

**STILL  
DIFFERENT**

# *Our Lucky Country*

OUR LUCKY COUNTRY  
(STILL DIFFERENT)

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Curators: George + Ron Adams

Editor: Daniel Mudie Cunningham

HAZELHURST + MOP PROJECTS





SHERWOOD III

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STILL  
DIFFERENT

# Our Lucky Country

HAZELHURST + MOP PROJECTS



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Inside back cover: *Our Lucky Country* DVD  
by Lisa Andrew

National Library of Australia CIP  
Title: *Our lucky country : still different*  
/ authors, Daniel Mudie Cunningham;  
Uros Cvoro, compilers, George Adams;  
Ron Adams.  
Publisher: Gymea, N.S.W. : Hazelhurst  
Regional Gallery and Arts Centre, 2007.  
ISBN: 9781921437014 (pbk.)  
Subjects: Art, Modern – 21st century –  
Australia – Exhibitions.  
Other authors: Cunningham, Daniel  
Mudie. Cvoro, Uros. Adams, George.  
Adams, Ron. Hazelhurst Regional  
Gallery & Arts Centre.  
Dewey number: 709.940905

pp. 1–8  
Views from around the Sutherland  
Shire in 2007, including Australia Day  
at Cronulla Beach (opposite).

PHOTOS: ANNA PETERS

## FOREWORD

In presenting this second and final instalment of the *Our Lucky Country* series of exhibitions I specifically want to use this opportunity to thank Ron & George Adams, and the artists involved, for their enthusiasm and commitment to the project.

In December 2005 we were presented with an opportunity to further connect Hazelhurst's contemporary visual arts agenda with an already robust community profile. The events that occurred at Cronulla and in other parts of Sydney, at that time, sparked in many people the need to consider some kind of response.

They also provided the catalyst for these exhibitions. Around this time Ron, George and I had been discussing ideas about ways that MOP and Hazelhurst could work together, connecting their artist-run-initiative (ARI) energy with our audience demographic. Lightning happened and *Our Lucky Country* was born, both as a means of exploring how artists could contribute to community wide debate, and as a way of creating (and better understanding) mutually beneficial relationships between ARIs, artists and public galleries. In agreeing to fund the project, Arts NSW and the Australia Council were supportive of our approach, not only as an opportunity to stimulate debate about art and artists but also, to highlight the benefits greater tolerance of difference and diversity could deliver.

Throughout 2007 the artists connected with the community to produce new work and their ways of working are reflected in the encounters described. For some, the experience challenged perceptions polarised by the events of 2005. Others have chosen to reflect on a broader jostling and argument about the state of our multicultural society today.

This project would not have been possible without assistance from the Visual Arts & Crafts Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments and the ongoing support of Sutherland Shire Council.

### **Michael Rolfe**

*Director, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre*

## INTRODUCTION

Over the last eighteen months MOP Projects and Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre have collaborated on the *Our Lucky Country* project, a series of two exhibitions sparked by the now infamous 'Cronulla riots'. This second exhibition in the series, (*still different*) sees a group of 16 artists commissioned to make new work that articulates an understanding of cultural difference in the community, and in particular the Sutherland Shire. Throughout 2007 these artists engaged in a residency program at the cottage on the grounds of Hazelhurst, where they considered, developed and/or produced new work.

As the curators of this project, we were not interested in demonstrating a political agenda or presenting overt social commentary about the Cronulla riots. We don't think that any art show is ever going to change the fact that humans are incredibly competitive and territorial and that sometimes tensions flare as a result. The following pages document the extraordinary process undertaken to achieve the ambitious goals set out. We've been fortunate to have a crew of intuitive writers, individually invited by the artists, to respond to the work produced. To further supplement the catalogue we commissioned Lisa Andrew to produce an experimental documentary showing the artists at work in the Sutherland Shire. Lisa has edited her footage with contextual material filmed or photographed by the artists themselves.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre for making this project run as smoothly as it has. In giving MOP Projects the opportunity to lead the curatorial development of *Our Lucky Country*, Hazelhurst clearly acknowledges the energy and creative resource provided by artist-run-initiatives. This mutually beneficial partnership has grown Hazelhurst's audience profile and allowed MOP to provide its artists with opportunities beyond MOP's usual resources. We would also like to thank Arts NSW, the Australia Council and the Sutherland Shire Council for providing the funds that has made this very successful project possible.

### **George + Ron Adams**

*Founding Directors, MOP Projects*

# How am I different?

DANIEL MUDIE CUNNINGHAM

Being involved with an exhibition about difference obviously forces you to examine and question your own difference. *How am I different?* You can answer that question in two ways. On the one hand, the question prompts you to explore and define what sets you apart from someone else; the oversimplified idea that what you *are* is what you're *not*. Or in another context, the question suggests change: *How am I different? How have I changed?*

Postmodern identity politics of the 1980s and 90s were predicated on the idea that subjectivities are constantly in flux, fluid and evolving, as opposed to essential, inherent, innate. Today it almost seems like a cliché to declare identity as a shifting ground upon which a multitude of identifications circulate. Maybe that's because clichés refer to 'truths' firmed over a period of time; when something is established as truth, it loses its ability to embrace change. It stays in flux forever; always changing and unchanged. It has become a convenient 'truth' to perceive identity as fluid because we're granted licence to resist engaging with it at length or in depth. Just because postmodernism privileged surface over depth, should we continue understanding identity through an infantilised attention span? You could never begin to answer that question. I've taken to ticking the box that says, "All of the above".

Several exhibitions I've curated in Sydney since the mid 1990s have played with identity politics, specifically examining the historically and culturally constituted emergence of queerness within visual representational systems. To spend so much time

tracing the development of a particular field is to find yourself constantly re-negotiating your relationship to it. And like any long-term relationship with a theoretical construct, you inevitably become ambivalent about what you were originally on about. Sometimes you get jaded by the sound of your own voice and realise it's time to change your tune. *How am I different?*

2007 has been all about change for me: I spent the last decade lecturing and researching within a university system that has been so dumbed down that you were forced to adopt change by either stripping back the scholarly rigour once expected of such a profession, or abandoning it once and for all. That environment was undergoing constant restructuring, constant change (for the worse) that you would find yourself fighting to resist change, even if it had been change for the better rather than flux as bad imitation Fluxus.

Despite my better judgement, a major change I experienced was succumbing to a conservative institutional gaze, despite having taught identity politics, gender and representation from the start. When I was a tertiary student in the early 1990s, it was no big deal to be confronted with difficult or explicit images. I recall being introduced to Robert Mapplethorpe's 1970s *Portfolio X* in a first year art history lecture. As shocked as I was, it would've been unheard of to show that shock. We were all too cool for (art) school! I recall only one Christian student making a complaint but nobody, including the faculty staff, took it seriously.



In recent times I'd become too nervous to show students contested images of any kind, for fear of reprisal. Even though I had been teaching such images for years, it seemed that the presence of cultural difference (often demarcated along the lines of religion) required a policing of content that could be deemed offensive. It seems like those good old 'culture wars' never go away. A student once used an admittedly lame advert featuring gay men kissing to illustrate a tutorial presentation and some students responded with homophobic taunts. This was in 2005 – lightyears away from the halcyon days of 1970s gay liberation. It was at this point and partly because of my own ineffectual way of dealing with it, that I was prompted against my better judgement to internalise the same kind of conservatism gripping the student body. It becomes apparent in retrospect that this conservatism had already seized the tertiary sector long before students caught on. What else could you expect amid a political regime that held higher education (and the independent thought expected from such institutions) in low regard. Maintaining difference and progressive change, then, can be impossible in environments where the freedom to express such independence is quashed.

I've anecdotally outlined recent experiences of difference and change primarily to imply my growing ambivalence with these ideas. The greatest tension with the concept of difference is that it's predicated on a supposed individuality that can be impossible to maintain. The thing with difference is that it catches on like wild

fire; before you know it, everyone is 'different together'. Difference inevitably becomes a case of sameness. In Marxist terms, this is akin to the idea of 'pseudoindividuality', which refers to how mass culture creates a false sense of individuality through persuasive means. This is especially prevalent in images (such as advertising) where the subject is addressed as an individual but is, in fact, 'singled out' to conform to a mass ideal. Being different then, is like being set apart from everyone else because you have an iPod.

\* \* \*

*Our Lucky Country* brings together a group of artists and asks them to explore ideas of difference through a residency program book-ended by two exhibitions. The first exhibition in December 2006 was subtitled (*difference*) and the second taking place exactly a year later is subtitled, (*still different*). Curated by Ron and George Adams, directors of the Sydney artist-run-initiative MOP Projects, *Our Lucky Country* was initially conceived as a response to the 'riots' that occurred at Cronulla in December 2005. As it developed, the project's focus was broadened out to reflect the idiosyncratic types of responses that only artists could be expected to deliver. It's not that it became convenient to shift the focus away from the Cronulla riots – it just became unrealistic to expect all of the artists would focus on this particular moment in time.

Using humour and participation as key motivators for thinking through the issues of identity, trust, culture and community, *Our*

*Lucky Country* aimed from the outset to explore how artists can contribute to community wide debate; how new audiences for contemporary art can be developed; how new ways of working can be developed for artists; how community and cultural difference can be linked; how mutually beneficial relationship models between artist-run-initiatives, artists and public galleries can be implemented; and how community wide partnerships already established at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre could be further developed. Through the residency program, artists have had the opportunity to connect with the community of the Sutherland Shire to facilitate the production of new work.

Ron and George Adams asked me to be involved in the *Our Lucky Country* project from the start. As cultural, political and visual aspects of difference have been recurring concerns in my curatorial and research work, it seemed like a perfect fit: difference is what I 'do'. Amid the duration of the project I was appointed Exhibition Coordinator at Hazelhurst only a few months after Ron and George had invited me to be a co-director at MOP Projects. These significant changes to my own direction allowed a much closer working relationship to this important project and also compelled me to examine the way I comprehend difference and change.

One of the most innovative aspects of *Our Lucky Country* is the opportunity it affords for creative collaboration and partnership between a regional gallery and an artist-run-initiative. The curatorial premise was predicated on including artists who had

already demonstrated a strong working relationship with MOP Projects, since its inception in 2003. Not all of the artists selected had a notable reputation or track record for making work about 'difference' per se, but it was beside the point as the project was born out of an established community of artists and friends working together to form a collective response through their individual contributions. That aside, exhibitions exploring difference inevitably require an engagement with the politics of representational inclusiveness. While the artists selected represent a broad cross-section in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age and so on, it is unlikely that an exhibition purporting to be about difference could ever adequately tick every box. For that reason, omissions are evident and it's always a shame that these exclusions come to light. But it makes me wonder whether it is better to be criticised for being exclusive or being tokenistic. Damned if you do, damned if you don't. For a project that promotes active community engagement, perhaps the best way to negotiate these tensions is to draw upon the resources within your already existing community formations.

Ultimately what counts are the artworks produced, and it is through these works that we can see the rich diversity of aesthetic and conceptual approaches comprising *Our Lucky Country*. I must admit, the subtitle of the second exhibition, 'still different', didn't sit comfortably with me initially as it seemed a contradiction in terms. To be *still* is to be unchanged; to be *different* is to have changed or moved on. To be *still different* runs the risk of presenting difference

as an essentialist conception, resistant to being constructed over time. The curators' intentions with the phrase (*still different*), is more matter of fact really: to suggest that a year may have passed, but that this group of artists are *still* grappling with conceptual concerns that reflect their diverse and idiosyncratic comprehension of difference. Assessing the development of the work being produced now in relation to the first exhibition, it is apparent that what makes social, cultural and personal difference a complex state of affairs is the contested ground on which it moves.

Emerging as it did from the contested ground of Cronulla, as represented by the riots in December 2005, *Our Lucky Country* shows how difference is not just how you define identity. Difference also relates to how you approach a project brief. Not everyone is going to respond in the same way, despite pressures from some for an antagonistic approach. The success of *Our Lucky Country* is that it shows how different levels of political engagement can be deployed. Politics inspire everything from passionate debate to ruthless didacticism. The most effective representation of political engagement in visual culture is often that which engages humour. While this was always part of the original brief, it is a strategy that has not sat well with every artist involved. And that is fine – some of us aren't comfortable using humour to tackle issues born from trauma and violence. Certainly it's a fine line to tread, but artists are expected to have a finely-tuned sense of irony and satire. As much as it's a cliché to say it, laughter is sometimes the best medicine.

What strikes me as odd, however, is that some criticisms directed at the project have been specific to the very presence of humour in a context where laughter is apparently taboo – as if the greatest Australian cop-out is to trivialise everything as a joke. Humour isn't always that dumb. When used smartly, humour can convey an idea with greater power than the standard punchline structure of a joke normally allows. History is studded with politically engaged rebels – take Lenny Bruce for instance – who knew the power of humour to undermine the status quo. A whole history of oppositional visual culture is predicated on the use of subversive humour as a means of undermining dominant ideological forces. The legacy of US artist collectives like Guerrilla Girls, ACT UP and Gran Fury have had a legacy that is all the more enduring because their messages are often conveyed through a sharply satirical lens.

The perception that humour cannot be used to convey ideas about difference is naïve. Not all of the artists involved in the project have used humour to convey their ideas and that is their prerogative. But it doesn't surprise me that the one work that upset one particular punter last year was also the most unassuming and potentially the wittiest. In her series of cartoon-like works, Anna Peters depicts conversational exchanges between figures that are hilarious because of the way politically correct mores are challenged through language puns. The first three comments in Hazelhurst's guest book for *Our Lucky Country (difference)* indeed demonstrate their potential for graphic agitation:



- I find the Anna Peters Cronulla/Muslim cartoons highly offensive! There was never trouble at Cronulla until last year. The residents have had enough!!
- Anna Peters is a lovely young woman. I find her work very insightful and well thought out, the people of Cronulla cannot get enough! Perhaps this is the problem.
- Why the hostility (above)?? Ever heard of satire? The power of art! Good one Anna Peters! Interesting work all around.

What these comments highlight is how provocative and contested a project like *Our Lucky Country* is going to be, even if it has the best intentions. From my experience of the project, greater tensions occurred beyond those documented in the guest book. To promote community engagement, as this project has, a vibrant artistic community is required in the first instance. This community – artists drawn from an artist-run-initiative – demonstrate how the individuals comprising a collective can successfully respond to a brief with outcomes reflecting the diversity of its participants. Though tensions always exist when negotiating events not easily understood – the riots for instance – the formations that animate community in the first place should be strong enough to weather them.

above  
Anna Peters  
*Fashion Parade*, 2006  
pen on paper, 21 x 30 cm

**RACE RIOTS THE SECOND WAVE**

**WAR OF WORDS**

**Angry ride into danger**

There is no place in our free, democratic and civil society for racist and mob violence ... We must look to the root causes of this social disharmony, seek authentic information about them, and deal with those matters.



**Damien Murphy**

BARRY HUMPHRIES once defined being Australian as hating people from anywhere else. It is perhaps a good starting point for what happened at Cronulla on Sunday.

Sydney has long been Australia's most divided city.

Those who live in the eastern suburbs rarely venture beyond the CBD. If they can help it. Those from the northern beaches think they have found nirvana, the North Shore knows it has, and the western suburbs take pride in their mostly hard-earned existence.

Most Sydneysiders would not live anywhere else, unless a Lotto win impudently offers them a million dollars. Generations also do play up their differences.

At Cronulla, Howard's gratification, ethnicist terror led to the riot of Rese.

**PETER JENSEN**  
Sydney's Anglican archbishop

We were beating each other with sticks 2 million years ago, people. It's time to evolve.

GUS  
SMH website reader

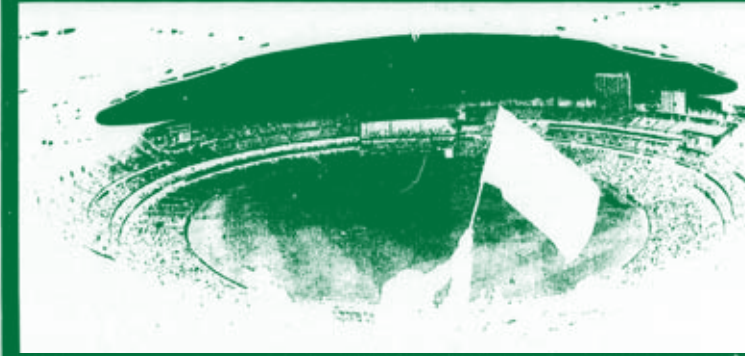
The people who sent out the text messages should be ashamed of themselves for doing what they caused.

**KEVIN SCHREIBER**  
Mayor of Sutherland Shire

We will never be able to forget this because it is so sickening. It makes me want to retch. It makes me embarrassed and ashamed to live in the Shire.

**JEN ADAM**  
Resident of Woolloomooloo

**These days it's harder to be different**



**HSU-MING TEO**

In less than a week it will be the anniversary of last year's Cronulla riots, which broke out on December 11. The infamous SMS which preceded the riot read as follows: "Come to Cronulla this weekend to take revenge. This Sunday every Aussie in the Shire got down to North Cronulla to support Lez and wog washing day."

Slogans aired on that day such as "We grow here, you flow here", or "Banan pride", and the prominent display of the Australian flag, made it clear who was and was not considered an Australian.

Being Australian is more than formal citizenship. It is a feeling. It is a way of life. It is a way of thinking. It is a way of being.

But Australia was different. Because of our appreciation for diversity we could broker cultural difference to our immediate geographical region. It was an innately arrogant assumption, but a happily optimistic one.

All this has changed. Australia may be a multicultural nation, but it is not a multiculturalist one.

Yet nothing has arisen to replace the ideal of multiculturalism as a way of making Australians from different cultural backgrounds feel at home, to make them feel Australian. Instead, a national identity has become narrow and regressively defined.

**Editor's note**

We received more than 600 emails on the Cronulla riot yesterday. Of these, 30 per cent expressed shame and disgust at the behaviour of the locals, 23 per cent felt the political climate played a role, 10 per cent saw the violence as evidence of deep-seated racism or the failure of multiculturalism, 5 per cent criticised the illegal vigilante gangs, 4 per cent believed the media were partly to blame, 3 per cent saw fault on both sides and 20 per cent addressed general issues or could not be otherwise classified.

**DISCRIMINATION**

**Treat us like dogs and we'll bite back**

Young Lebanese Australians now feel they are second-class citizens, writes **Roland Haddad**.

# Kultur Shock

UROS CVORO

It is appropriately inappropriate that the second anniversary of the events at Sydney's Cronulla beach follows closely on the heels of the 2007 APEC meeting in Sydney. If the heightened security measures and suspension of basic civil liberties during this event minimised the risk of protests, the opening of the second installment of *Our Lucky Country* brings their proximity into sharp relief. For while it is possible and necessary to observe the events at Cronulla in purely local terms, it is also paramount to contextualise them politically, socially and culturally as completely integrated elements of Australia taking its part in the developed capitalist order. In the context of global power plays, inequality, economic uncertainty and neo-liberal democracy, cultural enmities are the future. Yet, such global perspective on economic integration and cultural exclusion would miss what is truly at stake in projects such as *Our Lucky Country*: a grassroots, community-based attempt at opening some of the inherent prejudices to dialogue.

In this context, and in attempting to address the ongoing burning questions that underpin understandings of cultural difference in Australia, my starting point will necessarily be autobiographical. I migrated to Australia in 1995 as a refugee from civil war in ex-Yugoslavia. Having settled in the area of Hurstville, I was exposed to both the infantile garden-variety high school playground racism – because I spoke with a funny accent, and had an even funnier name – and the prejudice-infused understanding of Australia imparted by relatives and friends who had moved here

earlier. The former soon waned as a result of my loss of an Eastern European accent, much to the displeasure of my university friends who felt that I 'Anglo-Saxonised' myself too much (even though the name remained a standard stumbling block). The latter remained in my private life through contact with people of 'my' background, who clung onto imagined notions of identity and ethnicity as a way to deal with their migrant experience. Thus, my understanding of Australia became poised between striving for cosmopolitanism and acceptance, and my background which taught me that different people cannot live together for long.

Two anecdotes illustrate this typically awkward and often humorous split, inherent to the experience of being a migrant. The first concerns the proverbial child-parent power struggle implicit in the process of growing up and made even more complex when command of another language (or lack thereof) is at stake. On this occasion, my friend's father returned home from shopping visibly upset and loudly complaining about the stupidity of "all English people". This phrase was his description of everyone who was not a first generation migrant, and often included everyone who was not from ex-Yugoslavia. After some time he explained that he went to buy a strainer. Having forgotten the English word for strainer, he tried describing the item by repeatedly shouting "Water Go! Macaroni Stay!" He was angry because the staff did not understand him.

The second incident happened years later when a friend from university publicly congratulated me on my familiarity with art

history, especially since so many of ex-Yugoslavia's museums and cultural treasures were destroyed in a bombing raid by Polish air forces during the Second World War. In both cases, good intentions overlapped with the kind of ignorance or misunderstanding that is typical of attempts to comprehend cultural difference. Like in the case of my uncle who went to purchase a train ticket, and when asked, "Single?" – referring to the ticket of course – proudly and defiantly placed his right hand on his chest and exclaimed, "No! Married!"

Thus, when the ugly violence at Cronulla erupted, my own response – written in an article for *Broadsheet* – became as much an attempt to deal with the images of intolerance that brought me to Australia in the first place, as it was about formulating my own understanding of cultural difference in Australia in the face of such developments.<sup>1</sup> Here I will revisit some of the themes of that article as a way of pointing out the tensions inherent to cultural difference in Australia, and carving out space for projects such as *Our Lucky Country*. Revisiting some of the inherent tensions of cultural difference at this time sheds light on the antagonisms that continue to underpin debates around multiculturalism as a model for Australian national identity.<sup>2</sup>

The main reason for the ongoing spectre of cultural difference in Australia is its inability to maintain a balance between social cohesion and difference.<sup>3</sup> Or, to put this differently, it's about the inability of Australia to accommodate difference based on race in

the present model of nationhood. The issue of difference based on a construct of race thoroughly underscored all the debates considering multiculturalism since the seventies. This continues to be the case and recurs in more recent debates that have revolved around an Australian republic and citizenship. The question of citizenship that has become more prominent in recent years marks a departure from multiculturalism. For, in citizenship as a model for 'being Australian', a sense of belonging is defined less through embracing cultural difference than adherence to/respect for Australia as supra-national institution defined by law. In other words, with citizenship, cultural difference is defined top-down, respecting diversity while emphasising commitment to social cohesion based on laws that override 'older' allegiances. Citizenship is increasingly defined through what may be called 'pedagogical' democracy: where the right to be Australian is earned and proven by learning abstract notions informing liberal democracy, such as political institutions, history and economy. The push for citizenship tests is clear evidence that being Australian today is a question of learning how to participate in a community. The question that remains is the relevance of the knowledge thus gained to interaction at an everyday level.

