relate to the 'majority' of 'ratepayers'. I thought the avant-garde died in the 30s. As for ratepayers, well they can dictate art when they clean my toilet, when I have diarrhoea from food poisoning after eating at an Indian restaurant. Here's a pic of her in hospital with her children. Sheez, they look ugly too.

Here's a pic of the head of the body corporate of that 'I-am-not-a-wog-mansion' building I covered up with my giant T-shirt. He's happy cos he now views the city skyline while he cuts coke with his laminated passes to the Grand Prix. Like all guys with shaved heads, he's just a bald loser. Coke won't make his dome get fur.

Here's a picture of a leading 'right' politician's dick. Note how it's all withered and it actually bends to the right. I asked him to get some wood. He said he was already hard. He had to rush off to clean the toilets at a detention centre for suspected terrorists.

Here's a picture of a leading 'left' politician's dick. It points nowhere. I asked him to get some wood. He said that was bad for our State Forests. He had to rush off to clean up pigeon shit in the city centre in the lead-up to culling those 'non-native flying rats'. I think his five year old son licked pigeon shit off some bronze public art turd in Bourke Street.

Hey – here's a picture of you from that time you classified yourself as a rare indigenous botanical plant 'Artus Politicus'. And here's a picture of me writing this. I'm using a fucking quill, just for that 'old world' effect. Here's a close-up of my brow. No – sorry, that's a close-up of one of the politician's drippy dick holes. Here's the pic I want. It's the sweat on my brow from when I was writing this. I think I was a bit worried about you reading this....

I wasn't.

*Philip Political Brophy should know better, yet he persists in writing.*

# *Video Work: 1982-2001*

## *John Gillies: a retrospective*

*Performance Space*  
*Sydney*  
*16 April – 15 May 2004*  
*by Ruark Lewis*

It's hard to call John Gillies a veteran of video. Gillies is too young and vital for a title like that to make sense. There's nothing predictable about the course of his work either, meaning that it always has a certain clarity and freshness. Even the earliest work in this retrospective *Hymn* (1983) feels like it could have been constructed very recently. His work operates outside the common (museum) parameters of video and projection and it stands at a crossroad, being part of a continuing experimental theatre, while maintaining a unique position as visual art of the moving image.

Performance Space is not a mainstream venue where one might expect to see work of such a major Australian artist. It has four antiquated Victorian era gallery spaces that have been redesigned for this show to deal with screen and monitor based works, even so, the spaces could only accommodate a small sampling of Gillies' significant output. Careful selection has ensured that this exhibition made perfect sense and exploited the main developments in his oeuvre. In addition, the reconfiguration of what is a notoriously difficult exhibition space made the Gillies retrospective *Video Work: 1982-2001* into a powerful viewing experience.

The limitation of affects articulated in the medium of video is one of the defining characteristics of John Gillies' work. It is in his generation of image-makers that we encounter an accelerated use of new media. Almost overnight moving image editing has been condensed into a quick and easy process, but evident in these works is the technical advantage of sophisticated digital editing, for both sound and image. What stunned and preoccupied me in these four viewing rooms was a theatrical mode, something articulated outside the current museum projection-style video works with their accompanying post photographic protocols.

It is the devices of the theatre that make these video constructions such compulsive viewing. Throughout his career Gillies has consistently collaborated with performers and dancers and he has had a long-term relationship with local experimental theatre, working

as an associate member of the legendary performance group, The Sydney Front (TSF). Many of the players of TSF are familiar faces in both current and past works, and in Gillies' pivotal stage of late 80s and 90s it becomes a bit difficult to distinguish it from the collaborative theatrical experience of the masterly director Nigel Kellerway and the other members of The Sydney Front, but this familiarity adds a greater strength and resonance to Gillies' overall project.

Gillies appears to be fascinated by the way the materiality of imaging and sound can be manipulated and layered. His innovation could be best described as a relay effect, for these are like moments of another performance staged somewhere outside the screen with figural elements enwrapped, overlaid and then mesmerisingly remastered. Perhaps there is a distortion here that's worth commenting on. The artist is playing in a space between a continuity of an inherent narrative logic and a sort of gestural time writing. There exists a clarity of character within a reduced possibility of expressions – that is a kind of reduction that propels the meaning or 'poetic unmeaning' in an altogether animated theatre of the screen.

Looking at *Techno/Dumb/Show* (1991) I felt swept into a beehive of energy, where collage and overlay crashed through grainy black-grey portraits and figures. In the exhibition catalogue Edward Sheer observed acutely that, "What he is doing is unleashing the performativity of the gestures themselves: the autonomy of an action broken into its component parts. At its root this is what montage performs".<sup>1</sup> It's this oily skin of light whose capacity and velocity, rhythmetrics and repetitions, had me in a trance. The accelerated audio and visual syncopation emitted in this kind of video seemed almost operatic. Here comes that spook of theatre again, where you leave behind the solidness of reality, to enter a sort of partial hypnosis. The collage or montage element in *Techno/Dumb/Show* reminded me of the physical movements and cuts in Walter Ruttmann's urban classic film-portrait *Berlin, Symphony of a City* (1927). Both works are alive, complex and vast. When I saw French





'musique-concrete' composer Pierre Henri live-mix a tape collage to Ruttman's *Berlin* a similar euphoric state overtook me. With a different expression, Gillies focuses his constructions on human figural dramas, with the stunning use of fast movements and the engineering of fragments that rapidly create the video collages and montages. The technical substance in this work is an innovation that has forced me to appreciate what could be called 'digital-video-collage'.

Of course velocity isn't always rapid – any good artist understands that. There is often a need for dramatic counterpoint, where speed is used for changing the feeling and sense of a moving image. Gillies has modified the image and sound syncopation in *The Mary Stuart Tapes* (2000) to maintain the major dramatic effects. In both works he encases the body in 'a timely fashion'. Using repetition and doubling he makes these pieces function at walking pace, like a sort of metronome. The performer in *The Mary Stuart Tapes*, Clare Grant, has a delicious voice and the audio of spoken word takes on more purpose than is perhaps preferable. Grant moves about in a stately pose. Her gown and queenly tiara match her courtly hand gestures. In the catalogue accompanying the show, Gillies states that, "Australia is the inheritor of the British idea of the state. Within the idea, Mary Stuart is buried potentially, a force trapped within."<sup>2</sup> The gestural elements communicate this purpose elegantly, with no sense of theatrical deviation. This performance could be the line of an ancient courtly dance, but placing the actor in the contemporary underworld her sense and voice are shaken somewhat. Her entrapment is most cogent. The metropolis like a tunnel flips from trashy sidewalks, to city shops and the noise of arcade life blanketed by night. The juxtaposition of a displaced monarch and the pedestrianism of the street frames the psychology of her walk.

In *The Mary Stuart Tapes* we are not permitted any firm ground to make a sense of history in these speeches and no status or any state of existence in which to identify the voice and its markings. Gillies has taken the script (re-translated from Friedrich Schiller's *Maria Stuart* circa

1800) from another century and placed it in a new set of circumstances. Why did cast the actor's speeches in the scenery of today? In the allegorical moment of juxtaposition, it is this very non-correspondence that animates Grant's performance. By holding the figure of the player central, Gillies gives the speeches a kind of timely meter. In *The Mary Stuart Tapes* Gillies makes a ghost story of this displaced, haunted place.

<sup>1</sup> Edward Scheer, *Live Art/Media Art: John Gillies, Performance and the Techno – Live*, John Gillies: A Retrospective, exhibition catalogue, 2004, p7.

<sup>2</sup> Therese Davis, *John Gillies: A Cinema of Lost Images*, (Unpublished interview with Therese David, 12 February, 2004) John Gillies: A Retrospective, exhibition catalogue, 2004, p4.

John Gillies is a Sydney-based artist who has worked across video, sound and performance since 1980, with his work extensively presented in numerous international exhibitions, screening programs and festivals. For this retrospective Performance Space has made available a PDF document of the exhibition catalogue at <[www.performancespace.com.au](http://www.performancespace.com.au)>

**Ruark Lewis is a Sydney-based language artist. His recent work *Banalities/Banalitäten* with *Rubato Tanzcompagnie*, was commissioned by *Literaturwerkstatt Berlin* for *PoesieFestival Berlin.03* and performed at the *Theatre Halleschen un Ufer*.**

**Above left:** John Gillies  
*The Mary Stuart Tapes*, 2000

Video still

Performer: Clare Grant

Image courtesy the artist.

**Above:** John Gillies  
*Techno/Dumb/Show*, 1991

Video still

Made in collaboration with *The Sydney Front*

Image courtesy the artist.

# *un Interview with*

# *Cate Consandine*

*by Jo. Scicluna*  
*June 2004*



**Left:** Cate Consandine  
*Edging still at Westspace, 2004*  
Photo: Christian Capurro

*In Cate Consandine's recent installations 'window lash' at Bus in November 2003 and 'edging still' at Westspace in April 2004, we are met with a beautiful violence. A hospital grade sterility is constructed through clean architectural lines and stark fluorescent lighting. This is tainted with a recent violent or neurotic act, and evidenced by traces of these acts in vivid pigments. These traces evoke an obsessive repetition or futile attempts at escaping pain and death. The language is dark and the aesthetic is luminescent. We are provided with visual and spatial cues that invite us into a drama: delicate fake eyelashes sit quietly on a pane of glass that seals off a painterly trace (window lash) and fake apples sit quietly on a glossy white table, surrounded by an obsessive, layered circling of stiletto imprints (edging still). This is a theatre of anxiety with surrounding adornments.*

Edmond Burke wrote of the sublime in the mid-eighteenth century. He discussed the relationship between pleasure and pain, describing the latter as the more intense and powerful emotion. In Consandine's work the latter nestles comfortably next to its counterpart, disguising itself. Like the artist Felix Gonzales-Torres, in the mid-1990s, Consandine references and uses minimalism as an aesthetically clean and restrained tool by which to superimpose content that is poetic and highly personal. The body is rarely, if ever, represented. It is only evidenced through imprints and indentations, an index of the original. A loaded presence is evoked. Cate Consandine presents us with the delicate balance between restraint and expression. I have always been attracted to this menacing beauty, but maybe that's just the neurotic romantic in me.



**Below, left & right:** Cate Consandine  
*Edging still at Westspace, 2004*  
Photos: David Marx



**Jo. Scicluna:** We walk into a recent drama that sort of feels and looks quite fresh, like somebody has just recently left: embodying a significant moment. But then there is also this sense of the violence coming out of an act of obsession. That's the sensation that comes out of your work. How would you respond to this?

**Cate Consandine:** I think what you've touched upon is the experience of walking into a scene, feeling that something has happened and trying to make sense of it. On one level, the work is operating as a *misé en scène*. With respect to the act of obsession, I think the traces you are referring to operate differently in each show.

**JS:** Sure. Let's talk about *window lash* at Bus.

**CC:** *window lash* at Bus was really the first show where I started to use paint in connection to an action. I orchestrated an action that involved smearing, throwing and pressing a stuffed bird – a black raven – dipped in fluorescent green paint. Then I sealed this trace behind a glass wall. I wanted only the traces to remain and to resonate in a very expressive, frenetic and violent way. Treating the bird with fluorescent green oxygenates the trace.

**JS:** Maybe that's why I think it looks and feels fresh, because this paint has an overwhelming materiality to it, like blood before it dries.

**CC:** Yeah! It also suggests that violence can be a regenerative act. Is this kind of battering – whether it's the act of a bird beating itself against the interior space of a room, or an obsessive compulsive tracking around the edges of a space – a dead end or is it the force of life itself? I'm really looking to locate that potential for transformation within the traces of battery.

**JS:** In *edging still* I feel like I've walked in on somebody that has just left... and yet she doesn't leave... there is no trace of her leaving, so in a sense she is bound to this

continuity and this invisibility. It could be a filmic loop in a way.

**CC:** I've never thought of it like that, but I like the association. It is about the relationship between movement and containment. And it's not important that the connection between the mark and what made it, is read by the viewer... I'm more interested in the gesture... This is theatre. Something is being played out.

**JS:** So you set up a dramatic language around the still life?

**CC:** Yes. I wanted to activate it. There is a white table, with a white plastic tablecloth that holds within its folds a number of artificial apples. There is also a white room, a minimal cube that is being edged or humanized in a way as well and there is a feminine imposition upon that minimal space but it is set up in a very clinical way. So it's theatre, both in the sense of drama but also in the operational sense of theatre: something being scrutinised, operated upon, perhaps cut open... exposed.

**JS:** Actually, my first response was visceral.

**CC:** That's good. I want to connect with the viewer in that way, one body to another. Essentially I'm exploring the poetics of desire, the crystalising edges that connect the artifact or the accoutrement of desire to felt experience. The high heel shoes, the artificial apples, and the two false green eyelashes, are all artifacts of desire. Although employed differently in the work, as tools, they are used to adorn and entice, particularly in reference to the female body, although I think the association could just as easily be 'camp'. I thought the circling or edging of the room, for example, was like applying lipstick, applying paint, adorning the surfaces of the space.