Yet, recent public debates concerning asylum seekers, gang rapes and terrorism demonstrate that multicultural notions of compatibility and incompatibility between cultures have not lost currency, but have merely shifted rhetoric. It would appear that

for the 'normal' functioning of multiculturalism – and any other plural model for national identity – there will always be limits to the toleration of *difference*. And within this model, certain notions of *difference* test the limits of this tolerance. Australian history is rife with examples of how changing constructs of excess of difference have informed the public debate: the threat of Asian 'invasion', the threat of Aboriginal resistance and most recently the fear of violent Muslims.<sup>4</sup>

Even though Australia officially purports to account for all ethnic groups under the auspices of a generalised culture, the position of all three groups has been articulated as a 'problem' of incorporating a (threatening) difference. The popular spectrum of national identity debates in Australia often uses the notion of culture to shift away from confronting racial politics. In part, this is because in an Australian context, racial politics means facing the legacy and policies that have sustained colonial (and more recent) violence and these confrontations force us to reconsider the success of tolerance. Cultural diversity in Australia is a mode of producing a social order that serves to narrativise an ideology of a diverse and tolerant Australia, concealing the racism embedded in the experience of Australia as a nation. This racism is most clearly evident in the antagonism between the position of 'multicultural' Australians and Indigenous Australians. Yet, as Ghassan Hage demonstrates, this antagonism can be easily extended to include a variety of inter-cultural relations between Anglo-Irish and 'ethnic'

Australians, Asian and non-Asian Australians, Christian and Islamic Australians.<sup>5</sup>

One of the most prominent (and politically loaded) meanings of 'culture' in Australia today relies on the assumed opposition between a presumably secular (and neutral) majority against Islam as the universal symbol of religious fundamentalism. A majority of the media discussions that followed events at Cronulla centred on the question of how and whether Muslim 'difference' can and should be included in 'neutral' Australia. The conflation of Islam with religion in general performs a twofold function. On the one hand, it draws attention away from the ever-increasing role that other religious beliefs play in contemporary politics, as shown by both John Howard and Kevin Rudd's recent appeals to 'the Christian demographic'. The 'religion card' in both instances was never questioned on the grounds of its political neutrality, because it was abstracted under the appeals to general pseudo-Enlightenment ideals. On the other hand, the general conflation of Islam with religion has led to fundamentalism as a primarily Islamic trait. This is evident in the way both Muslim men and women are singled out as a *threat* to tolerance. Muslim masculinity is identified with public violence and terrorism, while conversely, the custom of wearing a hijab has associated Muslim women with the more 'silent' threat of terrorism and patriarchal servitude. The image of a veiled Muslim woman forms an ambiguous convergence of sexuality, danger and oppression that is frequently identified as starkly opposed to

'Australian values'. While there have been no documented incidents in Australia that involve the hijab in any way, its very sight is deemed as threatening in the public sphere. It is certainly possible to read this perceived threat as a manifestation of contemporary western orientalism, where what is concealed out of sight becomes sexualised to the point of being unbearable.

Even though the double standards evident in the treatment of Muslims in Australia is exemplary of the failure of accepting cultural difference, it should be highlighted that this is by no means a singular or one-way process. In other words, the process by which the 'other' is produced in the Australian cultural landscape is a much more complex cultural dynamic. Otherness is a condition that sees the politically and culturally subordinate internalise and reproduce the stereotypical conceptions held by the dominant culture. Otherness becomes a condition by which the dominated are considered as absolutely and irreversibly different, located outside accepted norms and outside the possibility of historical change. Yet, the notion of otherness is a thoroughly historical construct. This is evident both in its constantly shifting field of representation (who is the 'other'?), and desire implicit in producing otherness (what is the 'other'?). This suggests that the racism couched in the process of 'othering' is not endemic to one (dominant) group but is in turn reproduced and channeled even by the subordinate groups.

Thus, in terms of the contemporary political landscape in Australia, we may ask where does the 'other' start? Invariably, the

answer will depend on who you ask.<sup>6</sup> In Sydney, for the Anglo-Celtic population with its English roots and sensibilities, the frontier of otherness is marked by the borders of Western Sydney with its largely working class, immigrant population. A perfect example occurred when the *Chasers War on Everything* (ABC TV) team interviewed residents of wealthy Northern Sydney suburb Mosman, asking their views on the prospect of building a Mosque there. Several of the people interviewed said it would be more 'appropriate' elsewhere, namely in Western Sydney.

But for the diverse population of Western Sydney – including a number of ethnic groups such as Italians, Greeks, and ex-Yugoslavs – the 'other' begins in smaller specific ethnic 'ghettoes'. In many cases the crucial frontier is between themselves as (displaced) representatives of European civilisation and the collective Asian spirit. More specifically, in many cases, the individual groups see themselves as the line of defense against some kind of imagined fundamentalist threat, frequently embodied in Muslim groups. Yet, the Lebanese will frequently tell you that they represent the preservation of the purity of spirit, and family life against the tidal wave of hedonist corruption embodied by the tainted Anglo-Western decadence. And so it goes on indefinitely. The 'other' is always abstracted to elsewhere, to the west, to the south. In this instance Sydney becomes a space of imagined urban cartography onto which many different prejudices are projected.



This understanding of the ‘other’ captures some of the internal construction of boundaries in Australia and highlights the fact that prejudice goes in all directions. It also includes a more general understanding of difference in people based on appearance. While culture may be one way of approaching this question, others could include the categories of class, gender, body, sexuality, and so on. Yet, while it is important to point out that no one is immune to prejudice, the implicit social and political weight of racism is paramount. This articulation of inter-relations of exclusion always refers to otherness understood through its proximity or distance from what Hage calls ‘degrees of whiteness’.<sup>7</sup> What we are dealing with is minority groups establishing themselves through prejudice in relation to an untenable ideal: Eurocentric cosmopolitanism. What is at stake is who will be admitted and excluded into the present capitalist developed order of multicultural Australia. Every group tries to legitimise their place in this order by presenting themselves as a preserver of some important aspect of civilisation, in contrast to the confines of their specific identities.

My intention here has been not to discredit Australia as a space for the playing out of cultural differences, but rather to present an interpretation of it that seeks to open new critical possibilities. I believe that the critical potential of cultural difference has been radically reduced in recent years, and that this can be attributed to the internal tensions of multiculturalism as much as to a product of political conservatism. There is alarming evidence of

parochialism in Australian attitudes towards critical debates. The space for productive and critical dialectic about relevant issues has been discredited, sanitised and substituted with a ‘you are in or out’ approach in present Australian society.<sup>8</sup> I am interested in (re)carving out a space for that critical dialectic in Australia, and the starting point can be the encounter between different groups in open acknowledgement of their prejudices.

Projects such as *Our Lucky Country* that focus on areas where contemporary Australian identity politics are being played out – both geographically and ideologically – represent spaces outside of the limits of multiculturalism and the diversity it upholds. These spaces and the everyday humorous narratives they represent, test the limits of tolerance. Insofar as *Our Lucky Country* puts forward a picture of diverse Australia, it does this through artworks that do not avoid traumatic or problematic issues in Australian history. Such issues are projected onto the cultural plane as the multitude of stories that constitute the Australian history. *Our Lucky Country* thus creates a democratic and open-ended public arena of diversity in which constructed prejudices can be freely negotiated, and as such suggests an honest and appropriate encounter with contemporary Australia.

## NOTES

1. Uros Cvoro, 'Contact Zone Cronulla' in *Broadsheet*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 2006.
2. A comprehensive survey of literature on Australian multiculturalism is too extensive to list here. For select examples see books such as Ghassan Hage and Rowanne Couch (Eds), *The Future of Australian Multiculturalism*, Sydney: Research Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, 1999; Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*, Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998; Jon Stratton, *Race Daze: Australian Identity in Crisis*, Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998.
3. Ellie Vasta, 'Dialectics of Domination: Racism and Multiculturalism' in *The Teeth are Smiling: The Persistence of Racism in Multicultural Australia*, (Ed) Ellie Vasta and Stephen Castles, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996. 46-72, 46.
4. See Peter Manning, 'Australian Imagining Islam' in *Muslims and the News Media* (Ed) Elizabeth Poole, London: Tauris, 2006. 128-141, 141. Manning provides a good survey of the stereotypes of Muslims in Australian media in recent years.
5. See Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in Multicultural Society*, Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998.
6. See Slavoj Žižek, 'The Spectre of Balkan' in *The Journal of the International Institute*, available at <http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/journal/vol6no2/zizek.htm> (accessed: October 3, 2007).
7. Hage, *ibid.*, 20.
8. Robyn Archer also points to the lack of a critical dialectic in Australia in the context of the performing arts. See *The Myth of the Mainstream: Politics and the Performing Arts in Australia Today*, Platform Papers, No. 4, Sydney: Currency House, 2005, 1.

# RON ADAMS

## FIVE CHOICES OF DEATH

Ron Adams' *Five Choices of Death* (2007) is a seemingly epic work and jubilant installation of paintings and mixed media. His most ambitious single work to date in terms of its mural scale and multiple parts, it asserts a complex presence, which we as viewers have to navigate. It features one large wall-mounted painting, which acts as a backdrop to suborders of smaller colourful paintings and objects propped, suspended and balanced precariously in front. It can be read as both inward and outward-looking; as a display to be looked at as well as a construct that specifically addresses you. The immediate reference for the wall work, depicted in bold black stripes over natural MDF wood, is the American flag – but here the fifty stars are removed. In their place we read a lyric from The Smiths' 1984 song *How Soon Is Now?*

*I am the son and the heir of nothing in particular.*<sup>1</sup>

This song, with its intense oscillations of sound and sense of disenfranchisement, is said to have redefined America's vision of the band as "some wacky gay-rock crusade".<sup>2</sup> In the context of Adams' work however, this quote becomes a declaration. It speaks to an observation that we are of a time where the past no longer promises a grand inheritance. It also speaks of the fact that not one thing defines us, that we are a composite of parts, one not leading above the others.

Adams is expert in opening up the workings of visual shorthand, in a way that relies on the viewers' active interpretation and engagement as a 'reader'. His visual language is both deadpan and poetic, often funny and slightly surreal, and gives the sense that what we read is syphoned off from a much larger conversation, or, privileged from within the unchecked ramblings of an interior psyche-speak.

Formally, *Five Choices of Death* continues Adams' examination of abstraction, text, colour, graphics and composition. His work is reminiscent of Jasper Johns' flag and target paintings, Robert Rauschenberg's 'Combinés', and contemporary Australian artists Rose Nolan, John Nixon and Stephen Bram. Importantly, Adams' work also references that now retro-looking and revolutionary art of the Russian Constructivists. His oeuvre acknowledges the failed utopian vision of the Constructivists to develop a 'universal' art. While there is currency in the idea that 'pure' elements – line, colour, geometry, form – might better convey abstract concepts when words or representational pictures fall short, Adams works against the depersonalising effect of this universal quest, which entailed a repudiation of individual expressivity.

Adams' work invites an awareness of the way in which perceptions of 'signs' operate. You might call his artworks 'meaning composites'. Understanding that emotion and thoughts are complex and abstracted things, and not able to be adequately pictured, Adams presents compositions that contain multiple elements and symbols. Much as semaphore or pictograms are systems for expressing particular concepts, Adams relies on the process whereby a thing can be spoken, written or suggested, and the recipient (us) thinks of a corresponding meaning. This process, in linguistic terminology, is called concretisation or actualisation. His use of graphics, colour, forms and texts are units which function as the building blocks to meaning, as are poems for example, made up from the organisation of single words.

Adams' work is not a clinical abstraction. In the context of this exhibition, *Our Lucky Country (still different)*, Adams considers the notion of 'difference' by way of his personal life as a man who lives with another man, and



particularly in light of the implications that this characterisation has for others who do not live in the relative freedom of Australia. The shock that is experienced by persons who have a category applied to them from the outside, is one that evokes a similar kind of reaction one might have towards the absurd. We individuals know ourselves to be made up of many constituents of opinion, behaviour, emotions, life-stories, and defining events. We are related to 'others' in our community and world through a sliding scale of shared approaches, as much as we may define ourselves by what we are not. As an example: *You like this band + I like this band = We might get along*. And so it does seem absurd when one part of anyone's make-up turns them into a 'subject' of categorisation. To be classed within a 'minority' is a depersonalising process that, as a result, can exclude an individual person from the normal rights that are afforded to a 'mainstream' group, and further, that actually carries penalties of capital punishment in some nations, sanctioned by law.

*Five Choices of Death* considers that there are at least seven countries worldwide where, as a maximum sentence, homosexual acts are punishable by death. Among these are: Iran, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Yemen. Between these countries, there are five methods of execution for a homosexual: burying them beside a wall which is then toppled on to them, being hanged, stoned, halved by sword, or throwing them down from the highest hill or tower.

These penalties, largely derived from Sharia Law, appear in Adams' work as carefully half-drawn texts. They are difficult to read, as if the penalties were being evacuated from the canvas as much as they had been meticulously painted on. The causes of death are reduced to core verbs and left as signals to the inadequacy of

language or artistic illustration to reconcile concepts like human cruelty and terror.

Adams' work is more "like a Pop protest you might see in a record store"<sup>3</sup> than the result of intensive research into the complex laws of capital punishment for homosexuality worldwide.<sup>4</sup> This strategic delivery highlights a critical human rights issue that might not have otherwise been known. In this way we see the artist make a personal entry into politicised and protestatory work.

The small canvases bearing skeletons of these laws are presented like placards on raw metal stands or propped up on supports that threaten to topple, as in the rough square chocks, built up from a recycled ironing board. Others are fixed against the backboard in a seemingly casual arrangement, and it is as if the paintings perform the beginnings of a crowd mentality. Enveloping peripheral vision and affecting a palpable spatial interruption, the work dominates our physical scale.

The target is a prominent and repeated motif within the colourful assemblage. The written texts of the five modes of death are specifically targeted. This graphic, which determines a positive and negative appearance of the text, requires that the death-sentences be read actively, as if the existence of these laws cannot be comprehended. Of course, in Adams' depiction, it is the punishments that need to be targeted, not the peoples to which they are applied. Another motif is one resembling a pie chart, which visually represents data on the basis of percentiles. It is rendered in monochrome, black on plain wood, not white. Adams' focal planes affect our perception and invite a kind of zero-ing in, or telescoping effect. They suggest that a mere movement of the head could result in a flip-side view of a particular perspective, and further, that viewpoints are not fixed.

As much as we can read in Adams' work a utopian wish for a changed social state, for dispensing with expectations and for acceptance of difference, it also raises questions about what efforts to engage real experiences of despair and terror might mean, coming at it from the outside, and from the relative freedom that living in this country affords. This is problematic terrain.

Adams' handling of this traumatic knowledge is to reposition the paralysing effect of fear into a carnivalesque, even store-bought kind of activism. Adams' diminishing of horrific representations in this piece conversely works to maintain the presence of this real situation. It hangs in the air, albeit as a mute idea, frozen and stilled within a layered visual assemblage. The repetition of 'target' motifs allude to violence or weaponry, but the artist now controls where the sights are aimed. The chorus of *How Soon is Now?* repeats:

*I am human and I need to be loved /  
Just like everybody else does*

### Naomi Evans

#### NOTES

1. Morrissey and Johnny Marr, "How Soon is Now?" released in Australia on *Meat is Murder*, 1985.
2. Simon Goddard, *The Smiths: Songs That Saved Your Life*. London: Reynolds & Hearn, 2004. 107-114
3. Telephone conversation with the artist, 23 September 2007.
4. Adams was first inspired by Henrik Olesen's *Lack of Information* (2001) exhibited at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2003. Olesen's installation is comprised of 240 photographs and features research into the rights of homosexuals as compared across nations.



*Pakistan, 2007*  
Acrylic on MDF, 30 x 40 cm

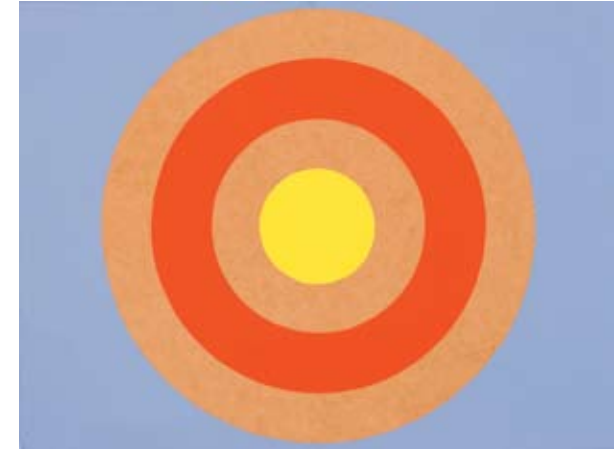
*Iran, 2007*  
Acrylic on MDF, 30 x 40 cm

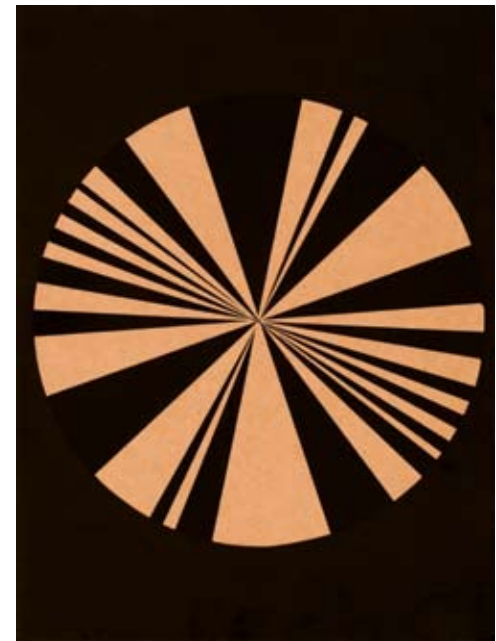
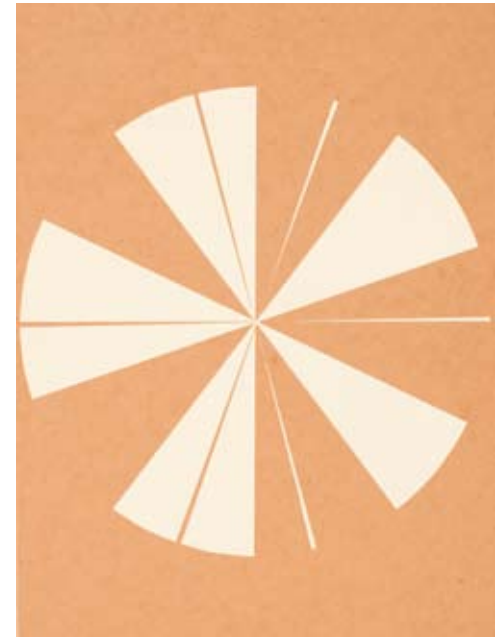
*Afghanistan, 2007*  
Acrylic on MDF, 30 x 40 cm

*Jamaica, 2007*  
Acrylic on MDF, 30 x 40 cm

*Mauritania, 2007*  
Acrylic on MDF, 30 x 40 cm

*Yemen, 2007*  
Acrylic and gesso on MDF, 30 x 40 cm





opposite  
*Saudi Arabia*, 2007  
 Acrylic on MDF, 40 x 30 cm

this page, clockwise from top left  
*Sudan*, 2007  
 Gesso on MDF, 40 x 30 cm

*Kenya*, 2007  
 Acrylic on MDF, 40 x 30 cm

*Virginia USA*, 2007  
 Gesso on MDF, 40 x 30 cm

# LIAM BENSON

## SO WHO THE BLOODY HELL ARE WE?

Liam Benson, a patriotic gay Australian artist, adopts drag etiquette to expose the parameters of male culture and ultimately to promote a positive Australian spirit. In the photographic postcard series *I LOVE THE SHIRE* (2007), Benson is depicted resplendent in Australiana, artificial tan, blonde wig, fake breasts and an “I love the Shire” T-shirt. The alluring images are seemingly tongue-in-cheek, yet seriously reflect a mish-mash of social commentary. As Benson poses on an almost deserted Cronulla beach one is instantly reminded of the infamous line, “So where the bloody hell are you?” delivered by celebrity Shire model Lara Bingle. By geographically relocating this reference to the Cronulla area and adorning himself in the Australian flag, Benson also references the 2005 Cronulla riots when opposing beach-goers angrily wielded similar tools of patriotism. In contrast to this anger motivated event, Benson’s work expresses resolute flag-waving celebration.

Evidence of masculinity and fakery emerge from beneath Benson’s Australiana and female attire. His beard punctures his Australian flag painted face, whilst his hair covered legs glisten with artificial tan. Benson twists stereotypical drag decorum by unabashedly being masculine whilst also reveling in femininity. The exhibitionistic Benson questions his identity as a gay male to reflect the fluid Australian identity which at times – like during the Cronulla riots – is seemingly confused. As the bikini-clad Bingle stood on the beach and asked “So where the bloody hell are you?”, Benson gallivants on the beach in wedge espadrilles and asks, “So who the bloody hell are we?”

Presented as tourist postcards, these photographic self-portraits question clichéd Australian representation. Normally used to send messages home from afar, Benson utilises the postcard medium to send a message to all Australians from within.

A strong emotive slant comes into play in Benson’s video piece *I BELIEVE IN YOU* (2007), a reworking of Kylie Minogue’s song of the same name. Singing to camera, a bare-chested Benson is tightly cropped in close-up with a glitter tattoo curving around his neck quoting Minogue’s “I believe in you” chant. The temporary tattoo, based on Koby Abberton’s “My Brother’s Keeper” tattoo, alludes to the well-known surfer and Bra Boy who was named as an instigator of the Cronulla riots. This unfounded accusation simultaneously brought attention to a supposed belief of territorial tension and deep-rooted male thuggery on Sydney beaches but also the post-riot culture of sensational blame that quickly developed.

The singing head shots of Benson are inter-cut with footage of a local belly dancing group who Benson visited during development of the work. Finding inspiration in their performative dedication and sense of pride, Benson has used footage of the group dancing in sparkling coloured costume, transforming them into his music-clip back-up dancers. As Benson sings, “I don’t believe the faults I have are only mine to blame”, the belly dancers become his messengers and provide a positive Sutherland Shire-based community context for the interpretation of Minogue’s lyrics. Through Benson they dance to restore belief and unveil the everyday realism of the ‘God’s Country’ image archetypal of the Shire.

Liam Benson is a pop culture chameleon. His work dissects topical social issues whilst sashaying through celebrity references from Abberton to Bingle to Minogue. From within his contemporary pop re-mix emerges a personal identity quest that heavily comments upon a desire for understanding and celebration amongst all Australians.

**Sophia Kouyoumdjian**





I ❤️ THE SHIRE





p. 43  
*I BELIEVE IN YOU* (production still),  
 2007  
 digital photo, variable size  
 PHOTO: ANASTASIA ZARAVINOS

pp. 44–45  
*I LOVE THE SHIRE* (production still),  
 2007  
 digital photo, variable size  
 PHOTO: ANASTASIA ZARAVINOS

opposite  
 Bridie Connell and Liam Benson  
*Harem Skarem; Middle Eastern Dance  
 Group. Belly dancing with attitude for  
 the not-so retiring*, 2007  
 variable size, scanned C-type print  
 and digital photo  
 GROUP PHOTO PROVIDED BY FAYE GREEN  
 DIGITAL PHOTO PROVIDED BY BRIDIE CONNELL

pp. 48–49  
 Liam Benson and Anastasia Zaravinos  
*Motel Sisters stunt doubles in  
 Gynea takeaway* (performance  
 documentation), 2007  
 digital photo, variable size





# MARIA CRUZ

I am an accountant I am accountable.

coins change hands see, they circulate, little wedges I call them, shiny wedges, shiny wedges for this little slot machines like me. In and out of my pocket, in and out of your wallet, numismatic nomads I call them, brief acquaintances that I needn't get too attached to, always giving them away you see, generous like that, bloody encumbrances, weighed down, ballast of my meagre economy. What a blast, shot pieces, my economy, that is. coins as you know, they're exchangeable, interchangeable, I like to swap my small change around, mints I call them. Like to launch them, float them off on the mercantile gulf stream, like to catch the tide with my investments, keep my currency current, if you catch my drift, where it ends up is none of your business, the filthy lucre, I keep well out of it, keep well away from the filthy stuff. Me, I'm charitable by nature. I like to proffer not for profit coins now and again. It's a token gesture I know, there's no violence in benevolence though and I like my law and order. What if I asked you to lend me a coin? Anybody can beat a treasurer, so they tell me, go on, you can trust me with it, a short term loan, promise. I'll repay you in kind, I'll promise to pay the bearer, here, take this envelope with my pledge I do, this, see it as a contract, all above board, here, I'll draw it up for you, see, the dots all joined up and dotted lines signed here, look. I'll cash convert your coin, crudely replicate it, make it cruddy, cast it in a base metal: what about an aluminium minty, with a minimum of fuss? No fucking worries. Even though that coin you gave me was your coin, your property, you weren't sentimentally attached to it were you? Didn't think so, after all it was only temporarily in your possession anyway, not really your stake was it? It's just worthless money really, so I'll render your coin worthless in counterfeiting it, that'll make it worthwhile, make it worthy your while, worth the wait, worth the waiting for. I'll rear it to the level of a rare artefact that's what I'll do, give it a rarity value, make it special, just between the two of us, a token of my appreciation, shall we say. I'll show off my contraband, my precious counterfeits, that's what they're there for to show off. See it as a donation of sorts, a gift to the community, if you like, an embellisher's bequest, no kidding. Let me invest your money, think of it as a term deposit that we can both come to mutually appreciate. Wait on a minute, wait on, I need to evaluate this transaction, see, need to think about it, want to commemorate this exchange somehow, memorialise these coins, these actual coins, for their contribution, for the change we exchanged, to sort of commemorate the token gesture. These coins made me medallions, metal medal mementos, enduring tokens of your loan, not that you're having a lend of me, noway. You'll get your coins back, sweet, because I've already said I will. Of course I'll lack knowledge of your participation, name you as money lenders, just wait and see if I don't, identify you as beneficiaries no less, loaners of the loan see. Yes, of course I'll lack knowledge of all donors, I'm not stupid you know, I'll knock up a roll of honour, a sort of daft epitaph for letting me borrow the cash, would you like that? I'll stamp the roll call, even roll the credits give it the imprimatur of art, big word that. This'll be an act of accreditation, give currency to my contemporaneity. And of course the contribution you lot made to it. So here we go, blow the trumpets, fan the fare, thanks for letting me use your setrish, caz, kate, lisa, phil, & Mrs. mortlock, Mr. Andrews. Watch out, stand back, I've just decided: I'll show the lot of you with counterfeit confetti, coins sprinkled with coinage, like the windfall of chance; laced for the neck, braced for the wrist, linked in their glintings, the glimmer of bling. Let's celebrate our capital, that's what it's there for, let's get down and dirty and capitulate to the commissars of cash. I am an accountant, I am accountable. I count, I count for nothing. I'll rat at at at you into anti oblivion, cruise missile you, cover you with kissing bullets, make you a bulletin board, chain you up, drape you, stitch you up, name you, out you, you money lenders you.

Ray H.



Donation Box, 2007  
perspex, coins, aluminum,  
40 x 40 x 40 cm  
PHOTOS PP 51-52, CRAIG BENDER



*Caz*, 2007  
oil on canvas, silver plated chain,  
50.5 x 40.5 cm

*Lisa*, 2007  
oil on canvas, silver plated chain,  
30 x 26 cm



*R. Andrews, 2007*  
oil on canvas, silver plated chain,  
25 x 35.5 cm



*Kate, 2007*  
oil on canvas, silver plated chain,  
50.5 x 30.5 cm



*Mr. & Mrs. Mortlock, 2007*  
oil on canvas, silver plated chain,  
30.5 x 30.5 cm

*Trish, 2007*  
oil on canvas, silver plated chain,  
30 x 35.5 cm



# ELIZABETH DAY

## WILD GENEALOGY AND RHIZOMATIC LINKS

Grass is the prosaic stuff of the everyday, a common denominator of ordinary backyards and suburban dreams. But in various species it is also a wanderer, spreader, and stubborn disseminator that resists neat fences and boundary lines, refusing to be quarantined. Elizabeth Day has made use of grass within a certain paradigm as a carrier of codes. Literally cultivating grass, growing it from seeds, she has devised a technique of embedding mirror writing in the tangle of its roots. Grass, the irrepressible figure of dissemination in Deleuze and Guattari's fiercely nomadic text, "Rhizome", is semi-tamed in the gardener's art of organic writing, in which grass is coaxed into propagating messages of diaspora and cultural mapping.<sup>1</sup>

The material signifier is the roots themselves, sown from seed dispersed into the soil bed over words spelt out in individual hand-cut letters. Thus a kind of secret occult collusion informs the gentle mode of the gardener's practice, where the matter of the message is the message of the matter. Day has produced a series of place names written in relief in underground roots that only make sense when the grass is ripped up, torn out of the earth and exposed, inverse side up, in the light of Day. Dispersed across the root web, now right way around, the place names reference the displacements of Sutherland Shire locals across the surface of the earth: Sudan. Somalia. Vietnam. Afghanistan. Serbia. Liverpool. Manchester. Bogotá. Gaza. Amman. El Obeid. Guayquil. Saigon. A roll call for wars, famine, poverty, and the time-tested hopes of plain old good expectations, they signal intermeshed cultural threads – nodes of identity and difference within the local community.

Day is effectively over-coding the regional place/grass/location of Hazelhurst with reminders of the places from which its inhabitants originate. Grass, of the earth,

acts as a carrier, recalling connections in a common matrix, in a fusing of the symbolic and material realms in which the population now dwells. Closeness is implicated in this bonding with the earth and a compounding of the signifier in embedded matter. The earth is thus charged with a kind of repository responsibility, bearing the material imprint – the palimpsest – of what remains in memory, of the places left behind.

This acknowledges the tension between migration and rootedness, and the psychic patterning that remains of "putting down roots" long after one's roots are torn up.

Furthermore, grass is a fitting material through which to negotiate the *Our Lucky Country* project brief in the context of the history and philosophy behind the Broadhurst bequest. First, it should be noted that Day has been working with the medium of grown grass over more than a decade of projects, often in the cause of institutional and cultural critique. Grass, in its associations with colonialism, has often stood in as a metaphor for conquest and cultural imperialism in her work, as well as materially signifying a re-planting of the natural environment. Grass takes on a radically different role in Day's work and is reflective of the generosity of the Broadhursts, a family of visionary free thinkers, through whose bequest of the house and garden the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre was founded.

Originally from Manchester (the name appears in palimpsest), the Broadhursts were philanthropists and spiritualists who followed many of Rudolf Steiner's principles. In the business of textiles (another rhizomatic link), they gifted the means of production to their workers, who were often invited to enjoy the gardens of Hazelhurst, where the Broadhursts were keen organic gardeners, and early advocates of the benefits of composting and recycling. In line

with their holistic philosophy, the bequest mandated that the gardens be preserved and complemented by either "a place of culture' or a community facility".<sup>2</sup>

Adhering to Steiner's belief that "everything is related to the soil", the garden was crucial to the Broadhursts' vision.<sup>3</sup> Hence, Day's project of imbricating the immaterial signifier of the letter in the organic matter of grass, as cultural transmitter, intimately reflects the Broadhurst philosophy of the unity of all spheres of life, specifically as grounded in the relationship with the earth, and, as such, pays homage to their passionate spirit of community. One senses they would have approved of Day's cultural mapping in the medium of grass, being that the laying down of the letter(s) underground is analogous to Freud's description of the psyche as laid down in "the underground" of the unconscious. As President of the Sydney Centre for Psychic Research in the 1950s, Ben Broadhurst certainly knew a thing or two about the unconscious.

A second aspect of Day's work could be described as symbolically rhizomatic, and an extension of her interest in museology. Local women, representative of the cultural diversity of Hazelhurst, were asked to bring along a small object of personal importance for museum display. Day explains the operation as an opportunity to show and share, and, as importantly, given the museum's historical use of vitrines as institutional sites of cultural validation, to consolidate the pluralist threads of local identity. Working from the grass roots up, such a practice encourages patterns of emergence – akin to Foucault's autonomous 'self-seeded' microcircuits of power. Therefore, the display of these personal objects interrogates institutional function in relation to community, inverting the top down hegemonic relations of power, and replacing

the museum's usual classificatory tree with the wild, rhizomatic anti-genealogy of these women's personal possessions.

## Ann Finegan

### NOTES

1. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. and Foreword by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

2. *A History of Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre*. Sydney: Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre / Sutherland Shire Council, undated, 16.

3. *ibid.*, 12.





OF THE EARTH (series 1), 2006  
grass roots and steel frame  
ten panels, each 40 x 40 cm





opposite  
*MESH* (incomplete work), 2007  
 plastic mesh, assorted threads

above  
*no borderline for love*, 2007  
 English and Vietnamese versions  
 made by an anonymous inmate with  
 whom Day worked

## SARAH GOFFMAN

Sarah Goffman is a slave to her materials. This is her intention and this is how she likes it. She takes the stuff of everyday life as it finds her and rearranges it, layering and embellishing the flotsam and jetsam of consumer culture, the ordinary, the discarded and what we take for granted – what we don't notice because we see it all the time. As a reclamation artist, Goffman makes us look at the ordinary with our own eyes invigorated by her artistic interpretive process. Her gift is an ability to reveal the special life of objects: familiar quotidian artifacts are lovingly reclaimed, recrafted and reendowed with the value of a common cultural significance – something we can all relate to, something we all have in common, or we'd like to share.

Goffman's works for the *Our Lucky Country* project link a process involving the autobiographical and community engagement. The surfaces she presents address us in ways that take us deeper into ourselves and yet, simultaneously, draw us out of ourselves towards each other. In the first exhibition, a cardboard installation of a police car remade (tweaked) became a polite car, a wistful, hopeful yearning for manners, understanding and empathy. The adjustment of one letter, a simple thing, makes all the difference in our attitude to the police, sorry, the piece. It's also a well-mannered, discreet and subtle kind of graffiti; although, if this were a real police car Goffman's alteration would be an illegal act, a protest, and she would be an activist.<sup>1</sup> Goffman's watercolour self portrait as bearded lady was disturbing in the same way. Disruption in a non-confrontational manner, raising ideas about disguise, identity, gender, vanity, appearance – who we are on the outside, as we appear to others, who we are on the inside and is it safe to let others see and know.

Her *Brand identity* mural of plastic bag logos and brand names elevated consumer

packaging to art materials. Rearranged, out of context, text and symbols become signs infused with meaning beyond their advertising purpose. Shopping bags are a record of where we've been, what we've done, resonant with the memory of experiences good and bad. There are always two sides to the story, a counter-narrative: consumer culture is both a leisure activity (play) and work, it's how some of us make a living, so the sight of a shopping bag means we've done our job well.

Goffman's artist residency at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery in August 2007 is reflected in her work for the second *Our Lucky Country* exhibition. The gallery visitors she invited to make their own white clay ceramic sculptures, produced a decorative array of the brand names that construct our consumer selves. For Goffman, Westfield Miranda shopping town was an inspiration, a site and a sight ripe for pleasure and appropriation. Remodelling this much-loved attraction in her own playful way as *My Store* infuses a sign of local cultural identity with the trace of personal experience and the self, as individual and artist, as herself.

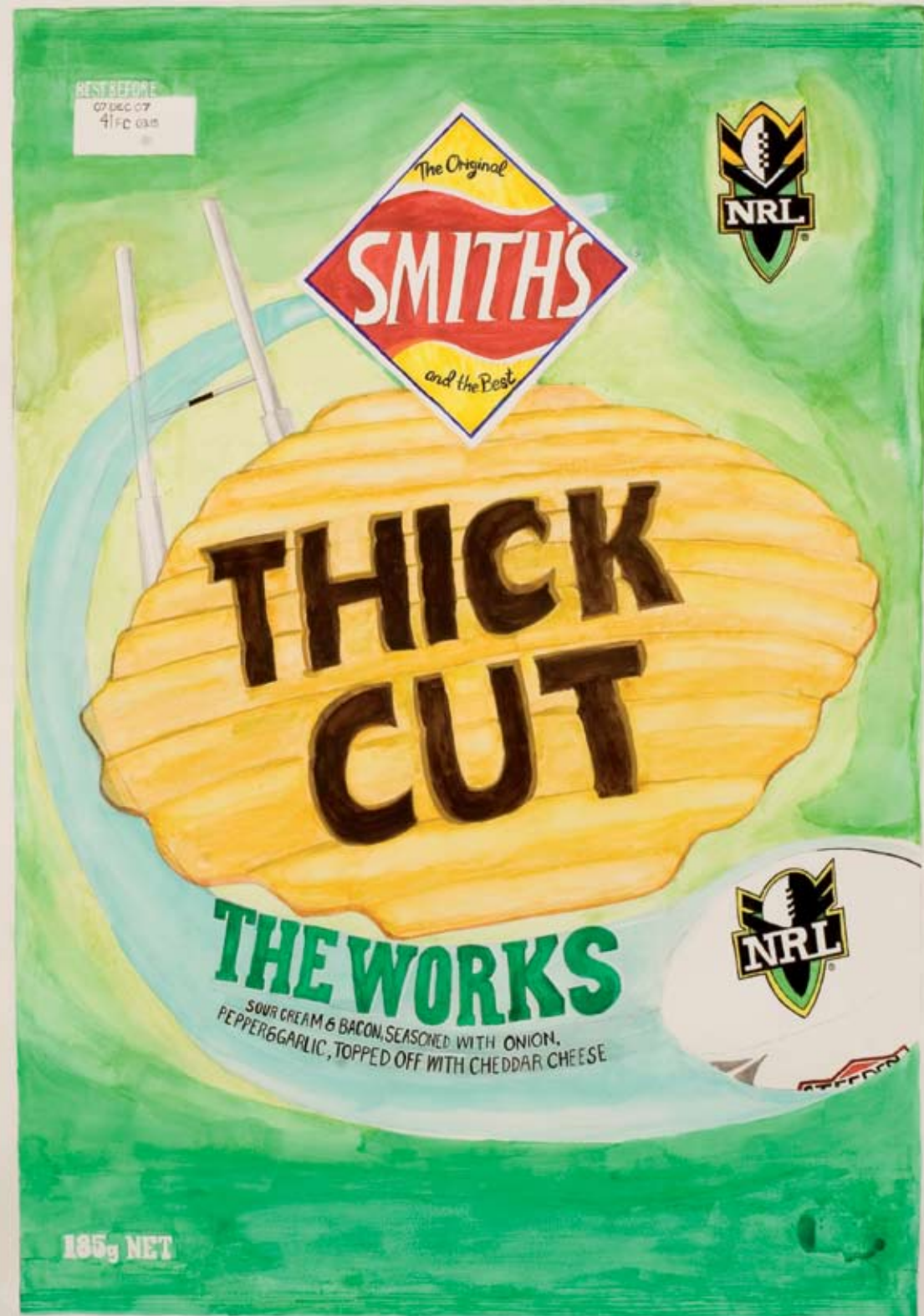
### Marise Williams

#### NOTE

1. As I write this I am reminded of television news coverage of APEC 2007 which showed a policeman (not 'politeman') excessively, forcefully pushing a female photographer backwards so hard that she flew through the air and hit the ground on her butt with a thud. The visual accompanied by the sounds of "Wooahh" from the shocked (mostly male) onlookers (protesters) is difficult to forget. Every time the footage was broadcast I felt the same way. Were we more affected because it was a woman who bore the brunt of such physically charged offensive behaviour?

*Self portrait in junk food*, 2007  
watercolour painting, cardboard,  
perspex, plastics  
1200 x 880 cm

PHOTO: SILVERSALT PHOTOGRAPHY



LOVE BIZZO SALLY MONTA SPORTS GYM  
RON BENNETT MARY MONTA  
THE BAS MARY MONTA  
NOODLE INN MARY MONTA  
COOPEOTANCE GUESSES DAVID  
OTHER SIDE VEST GUESSES DAVID  
GOLDBENBRISTLES BLUE STRONG  
BILKSONS TYREPLUS HOUSE  
VCHLORSHENK GENERAL PAWIS COOKS  
ONALS SPANAWEST MAGGIE SWEET  
TS ESPRITO DESSECRETS THE WIN  
ONALS SPANAWEST MAGGIE SWEET



pp. 68-69  
*My store* 2007  
 hot glue  
 1.5m x 700  
 PHOTO: CRAIG BENDER

above  
*Do I have the guts to video the fitness  
 places at night, through the windows,  
 all those people burning their fat off  
 and making their muscles stronger?*  
 2007  
 stills from DVD, 15 mins

**BRAND NAMES IN CERAMICS**

Sarah Goffman would like to thank the following participants of the ceramic component of her residency at Hazelhurst:

Gabrielle Murphy  
 Brennan Honey  
 Eleni Kinnear  
 Chris Warten  
 Natalia Rust  
 Alex Wright  
 Lorraine Leong  
 Melissa  
 Emily  
 Nona 'Superstar' Hayes  
 Maeghan  
 Denise Anderson  
 Natalia  
 Janet McCawley  
 Jessica Syed  
 Elizabeth Bourikov  
 Ashlee Hill  
 Cassandra Ma  
 Lana Kraichuk  
 Raymond Wang  
 Paris Langtry  
 Jahnai Harris  
 My Nguyen  
 Grace Goodhew  
 Jenna Peacock  
 Phillip Ricao  
 Anne Marie Jukic  
 Claire Glover  
 Jane Polkinghorne  
 Nana Ohnesorge  
 Jamyka  
 Evie



right  
 Stills from the *Our Lucky Country*  
 (*still different*) DVD, which documents  
 16 artists working in and around  
 the Sutherland Shire and at the  
 Hazelhurst Arts Centre in 2007.  
 Directed, edited and produced by Lisa  
 Andrew. DV PAL (1.067) 4:3, 60 mins

# MICHELLE HANLIN

## MICHELET – HANLIN

*Note on the text: all directly quoted from various translations of Jules Michelet.*

Under these chivalric forms<sup>1</sup> – fantastic arabesques and dazzling pageantries of light, magical scrolls of fire<sup>2</sup> – the young girl,<sup>3</sup> a being eminently electrical,<sup>4</sup> initiated an attempt to conquer the religious future.<sup>5</sup> Protracted warfare had changed men into wild beasts; now it was necessary to change these brutalized creatures into men again, into Christians, into obedient subjects.<sup>6</sup> The people were beside themselves; they had cast off all fear; they were drunk with religion and war, in one of those formidable fits of fanaticism during which men are ready to do anything, to believe anything, hardly less terrible to their friends than to their foes.<sup>7</sup> Most people did not know why they were fighting.<sup>8</sup>

It is the small port of Saint-Georges<sup>9</sup> that evoked those waves of gold, that streaming wealth of golden hair, which Van Eyck, the famous court painter of Philip the Good, lovingly spread over the shoulders of his holy women. Everyone saw in the new order the apotheosis of blond beauty, the youthful luscious beauty of the North, in despite of the South's dark beauties.<sup>10</sup> How grand a part does it play as the arbiter between races and empires.<sup>11</sup> Before me, that enormous sparkling basin of the sea; ... metallic flashes which by

day are blinding.<sup>12</sup> An ineffable bluishness ... a sacred ether.<sup>13</sup> During the battle of the two sources of light, the air's prodigious transparency permitted me to see and hear for incredible distances: ... everything was revealed with the most delicate precision. I had extra senses. ... A limpid, austere moment, and so pure.<sup>14</sup> These fairy mountains have assumed quite another physiognomy.<sup>15</sup> Their sublimity consists in the radiance, the glowing hues, the fantastic lightings with which they are incessantly crowned by the rugged southern world they conceal.<sup>16</sup>

The community<sup>17</sup> of Saint-Georges<sup>18</sup> [has] been endowed at its first foundation<sup>19</sup> with a caricature of evidence<sup>20</sup> both ordinary and extraordinary<sup>21</sup> (e.g. drums beating, flags flying)<sup>22</sup> worthy of the highest artistic purposes.<sup>23</sup> Under so many pedantic ornaments and trappings of sentimental morality,<sup>24</sup> the young girl created, so to speak, her own ideas<sup>25</sup> – possible loopholes of escape<sup>26</sup> – turned them into realities, made them entities, powers.<sup>27</sup> Their mad ostentation<sup>28</sup> blow[s] into precocious flame the spark of naughtiness<sup>29</sup> and a grotesque remedy<sup>30</sup> is accomplished.<sup>31</sup> Full of lovingkindness,<sup>32</sup> [it] will turn out an apt go-between.<sup>33</sup>

Amanda Rowell



## NOTES

1. Jules Michelet, *Joan of Arc*, (first published 1853) trans. Albert Guérard, University of Michigan Press, 2000. 58

2. Jules Michelet, *The Bird*, (first published 1856) trans. W.H. Davenport Adams, London: Wildwood House. 135

3. *Joan of Arc*, 9.