**JS:** Are you 'sexing it up'?

**CC:** Well, yes, in a repressed kind of way.

**Right:** Cate Consandine  
*Edging still at Westspace, 2004*  
Photo: Christian Capurro



**JS:** So how are you using the still life? What is the relationship between the act of tracing and the act of setting up a still life? They are two different languages, two different methods. You obviously are setting up a spatial relationship...

**CC:** The still life occupies a certain space historically. It occupies an interior space, a domestic, motionless space. It is insular... contained... a decorative construct not out in the world. In fact, everything is so precisely balanced and orchestrated that it exists in the space of pure aesthetic spectacle. When you look at Cezanne's still life paintings, which have inspired my still life, the rumpled creases and folds in the tablecloth are really suggestive of the artifices of theatre. My trace action – while falling into another genre of painting, Abstract Expressionism – is also closed in. Its expressive potential is contained. So I think this is what these two layers have in common, a kind of intense interiority, a physical, sexual and psychological interiority.

**JS:** After experiencing the immediate sensations the works invited, I was met with a whole lot of filmic associations. With *window lash* my immediate association was with Alfred Hitchcock's movie of 1963, *The Birds*. The trace of fluorescent green paint from the bird on the wall was about the negative space of this scene. I think Hitchcock also used this device of shifting into the negative zone, where we swim into the vicarious representation of an image such as a trace of blood. It's an obvious visual reference, but a powerful one for me, evoking very specific sensations: the violent flapping of wings across my face and body. So, after saying that, what are the purpose of such devices being used in your work ... are they about the psychology of space and perception?

**CC:** For me, it is about a particular state of desire, a desire held tight. I always think about it in relationship to the downcast gaze, when your peripheral awareness of space takes precedence.

**JS:** You are met with it, but it is always being held away from you.

**CC:** Yes, and I think restraint is always present.

**JS:** But it's about restraint in another type of way, a formal restraint. It's stark and crisp and clean, but it still is mysterious. I think that this interrelationship is the thing that draws me most into your work.

**CC:** It is mysterious because of its starkness, its fluorescence, because it edges on the hyper-real.

**JS:** What do you mean by 'hyper-real'?

**CC:** It's about projection, Jo. Are you seduced?

**JS:** Yeah, I'm seduced and repulsed.

**CC:** Seduction is more interesting when one is unsettled and inhibited by it.

**JS:** Very cheeky! So you're playing with behavioral codes. You also mentioned something about your art being repetitive to the point of pain.

**CC:** Well it's repetitive to a place beyond pain ... there's a place where the ritual of pain becomes an exalted experience within the body...

**JS:** I feel your pain.

*Jo. Scicluna is a Melbourne-based artist, founding board member of Bus artist run space, and lecturer in design at RMIT University.*

# *Before and Now: The Work of David Noonan*

by *Johannah Fahey*

**Right:** David Noonan  
Waldhaus 2002

*Owl wall paper & Oil painting, installation view.  
Image courtesy of the artist & Uplands Gallery*



## ***Distant Thunder Rumbles***

An astronaut floats in the void of deep space as his helmet fills with blood. Brooding owls stare with dark intent from the corner of a room. A young woman drifts through open doorways and along endless corridors. A Tudor house beckons. Strange, theatrical mise en scènes, frozen moments that leave the viewer out of time and place.

David Noonan grew up in Ballarat, a regional city in the state of Victoria, Australia, during the 1970s. Thanks to the wealth of early gold prospectors the town is defined by the grand Victorian architecture shadowing the wide tree-lined streets. When the gold ran out, Ballarat was left stranded in a cold climate at a particular moment in time, a remnant of distant Europe misplaced among the Australian bush. “I have a strong aesthetical connection to the place through its history”, Noonan says. “In some ways it was very romantic, it had a very European feel.”

Part of Noonan’s significance as an artist is based on his use of different mediums in his art. Jarrod Rawlins, co-director of Uplands Gallery where Noonan exhibits, said recently, “he’s a multitask master, old school and new

school, not versus”. As Noonan moves across mediums from oil on canvas to installation, and from film to sculpture, he draws attention to the way materiality contributes to the overall impact of his work. His art is never simply about visuals, but almost always creates ambience. In his work there’s not a single point of definition, but a resonance that creates a sense of immersion. Through his installation art, Noonan creates whole environments that involve the audience, and engage with the gallery space, rather than limiting himself to the stasis of visuals alone by hanging a painting on a wall.

## ***Is the present moment all there is?***

An initial reluctance in the space gives way after only slight encouragement. And now some of us, the ones willing to take the plunge, have grabbed the nearest goblet and headed to the keg for a top-me-up. There’s a convivial feeling in the air, we’re content to linger as the alcohol transforms the room into a more convincing version of ‘ye olde tavern’. And a narrative begins to unfurl like a film projected in the mind’s eye.



**Left:** David Noonan & Starlie Geikie  
*Miriam Hall, 2003*  
 Silk screen on ply wood  
 Image courtesy the artists

*Miriam Hall* (2003) is housed behind a tiled and cornered inner city pub. Several kegs of beer greet thirsty travellers at the door. Most of the barrels are wooden and empty, but there's one that's metal and full. A long, faux medieval wooden table in the middle of the room is laden with rustic earthenware. The ceramic cluster includes pottery goblets and an owl candlestick. A large Boston fern hangs from the ceiling in one corner; crystal chandeliers and pools of candlelight illuminate the scene. And there are replica Alvar Aalto stools scattered around the room. The windows have been criss-crossed with black tape to give the effect of diamond patterned glass. This style of window is typical to Tudor taverns of the Middle Ages and this style of window is also typical to 'medieval revival' houses built from the 1930s to the 1970s.

Screen printed photographs of Noonan and Noonan's collaborator, Melbourne-based artist Starlie Geikie, are on large plywood panels. The photos resemble the images on 70s bar mirrors. The panels are leaning, not hanging, on the walls. And this, along with the wood-grain surface, gives them a sculptural quality. There's also something filmic about them; they look like the remains of a movie set. In the photos the artists also peer through diamond patterned windows. Their eyes are smudged with black liner. And they're dressed in clothing that's a mishmash of different historical eras.

Geikie wears a costume consisting of a peaked and feathered hunting hat, a waist-length raven wig, a satin cape, a cane and a Victorian dress. It's Kate Bush does *Wuthering Heights* with a touch of psychedelic witches' coven thrown in for good measure. As a hybridisation of styles it's best described as 'medieval rock'. Noonan's

outfit evokes 1960's trippy folk-rock music. It consists of a military jacket complete with brass buttons and fringed epaulettes, tailored more for theatre than war. And he's wearing a wig cut in a long style, crowned with the obligatory top hat. The artist is disguised as Sargent Pepper meets Captain Beefheart, with a trace of Bowie, and a distinct nod to The Incredible String Band. There's a well-worn tape deck in the corner emitting familiar tunes from the French accordion and this adds to the overall spirit of drunken celebration that's beginning to ignite the room.

Retrospectively, it becomes important that the gallery is housed behind the 'local', part of the vernacular of inner urban architecture. From the alehouse of olden days, to a pub providing the pints of yesterday, today and tomorrow, there's a nostalgic embrace between the everyday and days of old. This continuity is created by an atmosphere of communality based on bawdy jokes and spurious gossip. Some things never change and some things don't last. This is the opening night of the show. It will run for several weeks, and then close. The only residual evidence of the event will be the leftover props, and the photos you see in this magazine. That is the impermanent nature of *Miriam Hall*. It is site specific and transient.... such limited existence adds to its appeal.

When you hang a piece of art on a gallery wall there's an immediate divide created between the audience and the work: you can look, but don't touch. In stark contrast, *Miriam Hall* is art that you become immersed in. As Geikie, Noonan's collaborator and friend, said recently, "the installation is not something you just look at, it has to be physically activated to be effective". So the space itself is not an empty category, it's as deep as the social relations that produce it. There's a resonance that bounces back and forth between the objects, the audience, and the space itself, and it's these ephemeral connections that give the work meaning. Noonan says, "all the elements have a relationship to one another, there's a dialogue created between each object that contributes to the work as a whole".

*Miriam Hall* is a custom made flashback, tailored with an appreciation for aesthetics, and warped by Noonan's preference for particular design eras. The unexpected association between the objects from different milieus shows his use of the language of design, in all its manifestations, to create a historical flavour. From the architecture of 1600s Tudor, to the outfits of 1960s Psychedelic; from the furniture of 1930s Functionalism



*Above: David Noonan & Starlie Geikie  
Miriam Hall 2003  
Installation shot, Clubsproject Inc.  
Image courtesy of the artists.*

to the make-up of 1970s Glam. The installation crosses the boundaries that define different eras and styles. Each item carries a cultural weight determined by the aesthetics of a particular period. And the object's presence in the room brings the era back to life. This is history traced according to a pastiche of design artefacts. As there are so many different styles condensed together under the one roof, it's obvious that Noonan doesn't want to conform to a linear representation of time: travelling straight from the distant past (without ever glancing back), to the present, and towards the horizon, beyond which lies the future. Rather, through the synchronous existence of different design objects, the artist acknowledges a more complicated relationship with temporal elements, such as memory and history, which is discontinuous and non-linear.

Noonan would discount the idea that history never repeats. For him, it's the things that happen over and over again that map time's progress. He explores the circular nature of history using cultural motifs that tend to resurface in different eras. Tudor style exemplifies this process of repetition. It's a design aesthetic recurring across a span of historical periods. From its birth in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, to its revival in both the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as the timber framing integral to the original structure of Tudor architecture becomes false half-

timbering used for decorative purposes alone, there is a move from utilitarian purpose to aesthetic function and a recognition of innovation within repetition.

So it is not a matter of conforming to the cliché that says 'the more things change the more they stay the same', an adage that tends to discount the possibility of progress. It's about recognising that although things may look the same, it's their context, historical or otherwise, that produces their significance. It's not that progress is denied, nor does it necessarily entail a complete rejection of the past. For Noonan 'now' is an elusive concept not separated from the past, but rather dependent on it for definition.... and the past subsequently becomes present in the here and now.

*Johannah Fahey's book on David Noonan will be published by Thames and Hudson in late 2004.*



## LUVTHETHIRD

# Lane Cormick

*Below: Lane Cormick  
LUVTHETHIRD, 2004  
Installation shot Kings ARI  
Photo: Cath Martin*

*Presented by the 2004 Next Wave Festival  
Kings Artist Run Initiative  
14 May – 5 June 2004  
by Danny Lacy*

### ***Blood, Sugar, Sex, Magic***

Where do all of the sleazy old uncles disappear to after the annual family Christmas pilgrimage or obligatory 21<sup>st</sup> birthday parties dissolve? Everyone knows of this despised demographic, either through witnessing the horror first-hand, or through disturbing tales of inappropriate behaviour (usually consisting of the trademark alcohol-fuelled sexual innuendo). Lane Cormick brings the essence of the sleazy old uncle – the one that we all have and all disown – to life yet again in his installation *LUVTHETHIRD* at Kings Artists Run Initiative as part of the 2004 Next Wave Festival.

Staged on a raised platform that fills the vast majority of the main gallery of Kings, Cormick's theatrical construction presents an orgy of excess. Three grotesque paper-mache caricatures act out a scene of seduction and desire, reminiscent of the real-life behaviour happening within the catacombs of dodgy nightclubs and strip clubs along the notorious underbelly of sleaze itself – King Street. The two male characters with their phallic faces, greasy tangled painted-on hair and lounge lizard suits, slouch on their seats transfixed at the seductive pose of the pink faced femme fatale. Scattered on the ground between them is a cacophony of mess: smashed wine glasses, empty beer and spirit bottles and the debris of a broken clay man. Apart from this alcohol stained cemetery, everyone seems to be having a good time.

The mental transaction of looking at the woman's asterisk nipples – or the dirty, old-man gaze – of the seated one-eyed lions supporter and the bleeding one-eyed monarchist is projected onto three giant black and white union jacks painted on cardboard that adorn the walls. These bold symbols frame the active narrative captured on stage. With a similarity to the playful vulgarity of Georg Grosz's drawings, Cormick's installation oscillates between a heavy political reading (bound in the representation of a longing for the traditional values of the mother country by conservative ideologies) and a manifestation of the stranded sleazy old uncle, with a lighter dynamic of perverse fun and frivolity.



*LUVTHETHIRD* embraces the diverse pieces of which it is comprised. The staged caricatures, the echo of union jacks, even the plastic milk crates holding up the platform, and the left over materials under the platform become active participants in the overall staging of the exhibition. By using the past as a reference point rather than a direct representation, Cormick navigates through foreign, yet familiar, territory. And in the conceptual dispersal of the sleazy old uncle, he opens up new vocabularies in his work. What may have initially been intended as an exhibition devoted to past work has become the exploration, destruction and reconfiguration of past ideas allowing Cormick to progress to a bold and ambitious new starting point.

*Danny Lacy is a Melbourne-based independent curator and writer who has just completed his Master of Art: Visual Culture.*

SOUL...

# Elizabeth Newman

*Clubsproject Inc.  
17 & 24 April & 1 May 2004  
by Zara Stanhope*



*Above: Lizzy Newman  
Soul (installation detail) Clubsprojects Inc. 2004  
Image courtesy the artist*

It is good to be reminded occasionally not to take life too seriously, so as to attend to the things that really do matter. This is not to suggest that SOUL... was characterised by, or deserved to be approached with, a lack of solemnity. Quite the opposite, this exhibition was the product of a beautifully enquiring mind, a project inspiring in its sense of warmth, vitality and unpretentiousness, where visitors paused, took time and, possibly, put other concerns on hold.