4. *The Bird*, 182.

5. Jules Michelet quoted in *Mother Death: The Journal of Jules Michelet 1815–1850*, trans. and ed. Edward K. Kaplan, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984. 164.

6. *Joan of Arc*, 25.

7. *ibid.*, 29.

8. *Mother Death*, 170.

9. Jules Michelet, 'La Mer', in *La Nature*, (first published 1861) Bibliothèque Larousse, 1930. 150 (unpub. trans. A. Rowell)

10. *Joan of Arc*, 58.

11. Jules Michelet, *The Mountain*, (first published 1868) trans. W.H. Davenport Adams, T. Nelson and Sons, Edinburgh, 1872. 74.

12. Jules Michelet, *La Sorcière* (first published 1862) quoted in Roland Barthes, *Michelet*, trans. Richard Howard, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. 50.

13. *ibid.*, 49.

14. *ibid.*, 49.

15. *The Mountain*, 91.

16. *ibid.*, 91.

17. Jules Michelet, *Satanism and Witchcraft: A Study in Medieval Superstition*, (first published 1862) trans. A.R. Allinson, New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1939. 196.

18. 'La Mer', 150.

19. *Satanism and Witchcraft*, 196.

20. *ibid.*, 144.

21. *ibid.*, 187.

22. *ibid.*, 198.

23. *The Mountain*, 280.

24. *Satanism and Witchcraft*, 123.

25. *Joan of Arc*, 9.

26. *Satanism and Witchcraft*, 154.

27. *Joan of Arc*, 9.

28. *Satanism and Witchcraft*, 122.

29. *ibid.*, 123.

30. *ibid.*, 123.

31. *The Bird*, 64.

32. *Satanism and Witchcraft*, 137.

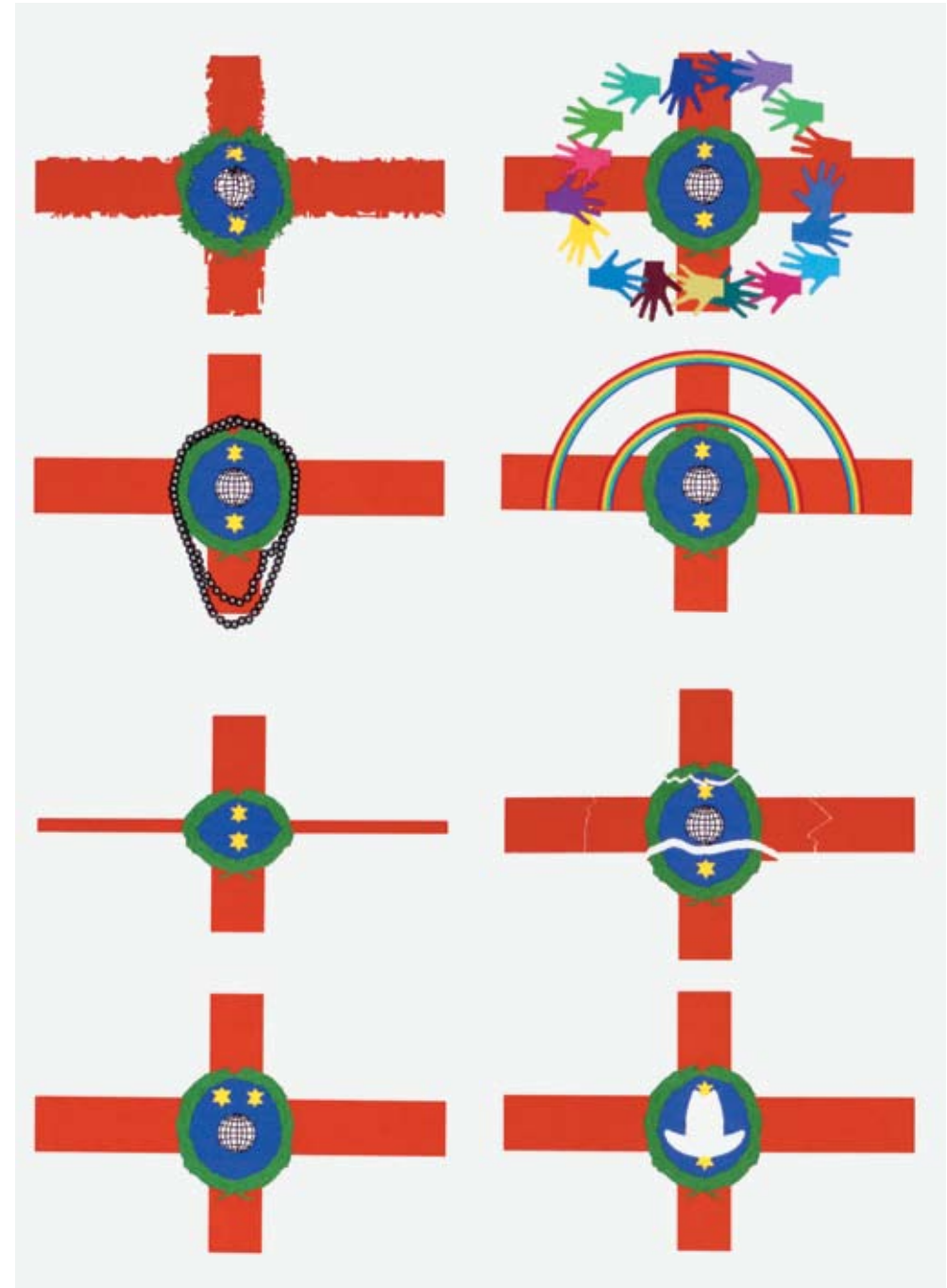
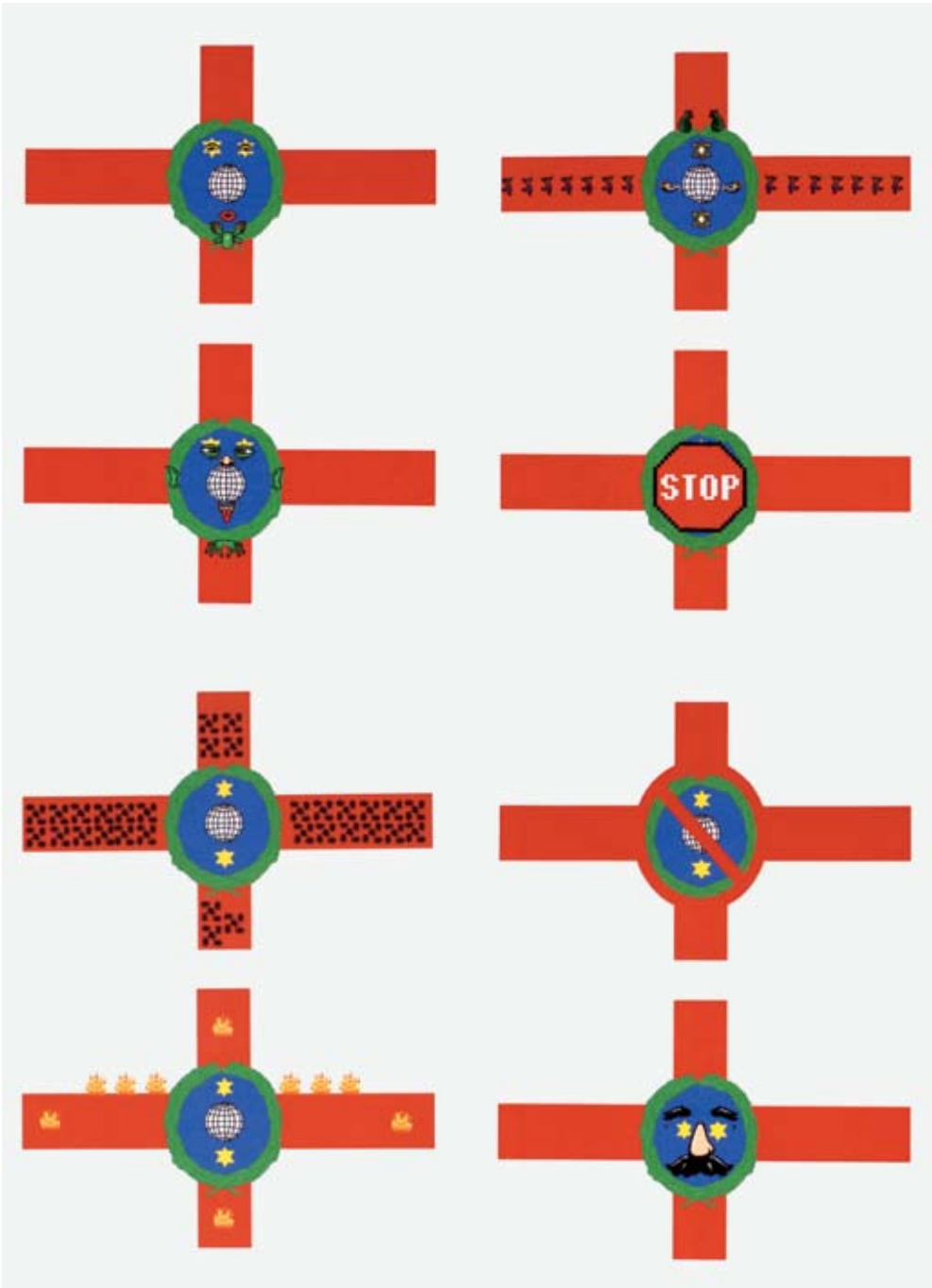
33. *ibid.*, 120.

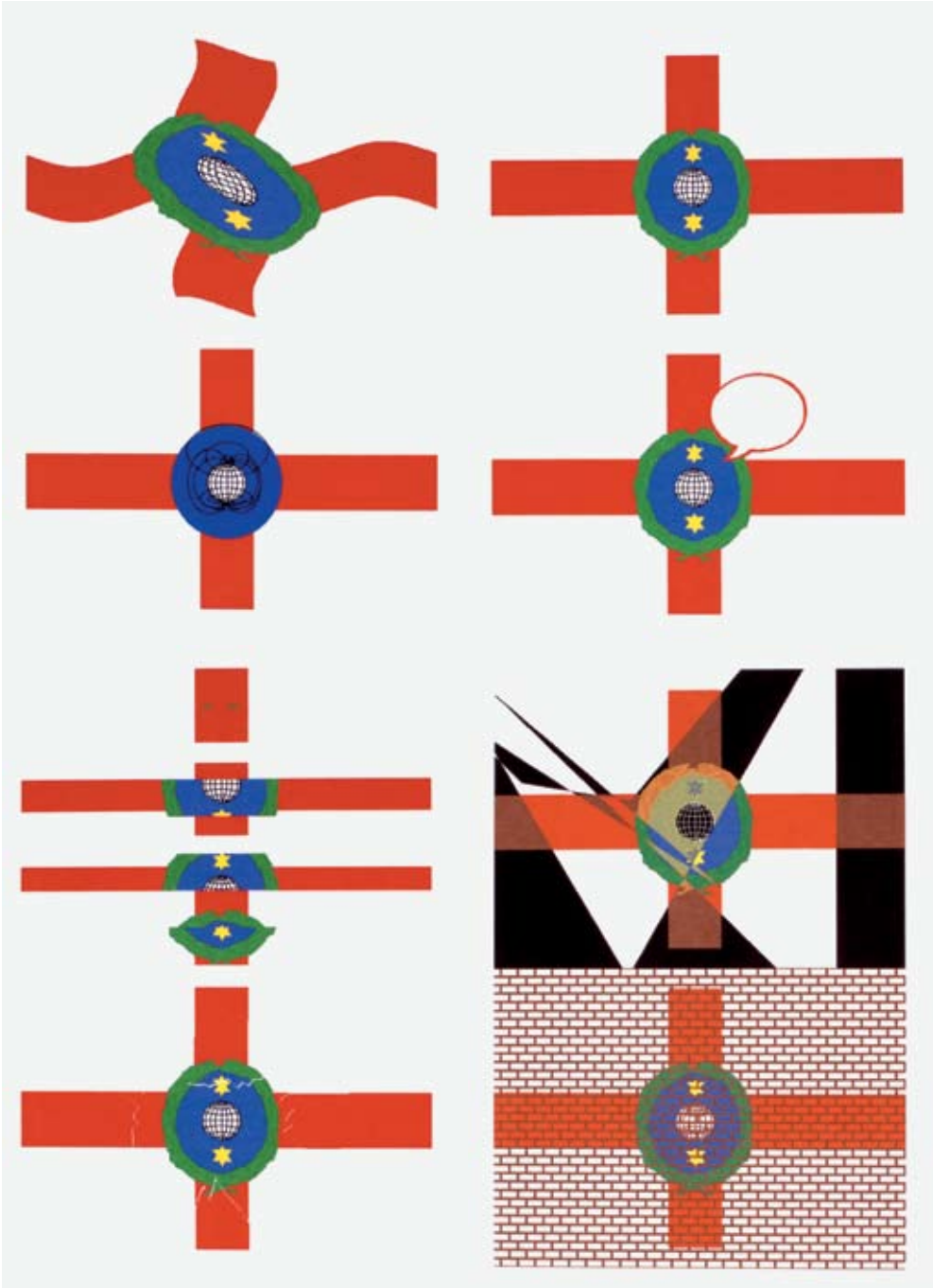
p. 75  
*Red Haring*, 2007  
 pencil on paper, 21 x 30 cm  
 PHOTOS PP. 75-81: SILVERSALT PHOTOGRAPHY

pp. 76-80  
*Flags 1-38*, 2007  
 computer generated images using  
 Kidpix Deluxe, 9.5 x 15 cm each









*Hairy Situation*, 2007  
pencil on paper, 21 x 30 cm

# RUARK LEWIS

## IN CONVERSATION WITH AARON SEETO

From: A Seeto  
Date: Fri, 21 Sep 2007 17:13:19 +1000  
To: Ruark  
Subject: Thinking about silence

I've been thinking about the work that was included in *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, *Euphemisms for a Riotous Suburb* that was documentation of a performance you made in what looked like the streets around your studio. In it you blocked off a street with one of your yellow barricades and began to (what I can only describe as) speak in tongues.

I was thinking about this idea of speaking in tongues, of a divinely inspired speech that is unintelligible, undecipherable, unsyntactic. Then I began thinking about the melodic, phrase structure of an auctioneer whose repetitious and hypnotic chatter encourages us to bid. I was thinking about their similarities.

I thought it was a very interesting thing to include in the exhibition. In the aftermath of the Cronulla riots we heard a variety of voices in the media and on the street which were angry, fearful, confused as well as voices asking us to be orderly and many other stupid voices. I wondered why you chose (or why Ron and George Adams chose) a work whose text was audibly unintelligible? I think it was a very interesting move. Especially in the context of an exhibition that asked artists to enunciate concerns – in a way, to speak from the margins.

And then again, during the artist talks that occurred, when other artists were speaking about a sense of shared cultural experience, of victimisation and suffering based on, in my opinion, dangerously generalised experiences of a literalised 'difference'. You chose to recite poetry – a concrete poem based on things you had collected and even overheard. I wondered what I would have done? Would I have been seduced by the opportunity to speak about my work? Or, as I

sensed you did, allowed myself to ask what happens when you 'turn off' the narrative? What happens when you allow other people to speak, when you remain silent? This is what the poem stirred up in me.

I remember speaking to Nuha Saad after her artist talk and we had a very productive conversation where I was trying to work through some of the confusions that I had been feeling, which in a way came out of the Cronulla riots. I was concerned that her work, which she described as being a type of metaphoric 'safe haven', may reconstruct the sites of violence from which she is metaphorically taking refuge. There is an irony, which I cannot quite resolve, that perhaps by creating a safe house within a gallery you speak to no one, you create a safe place within a safe place. I kept on thinking about the image of 'the lucky country' that emerges from popular rhetoric and the lines from the national anthem which describe this landmass as being 'girt' by sea. Isolated? Disconnected?

I think Nuha thought I was being critical, and in a way I was, because it is something I find very interesting and its something I know a lot of artists continually ask themselves: how do you avoid reinscribing the hegemony when you choose to speak, when you choose to articulate an intention or when you choose to try and change something? Nuha went on to say that her residency in the community would hopefully allow her to think through some of these issues.

I keep thinking about authority and speech, which I wrote about last time – the authority in speech, the authority to speak, who speaks, who speaks for whom? And I also think about the numbness you felt at the lack of action and response from your colleagues to the particular events at Cronulla. The exhibition throws up a lot of questions to its artists about marginality and



*Silence is Golden*, 2007  
acrylic stencil on cotton,  
60 x 100 cm

pp. 84–85  
*Euphemisms for a Riotous Suburb*,  
*MONEY Cronulla Street*, 2007  
stills from video, approx. 35 mins  
CAMERA PP. 84–89: SAM JAMES

pp. 86–87  
*Euphemisms for a Riotous Suburb*,  
*DISTANCE OF TYRANNY/ TYRANNY OF*  
*DISTANCE, Gunnamatta Park*, 2007  
stills from video, approx. 35 mins



community, and these are very big topics. Reading back through your texts, I think *Euphemisms* is an answer back, a response that holds up for observation the range of nascent prejudices that lurk in both speech and silence.

PS How is Singapore?

**From:** A Seeto  
**Date:** Tue, 11 Sep 2007 20:29:06 +1000  
**To:** Ruark  
**Subject:** Re: An Index of the Body – some ideas today...

I have been thinking about what to write to you about this place that seems to fascinate us both. I have been thinking about this idea of silence that you talk about at the end of your note. But maybe I have been thinking about silence in a couple of different ways, firstly with regard to the process of writing. I really have to begin by saying that I find email correspondence frustrating because the formulation and ordering of words that goes into making sentences and replies is different to having a conversation with you or even writing something with no expectation of a reply.

The frustrating thing is that though I am writing to you, I am also writing to myself, the gaps between my response and then your response is much more drawn out than in a conversation. As I write I wonder how you might respond; I have a self conscious awareness of my own language and I wonder where next in the string of thoughts that might make up our conversation. And I suppose we haven't even really begun. In a way I think I am really talking to myself.

I think I said this to you last time we spoke. When we see projects that attempt to 'look at' an issue, perhaps there is a futility in speaking. What could be said, who would you be talking to? I said this with a kind of cynical jest, what do people really want to hear, or see anyway? Who is it that people might expect to speak? This whole idea of speech and its interrelated silence is something that fascinates me. Who speaks? Who speaks for whom? Maybe it's about a type of politics of community, about ownership, and authority in speech. I wonder what would happen if we allowed ourselves to be silent? What stupidities or profound things might unravel before our eyes and ears? Silence may still be writing the disaster. Silence as action.

Something I have read haunts me. We have spoken about it briefly before:

To read, to write, the way one lives under the surveillance of the disaster: exposed to the passivity that is outside passion. The heightening of forgetfulness.

*It is not you who will speak; let the disaster speak in you, even if it be by your forgetfulness or silence (Blanchot).*

The slowness of my reply to you is partly because I have been trying to find a bit of an email I wrote to you when this event was freshest in my mind. I thought it might be helpful to remember it but I can't find it. I just remember I felt like I no longer wanted to talk because there was no expectation of participation. Or maybe it was because the expected participation was about reaffirming membership to a community I have never belonged to. And still there is much more to be said...

On 2/9/07 2:07 PM, "Ruark" <ruarklewis@hotmail.com> wrote:

Hello Aaron  
 I was at Cronulla and Taren Point on Wednesday afternoon to shoot more performances with Lisa Andrew. We got some really nice takes of the concrete poem I composed called *GO HOME*.

I am working on another series I have called *AN INDEX OF KINDNESS*. Last night I started shooting *An Index of the Body*. There is perhaps no connection between these images and my work in Cronulla and for what I am heading off to Singapore to do next week is develop further these *Indexes* in a residency at p-10.<sup>1</sup>

The main thrust of my Cronulla project has been a simple list of 53 euphemisms. These have provided the guts of *Euphemisms for a Riotous Suburb*. When I worked with choreographer Alan Schacher at Carriageworks during May and June on his *A Babel Project*, I read Umberto Eco's *In Search of the Perfect Language*. Here the myth of Babel maps out the form where once a unity of language/s break down, and from where communication and difference became the universal conundrum it is now. I guess this mythic moment is the point where semantics, gesture and meaning is said to have led to the many destructive outcomes in world history. Philosophers are sometimes described as being the tool-box mechanics that work at attempting to re-assemble the unity of this genesis of understanding and language. Their semiotic understandings profoundly located in our mythologies and their theological search for both commonalities and difference.



The philosopher aspires to a form where one language may again be required to solve the problems of the planet.

So I am thinking about the manner of kindness in a paradoxical way. My tool-box is that of the museum-collector of sorts. My photographs of the body are better called profiles that record the character and essence of things that I chance upon in life. My figure theatrically gestures to this *kind* of understanding.

Now to Cronulla: it might be that these 53 *Euphemistic* phrases are really kinds of specific expressions. Relating as they do to a time and place in history, I have captured some of the gesture of that moment: on a Sunday afternoon in Cronulla, December 13, 2005. I assessed this list of public sentiments and think of them as being two distinct kinds. One becomes an expression against civil disobedience and the other voices support for the actions of a riotous crowd. (I remembered reading *Crowds and Power* by Elias Canetti when I lived in Cronulla in the 70s). My collection of citizens' opinions remains stark, often crudely phrased and non-poetic. Not really the sort of thing expected of art. I thought these writings by the public, appearing as they do on the *ninemsn* website the following day of the

riots, had given me access to the broad range of social responses that we could expect of Australian society in the future.

My criteria was literal and came from reading Donald Horne's seminal work *The Lucky Country*. From the web letters, I selected phrases that in their way acknowledged the haphazard nature of getting ahead in life and a citizen's sense of personal destiny or insecurity. Maybe this represents what we think of as the contemporary *Australian Dream*. It was texts like Donald Horne's and Robin Boyd's *The Australian Ugliness* that I read when I was growing up in sunny Cronulla in the 70s. For me, these texts were signposts to the urbane, from an ideal that has evolved as an interest in things like town-planning and the history of the municipal – a plan for a place physically denser in the future, not more spread-out and sub-urban.

Texts are sometimes the sentinels for a young person developing ideas slowly on their own. When I use the word 'criteria' I think of a critical framework that an artist uses to synthesise selected information that informs their aural, literary and visual renderings or perceptions. Artists are allowed to use confusing systems to make their art because they emerge as the product of such criteria.



Often the artist's instincts generate the most fascinating patterns, processes and procedures of all. As I set out and planned my various works for Hazelhurst this year I realised it would never be the collective show I dreamed of, which would ideally negotiate the thematic through-lines as an artist-run-initiative should when dealing with social history. I observed that the politics surrounding this exhibition had become obscure and even bizarre.

That the NSW Government and the Police Dept. Reports i, ii, iii, iv, called "Strike Force Neil" had been such a public disaster. I understand but don't accept the inept statements by Prime Minister Howard – who believed that 5000 uncivil people did not represent a 'riot'. What a disaster Cronulla had become for Police Minister Carl Scully, who fell from high office over that report. Scapegoats or was it just a form of denial? To try and document the actualities of the 'incident' I printed red posters to deface in public places around the suburb for I decided that Sculpture = Agit-prop. This sense of not speaking can be translated like a virus to Silence = Death. As a disabled person I dragged my painted objects (agit-props) behind me in the performances at North Cronulla, and in Cronulla Street and at Gunnamatta Park. In those performances

I return to the actual locations of the riot scene. They are the same skies and parks and streets that fill my childhood memories of that place in the 1960s. So I made the *Banalities for the Barricades* and all the supplementary nonsense vocal works because I thought the establishment in Sutherland doesn't want to listen or hear anything. They are like all revisionists. They hope this ugliness will just go away. Disappear. Be Silent. To some extent it will in time. I made yellow handbills saying *GO HOME* because what else is there to do when you realise this is the same location where in 1770 the European invasion into the indigenous homelands began. It seems strange that no Aboriginal Australians have been asked to work on the two *Our Lucky Country* exhibitions. What's so different?

Recently I started making small yellow flags saying *SILENCE IS GOLDEN*. These works first appeared in Singapore, and were designed to function as a reminder about how the citizen's right to voice opinions in opposition in the democratic elected totalitarian state of Singapore. Real political opposition there is systematically denied. I have been wondering if my recent work has been influenced by my feelings about race conflicts in Cronulla. In Singapore I stencilled a banner that I called *QUOTE*.



With the words of the Indian scholar Ashish Nandy it said, "It was a strange mix of love and hate affirmations of continuity and difference nostalgia and a sense of betrayal on both sides".<sup>2</sup> Could that same sentiment be applied to this situation? Singapore is a government that effectively silences and/or detains its political resistance, squashes its dissident voices and tries to remove any effective opposition to their endless regime. Things politically are erased. They disappear just the same way that the Cronulla riot here is being silenced and erased.

I have decided to collect piles of garbage (the 'white trash') and this will act like a nest for my childhood memories of the area. I will position this detritus conceptually in the gallery vitrines and call it art. In a way this assembly of separate objects is meant to relay meaning across the installation space and co-influence the audience's perceptions by using allegorical devices. They become a sort of decoy or signal that might allow us to perceive 'things' as the truth ever further.

I think these pieces should be my signals to a living history (an extended metaphor) a poke in the eye to the polite museuming that this *pogrom by the sea* has become.<sup>3</sup> When I went to my archive I looked at the copies of the manipulated board games made to look-like Monopoly with the streets names

changed to those around the North Cronulla Hotel such as Gerrale St, The Kingsway, Elouera Rd. Embedded in the board game were racial taunts taken directly from right wing extremist slogans circulated at the riot. I was numb. A *Silence* came over my artist-colleagues too. Their avoidance of the terms and references that reflect the Cronulla riots and its aftermath is unsettling. Maybe these were the tools that no one would show us how to use. There was such a resistance to examine and explore the facts surrounding the riots in the Sutherland Shire that I went about assembling a research tool-kit for our group of artists to use at [http://ourluckycountry.blog-city.com/our\\_lucky\\_country.htm](http://ourluckycountry.blog-city.com/our_lucky_country.htm)

Perhaps the riotous claim for the rights of the *local* is legitimate. When it comes to this matter no local artists were invited onto this exhibition platform to articulate the actual issues that socially affect the Shire's sense of community values. In a sense the question we began to ask remains unanswered.

But this reminds me of my early years in the Shire: where the social politics around racial and physical discrimination had us wogs always in the un-winnable situation. As the victims, in the street or in the school playground or in the work place or at the beaches this was something that created



profound sadness. Nowhere could we speak. As a young Australian, racial discrimination was something you were just supposed to accept and we had to grin and bear it. Any resistance, any complaint, any protest at all from us was met with surprise by the agitators who with some surprise would say, "Oh come on, I was only joking". Those Anglos always had that same parochial response to our more cosmopolitan dissident voices. No one ever would discuss it openly. But as you probably know, Aaron, it has always been this way and it always will be *just a joke* – one that comes and goes in that same and singular direction. Maybe *Our Lucky Country (still different)* can be the stage to balance out a sense of that sort of argument.

So it goes today and I felt like writing this note to you.

*This text was developed via email as the writers travelled between Sydney, Singapore and New Zealand. The emails appear in reverse chronological order.*

*A vocal-collage recorded for radio by the artist, will be broadcast on Sunday 16 December 2007 at 8.30pm on the ABC Radio National (576AM in Sydney) program The Night Air.*

#### NOTES

1. p-10 is an artist-run-initiative at 10 Perumal Street, Little India, Singapore. The exhibition *AN INDEX OF KINDNESS* was held at Post-Museum in Rowell Street Little India, and featured three indexes from the series, being *An Index of Silence*, artist-book, *An Index of Emotions*, audio collage with vocal artist Amanda Stewart, and *An Index of Line*, wall drawings with collaborating artist Jonathon Jones. This project was part of the Asialink program Run-Artists-Run. For more information see [http://www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/our\\_work/arts/visual\\_artscrafts/exhibition\\_touring\\_program/visual\\_arts\\_exhibition\\_program/run\\_artist\\_run\\_artist\\_run\\_initiatives](http://www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/our_work/arts/visual_artscrafts/exhibition_touring_program/visual_arts_exhibition_program/run_artist_run_artist_run_initiatives)
2. Ashish Nandy in discussion with Phillip Darby, "The Darker Side of Modernity", *Postcolonising the International*, University of Hawaii Press, 2006, 106.
3. *Pogrom by the Sea* refers to an article by the genocide expert Dr Dirk Moses called *Pogrom Talk* available at <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=4038>

*Euphemisms for a Riotous Suburb, I COME FROM A WOG BACKGROUND/ NOW PEOPLE ARE SCARED, North Cronulla Beach, 2007  
stills from video, approx. 35 mins*

# ADAM NORTON

## BACK IN BLACK

I was at home thinking about what to wear while watching an old black and white film about blond alien children invading a village in England. The alien children had just telepathically forced a man to drive his car into a brick wall, and a local mob was assembling. It was not the best mob I had ever seen in a film but it wasn't bad. I looked down at my Day-Glo smiley acid house T-shirt and realised I couldn't go there wearing it. 'There' was The Institute of Contemporary Arts. I had never been there before, but this night, a friend of a friend's band was playing as part of a 'private view' which apparently meant the opening of an exhibition. It was free drinks and the bar was open until one. That was not my only reason for going.

1. There was a cute girl who would be there who I had recently begun to obsess over.

2. Via some very muddy thinking and a strange twist of fate I had just 'won' a place at art school, and as such thought I should check out the enemy.

I had never been to an art gallery before, let alone a 'private view', but I imagined this would be a good place to ingratiate myself amongst my new host culture. I had decided not to stand out, and attempt to look like one of them. In my limited experience of what they called the art world (which was solely based upon a one hour interview at art school), a lot of black was worn. Even the kids I saw arriving and leaving, lugging their portfolios about for their interviews, were dressed in black. It was not difficult to deduce that black was the camouflage that was needed.

The film ended with an explosion and the implication that the alien menace had been quashed. I went to my bedroom, got dressed into the best version of black I could assemble and headed into town.

The free ticket worked a dream and I was soon sloping around the ICA, glass in hand,

looking not so much at the art, but at the people, almost uniformly dressed in black. For once, I had got the uniform right. I fitted right in.

That was until someone turned to me and said, "We are running a bit low, can you get more wine out here?" Although I had no idea who this person was, the idea of liberating wine from the bar was a good one. She was also the first person who had spoken to me all night. I went to the bar and asked for more wine "You're new", he said. The bar man had rumbled me. "Err yes I am, my first opening", I replied. He passed a tray of wine and told me not to spill any.

My friends never turned up and I found myself spending the night serving wine to the art world. I had obviously chosen the wrong type of black.

## Simon Hollington

*Camouflage Suit – 'Skull & Crossbones', 2007*  
fabric, zip, elastic, cord, size: Male, XL





*Camouflage Suit – 'Flowers & Leaves',*  
2007  
fabric, zip, elastic, cord, size: Male, XL





*Camouflage Suit – 'Original'*, 2005  
fabric, zip, elastic, cord, size: Male, XL

pp. 96-97  
*Camouflage Suit – 'Concrete & Brick'*,  
2007  
fabric, zip, elastic, cord, size: Male, XL  
PHOTO: CRAIG BENDER



# NANA OHNESORGE

## INVISIBLE DIFFERENCE

Osama Bin Laden may be the current poster boy for America's most wanted list (and therefore, as overeager members of George W's coalition of the willing, ours too), and nobody thinks Saddam Hussein was a very nice guy, but these two recent perpetrators are barely in the same league as Adolf Hitler. Quick: name the most evil man of all time... Other badass dudes like Genghis Khan, Pol Pot and Slobodan Milosevic barely get a look in. A seemingly endless stream of TV repeats keeps Hitler up front and centre in the public consciousness. The little guy with the distinctive moustache casts a long shadow. He's got staying power.

Nana Ohnesorge is a blonde, white woman. You'd never know she's a migrant, until she opens her mouth. Her distinctive accent gives it away. Ohnesorge is German, and to be German is to live with Hitler's toxic legacy. Ohnesorge and her husband have been here twenty five years, their children were born and raised in Australia, yet the whole family has been subjected to ethnic vilification. Not often mind you; but being called a Nazi once is probably enough. And the point of all this is that being different isn't always highly visible. You don't have to be a burqa clad woman out for a stroll on Cronulla beach to find our lucky country less than welcoming, from time to time.

Having said all that, Ohnesorge was determined to emphasise the positive aspects of difference during her time in the Shire. Recognising the importance of food in people's pleasant experiences of other ethnicities, Ohnesorge turned to the German butcher in Kirrawee. She also explains that as an artist, "I like to play with stereotypes and put them out there, and Germans, sausages, well you know!"

Ohnesorge's painting, *Meat & Greet*, is a visual distillation of the two days she spent at the butcher shop interacting with the public. She conducted a loose customer survey and was pleased to find that, despite its reputation, Sutherland Shire isn't an Anglo

Only Zone. Ohnesorge happily discussed speciality meats with Greeks, Poles, Italians, Egyptians, Russians, Sri Lankans and of course, many fellow Germans.

Ohnesorge was also drawn to the Broadhurst family as people like herself, whose difference is not visible on their skin. Ben and Hazel Broadhurst were post war migrants from England. They should have been welcome additions to white Australia. But Ben, another family member, and one of their dogs, had psychic ability, and as a result, the locals found the Broadhursts suspect. Even so, the family bequeathed their estate, where the Regional Gallery now stands, to the Sutherland Shire. As Ohnesorge says, "Through the generosity of these outsiders the whole community benefits in this really amazing way". It's clear that, for her, this story is an example of the positive impact different people can have in Australia, even when mainstream society is reluctant to embrace them.

Nana Ohnesorge is optimistic about Australia's ability to accept difference, without being naïve. She is well aware that her transition from foreigner to citizen has been smoothed, despite the odd glitch, by the colour of her skin and her European heritage. Ohnesorge even copes well with the hiccups, those occasional derogatory slurs flung in her direction, saying, "If we can't learn from history, then we are lost". In fact, she cites the history of Germans in Australia as a source of hope, pointing out that sixty years ago her people were public enemy number one, locked up just for being German. Now they are an integrated part of society, making a contribution. Ohnesorge is optimistic, that, in time, the ethnic communities currently being demonised in Australia will come to be accepted too. If we are indeed a lucky country, she'll be right.

**Tracey Clement**





p. 99  
*Meat & Greet*, 2007  
 acrylic, oil, aerosol spray paint,  
 pigment pen & acrylic ink on canvas  
 213 x 167 cm

ALL PHOTOS PP. 99–105: CRAIG BENDER

*Self-portrait with Meat*, 2007  
 pigment pen, charcoal, ink, pencil,  
 graphite, colour pencil, acrylic ink &  
 stamp-ink on paper, 70 x 50 cm



*Carnivores*, 2007  
 ink, charcoal & acrylic ink on paper,  
 70 x 50 cm



this page, clockwise from top left  
*Love Combined*, 2007  
 pigment pen, acrylic ink & stamp-ink  
 on paper, 73 x 51 cm

*Werner, Jeff & Serge*, 2007  
 pigment pen & acrylic ink on paper,  
 73 x 51 cm

*Three*, 2007  
 acrylic ink, pigment pen & stamp-ink  
 on paper, 73 x 51 cm

opposite  
*Helmut*, 2007  
 collage, pigment pen, acrylic ink,  
 pastel, pencil & stamp-ink on paper,  
 73 x 51 cm





*At Rudi's*, 2007  
collage, pigment pen & stamp-ink on  
paper, 77 x 56 cm



*The Professionals*, 2007  
collage, pigment pen, acrylic ink &  
stamp-ink on paper, 77 x 56 cm

# ANNA PETERS

## THE VILLAGE IDIOT PROJECT

The Village Idiot, a close friend of Anna Peters, made many journeys into the Sutherland Shire to establish a two-way connection with the community. But one connection she would prefer to forget was with a car, somewhere in Miranda. Fortunately the Village Idiot only suffered a slight fracture to her ten centimetre platform shoes she sensibly gets around in. And gets around she does! One hot February day as she walked along the tram line in the Royal National Park, in an enchanting pair of red high heels, she was welcome to join in a local game of cricket being played not far from the line. But despite trying to play a serious game she was called the clown of the team, so threw a wobbly and stormed off, walking all the way to Bungoona Lookout. The immense view of the park with the Hacking River below made her realise that being a clown was her destiny, and that altitude can affect attitude. It's like shoes, she thought.

The Village Idiot often enjoys taking the bus down Kingsway with the guys who sometimes, like her, don't wear colourful hats. And there's something about that hat of hers! The Idiot says she bought it from a stall set up outside a podiatrist in a main street in Kirrawee. Apparently these hats make one communal. Since then she has been running around doing community art like nobody's business and now everybody's business seems to be hers. Peters did a telling drawing of the hat buying event, as told to her by the Village Idiot, where the hat seller appears like a magician. Peters went to Kirrawee to buy such a hat for herself – being a miserable recluse so well in need of one – but the seller and his hats were nowhere to be found and no one had even heard of him. Peters is often suspicious that the Village Idiot is a chronic liar.

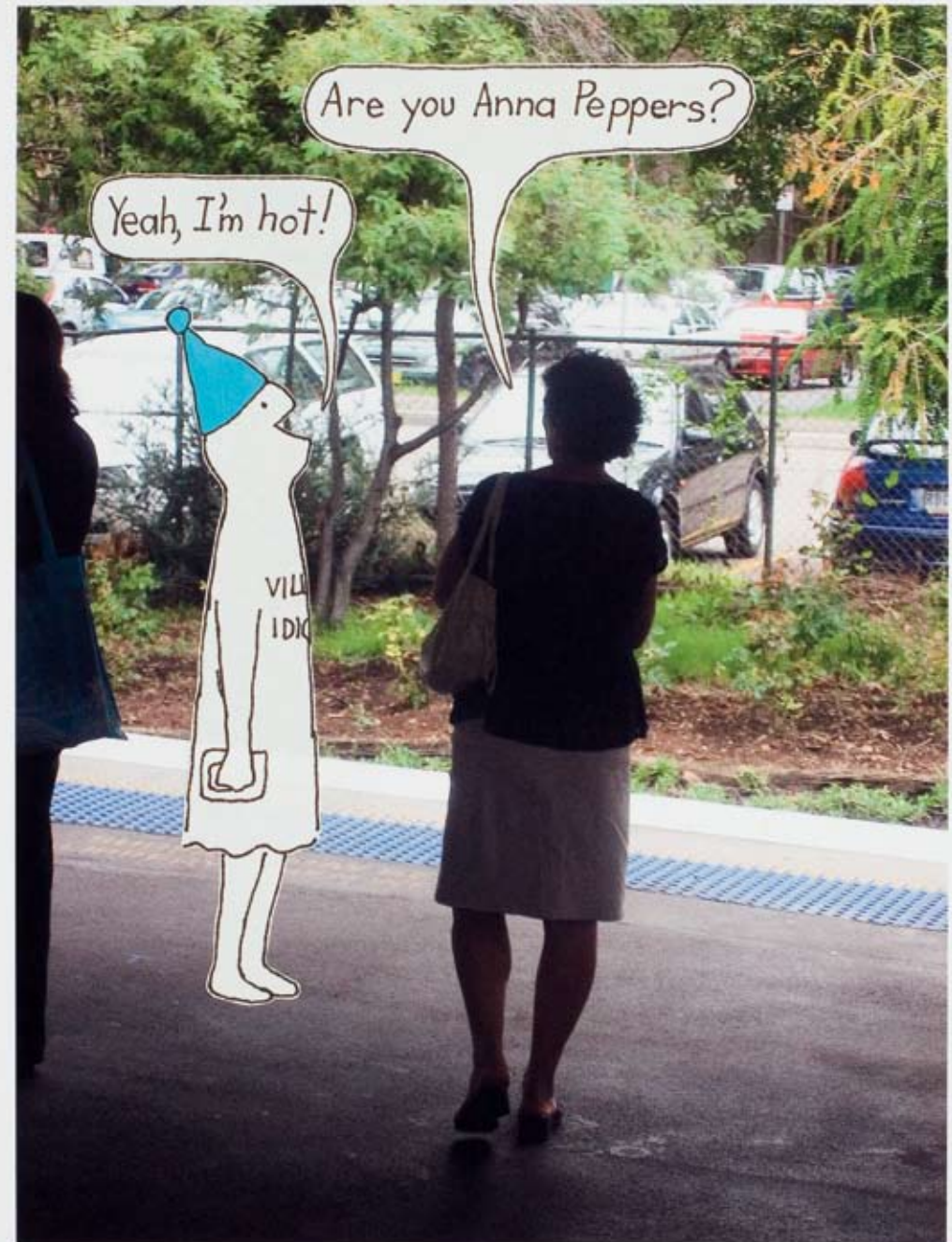
Peters would like to use this opportunity to insult some wooden-headed critics who wrote that her artwork is “minimal” and also

associated it with artists whose work is nothing like hers. Peters says these critics are “full of crap and it's absolute rubbish” and has ground her teeth down so far over this that she has sent them her dental bill. Whereas the Village Idiot claims she couldn't care less about inconsequential commentators and says, “In the darkest hour of the night I wake up and have a good laugh”.

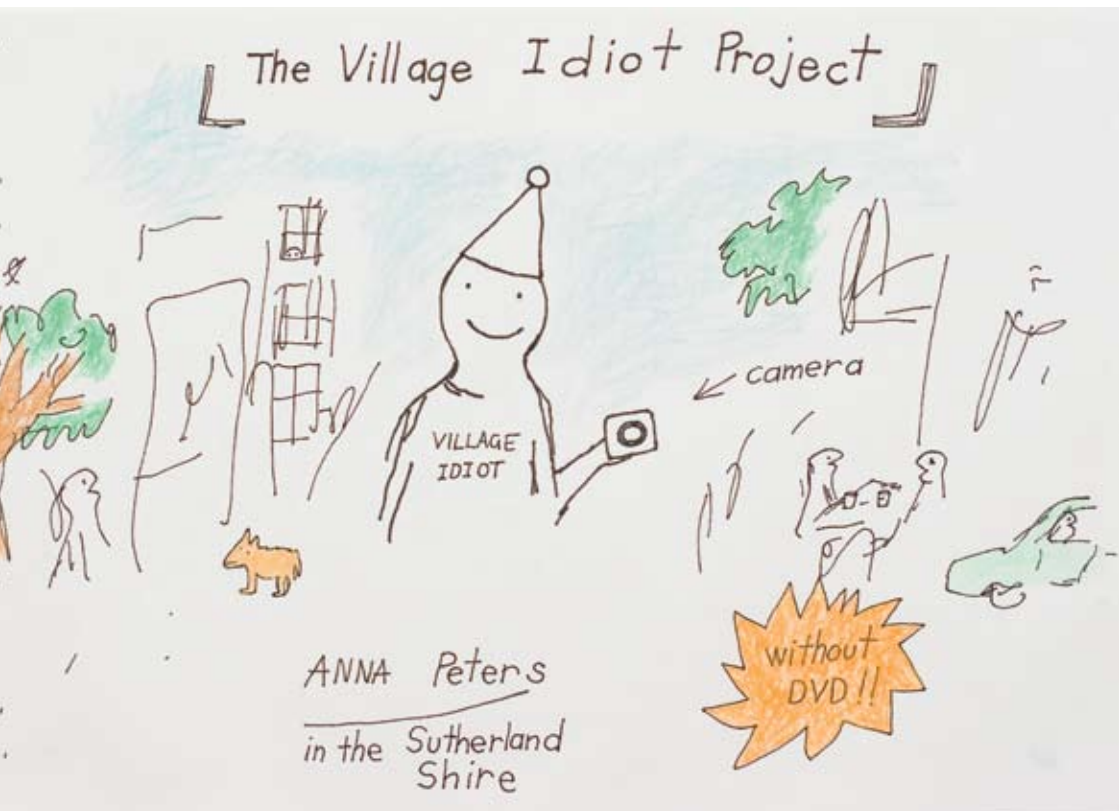
I'd like to conclude with a mention of Peters' forthcoming book, *The Back Cover*, which includes 180 selected photographs taken during her 2007 *Village Idiot Project* in the Sutherland Shire and is an accompaniment to her work for *Our Lucky Country (still different)*. Here Peters demonstrates how to be a well-mannered photographer by taking photographs of people's backs, and apparently these photos resulted from her inability to confront people with her camera. This well observed collection is an antidote to paparazzi hysteria – at last, a timid photographer! It also includes quintessentially polite photographs where people are but a tiny blob in the far distance. Entrancing.