Lizzy or Elizabeth Newman's work has not been seen in Melbourne for a couple of years. For viewers it was a reason to celebrate her return to art making after having put aside her creative practice to study psychoanalysis during the 1990s. Hopefully, this marks the start of ongoing exhibition projects and more frequent enrichment of Melbourne's visual arts.

Most appropriate to the process-based and discursive nature of the artist project space Clubsproject in Fitzroy; SOUL... was a group of individual objects that formed a rich installation that could be enjoyed from a range of perspectives. Large, soft geometric hangings in muted colours established a framework across two rooms that also included found objects, furniture, handwritten texts and clothing made by Newman.

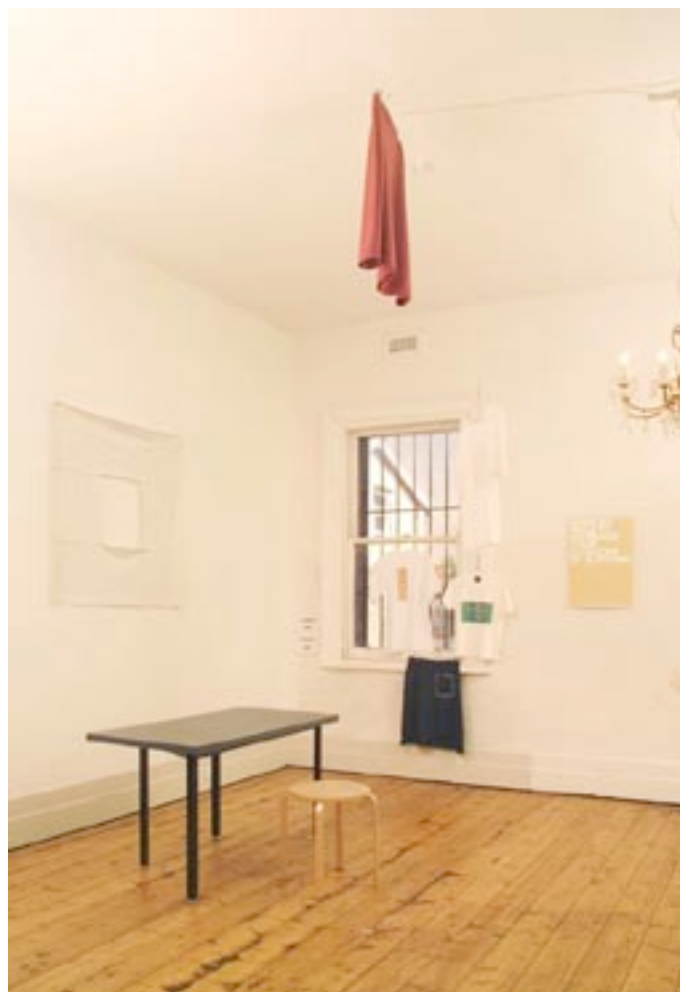
Newman's formal and conceptual approach made connections with her earlier painting practice and particularly the enquiry 'What makes a painting?' A past work from 1992, *Paris, London, New York*, which signified the similarity between the systems of fashion and art that succeed in the acknowledged centres of western culture, was referenced here with three clocks brushed in paint, high on the wall. The symbolic clocks at Clubsproject are cities prominent in past and present current events and invite more serious interpretations, being labeled 'Helsinki', 'Mogadishu' and 'Tehran'. The unlikely time settings of each clock's hands hint at Newman's continuing questioning of the relations between sensual or cognitive experience and reality, and how representation is not only at work in art, but is fundamental to daily life.

It is impossible to attempt to encapsulate an exhibition that unfolds as objects or elements became apparent in traversing the domestic spaces that displayed this work. The soft grids of roughly sewn polar fleece, suspended on the walls – or from the centre of the ceiling in the case of one grey frame-shaped work – dominated by means of scale and tone. But visitors could not afford to be inattentive to detail, as Newman's philosophy is to tread lightly. The unobservant would have missed the

partly obliterated text, “At present, that which cannot be represented is the only thing that should be represented”. The space had retained with its paintwork from the previous show, then readily accessible materials and techniques, such as hand sewing, were employed without apology, utilised with skill rather than refinement. Such effortlessness does not come without thought or struggle. I can imagine the battle to construct these gigantic paeans (symbols of triumph) into ‘universal’ modernist grids, the courage to include a homemade skirt and printed t-shirt, or the concurrent uncertainty and pleasure in including a makeshift rubber tyre-planter filled with soil. These symbols of mutual completeness and incompleteness resonated amidst suggestions of the spirit and mind to be found in the remnants of the physical world.

Newman should be pleased to fall into that group of artists who both embrace visual art and at the same time are responsible for its ‘breakdown’, who contribute to the collapsing of the relationships between customary or comfortable forms of art and the meanings they may signify. Or, in other words, they stimulate thought on what is considered to be art, where art is found and what ‘art’ might mean in an environment where design and visual art have become almost indistinguishable in the economies of global mass markets.

In emphasising values considered failures in daily life: an economy of means, lack of definition, unresolved techniques and fallible structures, *SOUL...* irresistibly reinforced the will of the individual and the power of creativity. Newman’s training in psychoanalysis is a significant factor in her thinking but not to the exclusion of the world of external circumstances. By compelling in us a need to keep looking, activating a drive, a desire to complete what is incomplete, she offers opportunities to recognise the ineffable and also to question the reasons precluding the visibility of certain events, ideas and sensations. A quote by Eden Liddlelow inscribed on an Ikea stool, within *SOUL...* stated, “Surrounded by voices and images of vehement intrusiveness and dubious authority we should practice being silent and blind”. Talking about her practice, Newman compares the process of producing work to that of drawing – the delineation of the mark of an unbroken line, which once completed is not revisited. What this creates when put into an exhibition is a heightening of sensory responses and questions regarding the nature of the world we individually inhabit, which remain with us, beyond the gallery, a counterpoint to our earnestness.



*Above & below: Lizzy Newman  
Soul (installation detail) Clubsprojects Inc. 2004  
Images courtesy the artist*



*Zara Stanhope is Senior Curator at Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne and an advocate of any forum for the discussion of contemporary art.*

*"I'm A Fucking Artist. I Deserve Respect And Money."*

## Glen Walls

TCB Art Inc.  
6 – 17 April 2004  
by Din Heagney

After stepping behind the black curtain of Glen Walls' room at TCB, I need to stand still while my eyes adjust to the blue glow inside. It is the same light that illuminates uninvited lint and dandruff in a nightclub. Whew, I'm wearing white but hold on, another eye adjustment is required: this exhibition is one of miniatures.

Walls' collection of mini architectural and naturalistic models protrude from the walls on small black plinths, each printed with acerbic titles like: *Mary was obsessed about having sex in the house below. She wanted her wild sexual fantasies to be associated with good taste.* The subject, Mary, is meanwhile dancing halfway down a mountain slope that is rising above a modern mini-mansion, in a scene reminiscent of the opening of *The Sound of Music*.

The playfulness of the titles belies the time consuming construction of these tiny slices of life where nature and modernism battle out their aesthetic conflicts. Icebergs, snow-blanketed forests, rolling mountains and shimmering rivers are the homes of nonchalant chimpanzees, people-eating polar bears and insular humans all confronted with modernist architecture. Employing DAS modelling clay, wood, wire and cardboard as the chief materials, Walls has painstakingly created a miniature collection of natural and constructed environments – all rooted in northern hemisphere appearances and each taunting the cultural impacts of modernism. The models measure an average of 30 x 30 x 30cm. Some are longer or taller, but all require a closer examination that puts the viewer in a role of gigantic voyeur, peering into these mini conflicts that, were it not for their titles, would be well placed in a toy museum.

Walls' interest in this series of model works lies in the human presence (or perhaps lack of it) inherent in the International Style architecture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Bauhaus School and championed throughout the world by Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Injecting a humorous presence into each micro-set, Walls opens the possibilities behind the façades of traditional and modern constructs that hover over our everyday activities. *There is nothing to see here, so fuck off,* appears to



**Above:** Glen Walls  
*John's racist, homophobic attitudes had extended to a distinct hate of anything modern. 2004*  
30 x 30x 35cm Mixed Media  
Photo: Din Heagney

be the only work absent of modernist trespass, a tiny slice of a natural environment replete with trees, rocks and river, but then one sees the tiny LED bulbs peering over the scene like streetlights. Despite the title's warning, it is easy to find oneself looking around and under the miniscule trees and rocks wondering whether there is a piece of modernism lurking somewhere in the dark. This kind of intimate engagement, with an equally intimate but saddening creation, is a strong mark of Walls' work.

*"I'm a fucking artist. I deserve respect and money," Billy yelled at his father as he condemned him for making yet another useless minimalist sculpture,* conveys the sense of a further and perhaps more personal conflict with the creation and appreciation of art practice that many of us are all too familiar with. By both celebrating and ridiculing modernism, Walls has revealed some of the emotional attachments we hold for buildings and for nature; places imbued with memory but rarely marked by those who have lived in them.

**Din Heagney is a writer and artist based in Melbourne.**



# Om Supreme Bhagavan

## Guy Benfield

*Om Supreme Bhagavan*  
NEW04  
Australian Centre for Contemporary Art  
23 March – 16 May 2004  
by Ashley Crawford

*Below, left & right:* Guy Benfield  
*Om Supreme Bhagavan*, 2004  
Video stills  
Images courtesy the artist



The figures in his performance were like bizarre medieval clowns or an occult 60s sect, their hair sticky with paint as opposed to blood. His most recent installation resembled a macabre disco, a gigantic turntable at its centre while a wizened skeletal hoodoo priestess looked on. Hanging on the wall was a giant disc scaled to sit on the turntable, its playlist a mélange of violent reds, oranges and yellows.

Guy Benfield's installation, as part of NEW04 at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art earlier this year, *Om Supreme Bhagavan* was an extraordinary potpourri of pop cultural references from the 60s and 70s... one can almost smell the marijuana smoke hidden by wafts of incense. But this is no homage to nostalgia. It was Benfield's youth filtered through a sharp, stringent aesthetic mixed with the opportunity for pure anarchy.

Benfield's drawings, framed in a style once in mode in the late 50s and early 60s, read like a checklist for the confusion of adolescence. His figures were adorned in Afro hairstyles that either reference the blaxploitation

style of *Shaft* or the golden locks of Brett Whiteley. There are tree trunks and cliffs reminiscent of Roger Dean's famous covers for the band *Yes* in the 70s. It was a knowing investigation into a youth spent growing up in the post-disco, post-alternative lifestyle world of jarring colours, loud Eastern music, Afro haircuts, bizarre sunglasses and flares. But these references were filtered through a contemporary aesthetic and the strange shifts and blurs of the space of memory.

In Benfield's performance, enacted for the the *Om Supreme Bhagavan* installation, his actors wore wigs to splash around the paint, resulting in ghastly, sodden, hairpieces. "Wigs are hard things," says Benfield. "I wanted a kind of blond Afro, but it ended up looking like a hybrid of Harpo Marx and Brett Whiteley!"

Benfield's output is an amalgam of performance, video, drawing and installation. But unlike the extravaganza of Mathew Barney's *Cremaster Cycle*, Benfield is quick to point out that his video work is not something you would



watch in the cinema. "The video is like a process – you're constructing the artwork through the performance through the video and, via that framework. It's about being free and painting and enjoying the language of painting. It's like getting away with crappy painting through these filters."

For Benfield the various components are intended to result in a single work. "I suppose I could have a show of just the drawings, but they are essentially designed as part of a larger whole," he says. After finishing his studies at the Victorian College of the Arts, Benfield seemed to disappear from the scene for many years. The reality was that his mother, based in Sydney, had fallen ill, and Benfield was obligated to care for her for a substantial period, dragging him back to the family home. The work he did during that period was highly personal, but it was also a rejection of much he had been taught by "the painting Nazis" – his lecturers at the VCA. The forced return to his childhood home gave time for reflection, but he claims the most recent work "doesn't refer to my past at all. I don't make the work to create any preconception or to dictate a response. I want people to look at the work and look at the gap. It's a kind of space that's not dictated, it's that weird stretch of abstract memory... This work was also about negotiating with a space, this particular space at ACCA."

Space, in its various forms, is a key element to Benfield's oeuvre. He scours design magazines and when he finds a space in which to perform and video he renders site-specific sketches before building his eccentric architectural interiors, creating his own retro-futuristic environment.

For a considerable time he had kept his head low. "I was something of an angry young man," he admits. "My work was about experimentation and I was just into finishing my work. Forget about all that other bullshit," he says, referring to dealing with galleries and curators. "I didn't think they'd be interested. I was on about performance years ago, and now it's everywhere." Benfield in this process is also questioning the role of the artist as "solo genius." "I'm questioning the whole issue of the artist flying solo, sole author of all the work. I'm questioning whether that is relevant, I've got a team of six people when it comes to building the work, filming the video, editing the video, framing the drawings. It's a team effort, it's a massive collaborative project and there's a lot of skill sharing." "The drawings are influenced by the video and vice versa. It's not a one way street."