**Dan H. Sturel**

*Meeting fans at Miranda Station, 2007*  
colour photograph on matte photo  
paper, pen, paper, acrylic paint,  
30 x 21 cm



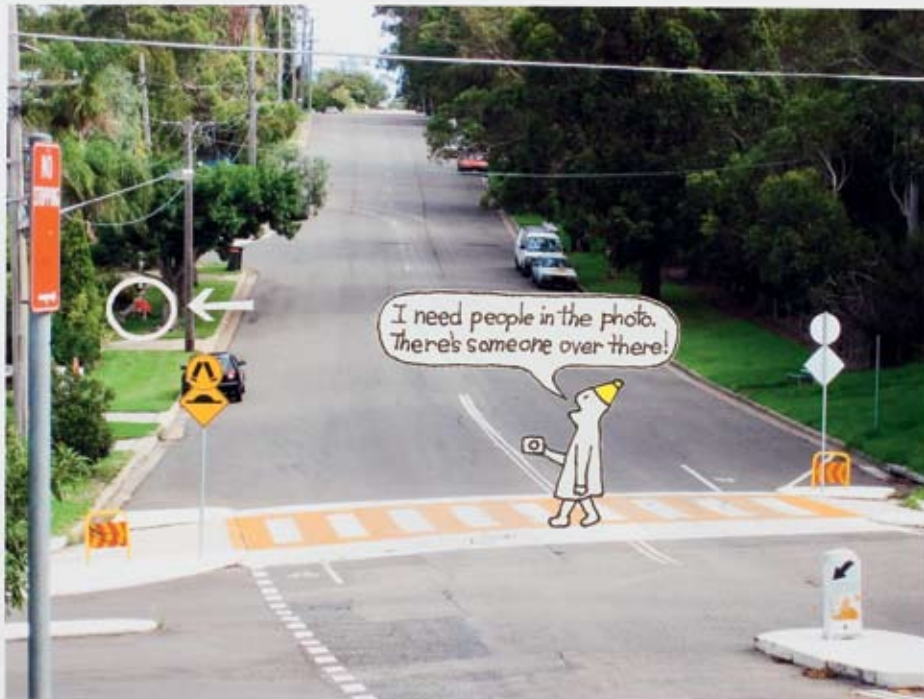
Meeting fans at Miranda Station



Doing community work for the sight impaired

Miranda Station





Attunga Road, Yowie Bay



Boyle St. Sutherland

*I need people in the photo*, 2007  
 colour photograph on matte photo paper,  
 pen, paper, acrylic paint, 21 x 30 cm

*So why are you always gambling?*, 2007  
 colour photograph on matte photo  
 paper, pen, paper, 21 x 30 cm



Having morning tea with Conservation Volunteer workers at Kurnell

## NUHA SAAD

Nuha Saad is intrigued by how our thoughts and behaviour are influenced by often unconscious reactions to spatial and colour stimuli. Her practice has for some time explored how the visceral response we have to colour – its immediacy, apparent irrationality and intensity – interrelates with our embodied experience of spatial delimitations, both the general way in which architecture guides and moulds our movements, but also our perception of specific places cathected with memory and particular identities. Her explorations have taken the form of sculptural ‘paintings’ (or painterly installations) that combine household interior design elements such as skirting boards and balustrades, and graded colours, ‘diluted’ with white.

One significant earlier series (that included *Pegasus Ace*, *Jubilant* and *Cosmobil Ace*) saw Saad draw on her reactions to the huge container vessels docked in her vicinity, whose towering walls of rusted colour and romantic names became associated with her parents’ migration by boat from their native Lebanon. Another work comprised the poetic clumping of brightly coloured turned wood or finials found in the typical Victorian cottages in which so many mid-20th century migrant families grew up. Saad’s composition foregrounded the pieces’ graceful arabesques, thus complicating received ideas of Australian suburbia with a touch of Orientalism. In Saad’s works, ordinary architectural elements are decontextualised and reworked to explore how spatial features and colour work together to construct a sense of place, a cultural identity even. Thus, what might at first appear to be work predominantly concerned with questions of form and the nature of painting opens up broader social and political dialogues.

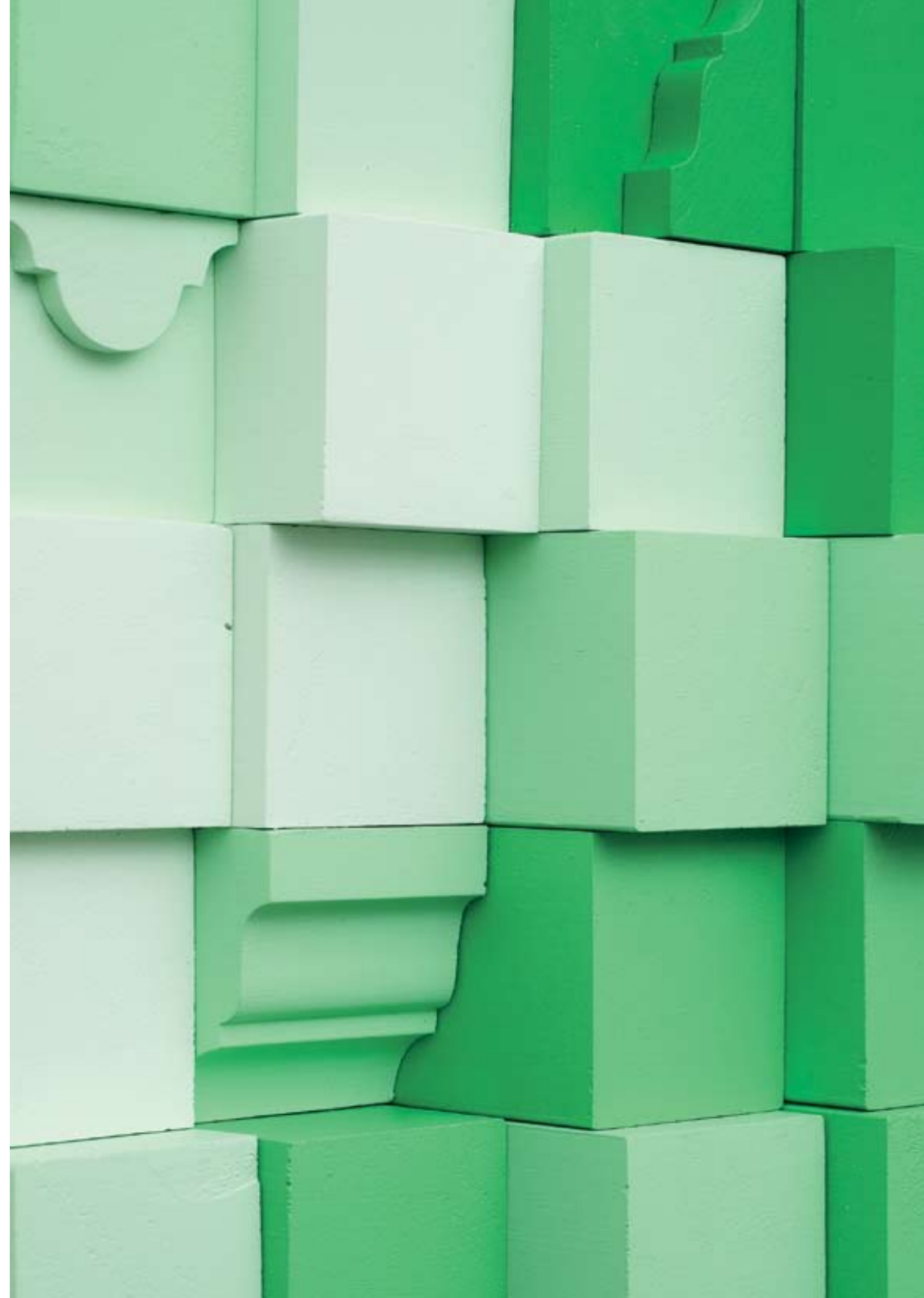
For both *Our Lucky Country* exhibitions, Saad has used her explorations of the relationship between colour, territory and

cultural identity to consider what happened in Cronulla in December 2005. Colour is not only a racial signifier; it also plays a large role in designations of territory and identity, being one of the key elements of maps and, of course, national flags, where the emotive power of colour is mobilised with particular virulence. Saad brings all these associations together in her attempt to ‘re-map’ the site of the riots, to go over the territory, to symbolically shift the violent energies that had cathected onto those places that for many had held fond memories. Her large drawings, executed on tracing paper to capture the sense of a non-ending process of addition and erasure that can be approached from either side, represent a revised and revisited Cronulla, where the past is still visible but does not hold the future captive. Rendered in the colours of both the Lebanese and the Australian flags, Saad’s ‘map’ offers an alternative view of this territory, as a space of possibility and contingency. This Cronulla is a place where cultural identity is not fixed and instantly identifiable, but supple and nuanced, not unlike Saad’s own experience of growing up Australian.

**Jacqueline Millner**

facing page  
*Model for a New Place (detail)*, 2007  
 Acrylic on wood, three pieces: 35 x 35 x  
 10 cm each (Private Collection)

All images courtesy of the artist and  
 James Dorahy Project Space, Sydney





*Model for a New Place, 2007*  
Acrylic on wood, three pieces: 35 x 35 x  
10 cm each (Private Collection)

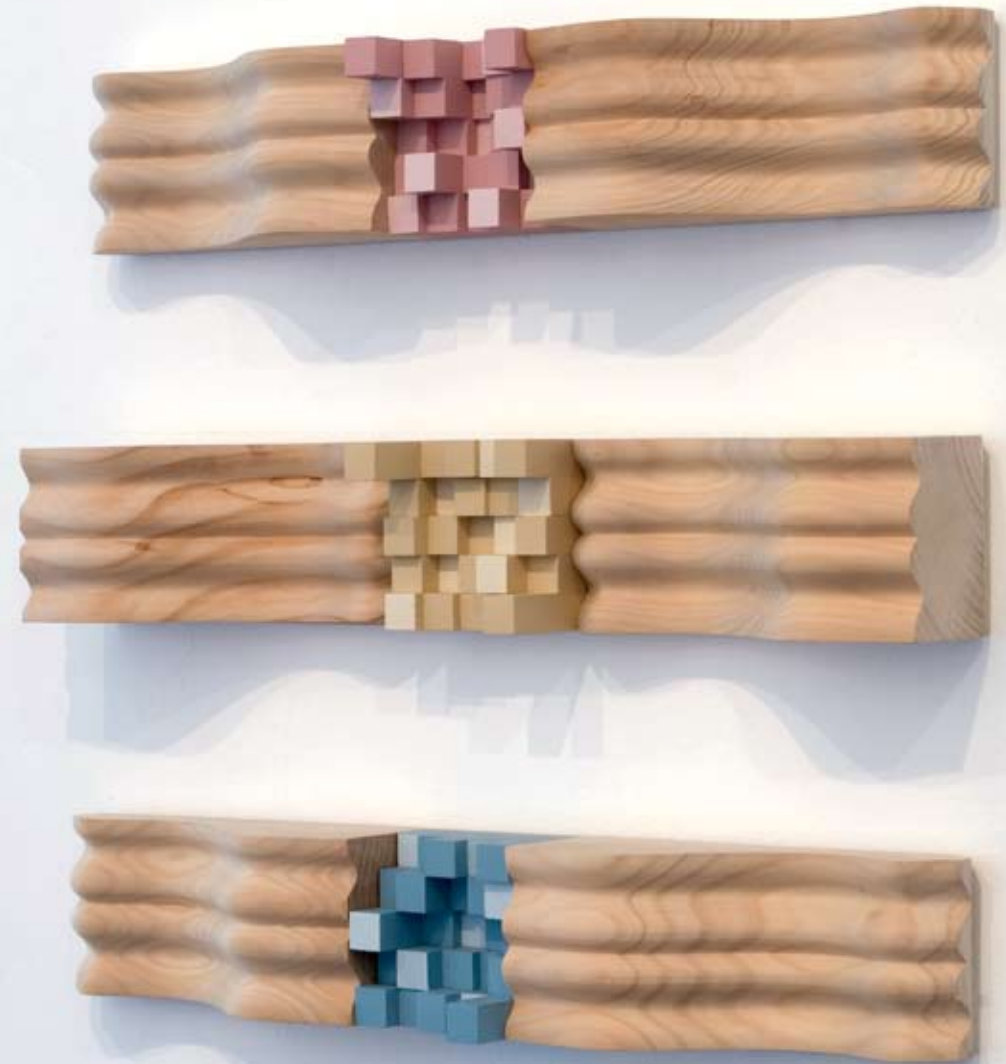


*Sabotage in Lighter Pastel, 2007*  
Acrylic on wood, two pieces: 31.5 x  
32 x 13 cm each piece (Private  
Collection)



above  
*Medusa*, 2007, Acrylic on wood, 17 x  
 17 x 13 cm

facing page  
*In Between*, 2007, Acrylic on wood,  
 three pieces: 53 x 9 x 10 cm each piece



# HUSEYIN SAMI

## NOTES ON A SONG

When I was younger and living on farms in NSW, my mother used to play AM radio in the car coming home from town. We would sing along to a medley of classic hits. Whenever I hear those songs I immediately return to images of the passing rural landscapes and that feeling of exuberance I had as young girl with the wind blowing across my face as I watched the road ahead disappear into the horizon. I can barely remember my mother's face though I do remember that she used to sing out of tune, which was both annoying and funny. I remember that my mother would sing before things changed, before the drought and the debts.

My mother would often complain about how awful my grandmother's singing was. Nana used to sing and dance around the kitchen, shuffling to and fro to the popular songs of wartime England. This would usually lead to stories about dancing with her sisters, about falling in love with an Australia soldier and moving to Darwin, to the other side of the world. She used to sing to block out the sound of the blowflies then, she said. My grandmother has Alzheimer's disease now and can't remember what day of the week it is, but she still sings those songs. When she forgets the words she just hums the melody.

Some years ago I found myself with a broken heart on the other side of the world, in the middle of a bitter-cold Norway winter. I felt lost and more alone than I have ever felt. All I wanted to do was go home. But home seemed like an impossible destination when you find yourself with different identities, living between two cultures, when you are an emigrant. I remember wandering through the snow filled streets and meeting a man singing and playing an ornate drum. His voice stopped me in my tracks; something about it drew me close. He told me about growing up in Morocco before starting to cry. He told me his mother had died that week and he hadn't

been able to say goodbye to her. She loved to hear him sing.

I recall there were two other things that lessened the loneliness I felt that winter in Oslo. One was the unnerving sound of the Somalia refugees singing in the nearby square, a particularly high pitched sound that would escalate in volume but end abruptly. It was a noise that seemed to come out of nowhere like a war cry and disrupt the malaise of the white landscape. On one of the coldest nights, I encountered the sound of a drunken Sami, the Indigenous descendents of the lap people, yoiking under my window. Yoiking, a form of folk singing or chanting, uses a sound to reflect a person or a place, to represent its spirit or essence. Up until that moment I had heard little about the yoik as Norwegians approached it with politically correct caution or made jokes about it. That night I felt a great affinity with that abstract sound coming from under my window. I recognised the tones of displacement and longing; words were not necessary.

Perhaps over time the words are minor details and become less important. It is the melody that stays with us, like a thread that draws back the past and anchors it to the future. Like all art, a song can encapsulate the mood and sentiment of a moment but also can, inexplicably, become timeless. A song especially can cross over cultural and political barriers, eliminating difference and distance by evoking something commonly felt. To sing is to surrender to that feeling and allow it to envelope you. In that moment of abandonment a song becomes a vehicle; a boat, a plane, a wind that carries us away to another place and era, to a part of ourselves long forgotten in the daily grind. Singing offers an escape route, a brief transcendence from the trauma and the tragedy within the unfolding events of our collective histories.



*For Our Lucky Country (still different)*, Huseyin Sami presents video recordings of six women singing. While some of these women were born and bred in the Sutherland Shire, others are relatives of the artist and were among the first Turkish Cypriot immigrants to settle in Australia, the so-called 'lucky country'. Their singing reminds us that despite our differences, the anthems we sing rekindle our past as much as perhaps induce a desired future point: a happy moment, a place we where we belong and call home.

**Sarah Rawlings**

pp. 123–129  
Additional images for *Happy Days*,  
2007. DVD, approx. 20 mins. DVD  
editor: Declan Rooney

above  
*Greens 1, 2007*



*Outdoor barby, 2007*



*Untitled, 2007*



These images represent a visual diary of my journey to and from different locations around Western Sydney and the Sutherland Shire to complete my video project *Happy Days*. They document particular scenes or objects which evidence these travels and relate to a specific moment during the time of the project.

– Huseyin Sami



*For Lease (Blacktown), 2007*



*The Happy Family, 2007*



*Prince, Trixie, Shar, 2007*

# SODA\_JERK

## COMPETING STORIES

When I was 18 I lost my virginity in a grimy ditch behind the Kunsthau Tacheles in Berlin. My preferred story is this:

*A dull driven reverb buzzes out with me as I stumble gesturally from the flickering small club, sweet yeasty hefeweizen is on my breath and I follow a tall tanned man into the dirt. At dawn, devoid of backward glance I leave, en-robbed in my cobalt scarf with crimson cheeks face first into the cold. My discman blasting Iggy's song "...and I ride and I ride".*

A competing version of the story might be:

*As soon as the American chick with the spray-on Aniston look went home, the cute, somewhat smarmy NZ dude diverted his attention straight to me, and, before you could say "old-skool deep-throat tongue-pash", we were doing it.*

An 'inside scoop' of this story might be:

*I lost my virginity to a Kiwi backpacker – partially in a ditch, mostly in a shower cubical at a youth hostel. The event was frequently interrupted by anyone who had to use the urinal and, while there's a slight chance I unwittingly lost them in one of the many, many pockets of my oversized combat trousers, I'm pretty sure he also stole my undies.*

I think in recent times, some of us, particularly in Australia, have developed an acute sensitivity to the idea of competing stories – we see them less and hunt them out more.

The four biggies – News Corp, Fairfax, The Harris Group and West Australian Papers get a large majority of content from a shared pool of 175 journalists at The Australian Associated Press. Not many

competing stories. But here's an interesting bit: according to the AAP, there's an area of 'the news' where competition is still fierce amongst the full spread of mags and broadsheets, each scrambling, with claws out, for one level of info, commentary or analysis deeper than the rest – the field of pop culture reportage.

And it is at this battleground where Soda\_Jerk strike. They creep around our collective, and shamefully extensive, almost impressive mental repository of Australian celebrity data and twist and squeeze.

While on residency at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery they rocked the op-shops of Gynea, found some records, and rewrote their history. What competing stories have surfaced? Despite the spray of affectionate cover stories, inertia pulls Delta reluctantly towards the haggard hall of failed post-soap pop-clones. Nat Imbrulgia and Danny Johns have indeed left their bogan past in the antipodes and emerged, at least in garb, as pre-punk revolutionaries (very modern lovers) and the Irwin family provide a pleasing backdrop of folkish fauna with unsettlingly timeless ease in Austen Tayshus' *Australiana*.