Geraldine Barlow, who curated the show at ACCA says that, "Guy is willing to go into the unknown... He doesn't over familiarize his work or apologise for his work and he is willing to go somewhere that is a little bit uncomfortable." His inclusion in the show at ACCA was a significant moment for the work, she says. "It puts the it in a new context, it's an incredibly important platform to be seen on, but the criticism of your work goes up ten-fold as well. Once you're up there you're there to be chopped down. It's either love or hate."



*Above & below: Guy Benfield  
Om Supreme Bhagavan, 2004  
Video stills  
Images courtesy the artist*



*Ashley Crawford is the author of Wimmera: The Work of Phillip Hunter (Thames & Hudson) and co-author of Spray: The Work of Howard Arkley (Craftsman House).*

# Third History

## Chris Bond, Richard Grigg & Kati Rule

TCB Art Inc.  
15 – 26 June 2004  
by Fiona Bate

The art works in *Third History* reveal a series of personal metamorphoses, that exist more as crazed teenage fantasies than cheap recreations of an ambiguous international style. This is the consequence of each artist's layering of familiar historical and pop culture items in unique interpretations that construct a new identity for their references.

Richard Grigg's work *Giotto and the Substitute Meaning* reflects an ongoing interest in form and symbolism. In the style of an Italian fresco, Grigg creates a landscape of seemingly disparate objects that reveals new sets of meanings. Conspicuous objects of contemporary culture, including an empty packet of 'DU-LL' cigarettes, a crumpled cardboard building and a concealed VB bottle, are set amongst the tree of life, a headless robed figure and the entrance to a dark cave. Because of this juxtaposition the viewer is stranded in an invented intermediate space. Furthermore, there is an inherent contradiction in the hand-cut dowel detailing and painted patterns that frame the central image. These details, which initially appear as typical 15<sup>th</sup> century mosaics or marble inlay, are again contrary to nature of the painted subject matter, transforming this detailed frame into the palatable form of a television set and the painting into an image on the TV screen. Is this Renaissance culture for the armchair advocate? Not really, because Grigg's work is more complicated than a staid comment on the hegemony of the mass media. He provides a study in the changing nature of style and symbolism, and demonstrates how they should not be simplistically relegated to a particular historical period.

In his painting *Abstract Remnant 0404.4*, Chris Bond refers to the form of the 1950s Penguin novels. In oil on canvas Bond recreates the book cover of 'A Lantern for Jeremy' in an abstract and minimal style, by removing superfluous details such as text and images. This allows the piece to operate primarily as a painting rather than a literal transcription of a real object. Other details, such as cracks and stains, have been added to the emblematic form of the book cover. This deliberate affectation of the painted surface is meant to imitate the accumulation of dirty



**Above:** Kati Rule, *Untitled* (2004)  
Pencil on paper. Image courtesy the artist

marks and bent corners on a real aging book. Despite the appearance, the addition of these phoney details is very specific but Bond is careful not to let this technique get too mechanical or stylised. His painting mimics authenticity and alludes to the construction of new identity. By playing off the highly processed against the arbitrary, Bond makes a feature of the typically neglected book cover (abandoned on the shelves of a second-hand bookstore) enabling it to reveal its own story.

Kati Rule's *Untitled* (2004) consists of two pencil drawings on paper. The two images are from quite different sources that play off one another, but are both taken from pop culture. One is based on a press shot of Kurt Cobain's suicide and the other refers to a still from the Disney animation *Snow White*. The two images are surprisingly similar in composition, which is an aspect that is of some significance to Rule, with relevance to synchronicity and memory. So in this exhibition, Rule's image association exists primarily in the aesthetic realm, since Cobain committed suicide in 1994 and *Snow White* was not dead after all. But from this straightforward comparison emerges a more complicated investigation into reality and fantasy. By setting *Snow White* against Kurt Cobain we realise that both identities exist as popular icons, and then we see how Cobain has become a fictional character, just like *Snow White*. While both of these images are loaded with cultural significance and nuances of mass media dissemination, each depiction is powerful and striking, particularly with the delicate shading and high contrast that make them, as Rule giggles: "a bit like Caravaggio".

**Fiona Bate is a Melbourne-based arts writer.**

## *The Evidence of Love*

# *Cassandra Tytler*

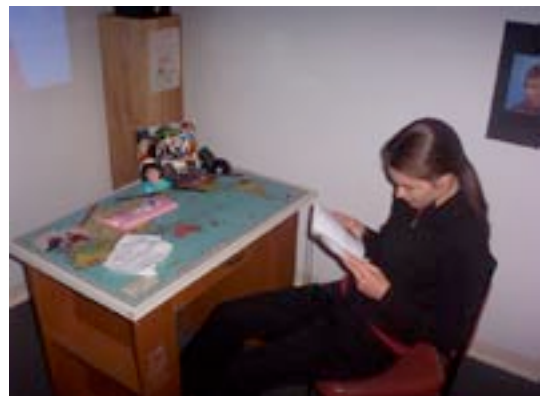
*West Space*  
2 – 17 April 2004  
by Lily Hibberd

Being a teenager is not an easy time. Dramas, angst, tears, passions and pimples are symbolic of this tormented phase of life, and one of the things about getting older is that you start to find it hard to remember what it was really like. With the exception the infamous director of the movie *Kids*, Larry Clark, this act of forgetting is in most instances a case of voluntary erasure. With a whole lot more humour, and a lot less preaching, a recent solo-show at West space brought it all back to us. This was the work of Cassandra Tytler, who encapsulated the intensity of adolescence in her mini-drama video and installation, *The Evidence of Love*.

The problem with a lot of installation art is its conflation of the real with the fictional. The arty set-up of the scene is often too artificial, and so it was completely refreshing to see Tytler disposing of these conventions. The usually urbane Gallery 3 became a teenage girl's bedroom, with all of the telling signs of adolescence: pin-ups, clothing strewn about, and the pages of an open diary that revealed the dark passions of a 13 year old. It was a bit like those museum creations where they transport the entire bedroom of some dead and famous figure, but the difference is that they tidy it up for the museum. Not so in *The Evidence of Love*, where you had to step over an unmade single bed to get to the illuminated desk to see the open diary. It could have been awkward but this was really unpretentious, so much in fact, that another (unnamed) co-exhibitor felt completely comfortable having a nap on the single bed the night before the show opened.

Amongst all of this, the video came off incidentally. The projection on the wall facing the doorway was large, but not incongruous. This was cleverly done by integrating the subject matter in the bedroom into the video. This is a feature of installation art that is normally used the other way around, with props from the video being thrown into the installation to boost the reality kick. As pure video, the work stood apart from convention in its narrative form. Tytler presented us with a story: the age-old tale of the broken heart. Now, people don't mind a love story, but it is a bit hard to take the small universe of a teen-crisis seriously... it is all so terribly *Neighbours* in soapy, melodramatic kind of way. So the narrative structure escaped the dreaded criticism of art fashionistas by being heavily loaded with irony. What's new? Well, Tytler is a master of the form. In terms of a documentary style piss-take, *The Evidence of Love* was the best thing I've seen in ages.

*Lily Hibberd is a Melbourne-based artist.*



*All images on this page: Cassandra Tytler  
The Evidence of Love, 2004*

*Top & bottom: Video stills  
Images courtesy the artist*

*Centre: Installation shot, West Space, 2004  
Photo: Ben McLeod*

# *Decadence of the Nude*

*Raafat Ishak, Jonathan Nichols, Sangeeta Sandrasegar & Vivienne Shark LeWitt*

*Ocular Lab  
4 – 25 April 2004  
by Andrew Gaynor*

## *DOCTOR, MY EYES ...*

In an unobtrusive street of warehouses and light industry lives the Ocular Lab. A former shopfront, it sits isolated from the rest of the artistic -hub of Melbourne by a significant physical and psychological distance. Yet, it is worth making the journey, for some serious research is going down.

The *Decadence of the Nude* was a modest show located in an intimate room measuring only five by five metres. It incorporated four small artworks, one from each artist, and a wonderfully biting little catalogue of essays by Karen Burns, Lara Travis and Stephen Zagala.

These physical descriptions of scale and intent are important because this was not a show celebrating the grandness existent in iconic representations of the 'nude' (a la the civilising force of Sir Kenneth Clarke). Rather, there was stealth, a sly subterfuge, indeed, a shameless self-awareness within these artworks' characters that colluded with the dictionary meaning of decadence as a 'falling away, decline or deterioration', that was in this case the decline of a (old) domineering paradigm – the nude.

Consider the no nonsense attitude of the central character in Vivienne Shark LeWitt's painting *The True Legend of Lady Godiva* (2004). Whereas I, like most repressed Anglos, grew up with a somewhat prurient interest in the possible spectacle of a naked celebrity astride a horse (that is, until internet porn reared its farm-ugly head), Godiva's political act is here restored to the self-determined path that was the original intention. This is not a nude for possession – no way – this is nakedness as power. The Lady and her handmaidens are arranged somewhat chastely, painted with LeWitt's trademark flatness (as if Giotto worked for *The New Yorker* magazine) and are arranged against a pallid cobalt blue, there is no titillation evident for even Godiva's nipple is obscured by one of her companion's modesty cap.



**Above:** Raafat Ishak  
*Ascent and Descent*, 2004  
Acrylic paint on wall  
Photo: Julie Davies

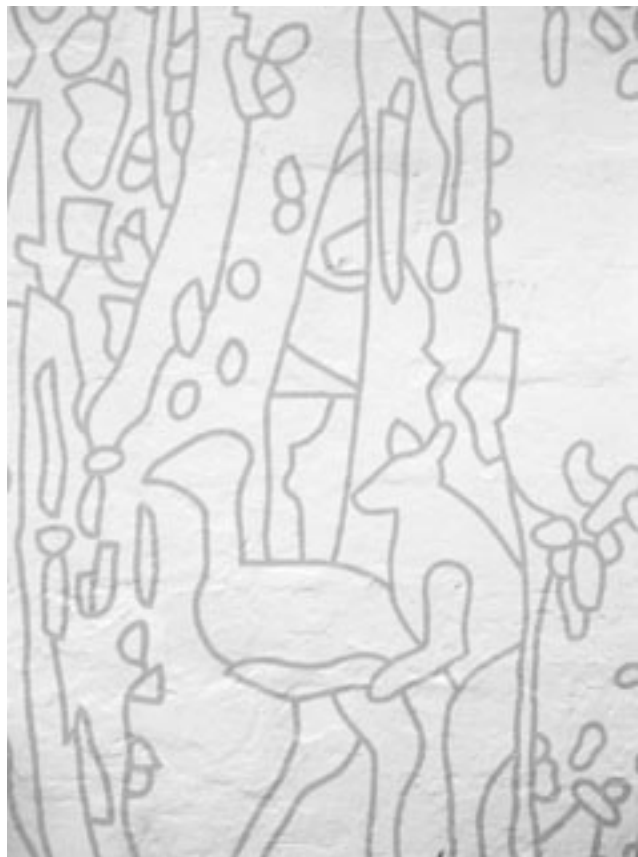




On the opposite wall is a painting of a girl by Jonathan Nichols, *Inhale #1* (2004). Nichols searches the web for his subjects, choosing them for their starkly public anonymity, and the resultant paintings somehow enhance the contradiction inherent in their informal familiarity. By this, I mean that we feel we know the girls but it's just that we've never been officially introduced. The subject of *Inhale #1* is in the process of smoking a recently lit cigar as the dead match-bearing hand retreats from the frame. Heavily laden with Freudian and Clintonesque memories, there is a sense of uneasiness here. We have no idea whether the hesitation in the girl's face comes as a result of coercion to perform the act (for the webcam) or is repulsion from the taste of the smoke. The girl is shown naked, but she inevitably hovers in the uneasy embrace of the concept of 'the nude' as a peek of her nipple's aureole at the edge of the canvas makes voyeurs of us all.

The final two pieces were more direct in their commentary. Sangeeta Sandrasegar presented *Untitled* (2004) a finely crafted paper cutout depicting the emperor's new clothes. Constructed in two parts – the body and the clothes – the latter danced a saucy version of the seven veils on the breezy day I visited. The ruler's body was revealed, through the cavorting translucency of the cutout suit, as ornately curled and primped yet still plump and saggy, coiffured in an attempt to hide the corporeal truth.

And there in the corner lurked the dark and dirty secret of Raafat Ishak's *Ascent and Descent* (2004). In a wall-drawn vision of an antediluvian forest, a coupling emu and kangaroo rooted for Australia. A blunt finale, this piece served to remind us that no matter how lofty the ideals of the notion of the nude, the impulses behind all such theories should be recognised for what they truly are... merely refined or civilised bestial urges.



**Top:** Vivienne Shark LeWitt  
*The True Legend of Lady Godiva*, 2004  
Oil & crayon on linen  
Image courtesy the artist & Anna Schwartz  
Gallery, Melbourne  
Photo: Julie Davies

**Left:** Raafat Ishak  
*Ascent and Descent (detail)* 2004  
Acrylic paint on wall  
Photo: Julie Davies

*Andrew Gaynor is a professional arts bum, freelance visual arts writer, and researcher.*



# *un Interview with* *Peter Burke*

*by Jason Maling*  
*May 2004*



*Above: Jason and Peter in front of Shelly  
Image courtesy the artist 2004*

## **Brand loyalty**

Many people may remember Shelly from her page three swimsuit appearance in the *Pedestrian Times* in March 2002, where she confessed that her big ambition was to be on billboards. If the new *Innocence™* billboard and website campaign that has recently sprung up around Melbourne is anything to go by it seems that Shelly has come a long way since her first job as a retail in-store demonstrator. You may also be aware of artist Peter Burke who is behind the campaign and who has previously introduced Melbourne to such fine characters as Princess Incandescence, FutureX quack Dr Clarence Chan, Pedestrian Times mogul Hugo Pikestaff and the less flamboyant but no less relevant Pedro from the company that always delivered, Starlink Express. Peter Burke works on the frontline of consumer desire and satisfaction. I had the pleasure of putting a few brief questions to Peter and Shelly.



**Above:** Peter Burke  
'The Inner Flambe'  
Photo: Julie Hunt



**Above:** Peter Burke  
'Hugo Pikestaff'  
Photo: Irene Crusca



**Above left:** Peter Burke & Robin Hely  
'Rob and Pedro from Starlink Express'  
Photo: Tal Kochavi



**Above right:** Peter Burke  
'Professor Chan'

Photo: Denis Weymouth (courtesy Leader newspapers)

**Jason Maling:** Peter, is Shelly really the public face of *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup>, or is she just somewhere for Peter Burke to hide?

**Peter Burke:** I'm not sure. Shelly is bigger and braver than I am. Shelly and I collaborate. She gives me a place in which to invent freely and I give her public exposure.

**JM:** What came first, Shelly or *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup>?

**PB:** *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> developed a product called *Happiness*<sup>TM</sup> we so needed a public face. We sought the best model available.

**JM:** It seems Shelly has become whole and fully realised through the campaign.

**PB:** That's true. I feel Shelly is resolved now. She has come a long way. There were big problems making Shelly, she has taken many shapes and forms. There was a time when she was going to be dropped from the project altogether. A lot of people helped with Shelly and a lot of people tried to be Shelly. Other people wanted to be up on those billboards. They would go shopping with Shelly and try to make her buy clothes to look like them. They tried to make their own Shelly modelled on themselves, but I wouldn't have it. There have been 1950s versions of Shelly, 1970s versions, silly Shellys, Savers Shellys and slick superficial Chapel Street Shellys but she's the real Shelly now. She's arrived. She's one hundred per cent

**JM:** Is Shelly just hired help? Did she have any say in the look of the campaign?

**PB:** Shelly is not like other models that might work for one company and then flip over to another one. She really believes in *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> and endorses the products totally.

**JM:** What product do you think Shelly best epitomises?

**PB:** She endorses all the products but I've got a feeling she epitomises one of the discontinued lines, 'Destiny – it will get you in the end'.

**Shelly Innocence joins the interview.....**

**JM:** Shelly, is the *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> campaign a major step for you?

**SI:** Hi Jason. I previously specialised in the area of aromas and accessories but I'm not into products anymore. I'm into concepts now. That's what's different about *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup>. We market concepts not products. I love to slip into a good concept in the morning.

**JM:** I agree there really isn't anything like the cool splash of concept on the cheek. Where does your commitment end? Is this a contractual arrangement?

**SI:** There is a contract but the completion date is unspecified. There is something I'd like to say here: I'm very happy to be doing the campaign and I'm getting paid, but my role as the public face of *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> is really unresolved. It's the weakest part of the project. I'm upset over the fact that I'm treated like a blank canvas onto which other people, the team members and the public, project their own fantasies. I would like to discuss this issue with the *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> CEO and I've even considered withdrawing from the project.

*The Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> project has its on-going melodramas posted at [www.shellyinnocence.com](http://www.shellyinnocence.com)

**Jason Maling is a Melbourne-based artist and writer.**

## *Photographs*

# *Paul Knight*

*Presented by the 2004 Next Wave Festival  
Centre for Contemporary Photography  
30 April – 12 June 2004  
by Toby Miller*

**Below:** *Paul Knight  
room for a couple, 2003  
182 x 232 cm  
type- C print  
Image courtesy the artist*



Viewing Paul Knight's exhibition *Photographs* at the Centre for Contemporary Photography one can sympathise with the experience of people first encountering Jackson Pollock's huge 'drip' paintings of the late 1940s. Recalling something of these paintings' scale and affect, Knight has hung two large panoramic photographs on adjacent walls. The larger, *Container* (2003) measures over four metres wide and one metre high. Around these works Knight has hung a selection of large format and medium sized photographs.

This confluence between Knight and Pollock should be viewed with more than intermittent interest as Pollock's paintings have become a common point of reference in the analysis of the work of German photographer Andreas Gursky, to whom Knight's approach is clearly indebted. Such analyses have traditionally been focused on the lack of perspective in Pollock's abstraction, relating this to the absence of any determining focal point or "hierarchy" of pictorial inflections in Gursky's photographs.<sup>1</sup> The result, most commentators have agreed, is a

**Right:**  
*fractions added together equal whole*  
*numbers, 2004*  
*182 x 232 cm*  
*type- C print*  
*Image courtesy the artist*



shared incarnate sense of presence – a judgment the philosopher Stanley Cavell apprehended when he wrote that Pollock’s paintings imitate, “not the look of nature, but its conditions, the possibilities of knowing nature at all and of locating ourselves in a world”.<sup>2</sup> The word to single out here is nature and by continuing to push it in the direction of Cavell’s supposition we can identify in the work of all three artists “not a return to nature but the return of it in the form of the repressed”.<sup>3</sup> The closer we look the more we can see evidence of this, but ultimately such an idea plays a part in any description of Pollock’s work as “action painting” or in Gursky’s own remark that, “photography is no longer credible”.<sup>4</sup>

As scenes of repression Knight’s images invite us to search for what has been elided, which is unmistakably the human presence. The result is a series of empty spaces that document the ways our built environment is linked to our psychological attachments. Knight’s *Room for a couple* (2003) conveys this powerfully, its heightened symmetry and absolute clarity disclosing at its heart a profound emotional blankness. Nevertheless, it is important to realise that it is not just Knight’s internal characters who are absent, but significantly, this repression of human presence extends to us (the viewer) as well. Put simply, Knight’s interest lies in the ways in which we, as individuals, are separated from each other and in photography’s particular ability to displace and inhabit these conditions. The key works in this regard are Knight’s photographs of cinema curtains, which unlike his other images foreclose on our complete absorption

into the represented tableau. Rather than preventing access these images declare the fundamental conditions necessary for access at all, where the screen is both the ‘face’ that shows an image and the limit of this occurring. The philosophical questions here are large, but they are also intimately natural and they are not distinct from the questions regarding human relationships to be found in previous works by Paul Knight.

<sup>1</sup> Lynne Cooke, “Andreas Gursky: Visionary (Per)Versions”, in Marie Luise Syring (Ed), *Andreas Gursky Photographs from 1984 to the Present*, Schirmer/Mosel, Munich, 1998, p13.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed: reflections on the ontology of film*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p114.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Cooke, *ibid* p14.

**Toby Miller is a Melbourne-based arts writer.**

## Oribotics

# Matt Gardiner

*Presented by the 2004 Next Wave Festival  
TCB Art Inc.  
18 – 29 May 2004  
by Cynthia Troup*

*Mechaniflorum quinquiplicatum* M.Gardiner et sp. nov  
**Genus et species insignis floribus mechanicis, a speciebus nobis bene distincta [this species is remarkable and distinguished from all other known species by virtue of its mechanical flowers].**

There is no register of the facts relating to these plants and their place in the scientific description of the world. The 'natural history' of Matt Gardiner's oribotic flowers has yet to be written. The prehistory of the species might be found in the tradition of art imitating nature, and also in practices of botanical study, such as the analytical precision of botanical drawing. More specifically, their prehistory is located in contemporary origami and in contemporary robotics. These modes of practice both emanate from the study of natural systems. Gardiner's own field of 'oribotics' hybridises computer-controlled mechanics with a simple, paper model. This is partly a strategy for collaborative experimentation, and it is also a strategy for pursuing the relevance of one type of expert logic to another. This process of enquiry defines the oribotic flowers as specimens.

*Oribotics* consisted of five, self-folding origami flowers. Each was driven by a tiny electric motor that formed a mechanical stem. The pinwheel design of these blooms created five, stiff petals: activated via a touch screen, these petals could fan out or retract, with a whirl of small gears. On the screen, the robotic flowers were displayed as diagrams of the origami model. When selected by the viewer, the linear image of the flower was propelled into motion along with its three-dimensional counterpart. Selection also triggered video imagery of a real flower opening or closing, footage that appeared simultaneously on the screen, and as a projection onto the surfaces of the robotic bloom.

In this kind of botanical art, the evidence of the artist's hand must lie predominantly in the design and construction of the model, and in the intricacies of its operation, programming and installation. Gardiner's hand hovered at a number of technological removes from these specimens and their representation. Despite

the sculptural appeal of the life-sized, oribotic flowers 'living' in a synthetic lawn, the hand of the viewer was also obliged to hover and interact at a distance. The touch screen in particular, and the setting overall, produced a formal, contemplative relationship with this botanical collection.

Of course, the gallery is the unnatural environment that makes such flowers possible. These plants had yet to be plucked and tested under conditions beyond the controlled intimacy of the exhibition space. Particularly in their resting state, they pointed to nature as a finite, tireless order of permutations and combinations. Even so – like the synthetic grass – sound, lighting and projection amplified the peculiar activity of the oribotic flowers. These theatrical elements seemed to thicken and texturize the surrounding air.

In collaboration with Gardiner, composer David Young created an isometric musical score for paper, rocks and sand, wooden ratchets and chimes. Performed by percussionist Eugene Ughetti and mixed by Peter Humble, the soundscape evoked the infinitesimal frictions and collisions of organic processes. Literally opening into this background, the oribotic flowers could become symbolic of an un-revealed ecosystem. In the darkened gallery, the video imagery further altered the perception of the mechanical plants. Poised in their open state, and saturated with the colours of the real flowers, the oribotics suggested a future forest of various, automated life forms. But in their strange luminosity, their slow spiralling movement, and simple structure, there were moments when they might equally have pertained to a sultry, primeval wilderness.

Projected from above, a red poppy casts its hue over a robotic bloom once more — is that the flower which Gardiner's assemblage has been, or is it the flower that it will become?

*More on this ingenious work can be seen at <[www.oribotics.net](http://www.oribotics.net)>*

*Cynthia Troup is a writer and editor, and a founding member of Aphids <[www.aphids.net](http://www.aphids.net)>*





## *Verse one*

# *Ying Lan Dann*

*Seventh*  
16 – 27 March 2004  
by Jeff Khan



**Above:** Ying Lan Dann  
*Verse one (panel detail) 2003-2004*  
Coloured pencil on paper.  
Photo: Jeff Khan

### **RE: ORIENTATION**

Spanning just over nine metres in length and taking six months to complete, Ying Lan Dann's first solo exhibition *Verse one* was monumental both in its scale and fabrication. A large drawing, constructed from eight panels that joined together to merge into a single work, *Verse one* wrapped around two of Seventh's walls, establishing an enveloping, architectural presence in the gallery space. Viewed from afar, the work resembled a mass of pixels, clustered together densely, although not focused into a recognisable figurative pattern. The resemblance to computer-generated imagery was enhanced by line work – in the style of the architectural drafting computer program CAD – that wove in and out of the larger composition, its geometric shapes and configurations providing a different plane and perspective to the larger field of the drawing.

Moving closer to the work, the similarities to a geographical map became evident, the clusters of fluorescent and brightly-coloured pixels forming distinct 'fields' on the page, marking out zones of colour even as they bled into each other or fragmented away towards the edge of the page. But this was not a map of any existing territory or state. Moving even closer to the drawing, the imagery further dissolved to reveal that the 'pixels' were in fact hand-drawn, each single unit possessing a loose, almost scribble-like quality that defied the suggestion of computer-based construction and imbued each mark with an intensely idiosyncratic, organic quality. The work hummed with an energy which arose both from its intense colouring and hand-drawn composition – at once incredibly careful and labour-intensive in its construction and wildly whimsical in its fragmented, imagined 'landscape'.

Referencing landscape drawing, mapping, computer-generated landscape, and CAD architectural diagrams, the installation read at one level like an index of the various current technologies which are used – not only to represent, understand and define the space



**Above:** Ying Lan Dann  
*Verse one (detail) 2003 - 2004, coloured pencil on paper.*  
 Photo: Jeff Khan

we inhabit – but also to determine our relationship to this space. While remaining firmly rooted in the traditional, manual, pencil-on-paper mode of drawing, the other media referenced in the work can be seen as developments in the practice of drawing – from the empirical precision of cartography to the virtual, vector-based systems of computer imaging. In this way, *Verse one* functioned like a survey of the present state of human-spatial engagement. While referencing all these traditions and methodologies, the drawing remained resolutely abstract, creating a purely imaginative space in which the viewer could be positioned. This sense was enhanced by the monumental scale of the work, that enveloped the viewer's peripheral vision, offering them the chance to lose themselves in this imagined space. This in turn allowed for the re-imagining of the space, both geographical and cultural, that we currently inhabit – as well as our relationship to the technologies (both high and low) by which we actively engage with such space. The street frontage of Seventh gallery provided an added dimension of engagement with

the work. Visible from the street, *Verse one* provided a thought-provoking counterpoint to the landscape of Gertrude Street, which is nestled in the south of Fitzroy and is itself in a particularly active state of flux, a continuing process of up-scaling, gentrification, social activity and development.