Perhaps Soda\_Jerk might one day – if I ever reach a level of *Fame* akin to that of Warnie's mobile phone – shove me and the one image I have of the shabby Kiwi (he deliberately obscured his face with his T-shirt in the photo) over Peggy Lee's *Is that all there is?*

**Ella Barclay**

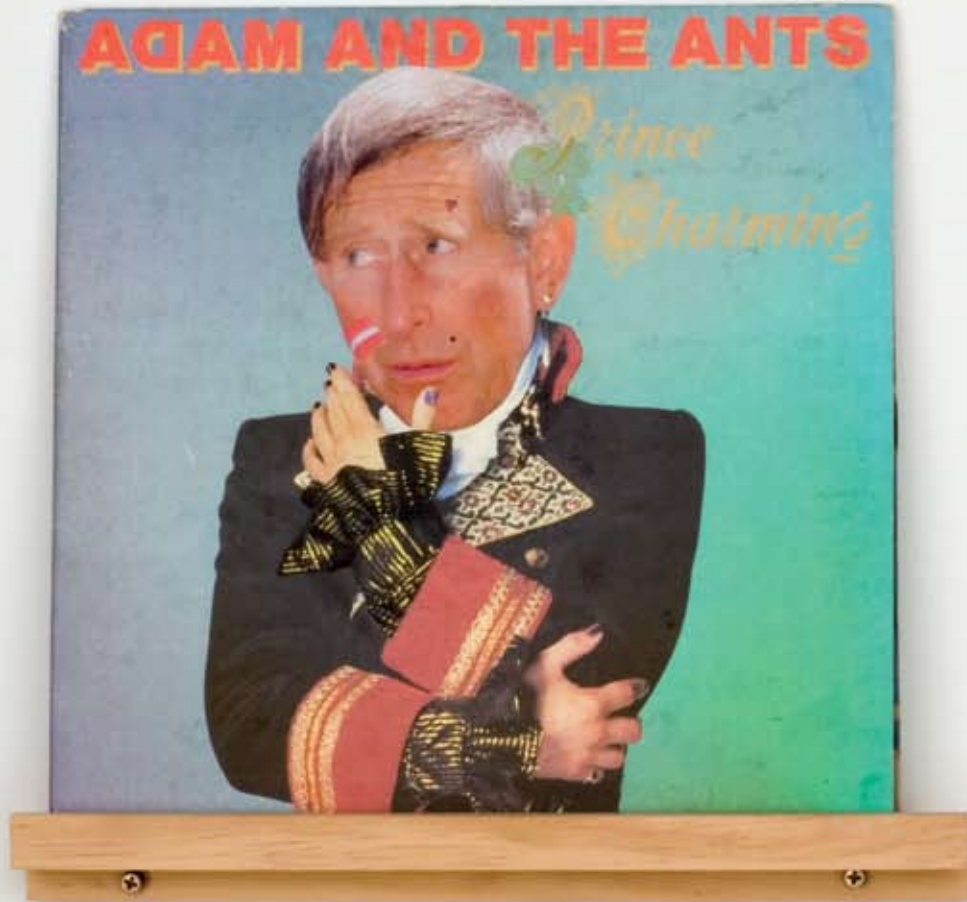
*The Modern Lovers (Nat & Daniel), 2007  
photo-collage on vintage record cover  
(vinyl included), 31 x 31 cm  
PHOTOS PP. 131–137: SILVERSALT PHOTOGRAPHY*



*Australiana Diptych (Teri & Bindi)*, 2007  
 photo-collage on vintage record cover  
 (vinyl included), 31 x 31 cm



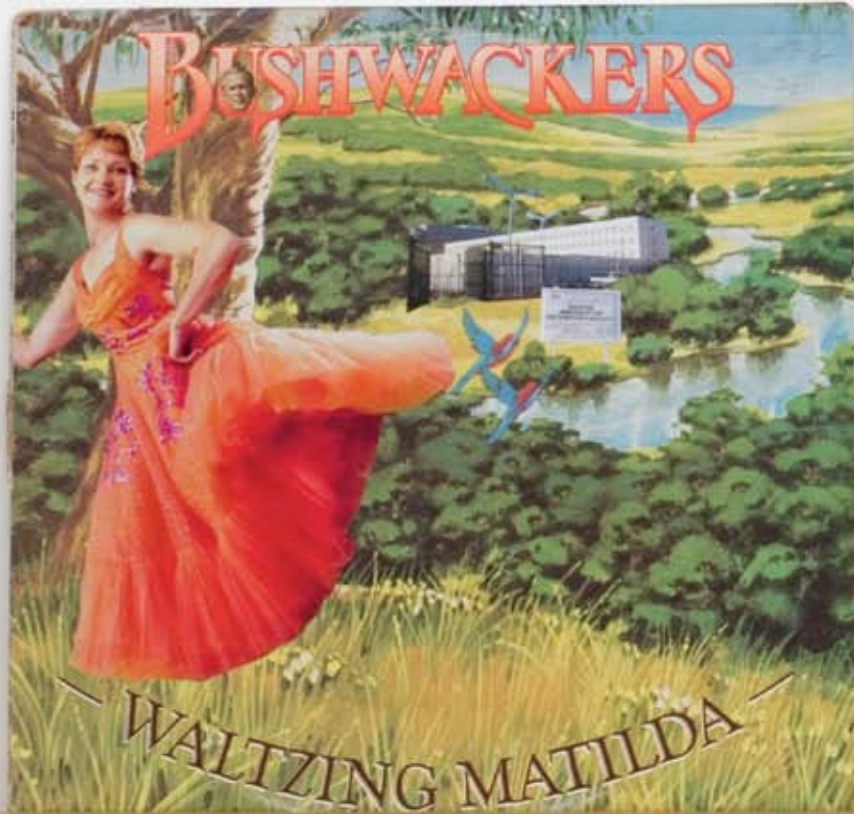
*Prince Charming (Charles)*, 2007  
photo-collage on vintage record cover  
(vinyl included), 31 x 31 cm



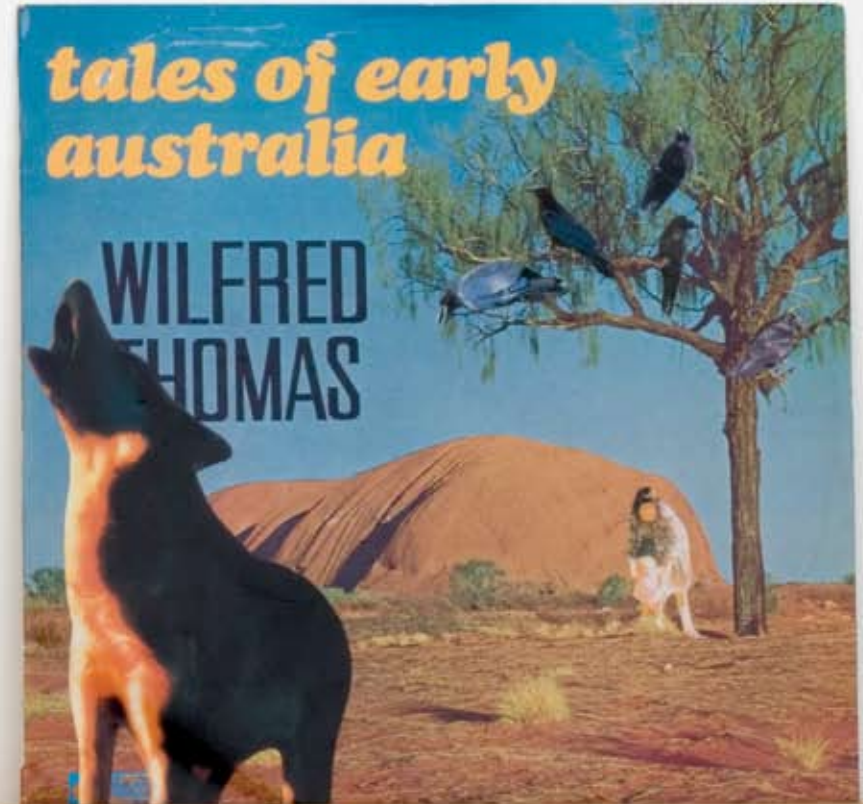
*Infamous (Shane)*, 2007  
photo-collage on vintage record cover  
(vinyl included), 31 x 31 cm



*Waltzing Matilda (Pauline)*, 2007  
photo-collage on vintage record cover  
(vinyl included), 31 x 31 cm



*Tales of Early Australia (Lindy & Azaria)*, 2007  
photo-collage on vintage record cover  
(vinyl included), 31 x 31 cm



# GEORGE TILLIANAKIS

## BEYOND CONVERSATION: GEORGE TILLIANAKIS TALKS WITH ANN FINEGAN

Ann Finegan: How's the brief mutated from the first phase of the show?

George Tillianakis: It's still about difference, but open-ended. *Our Lucky Country* (difference) was not directly about the race riots at Cronulla but our own experiences as an artist or human being.

AF: In the video work for the first exhibition, *Always a Blank Fucking Canvas and the Ghetto Jesus of Blacktown* (2006), you begin with a gesture of messily smearing black stuff all over your mouth, then you go to sleep, lying around in a series of vulnerable positions, skirt up, in a tutu, in a series of back lanes. Why did you smear your mouth out?

GT: It refers to those situations when you're too intimidated or embarrassed to say who you are or what you want. Also I've done enough talking. There are two ways of being a victim – becoming someone who can't say anything, or who is too self important and closes himself off and is ignorant.

AF: Then in *WATER/Humility Kills Haughtiness* (2007), your video work for the second exhibition, traces of difference, traces of culture are gone. You're no longer that identifiable man in a tutu with his skirt up, bum in the air, asleep. It's not about cultural difference in an obvious way.

GT: The new work is totally directed to the brief. It's a "fuck you" to the brief, but in a good way. On the one hand I don't like being pigeonholed in shows that talk about difference; I don't like being involved in shows about being homosexual (or other forms of difference). How many works can we do about subculture and difference? Discovering who you really are is another form of identity or truth rather than

succumbing to your external idea of what you should be.

AF: An obvious starting point with the new work is Narcissus and the mirror, especially in the context of earlier works like *Courtney Love Song* (2004) where you frock up dirty with your electric guitar, all pout, power vocals and big chords in front of the camera like a mirror. What do you say to those who read you as an angst-ridden narcissist?

GT: I would say, get the fuck over yourself because everybody's into themselves. If you weren't concerned with yourself, you wouldn't get anywhere in life. That early work was very angry. It released a lot of negativity. Looking back it was a necessary phase – getting angry, then going to sleep in *Always a Blank Fucking Canvas and the Ghetto Jesus of Blacktown*, and now in this new work, you're waking up.

AF: Okay, I can see the trajectory: phases of anger, sleep and waking up.

GT: The point of directly invoking Narcissus is that he's lost in his image but I'm awake and seeing who I am and what I am for the first time. If you don't review who you are as a person and do it in the means that will help you – from personal experience – you can't move beyond it. What I liked in Caravaggio's *David with the Head of Goliath* (1605-06) was the reference to the Latin saying on David's sword: "*humility kills haughtiness*". If you want to wake up and change your life you have to kill that part of yourself that's the haughtiness, the ego that fucks you over.

AF: So for me the new work reads as an interrogation of the self; there you are in a bathroom, in a kind of raw state of intimate personhood, wearing nothing, no indicators of culture or social status, up close, very

close to the mirror, and the representation of yourself, looking beyond the image of what is in the mirror and trying to find yourself in there. It's like you're deconstructing the Mirror Phase as described by Lacan, in which the infant becomes aware of itself as an image, and through that moment of alienation into the image, as a separate and bounded human being. It's as if you have put this image-based subject of self – the sense of selfhood which we as adults all take for granted – and put it through an intense act of scrutiny. You seem to be undoing your subjectivity and putting yourself into the event of your own becoming, an act of deconstruction and remaking. At one point your selfhood seems to dissolve; you are up so close to the mirror that you seem to be almost exchanging breath with yourself and then you cup your hand around this misty or foggy space, as if something deep and intimate beyond the gaze and external appearance is happening there. You use the mirror to go beyond Narcissus, to suggest that the secret of subjectivity is elsewhere than in the external appearance of the mirror.

And then there's water – an elemental substance of purity and cleansing. Is that why the work is set in a bathroom, in the context of an everyday ritual of bathing? You spiritualise the banal, put it in reach of common experience. Then you add the candelabra (a symbol of spiritual light?) and a dissolve which transfers it from the bathroom floor to the beach, washed over by waves. This aspect reminds me of Maya Deren's surrealist works like *Meshes of an Afternoon* (1943) which use the double and dreamlike dissolves to explore subjectivity. In this context I noticed a dedication to a spiritual teacher, Rav Yehuda Brandwein. Without being corny *WATER/Humility Kills Haughtiness* is an intensely spiritual work which undoes the subject ex-sistentially (I refer to Heideggerian and Lacanian notions

of ex-sisting through the image) to get to what Lacan refers to as the kernel of the self. Could you explain the dedication?

GT: When I was in New York last year (2006) I had a very intense experience with Rav Yehuda Brandwein at the Kabbalah Centre in the war room, without anybody around that is. (Rav Yehuda Brandwein died in 1969). I pleaded with Rav Brandwein to answer an important question of mine and he spoke to me through several signs. I'm not going to divulge what the question or what the answers were, but what I can say is that through this experience, I have realised that there are more things going on in our lives than what we know. We don't know shit. I dedicate the work to him because it is about waking up and that's what he taught. And I hope that I can do his work justice.<sup>1</sup>

I have made a few works over the course of seven years that feature me in a bathroom: crying, singing, putting on make-up, taking off make-up. And the make-up stuff is not about referencing drag, it's about the face you put on for the day, for your husband or for your wife, for your kids, your work colleagues, etc. What face are you putting on, and what gets accumulated from these faces? The image of me in the bathroom represents a cleansing, because that's what you actually do in a bathroom. You wash away all the dirt.

### NOTE

1. <http://blog.kabbalah.com/michael/my-teachers/rav-yehuda-brandwein/en/>









# MIMI TONG



## THE EXTENDED COASTLINE: MIMI TONG IN CONVERSATION WITH RECHELLE BEAUFILS

*The following text is based on a conversation between Mimi Tong and Rechelle Beaufiles that took place during the Hazelhurst residency Mimi undertook in July 2007. Rechelle's notes about Mimi's visual processes and outcomes are dispersed with words from the artist.*

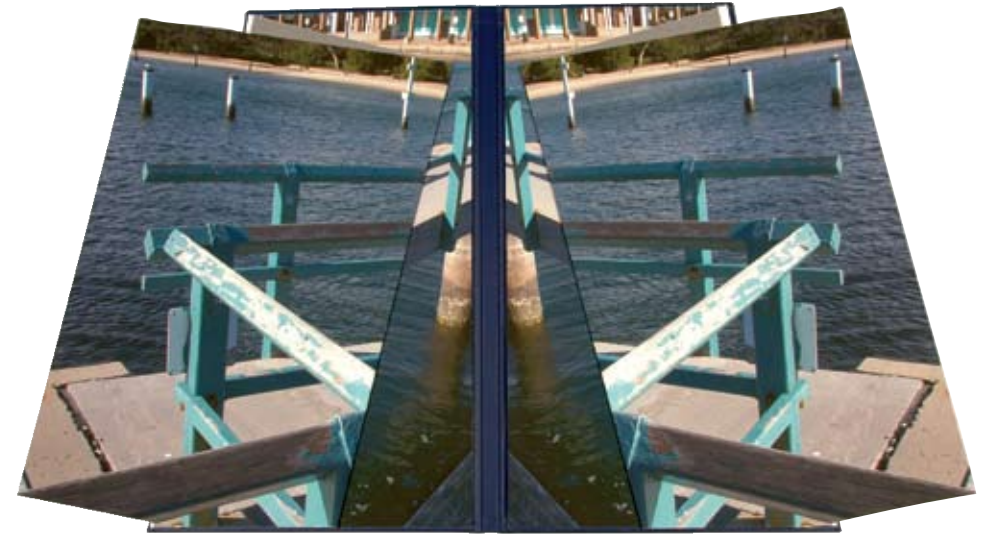
Rechelle Beaufiles: The works you are producing for *Our Lucky Country* (still different) introduce distinct places in the Shire through selected frames. The cropped images form a new photographic image by overlapping and intertwining many elements.

Mimi Tong: I went for walks around Gynea Bay, Port Hacking, Como, Oyster Bay, Kurnell, Gunnamatta Bay and Cronulla. I found each landscape made up of residential housing and industry surrounded by bodies of water. I printed some of the images I had taken on these walks. Like a jigsaw puzzle, I laid out the prints and visualised the connections between the form and colours.

RF: The fusing of ink lines and colour photos create a subtle chaos of pictorial elements. The ink lines do not realistically flow from the photos; they crash and invade divergent spaces.

MT: The photographic collage technique is a lot like drawing but with scissors. The collage is limited by what prints I select to use, so to draw with ink in and around the photos is another way of mapping space, traces of where I've been and how I viewed it. The ink drawing is both fictitious in exaggerating the geometry and the extension of what is already there.

RF: Conflicting urban elements such as graffiti on buildings are situated in the natural landscape. Nature is portrayed as structures that are engineered like buildings. The built environment camouflages into the natural and the natural melts back into the built elements.



MT: When I came across the sailing club on Port Hacking Road, I thought it was interesting how it is not just used as a site to launch boats. Graffiti is symbolic of the way people inhabit this space for all sorts of recreation and leisure. The colourful tags on the building walls are a reminder that the club, situated on an expansive waterway, is part of the urban landscape although it feels secluded and tucked away.

RF: It's hard to distinguish the original orientation as the perspectives are inverted and create a visual narrative with an erratic sense of spatiality that has no discernable beginning or end. The illusion of space is at play as the drawings allude to three-dimensional spaces.

MT: My trips made in a short span of time are documented in the collages. Every place I visited is unique and has a distinct character. The collages are personal maps of my observations.

RF: Drawings act like blue prints of the books being made as the visual outcome of your residency. A visual narrative with no words, each fold represents a chapter; architectural forms are in place of text.

MT: I'm fascinated by concertina books; the way they compress and expand paper space. Folding the photography image into a book is a lot like collage cutting, another translation of the geometric elements in the photo as well as the memory of place.

RF: As an artist who doesn't live in the Shire, you respond to the natural space in relation to the built environment and the experience it evokes. Creating a bird's eye view of the Shire, the viewer is shown an altered view. The books represent the building of a continuous, mirrored landscape that evokes a sense of freedom and moments frozen in time.



pp. 146–147

*Silver Beach*, 2007

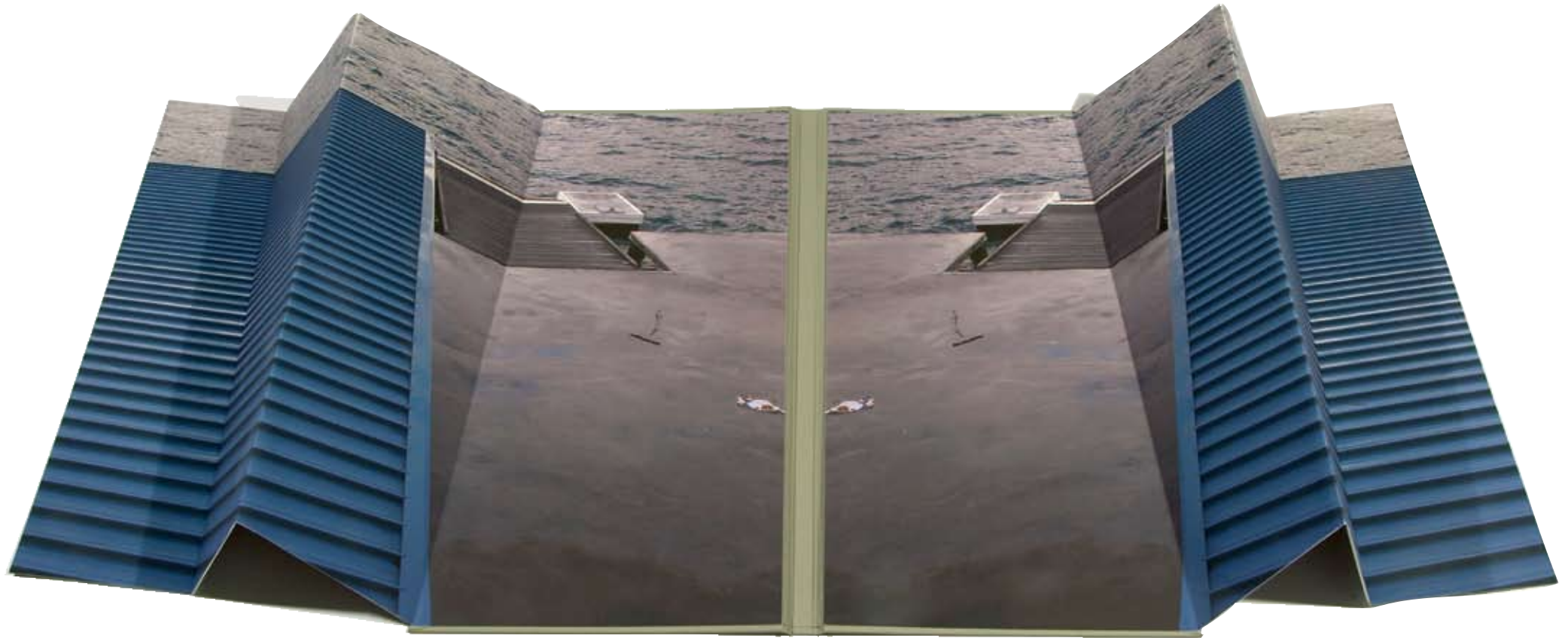
*Gunnamatta Bay*, 2007

giclee prints on Albrecht Durer and  
Buckram hardcover, each 50 x 30 cm  
(folded), 50 x 150 cm (unfolded)

PHOTOS PP. 146–151: CRAIG BENDER

*Cronulla Beach*, 2007

giclee print on Albrecht Durer and  
Buckram hardcover, 50 x 30 cm  
(folded), 50 x 150 cm (unfolded)



*Port Hacking Open Sailing Club*, 2007  
Giclee print on Albrecht Durer and  
Buckram hardcover, 50 x 30 cm  
(folded), 50 x 150 cm (unfolded)

pp. 152–153  
*Extended Coastline (drawing one)*,  
2007  
photographic collage and ink drawing  
on paper, 110 x 75 cm (framed)  
PHOTO: MIMI TONG



ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



**Ron Adams**

Born 1959 in Sydney  
Lives and works in Sydney

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2006: *Early Intervention*, James Dorahy, Sydney

2005: *Cut*, MOP Projects, Sydney

2004: *Before and after Science*, Peloton, Sydney

2003: *Still Life*, Sherman Galleries, Sydney

2001: *31/16*, Rubyayre, Sydney

2000: *Giving and Receiving*, Rubyayre, Sydney

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2006: *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre

2006: *Take Off*, Organised Daniel Gottin, Heble\_121, Basil, Switzerland,

2006: *Eldorado*, Organised George + Ron Adams, Downtown Gallery, Adelaide

2005: *ARTLANGUAGE*, Curated by Ruark Lewis, Schoalhaven Arts Festival

2005: *Salon de Freehands*, Curated Rob McHaffie, Seventh, Melbourne

2005: *Situation*, Curated by Russell Storer, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

2005: *Dress Code*, Curated, Daniel Mudie Cunningham, MOP Projects, Sydney,

2005: *New Australian Art, No worries*, Raid projects, Los Angeles

2003: *Painting Now 02*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney,

2003: *Images of Desire*, Curated Jan van der Ploeg, Redlight District, Amsterdam