A work of remarkable accomplishment for a first-time solo exhibitor, *Verse one* possessed a strong utopian impulse in the deconstruction of the aforementioned media and their reconstruction into a monumental, investigative and energetic work on paper. In this manner, Dann imagined a new method of engaging with space and also a way for art to facilitate our reorientation to the current cultural landscape. The work was a testament to the power and potential of art – even in the most humble, pencil-on-paper format – to make possible such new connections and understandings.

*Jeff Khan is a Melbourne-based writer and is Communications Coordinator at Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces.*



## FORT

*Sean Bailey, Jane Caught, Emma Gallagher,  
Christopher L G Hill, Simon MacEwan,  
Neils Oeltjen, Josh Petherick, Kevina Jo  
Smith, Billie Stone & Alex Viviano.*

*Presented by the 2004 Next Wave Festival  
Rose Street Artist Market, Fitzroy  
18 – 30 May 2004  
by Warwick Edwards*

There seems to be some sort of fungus growing in the humid back streets of Melbourne. Funky bars and units tucked neatly in alleys off side streets. It's not a new thing, it is simply a matter of necessity. With the exploding property market there doesn't seem to be much choice for young entrepreneurs. Renovations are transforming these decrepit allotments into new and inhabitable spaces with reputations built on street cred.

Renovations of a different kind recently took place in the Rose Street Artist Market. As part of the 2004 Next Wave Festival ten emerging artists created *FORT* – a reaction to this thirst for reclaimed space. Built among and within a dilapidated structure, the artists created a fantasy playground, a world where the pressure of the mainstream and the rules of a stubborn and inflexible society have been bent and twisted.

*FORT* was a collection of found objects, delicately made sculptures of children's toys and paintings on wooden panels surrounding a dilapidated fortress constructed of salvaged wooden shards. Characters filled this space, like the green paper man with a top hat (who stood guard over the entrance to the feature fort) and the strange elephants (wooden or stuffed) that were amongst fluffy pillows and cotton mushrooms. While navigating the space you could find yourself lost within the landscape like another character inside a neo-gothic folk tale. In this surreal wonderland, reminiscent of a fairytale, the sculptured depictions had a fantasy narrative with no delineated beginning or end – an amalgam of the known and the unknown.

The success of *FORT* lay in the artists' ability to utilise the space. The building was uninviting, cold and damp, with rotten wood and dusty floors – an unconventional art space. Renovated from an inner-city garage to an inviting dreamscape, the space was changed entirely. Colour dominated with pinks and greens, blue, yellow and orange: a childish dream world, all bright and fun, with no teachers, parental rules or consequences. The individual works were varied. Some quite tight with strict attention to detail, others simply dropped in place.



*Above: FORT  
Installation detail, 2004  
Photo: Warwick Edwards*

The contradictions between them were refreshing. The fortress itself seemed to be a direct reaction to the garage with a similar aesthetic and mood, albeit fabricated and highly decorated with the beautiful stitching by Billie Stone of *Pop Icons*.

*FORT* was not all together a response to popular culture or a celebration of any counter culture. It did not seem to be responding to particular mainstream trends or gallery etiquette either. The work touched on all the elements emerging artists negotiate, while extrapolating the concept of fun with a child-like exuberance for the outrageous. *FORT* was a land where the harsh realities of professional art were been abandoned for an artist's wonderland.

*Warwick Edwards is a Melbourne-based artist.*

## *Inner Circle*

# *Edward Horne*

*Seventh*  
3 – 14 February 2004  
by Lily Hibberd

**Below:** Edward Horne  
*Inner Circle*, 2004  
Installation detail, *Seventh*  
Image courtesy the artist



### *The art of exclusion*

In Melbourne's artist-run gallery scene there has been a recent proliferation of highly refined and elaborate exhibitions by emerging artists. In many cases these artists have invested a massive amount of time and money towards their exhibition, and they have chosen to mount their show without prospect of financial return, or any of the support from paid staff provided by the commercial and public gallery systems. Edward Horne's installation *Inner Circle* is one such work. Articulate and extraordinarily finished, it looks like it should be in a major institution but is flawless in *Seventh*, one of Melbourne's smaller artist-run galleries.

*Inner Circle's* strength as an installation is in its simplicity. Through the *Seventh* gallery shopfront window the space appears empty, other than a strange blue light. Inside, a huge circular structure is suspended at eye level in the gallery. This construction is like a gigantic halo made of wood – a band of white only 30cm in height – without any supports above or below, except where it meets the gallery walls on each side. The strange light is coming from blue fluorescent tubes concealed inside the circle's lidless rim. This large, simple sculpture is reminiscent of Minimalism, with its giant monochromatic monoliths, and yet *Inner Circle* moves beyond this reductive tradition





**Above:** Edward Horne  
*Inner Circle*, 2004  
Installation detail, *Seventh*  
Image courtesy the artist

by presenting us with a physical dilemma. Because the structure occupies the whole gallery (its curvature bending towards you) it is impossible to walk directly into the space, but the position of the object at head-height means that you can duck under the rim and enter the circle. The dilemma resides in this act, whether to treat it as a formal object that you only look upon or to physically interact with the work. This impasse is not eased by a deliberate lack of signage; and we have become reliant on instructions to constantly provide the parameters of engagement with art, like, “Please do not touch”... “One person at a time”. So Horne leaves us in a quandary, not knowing if we should limbo into the inner circle or maintain our dignity and remain outside. The consequence is that we, who are normally so ‘au fait’ with how to appreciate contemporary art, are confounded. At this juncture *Inner Circle* becomes a clever trick, playing on the exclusive nature of fine art. Plus, in the situation of a groovy artist-run gallery, it has potential references to art world politics such as, being in or out of the inner circle of ‘cool’ people... and maybe even one’s inner circle of friends. Fortunately, artist-run galleries are always attended by a volunteer (who is often the artist) and in this instance the attendant is giving me a nod to indicate that I should enter.

In going beyond a formalist structure, *Inner Circle* relates to the history of conceptual works, such as Bruce Nauman’s *Model for Trench and Four Buried Passages* (1977). Although there are similarities in the structural elements, such as shape, materials, and fluorescent lighting, the primary terrain that these works share is the kind of perceptual displacement that is experienced during interaction with scale models, where the physical reality and the conceptual possibility of one’s body getting inside the model acts as a spatial push-me, pull-you. In addition to this, both Nauman and Horne’s installations possess certain references to reality that are overcome by their fictional status as art objects. The ultimate distinction

between them is that *Inner Circle* permits you to enter its world. So, having ducked under the outer rim of the construction, the interior of the circular band is akin to a floating white orb (but is also a corral that might fence you in). The seamless, white screen is blank because this perfect stark perimeter has no visible joinery. The form is reminiscent of historic cinematic screens invented for the purposes of immersion, such as the pre-cinematic Zoetrope, virtual reality configurations, and panoramic video installations. With your head stuck in this cloud, it might be forgotten that your body is on display to the people outside the circle. This feature of *Inner Circle* is similar to an interactive piece shown in the 2001 *Space Odysseys* exhibition at ACMI. *The Visitor: Living by Number*, by the Canadian artist Luc Courchesne, was a humorous scenario as an external observer, because the participating viewer stood with their head stuck in what looked like an upside down, metal mixing bowl, whereby they became part of the work for the lookers-on. So in Horne’s piece, the awareness of being seen inside the inner circle, and of your body’s visibility makes you a bit uncomfortable.

An imposing monumentality is achieved in this work that in architectural terms has some obvious historical contexts. As a pure mathematical form and a perfect circle, the Romans of the 1st century would have loved this installation, and doubly so, with the circle being balanced within the square room of the gallery. In classical Italy this equilibrium of geometries reached its pinnacle in the Roman Colosseum (70-82 AD). *Inner Circle* reminds me of that building, firstly as a site of voyeurism and performance, and secondly because of another amazing feature of Horne’s work, an acoustic bubble. With great expertise, Horne made the dimensions of this construction precisely so that, when you are standing in the middle of the circle, the sound of your own voice is bouncing around your head (even though there is no lid to hold it in). According to his curriculum vitae, the artist has worked with electronic sound installations in the past, but this piece is remarkable, because it operates simply and without artifice, as a miniature amphitheatre just like the Roman Colosseum.

The concept of the amphitheatre in relation to Horne’s work is powerful because it combines the use of sound, theatrical performance and immersive experience, which are all important elements in the exhibition. It’s curious too that old auditoriums still use the term ‘upper circle’ to denote the auditory space where the sound of the performance is superior for the audience... Only, in this work, the circle is a theatrical stage that provides a site for the viewer’s inclusion in a live performance. And those of us deigning to remain mere spectators are irreverently excluded from Edward Horne’s inner circle.

## Three shows at Bus

**Sanja Pahoki and Haydn Salmon:** *I haven't been feeling myself lately*

**Michelle Ussher:** *Making Faces*

**Adrian Doyle:** *When I Grow Up*

*Bus*  
6 – 24 April 2004  
by Andrew Gaynor

**Right:** Adrian Doyle  
*When I Grow Up*  
Video still  
Image courtesy the artist 2004



It's the back room of Bus that keeps coming back to me. All blacked out with a video screening Adrian Doyle's *When I Grow Up*. No real surprises, yet this little video loop of 'rug rats' pulling faces is still with me. They stretched their mouths and rolled their eyes, celebrating the permission they've been given to be naughty on camera. It invokes strange memories of Mike Parr's *Idea Demonstrations* (1972) where commands were flashed on a screen followed by the act being performed like; *Hold a finger in a Candle Flame for as long as possible* – you get the picture; particularly the kid with the dried bloody nose, eyes shut in painful intensity. Or the kid with the filthy hands, and the fair faced girl whose grimace lasts a good ten seconds; longer than the other kids who became either self-conscious or bored and gave up more quickly. As such, *When I grow Up* is an uneasy metaphor for today's limited attention span, and it makes me query as to who is growing up?

In the main room Sanja Pahoki and Haydn Salmon presented an installation of many works across mixed mediums. This was the fruit of a three-month collaboration in which each artist portrayed the other. Whilst Pahoki showed photos of her compatriot in various, awkwardly forced 'casual' poses, Salmon took a more dynamic and ultimately successful path. His work acted as a particularly effective visual interruption, breaking up the photography with tacky, sticky plastic low-tech portraits. A tumble of glossy black tape delineating hair and facial outline, with flashes of acid green and pink that sparked out against the ground of absent white. In the accompanying catalogue interview, Salmon discusses a wealth of art sources that underlie and enrich his investigations. Particularly noteworthy is his recognition of the formal technical discoveries and other plastic elements that give his work a solid grounding and depth that is missing from Pahoki's photos. Current



**Top left:** Michelle Ussher  
*Alice*, 2004  
Photo: Jeremy The.

photographic practice is utterly swamped with images of the 'real', the 'banal' and the 'everyday' (photographers, I reckon we've all got the point now, so please try to investigate the image harder).

Which brings us to Michelle Ussher's *Making Faces*. With the preponderance of the televisual and photographic in our lives, it is not surprising that there has been a backlash of sorts where old school pursuits like watercolour have come back into vogue. Ussher employed this tricky medium in *Imaginary postcards*, as part of an ongoing project with Rebecca Ann Hobbs and Lisa Radford that is exhibiting in Melbourne, Tokyo and Los Angeles. In this project, the artists exchange photos of new places and friends, which are then lovingly translated into postcard-sized watercolour versions and arranged into small groupings on the wall. Like Doyle, Ussher's friends pulled faces for the camera, but this time as a

**Above & top right:** Sanja Pahoki & Haydn Salmon  
*I haven't been feeling myself lately*, 2004  
Installation (detail), Bus  
Images courtesy the artists

dinner party that went hopelessly awry. Because these were not just snapshots, moments stood out where the act of painting took over from that of merely copying. Particularly in *Alice* on the adjoining wall: a large-scale watercolour of a friend with her fingers up her nose. In this work, Ussher's colour was applied in delicate, transparent washes, punctuated by the patterned freckles on the subject's face, that were echoed by those upon her arm. The artist's harnessing of watercolour's possibilities helped Alice transcend the otherwise petty, low-rent strategy of formalising such 'up-her-nose' poses through the medium of art.

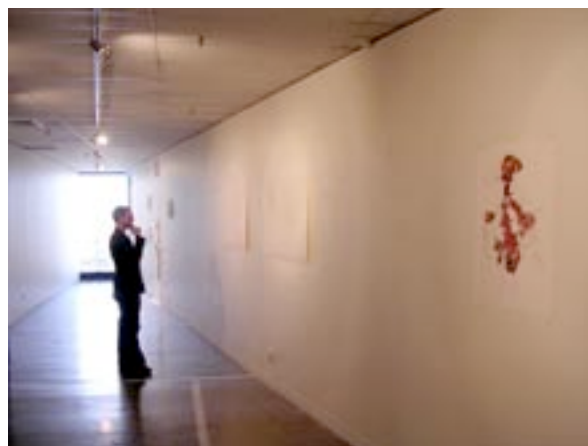
## un Obscure: gallery profile:

# MIR 11

Artist-run galleries are typically hard to find. In many cases, you need to be taken there by someone in the know... someone to hold your hand as you wind through dark laneways, into shabby stairwells and up several sets of creaky stairs. The reality is that your Nanna won't be able to find it on her own. Not that this is a deliberate effort on the part of these galleries to be elitist. No, they want us to visit, but who can afford street frontage these days? In an attempt to redress the constant need for a tour guide to get to these shows, in each issue of un Magazine we will uncover a distinctly obscure (or hard to find) gallery.

MIR 11 is part of a recent trend that has seen galleries and studios cropping up amongst the corporate high-rises, such as Kings artist-run space, just around the corner, which opened on its namesake (King street) at the end of 2003. How can something be right in the centre of the city and feel like it is on another planet? To start with, artistic types have an aversion to peak hour. The rush of grey suits at these times is always a daunting sight. One place that suits congregate is at the multi-storey car parks, and the worst time to turn up is around 5pm. It might sound absurd, but on your intrepid trip to MIR 11 this is precisely where you will be heading. You could look at it as an adventure, being packed into a lift with ten corporate types rushing to get in a queue of cars to arrive home so that they can watch the box. At least you know you are on an alternate journey.

To get to MIR 11, wander down Flinders Lane towards Spencer Street. Crossing King Street, you will see the 'Kings' multi-storey car park on your right. Shuffle in with all the suits and catch the lift. Press the button for level 11, and don't worry when every one looks at you strangely they think that there is nothing else up there, but you are wiser.



*Above: MIR11, 2004  
Image courtesy Danny Lacy*

The doors open at the 11<sup>th</sup> floor and after ten floors of car park you are confronted with a pristine white space. It's like stepping out of a time machine, the vista is so unexpected. Level 11 feels detached from the building, like the 13th floor in a horror movie, a secret level. The white cube is an active yet unattended gallery space. This is an exhibition environment as well as a high-rise passageway to the offices of ARM, RWA, and Vivid Communications. And yet, MIR 11's unmanned space maintains an interesting level of autonomy in relation to the activity of the city surrounding it. With angular geometry and a splendid view, MIR 11 responds to its environment through an exhibition program of artwork that deals with the broad notion of abstract space as either a subject or a process. The geometry of its gallery area accommodates site-specific projects in addition to exhibitions of work in conventional formats. We recommend you discover it.

*MIR 11 is an art space located within the southern section of the Melbourne CBD. It is run by a collaborative group of independent artists, who are interested in developing a program that includes emerging and established local and international artists.*

*11<sup>th</sup> Floor, 522 Flinders Lane  
(enter through King's car park lift)*

*Melbourne 3000*

*email: mir11@netspace.net.au*

*HOURS: Monday to Friday 9am-6pm*

*by Fiona Bate & Lily Hibberd*

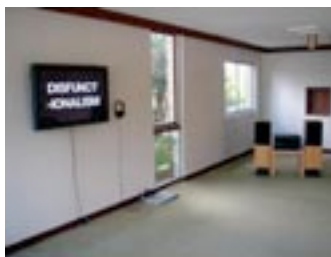


# *Dazed and Praised*

## *Grant Stevens*

*Pestorius Sweeney House  
Brisbane  
8 May 2004  
by Sally Brand*

*Below: Grant Stevens  
Dazed and Praised  
(installation detail) 2004  
Photos: David Pestorius*



"We weren't looking at this as some kind of future. There was no promise in it, there was no nothing in it. People were really living in the moment. There were no goals, there were no aspirations".<sup>1</sup>

A home-made compilation of Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, Jimi Hendrix and Cream tracks formed the background music to Grant Stevens' recent one-day exhibition *Dazed and Praised*. Sixteen songs on continuous repeat accompanied a looped video work displayed on a single plasma screen attached to the gallery wall. White upper-case text blinked on the black screen with the longer words hyphenated to fit the monitor's dimensions. Headphones dangled beside the screen, inviting closer inspection and a possible escape from the all-day 'classic' rock session. With headphones on, a series of voices matching the words on the screen could be heard. American accents, a predominance of male voices and some glimpses of 'classic' rock as background music. Absolute sincerity could be discerned in comments such as: "they created a whole new identity, a totally separate, unique identity". What remained completely unclear, even with the introduction of a documentary-style voiceover, was any precise idea of what this dialogue was referencing. Who "took the ruins of the twentieth century and made art out of it"?<sup>2</sup>

In *Dazed and Praised*, Stevens has taken content from the 2001 documentary *Dogtown and Z-Boys*, which nostalgically recounts the stories of the Zephyr Skate Team of the 1970s. Stevens removes all of the specific verbal references to skateboarding, surfing and California, along with the documentary's moving images. What remains are statements from the documentary's interviews, re-

presented in written text synchronized with the spoken words. Though the dialogue was originally descriptive, here these statements become empty of content and direction. As the appropriation of *Dogtown and Z-Boys* is probably not apparent to most, nor noted in any of the exhibition's support material, the viewers of *Dazed and Praised* are prompted to choose their own narrative and provide the necessary framework for situations where people "were dedicated to being anti-mainstream and they were proud to be anti-mainstream".<sup>3</sup>

When asked however, Stevens is very happy to disclose the source of his material, and so the motive behind this work seems to go beyond keeping you in the guessing game. As such, *Dazed and Praised* seems to be more concerned with liberating the viewer from highly codified and connotative media languages. It provides the freedom to decide upon new and multiple narratives for this string of (once specific) statements and this is an autonomy we are rarely granted when engaging with content broadcast via mainstream media.

<sup>1</sup> G. Stevens, May 2004, *Dazed and Praised* transcript, dialogue appropriated from *Dogtown and Z-Boys*, Sony Pictures.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*.

*An alternative format of Dazed and Praised is currently showing in the 2004: Australian Culture Now exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria.*

*Sally Brand is a freelance arts writer, curator, and co-editor of the Brisbane-based publications Local Art and Summer.*

# GIANT, un Interview with Matthew Bradley

by Andrew Best  
April 2004

*Matthew Bradley is an Adelaide based artist whose exhibitions include Gold Card at the Experimental Art Foundation, Primavera at the MCA, and Z at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery. Andrew Best spoke to Matthew at his exhibition Dark Crystal, held at the Project Space, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia in April 2004.*

**Andrew Best:** In this exhibition you seem to repeat ideas of weightlessness. Except for this huge, branch-like, light box structure, which feels like an intense weight - perhaps to the point of collapse.

**Matthew Bradley:** I wanted to keep the shape organic. I always have ideas of overcoming gravity, overcoming resistance. A lot of people have said it looks like a plane that has crashed. There are a few things I think it's like. One is as a fragment of my neural network. Just a very small part, chopped out and enlarged a million times. It's like the section that stores the memory of TAA (Trans Australian Airlines).

**AB:** Why TAA?

**MB:** I think that TAA, when I was a child, sort of gave me an early philosophy. Because I wanted to travel, TAA provided both the actual physical means: planes, routes you can fly. It also suggested a state of mind that facilitated travel. It was sort of downloaded into me. If my brain had a branding of any sort, it would probably be TAA.

**AB:** There is a large photograph next to it of an upside-down aeroplane. It looks like some sort of spacecraft - a super-plane - that can go further than TAA.

**MB:** The meaning of planes has changed - they are a lot more ominous in the sky now. One of the first great symbols of Modernism, they've been turned back against the modern world. I want this type of image to suggest implications. If you came across this in nature, either it's falling out of the sky, or it's going along - an alien force has taken over it. So you have to speculate about that other force.

**AB:** There are also a series of stencil paintings that refer to a character *Giant*. Who is Giant?

**MB:** Giant is one of a few different characters that I feel reside inside me. Sort of bordering on multiple personalities, but I have a little bit more control over when they came up. All these characters have different traits I think maybe I don't have a lot of. So if I'm doing something and I need a bit of extra strength, I can call on Giant to come on line. It has come about because of other effects as well, like feeling like I am able to I see through his eyes. I get a view of the world he comes from. I feel like he has an equal part in creating these pictures as I do.

**AB:** All of these stencils are part of Giant's history?

**MB:** It is his domain. I kind of see events unfolding and objects, but I'm not really aware of the narrative that binds these places and things together. I'm sort of cataloguing them at the moment: beings, landscapes, perhaps an interpretation of politics, geography, like a map slowly being put together in my head. I think there's a narrative or a role for a spectator or me to speculate on.

**AB:** You've talked before about your works as maps, filling in important parts of your physical actions in certain places, such as Adelaide. These works seem to depict an internal, psychological map. How do you see these two 'maps' intersecting?

**MB:** It is interesting to me that these earlier places, you can find them on the map, the titles refer to real places. Maybe I disappear off of the official map because I've moved in a way that avoided a prescribed way of moving through space, by jumping a fence or off of a building.

**AB:** The earlier explorations seemed to be about physical extremes and dangerous ones like travelling from great heights or distances. Perhaps this work is going on some extreme inward path.



**Above:** Matthew Bradley  
*Ghost Gum*, 2004  
Lightboxes  
Photo: Lucy Price



**Centre & above:** Matthew Bradley  
*Giant* (detail)  
Spray enamel on board, 2004  
Images courtesy the artist

**Top:** Matthew Bradley  
*Corner of Danby and Carlton, Torrensville*, C-type print, 2004  
Image courtesy the artist

**MB:** I think that my body has always been the site of works and the movements either go outwards or inwards. I think that both *Giant* and *Ghost Gum* are deeply embedded works in my mind or consciousness. An extreme level of digging is required to get to these places.

**AB:** But there doesn't seem to be any real danger in the paintings, only an unnerving sense perhaps.

**MB:** The only danger with *Giant* is getting him angry. He shoots lasers out of his eyes. Everyone else is soft and friendly. Yes, *Giant* is a bit of a worry.

*Andrew Best is an Adelaide-based artist, and co-director of Downtown Art Space.*

## Five Sydney shows in five hundred words

by *Ruark Lewis*

**MOP (Modes of Production) – Artist Run Initiative  
Redfern  
14-25 January 2004**

**Lisa Andrew**

I like the manner of confusion that Lisa Andrew's current work maintains. A sort of absent-minded network generated by a range of semi-distracted parental concerns.

Here the artist moves through and around elements of evidence. Andrew moves beyond the fixity of real time and actual space by taking the camera and the artist into a sort of extended cinematic experience. The works include photographs of empty industrial facades made in the Greens Park-South Sydney area. They are lacerated and disrupted images, punctured by a neo-constructivist needlepoint, the wool and cotton loosely threaded. Andrew vacates town, taking the video into coastal sand hills and ancient fortifications, and there she easily assembles a sort of spastic drama, a journeying through, a performative trace of a sort that Raul Ruiz would have enjoyed. Peculiar? Yes!

**Jan van der Ploeg**

Van der Ploeg is a Dutch artist who uses hard-edged abstraction techniques to render fluid linear designs as architectural wall works. In Sydney he presented 20 small model works on paper and a design painted directly on the internal wall of the gallery. The overall effect was a 1960s style interior that was slavishly hip, immaculately executed and spatially coherent.

**Vicente Butron**

Butron applies stains on large canvases... spills of purple, the painter's moment, the maleness of calico. These are the whys and wherefores that form a method of painting outside the parameters of coherency. Here the four corners indicate the poetic intentions of the art. It reminds me of the bathroom aesthetic of junkies, where narcosis sends the nihilist to his knees, then prone, laid out against the tiling of the floor. Cold and maybe sobering.

**Below: Oscar Yanez**

*Untitled, 2004*

29.5 x 21cm

Pen, ink & collage

Image courtesy the artist



**MOP (Modes of Production) – Artist Run Initiative  
Redfern**

**28 April-9 May 2004**

**Brian Thompson**

Brian Thompson exhibited a set of small paintings including *Stamping #1, #2, #3* and a diptych or double portrait on the opposite wall. The painterly construction of these works has a haptic crudeness as a result of Thompson's rules of art play and production. Thompson applies the paint by stamping his foot onto the canvas so that the imagery forms through a process of distortions, although the works do not appear at all accidental nor are they made by chance. His criteria are clearly set.

**Rueben Keehan**

Rueben Keehan paints lettering. These transcriptions do not form language — they operate as a visual system. The sign here is a formalist intervention, a strategy of displaced signs and its political intentions. Accordingly, the artist's visual jargon is hard to decipher. Keehan replicates "La Societe du Spectacle" from the Situationist Guy Debord. The paintings quote, in French, Debord's commercially printed posters and book covers. Keehan's homage to May 1968 could be called a popular phantom, alluding to European cultural radicalism. Animated by slight imperfections, these shaky but enigmatic paintings would have made more of a visual puzzle printed again as posters.



**A Sacred Place**  
**Micky Durrng**  
**UTS Gallery**  
**Sydney**  
**11 May-4 June 2004**

Micky Durrng's coastal environment is totally fabulous. Masterful curator Djon Mundine has managed to construct a fascinating installation at UTS Gallery. The two chambers echo out of each other, with Durrng's wide bands of yellow, brown and white embodying the space between ceiling and floor. Each strip of colour runs horizontally and is loosely hand-drawn one above the other. They rise up the wall like the markings of the tide. Resembling an abstract construction, the wall drawing encases the space, wrapping the visual experience of the viewer in its hovering mirage. The flicker to the eye is both a beautiful and profound experience. The vibrations may be a slow tidal metaphor or a reference to movements of the painted torso of ritual dancers. A particularly remarkable synthesis of motion, colour and space.

**Oscar Yanez**  
**MOP (Modes of Production) – Artist Run Initiative**  
**Redfern**  
**14–23 May 2004**

Oscar Yanez makes Baroque collages, assemblages and paintings, but the collages are what I love. The large paintings are perhaps illustrative of what occurs more naturally in smaller works on paper. Here the vacuity, fails to maintain any significant surface tension or play with the depth of field that the cutouts effortlessly achieve. I would prefer it if his poetic designs were screen-printed onto canvas. For me this would make more sense, to have a play on flatness and depth.

**Below: NUCA**  
*'Australia's 50 Most UnCollectable Artists' bubblegum cards*  
*Image courtesy The Network of Uncollectable Artists, 2004*



**Rainer Linz**  
**National Museum of Australia - Studio**  
**Canberra**  
**4 June 2004**

Rainer Linz is somewhere inside the National Museum of Australia today. He is live broadcasting to the world wide web at 1.00pm with his *MUZAK STIMULUSPROGRESSION CHART*. Right now I am opening the tiny media frame on my monitor. The sound being emitted is one of Linz's slow semi-progressive, chance-generated jazz numbers. It has no sense of beginning, middle or end. It's muzak you might endlessly wait for. But Linz makes music, not as conceptual doorstops that require PhDs to comprehend, but as music to take for granted whilst the artist is sending through user instructions. These direct you to sweep sand across a floor and assemble plastic packages out of the residue. There are scores for a viola piece or the construction of a mobile. Linz also offers the web viewer the self-service sound generating works, *INFO NOISE* and *LINZ WARE*.

**The Network of Uncollectable Artists**  
**Hollywood Hotel**  
**Sydney**  
**2 June 2004**

The Network of Uncollectable Artists (NUCA) launched last night at the Hollywood Hotel, after what has been described as the hit of the 2004 Next Wave Festival in Melbourne. Some of Sydney's favourite anti-artists presented the NUCA in Briefcase: Simon Barney's mini-exhibiting space. It was a boozy night where collectors bought up big, swapping cards ruthlessly to assemble the printed manifestos of what was reported to be the 50 most uncollectable artists in Australian Art. A sort of playful madness this, a study of abjectness and loathsomeness, NUCA has taken the un-fun out of the 'God As Art' syndrome. NUCA almost effortlessly deflates and flattens the concept of ART into a stick of artificial bubble gum. Each collector pack features eight printed cards and the gum. I can personally recommend any NUCA Pro-Collector card No.18: A.A.A. (*Artists Against Art*). But equally whacky and disrespectful are cards: 1. *This is a Heavy Product*; 9. *SquatSpace*; 15. *Blind Authority Manipulation Corp*; and 32. *Marrickville Jelly Wrestling Federation*. In the same week that the 2004 Sydney Biennale anoints the new avant-garde, the NUCA project easily infiltrates and profits from the vulgarity of collectability.

*Ruark Lewis is a Sydney language artist. His recent work **Banalities/Banalitäten** with **Rubato Tanzcompagnie**, was commissioned by **Literaturwerkstatt Berlin** for **PoesieFestivalBerlin.03**, and performed at the **Theatre Halleschen un Ufer**.*

XEROS

# Marie Bonnal

Breadbox Gallery  
Perth  
12 – 22 March 2004



*Above & top:* Marie Bonnal  
XEROS

*Images courtesy the artist 2004*

If there is one moment when ethics and aesthetics collapse it's in the domain of pornography where looking good and being bad coalesce in a struggle to defeat each other. Pornography is no longer about sex. It has not been so since its industrialisation and aesthetisation in the 1970s. It has become pure pastiche in which appearance is the complete arbiter of meaning. Porn has become a kind of advertising for the space between virtue and sin where the play of ambiguity and contradiction gives it a contemporary fascination and visual interest. 'Wow – Look at the shoes she's wearing. How can she afford those?' The look of porn has usurped any notion of its titillation or sexual illicitness. When anything goes, it's how well you look when doing it that counts.

Marie Bonnal's photos attack the surface and wreck the look of porn. She celebrates the tacky and kitsch of those porn images that try too hard to look too good. By playing up the over-blown aesthetic of the fetish she is able to construct a humour that thumbs-its-nose at the deep failure of porn to connect with sex and the soullessness of the pathos buried in contemporary sexploitation. By assuming the role of the prosumer (she uses her own body in some of the images) you get the feeling while looking at these images that this 'home-porn' is just a millimetre away from some kind of realism; a realism that could operate as a kind of confessional where the play of fantasy is made real.

When you enter the exhibition, there is the word 'cool' on one side of the room, and opposite, the word 'warm'. These measures of temperature, parody the value of porn and its locus in the body, and yet by the way they are constructed – like cartoon lettering – Bonnal is again taking-the-piss by deflating this most basic language.

However the outstanding image in the show is the six-part *homage-a la dick*. These photos show an erect penis dressed to ... whatever. Bonnal mischievously parodies the pomposity and vanity of this very fashionable dick while at the same time somehow celebrating its taboo and censorship. This image is truly 'hot' as it stands in contradiction to the bland familiarity of the images of the fetishized female torso.

A great little exhibition that mixes fun and intelligence, while playing with the collapse of porn into fashion.

*Julian Goddard is a Perth-based academic and gallerist.*

## Diary of a Body 1969-1973

# Vito Acconci

**Barbara Gladstone Gallery**  
New York  
United States of America  
3 April – 1 May 2004

Acconci is a legendary New Yorker whose artistic output between 1969 and 1973 in the form of performances, videos, texts and photographs was enormous. It seems evident from the work throughout this period that he was deliberately subjecting himself to massive personal upheaval. In one work he obsessively followed strangers through Manhattan streets until he finally lost sight of them; in another he masturbated under a temporary floor, apparently fantasising about the gallery visitors walking above. He once tried to stuff all of his partner's long hair into his mouth and thus get closer to 'consuming' her; and in one durational piece, he waited each night at the end of an abandoned pier for lone visitors, to whom he would tell (a presumably damaging) secret. In each case – and there are hundreds of these 'anti-social' acts – a simple, logical behaviour sat side by side with a darker, private psychological motivation.

In many of the activities of this period, Acconci employed the established formulae for 'conceptual art making' to push the limits of his own psyche and to go beyond normal and comfortable interactions. From the documents left behind, I never get the idea that Acconci was simply 'making art' or playing out hollow gestures for mere philosophical or intellectual pleasure, although his work certainly supplies both. Time has not dulled the impact of Acconci's early projects. His work is still moving and personally challenging, even from a distance of over 30 years.

In the recent New York exhibition, hundreds of typewritten 'instructional scores' for performances and actions were presented alongside photographs and video of the processes or outcomes. Plenty of these scores, it seems, were never realised or else were impossible to document. *Diary of a Body 1969-1973* was essentially an archive of Acconci's obsessive activities. The scribbled and typed notes and dozens of photos were laid out over the walls of four large rooms like a graphic historical timeline, linked by lines of red electrical tape. The tape compartmentalised and unified what might otherwise appear bitsy, or distractingly chaotic. I have to admit that I didn't go out of my way to try and decode the

**Below:** Vito Acconci  
*Diary of a Body 1969-1973*  
Installation: Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 2004  
Image courtesy Barbara Gladstone



relationships formed by proximity or linked red lines. I was too engrossed with each nugget of information to worry about such connections.

One of the most challenging pieces was a video called *Home Movies* (1973) in which Acconci presented a slide show of some of his work from the previous years. There were two levels of disclosure in the video. In the first, the artist with his back to us would select a slide and point to the action it depicted, explaining very simply and logically what he had been attempting to achieve. Every so often, however, he would get up, walk to the wall where the slide was projected and, turning sideways, would whisper emphatically as if to somebody just off-camera. He whispered things like: "...but only you, *only* you would know what this piece was *really* about, only you know what happened between us that July, when *she* began living with us – when the tension, the jealousy was thick in the house..." What I found gripping about this work was the tangible need to intervene in his own recent history, as if by disclosing everything layer by layer Acconci could prevent 'Art' taking over and prevent the work being merely an 'Artwork'. And yet, by making these disclosures the artist risked rupturing his (hitherto) private relationships.

Acconci's art activities could and did change his life.

To track the changes in Vito Acconci's work over recent years (he now runs an architectural studio) go to <[www.acconci.com](http://www.acconci.com)>

**Lucas Ihlein works with the Network of Uncollectable Artists (NUCA) and lives in Sydney. He wrote this review on a recent visit to New York. Another version originally appeared on his blog <<http://bilateral.blog-city.com>>**

*What's happening in....?*

# *Hamilton, New Zealand*

*Ahoy!  
Hamilton city skyline  
March – May 2004  
from Lisa Benson, a participating artist in Ahoy!*



It's everywhere. There's so much of it around. It's in all the places you'd expect and more... it's in your hood, on the net, on your skin... it's on its way to outer space, and on a good day I even feel like I'm eating it. ART: the three-letter acronym for anything. I love it. I particularly love it on the street. Maybe it's a (Jenny) Holzer hangover: "you should learn things from the ground up". Maybe it's a latent desire to be politically active in my community: "the over-occupation of public spaces with unnecessary data". For whatever reason, encountering art all over the place makes me very happy. Whether it's reconfigured window spaces or adjacent additions to international art fairs, art that casually awaits detection is delightful. I like the confidence of projects that are prepared to remain unnoticed for days or weeks, and I like ideas to be slowly revealed... or perhaps it's just that I like cheeky ideas that sneak into funny places. I'm guessing that's why I find it supercool for my flag to be in the Ahoy! line up.



*Above: Nicola Farquhar (left hand side)  
& Nathan Pohio (right hand side)  
Thomas Cook Building, Hamilton, 2004  
Image courtesy of the Ahoy! project*

*Top: Jon Campbell (left hand side)  
& Fiona Amundsen (right hand side)  
Thomas Cook Building, Hamilton, 2004  
Image courtesy of the Ahoy! project*

Hamilton is a landlocked town, with a stable yet interesting population, a river and an incoming statue of Riff Raff. Yes, that fishnet wearing fancy dandy from Rocky Horror is due to arrive (bronzed) in late September. In the mean time, above Garden Place in the centre of this town, Ahoy! has taken to the skies. From March to May this year, Hamilton's inner-city movers and shakers have been drawn towards the sky for a changing program of lyrical visual sequencing. High-flying rectangles, depicting raceways, chickens, bold colours, expletives and whacky characters have been waving to themselves, each other and anyone that will look up. Higher than your usual art encounter, up among the patriotic and publicity flags, two by two these flags nestle among the clouds. Among their kind, the Ahoy! flags fit in, and yet do not belong. With no theme, no fixed message or purpose, our flags are up there to dust the air, play on rooftops and to generally have a good time. Ahoy! doesn't try to make sense. We are not asking you to believe in an idea or donate ten per cent. The project is simply happily hanging around, making you wonder, and maybe making you wanna fly your own flag.

*Ahoy! artists: Von Dekker, Genevieve Gauckler, Jon Campbell, Nathan Pohio, Fiona Amundsen, Warren Olds, Tessa Laird, Nicola Farquhar, Lisa Benson and Karin de Jong. You can check out Ahoy!'s repeat performance in Christchurch or the virtual version at <[www.ahoy.org.nz](http://www.ahoy.org.nz)>*



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**short st** art space & studios  
open for proposals 2004/05

short st art space is a new gallery in the centre of footscray (diagonally across from the old west space). it is an architecturally designed, purpose built facility, with the gallery sitting in the middle of 12 studio spaces. the studio's have been running since march 2003 and the gallery is opened in june



gallery hours wed - sat 11.00 - 5.00  
5 short st footscray vic 3011 [mel ref 42 c5]  
0402 231 312 info@shortst.com.au www.shortst.com.au



# KINGS

ARTIST RUN INITIATIVE

## UPCOMING EVENTS...

- 30 JULY - 31 JULY MICHAEL NEEDHAM
- 6 AUGUST PATRICIA TODARELLO & MICHAEL NEEDHAM
- 27 AUGUST PAUL BATT & JARRAD KENNEDY
- 21 SEPTEMBER KRISTI MONFRIES & CHERRY 2000
- 24 SEPTEMBER KATE SWINSON & JEN CABRAJA
- 22 OCTOBER ROB MANGION & MARK HILTON
- 19 NOVEMBER DAVID MACLEOD & NAOMI BISHOP
- 17 DECEMBER NEW YORK GROUP SHOW

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