## PUBLICATIONS

2006: Tracey Clement, *Early Intervention*, James Dorahy Project Space

2005: *Runway 6*, The Invisible Inc, Sydney

2005: *The Art Life, MFD*, Firstdraft, Sydney

2005: Dominique Angeloro, Review of *Dress Code*, MOP, *Sydney Morning Herald*

2004: Reuben Keehan, *Out of the Blue*, MOP, localART

2002: *Studio visit*, Museum of Contemporary Art, catalogue

2001: Alex Gawronski, *31/16*, Rubyayre, catalogue

2001: Reuben Keehan, *Dormant*, Blaugrau, catalogue

**Liam Benson**

Born 1980 in Westmead, NSW  
Lives and works in Sydney

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2006: *Werewolves*, MOP Projects, Sydney

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2007: *Becos I'm Worf It*, Curator, Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne

2007: *Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship, Finalist*, Artspace, Sydney

2007: *At the Vanishing Point*, At the Vanishing Point, Sydney

2007: *Dream Merchant*, Kings ARI, Melbourne

2006: *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre

2006: *Snowdropping*, Curated by Drew Bickford, Chrissie Cotter Gallery, Sydney

2006: *Gang Festival 05-06*, Pelt Gallery, Sydney

2006: *Overt Compensation: Reloaded*, Curator, Depot Gallery, Sydney

2005-06: *Horsepower*, Liverpool Regional Gallery

2005: *Overt Compensation*, Curator, Depot Gallery, Sydney

2005: *Designfesta: Through a Strangers Eyes*, Tokyo

2005: *Gang Festival 05-06*, Various spaces, Indonesia

2005: *Western front, Art is a Social Space*, Blacktown Arts Centre

2005: *Dress Code*, Curated by Daniel Mudie Cunningham, MOP Projects, Sydney

2004: *Sideshow Valley*, SOOB Festival, Brisbane

2004: *Going Pro Project*, The Lewers Bequest & Penrith Regional Gallery

2004: *L'Ovest*, Firstdraft Gallery, Sydney

2003: *What the World Needs Now 2*, Phatspace Gallery, Sydney

## PUBLICATIONS

2006: Daniel Mudie Cunningham, 'Souped up at Supré: The Motel Sisters Interview', *Runway 8*

2006: *Naomi's Wonderground*, TVS, Episode 1, 16 April

2005: Sally Breen, 'Dress Code', *Un Magazine*, 4

Liam Benson also performs with Naomi Oliver as The Motel Sisters, an ongoing multi-disciplinary performance

**Maria Cruz**

Born in Manila, Philippines  
Lives and works in Sydney  
Represented by Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2006: *Paintings*, Galeria Duemila Manila, Philippines

2006: *one million dollars*, Artspace, Sydney

2005: *No, No, No*, Penrith Regional Gallery, Sydney

2005: *Give Me Something*, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne Victoria

2005: *Coins*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

2004: *Nothing in this World*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

2002: *Homesick, Palettes*, Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2006: *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre, Sydney

2005: *Seven Beauties* Tin Sheds Gallery, Sydney

2004: *Pearl*, with Stefan Sehler, Cross Art Projects, Biennale of Sydney Sattelite Exhibition

2002: *Freespace*, Provinciaal Centrum voor Beeldende Kunsten Hasselt, Belgium

2002: *Painting as Paradox*, Artists Space Green Street, New York, USA

2001: *Art > Music*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

2001: *art32*, Sarah Cottier Gallery Basel, Switzerland

2001: *Stangers/Etrange*, PS1 Clocktower Gallery, New York

2000: *Word*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

2000: *art31*, Sarah Cottier Gallery Basel, Switzerland

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2007: Reuben Keehan, 'Working with Tension & Time: Maria Cruz's *One Million Dollars*', *Artspace Projects 2006*, Artspace Publications

2005: Ann Finegan, 'An Art of Immaterial Reminder' *Give Me Something*

2004: Eve Sullivan, 'Nothing in this World', Kaliman Gallery Publications

2004: Ann Finegan, 'Shangri-La Collective', Artspace Publication, Sydney

2003: Eve Sullivan, 'Ways of Saying', *Art & Australia* 41:1 Spring

**Elizabeth Day**

Born in Wigan, England  
Lives and works in Sydney and Tasmania  
Represented by Conny Dietzschold Gallery, Sydney & Cologne

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2006: Conny Dietzschold Gallery, Cologne

2005: Hobart Summer Festival, Notebooks Project

2004: Conny Dietzschold Gallery, Sydney

2004: *notes on the castle*, Tin Sheds Gallery

2000: CAST Gallery, Hobart

1997: *View from the Sixty Third Floor*, Artspace, Sydney

1993: *Shadow*, Canberra Contemporary Artspace

1993: Dooley Le Cappelaine Gallery, New York

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2007: *Change in the Weather*, UTS Gallery, Sydney

2007: *Breaking Pattern*, Carnegie Gallery, Hobart

2006: *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre

2006: *For Matthew and Others: A Journey into Schizophrenia*, Campbelltown Regional Gallery

2006: Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award, Finalist

2006: *We are Australians Too*, Casula Powerhouse

2005: *Conceptual Crochet*, Cross Arts Projects, Sydney

2003: *The Shangri-La Collective*, Curated by Maria Cruz, Artspace, Sydney

## PUBLICATIONS

2004: Ann Finegan, *notes on the castle*

2004: Christopher Dean, room notes for *Conceptual Crochet*

2001: Duncan Fairfax, View work, *The Immateriality of Sense*, Artspace

1998: Patrick Crogan, *Lost in Space: Elizabeth Day's View from the Sixty Third Floor*

1996: Melissa Chiu, Review of *The Destiny of Objects, Art in Australia*

1996: *Directory of Public Artists*, NAVA

1996: Patrick Crogan, Review of *Disintoxication, Eyeline*, August

1995: Christopher Dean, 'Any Old Jumpers?' Catalogue notes for *The Viaduct Project*



**Sarah Goffman**

Born 1966 in Sydney  
Lives and works in Sydney

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2002: *Swell*, Block Gallery, Sydney
- 2002: *Hotel Module*, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Canberra
- 2002: XXXXXXL, Front Room Gallery, Sydney
- 2003: *I wish I were bigger*, Scott Donovan Gallery, Sydney
- 2007: *VICTORIA!*, Ocular Lab, Melbourne
- 2007: *Excess*, SNO, Marrickville

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2007: *In every dream home a heartache*, Curated by Sophie O'Brien, Sydney College of the Arts
- 2007: *The Shit Show*, Curated by Jane Polkinghorne & Trevor Fry, Loose Projects, Sydney
- 2006: *Someone shows someone something*, Curated by Mark Hislop, Canberra Contemporary Art Space
- 2006: *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre
- 2006: *It's a New Day*, Curated by Sally Breen, Artspace, Sydney
- 2005: *Situation*, Curated by Russell Storer, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
- 2005: *Seven Beauties*, Curated by Robert Lake, Tin Sheds Gallery, Sydney
- 2005: *Elastic Archive Show*, Cross Art Projects, Sydney
- 2003: *The Shangri-La Collective*, Curated by Maria Cruz, Artspace, Sydney

## PUBLICATIONS

- 2006: Ann Finegan, 'Good Times and Friendship', *Art Monthly* 190
- 2006: Guest Editor with Elvis Richardson, *Photofile* 78, 'Archive' issue
- 2007: Raquel Welch & Emily Hunt 'The Collector: Sarah Goffman's Amazing House', *DUKE* 2

**Michelle Hanlin**

Born 1972 in Melbourne  
Lives and works in Sydney

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2007: *Rendered Unconscious by Spirits*, Gallery 9, Sydney
- 2006: *Selfish Portraits*, Curated by Scott Donovan Projects, Black Box, Sydney
- 2005: *Advance Australiana*, Firstdraft Gallery, Sydney
- 2002: *Exotic Dog Week*, with Lauren Dyt, Block Gallery

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2007: *Running on Empty*, Parramatta Artist Studios, Sydney
- 2007: *I ME MINE*, Horus and Deloris Contemporary Art Space, Sydney
- 2007: *Bloodlines: Art and the Horse*, Hawkesbury Regional Gallery, NSW
- 2006: *Rectangular Ghost*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
- 2006: *It's painting, so it must be German*, Silvershot Gallery, Melbourne
- 2005: *Alien Invasion*, MOP Projects, Sydney
- 2005: *Where the Wild Things Are*, UTS Gallery, University of Technology, Sydney

## PUBLICATIONS

- 2007: Robert Wellington, 'Emerging Art: New Kids on the Block' *The Australian Art Market Report* 25
- 2007: Andrew Frost, '50 emerging galleries from around the world, Sydney: Gallery 9', *Contemporary Annual* 2007
- 2006: Andrew Frost, Review of *Rectangular Ghost, Art & Australia* 43
- 2006: Holly Williams, 'Artist Profile: Michelle Hanlin', *The Australian Art Market Report* 20
- 2005: Amanda Rowell, *Alien Invasion*, MOP Projects, Sydney
- 2005: Dominique Angeloro, 'Wild at art', *Sydney Morning Herald, Metro*, May 20-26

**Ruark Lewis**

Born 1960 in Sydney  
Lives and works in Sydney  
Represented by Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2007: *Banalities for the Perfect House*, SLOT Sydney
- 2007: *Index of Kindness*, with Jonathan Jones, Post-Museum Singapore
- 2007: *Homeland Illuminations*, with Jonathan Jones, Carriageworks, Sydney
- 2006: *False Narratives*, Die Schachtel Gallery Milan,
- 2006: *Transcriptions*, Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne
- 2006: *Artists-Books*, Johan Deumens, Haarlem
- 2005: *Banalities for Babel*, MOP Projects, Sydney
- 2005: *Banalities for the Perfect House*, with Rainer Linz, Performance Space, Sydney
- 2004: *False Narratives*, Room 103 Auckland
- 2003: *The Silhouettes*, Art Gallery South Australia,
- 2003: *False Narratives*, with Rainer Linz, RMIT Melbourne
- 2002: *Transcriptions*, Araluen Arts Centre Alice Springs

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2007: Noreen Graham Gallery, Brisbane; S.N.O. Sydney; Loose, Sydney; Centre Pompidou Editions/Artists' Books Fair, New York; Cross Arts Projects, Sydney
- 2006: *Biennale of Sydney*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
- 2006: *Recent Acquisitions*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney,
- 2006: *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre
- 2006: Cross Arts Projects Sydney, Art Gallery of NSW, Artists' Books Fair '06 NYC,
- 2005: *Interesting Times*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- 2007: Lilly Wei, *Art & America*
- 2007: *Run Artists Run*, Asialink cat.
- 2006: Reuben Keehan, *Eyeline*
- 2006: *Biennale of Sydney* cat.
- 2006: Diane Losche, *Lino*
- 2006: Lisa Greenaway, *The Program*, interview
- 2005: *ANTHOLOGY* ed. MOP Projects

**Adam Norton**

Born 1964 in Saffron Walden, UK  
Lives and works in Sydney

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2007: *UFology*, Gallery 9, Sydney
- 2005: *Generic Escape Capsule*, MOP Projects, Sydney
- 2005: *The Amplified Man Project II*, Pictura, Dordrecht, NL
- 2004: *The Amplified Man Project*, MOP Projects
- 2003: *Homemade Devices for Surviving Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Attack*, Firstdraft Gallery, Sydney
- 2001: *Sexual Butterfingers*, The Old Void Gallery, London, UK
- 1999: *Camouflage*, John Brown Publishing, London, UK

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2007: *The Visitors: Aliens and UFOs in Contemporary Art*, Penrith Regional Gallery & Lewers Bequest
- 2006: *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre
- 2006: *Flightpath*, Kings ARI, Melbourne
- 2005: *Brainstorms*, GRANTPIRRIE, Sydney
- 2005: *Not Worried*, Raid Projects, LA, USA
- 2004: *MOP*, Bus Gallery, Melbourne
- 2003: *Resistance is Useless*, Firstdraft Gallery
- 2001: *Corrupt Image*, Soho House, London, UK
- 2000: *Stealth*, The Red Gallery, Hull, UK

## PUBLICATIONS

- 2007: *Contemporary*, London, UK, Annual 2007 edition
- 2006: Dan & Dominique Angeloro, *A Note on Retro-Futurism from the Pop Tronic Institute*
- 2006: *Flightpath*, Exhibition Catalogue
- 2006: *Manual for Generic Escape Capsule*
- 2005: Clare Lewis, *Brainstorms*, Exhibition Catalogue
- 2004: *Brochure 2 – The Amplified Man Project*
- 2003: *Brochure 1 – Homemade Devices for Dealing with Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Attack*

**Nana Ohnesorge**

Born 1955 in Stuttgart, Germany  
Lives and works in Sydney

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

2007: *Über Tales*, MOP Projects, Sydney

2006: *Re-establish Something of a Bond*, MOP Projects, Sydney

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

2007: *Sulman Prize*, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney

2007: *Hazelhurst Art Award: Works on Paper*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre

2007: Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement, National Art School

2007: Winner Drawing Prize, Waverley Art Prize, Sydney

2006: *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre

2006: Winner First Prize, *MCQ International Art Prize*, Art House Hotel, Sydney

2006: Highly Recommended, *Redlands Westpac Art Prize*, Sydney

2006: *Kedumba Drawing Prize*, Kedumba Gallery, Wentworth Falls, NSW

2006: *Jacaranda Aquisitive Drawing Award*, Grafton Regional Gallery, Grafton

2006: *Art on the Rocks*, Finalist, The Rocks, Sydney

2006: *Blake Prize*, National Art School Gallery, Sydney

2005: Awarded Paris Residency, Degree Show, National Art School, Sydney

2005: Awarded Reg Richardson Travelling Scholarship, National Art School, Sydney

2005: *Sulman Prize*, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney

## PUBLICATIONS:

2007: Felix Ratcliff, *Exhibit: First Anniversary (Paper)*, <http://www.theprogram.net.au/reviews>

2006: Holly Williams, *Our Lucky Country, The Australian Art Market Report*, Issue 22, Summer

2006: Tracey Clement, *Metropicks, Sydney Morning Herald, Metro*, Feb 17-23

2006: Adam Cullen, *Gorgosity Made Flesh*, MOP Projects

**Anna Peters**

Born in Melbourne  
Lives and works in Sydney

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2005: *On A Roll*, MOP Projects, Sydney

2003: *Humour Plus*, Front Room, Sydney

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2006: *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre

2006: *Eldorado*, Downtown Art Space, Adelaide

2005: *Dead Famous: New Australian Painting*, Raw Art Gallery, Berlin, Germany

2004: *Out of the Blue*, MOP Projects, Sydney

## PUBLICATIONS

2006: Artist contributor, *Runway 8*

2006: *Eldorado*, MOP Projects, Sydney

2005: Artist contributor, *Runway 6*

2004: Reuben Keehan, 'Out of the Blue', *localART 16* October, back cover

**Nuha Saad**

Born in Sydney  
Lives and works in Sydney  
Represented by James Dorahy Project Space, Sydney

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2007: *The New City Beautiful Project*, James Dorahy Project Space, Sydney

2006: *Patterned Space*, Esa Jaske Gallery, Sydney

2005: *Intersecting Geometries*, with Mimi Tong, Artspace, Sydney

2002 & 2001: *Sedan Ace Project*, with Kay Wood, Room 35, Gitte Weise Gallery, Sydney

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2007: *Colouring the Landscape*, James Dorahy Project Space, Sydney

2007: 15th Annual CCB Art Auction, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney

2006: *Hardware*, University of Technology Sydney Gallery

2006: *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre

2006: *Lucky 7*, James Dorahy Project Space, Sydney

2004: *A Different Group*, Gitte Weise Gallery, Sydney

2004: Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award, Finalist, Werribee Park, Melbourne

2004: Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize – Finalist

2003-4: *Glacier*, Touring exhibition: Benalla Art Gallery Victoria, Newcastle Gallery NSW,

QUT Museum and Bond University Art Gallery QLD

2001: *That was then, this is now*, Gitte Weise Gallery

2001: *Glacier*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne

2001: *Reckonings*, Performance Space, Sydney

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2007: *Beyond Region: Public galleries in NSW*, Arts NSW & Australia Council, Sydney

2007: Richard Dunn, 'Nuha Saad & Mimi Tong: Intersecting Geometries', *Artspace Projects 2005*

2006: Mark Titmarsh, 'Shapes of inhabitation: Painting in the expanded field', *Art Monthly*, May

2004: Shelley McSpedden, 'A Different Group', *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 27

2001: Tanya Peterson, 'Fluid Geometries', MNCBM Cat.

2001: Linda Williams, 'Reflection and Reconstruction: New Directions in Australian Painting', *Glacier* Cat.

**Huseyin Sami**

Born 1979 in Enfield, UK  
Lives and works in Sydney

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2007: *Sweet Days Wilderness*, Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

2005: *The United Paper People*, Sherman Art Box, Sherman Galleries, Sydney

2004: *The Honeymoon is Over*, Peleton Gallery, Sydney

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2007: *Running on Empty*, Parramatta Artist Studios, Sydney

2007: *Workshopped*, Sydney Design Week, QVB, Sydney

2007: *Lion*, Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

2007: *Untitled-paper-1*, Zenshi Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2007: *Open Studio*, CCA Contemporary Art Center, Kitakyushu, Japan

2007: *Shoobox*, Bell Street Project Space, Vienna, Austria

2007: *Group Show*, Firstdraft Gallery, Sydney

2006: *Hardware*, UTS Gallery, Sydney

2006: *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre

2006: *Super Lucky Chance*, Maeda Project Space, CCA Contemporary Art Center, Kitakyushu, Japan

2006: *Playtime*, Kandada Project Space, Tokyo, Japan

2005: *Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship*, Highly Commended, Artspace

2005: *The Fauvette Louriero Memorial Artists Travel Scholarship*, Winner

2002: *Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship*, Highly Commended, Artspace

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2007: *Open Studio*, CCA Contemporary Art Center, Kitakyushu, Japan

2006: *Hardware*, UTS Gallery, Sydney

**Soda\_Jerk**

Dan Angeloro, Born 1977 in Sydney  
 Dominique Angeloro, Born 1979 in Sydney  
 Lives and works in Sydney

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2007: *Pixel Pirate II: Attack of the Astro Elvis Video Clone*, Darwin Fringe Festival, Darwin, Josetti Hoefe, Berlin, Videotage, Kowloon, Hong Kong, SpielRaum, Berlin, Germany, HetWildeWeten, Rotterdam

2007: *Dawn of Remix*, 24HRArt: Northern Territory Centre for Contemporary Art, Darwin

2006: *Pixel Pirate II: Attack of the Astro Elvis Video Clone*, Chauvel Cinema, Sydney, Electrofringe, Newcastle

2006: *This is Pop Tronic (Back to the Future Dub)*, Artbox, Sherman Galleries, Sydney

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2007: *The Visitors: Aliens and UFOs in Contemporary Art*, Penrith Regional Gallery & Lewers Bequest

2007: *Ain't no Skool like the Old Skool*, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Perth

2007: *Recycled Cinema*, Sydney Underground Film Festival, Sydney

2007: *Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship*, Artspace, Sydney

2007: *Clip Art*, Firstdraft Gallery, Sydney

2007: *Living Elvis*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne

2007: *Projector: Video Work by Australian Artists*, Boadstone Gallery, Dublin

2007: *Film Flam*, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Canberra

2006: *Our Lucky County (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre

2006: *Moving Image 1*, Domain theatre, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2007: Andrew Frost, 'If the artists are young, the reception is cool', *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 1-2

2006: Andrew Frost, 'Soda\_Jerk Revolutions', *Art & Australia* 44: 1

2006: Ross Rudesch Harley, 'ALT.ARCHIVE: THE REMIX', *Photofile* 78

2006: Andrew Frost, 'Undiscovered Artists', *Australian Art Collector*, April-June

2006: JV Adams, 'Artist Profile: Soda\_Jerk', *NAVA Quarterly*, March

**George Tillianakis**

Born 1981 in Sydney  
 Lives and works in Sydney

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2007: *Back In Black*, Blacktown Arts Centre

2005: *Project Degenerate: To Be Blacklisted*, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney

2005: *CURTAINS: the excavation process*, Artspace, Sydney

2004: *The Casula Tapes*, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre & Liverpool Regional Museum

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2006: *Overt Compensation: Reloaded*, The Depot Gallery, Sydney

2006: *Designfesta*, Tokyo International Exhibition Centre, Japan

2005: *Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship*, Artspace, Sydney

2005: *Satellite of Love (I like to watch things on T.V.)*, Bus Gallery, Melbourne

2005: *Dress Code*, Curated by Daniel Mudie Cunningham, MOP Projects, Sydney

2002: *Monopolies*, Performance Space, Sydney

## PUBLICATIONS

2006: Clair Weaver, 'Opening of Overt Compensation: Reloaded', *The Sunday Telegraph*

2004: Ann Finegan, 'Confessional (Enjoying the Abject): The Courtney Love Song', *The Casula Tapes*, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre & Liverpool Regional Museum

2003: Adnan Begic, 'DISTILLED DISTORTION: Search & Destroy George Tillianakis', *De-Coding [Sub] Cultures*, Blacktown Arts Centre

**Mimi Tong**

Born 1978 in Sydney  
 Lives and works in Sydney

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2007: *Unfolding Ground*, Artspace, Sydney

2007: *Interference*, with Ainslie Murray, Tin Sheds, Sydney

2005: *Intersecting Geometries*, with Nuha Saad, Artspace, Sydney

2005: *Folding Interface*, MIR 11, Melbourne

2003: *Geometric Folding Experiment*, MOP Projects, Sydney

2000: *Squarepusher Experiment*, RubyAyre, Sydney

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2007: *Platform for Urban Investigation II Shanghai*, Island 6 Arts Centre, Shanghai

2006: *Our Lucky Country (difference)*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre

2006: *Hardware*, Curated by Nuha Saad, UTS Gallery, Sydney

2006: *+ Plus Factors*, with Inverted Topology, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne

2005: *www*, Curated by Julian Dashper, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

2000: *MNCBM*, Curated by Nicholas Tsoutas, Artspace, Sydney

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2007: Linda Marie Walker, *Interference*, Sydney

2007: *Beyond Region: Public galleries in NSW*, Arts NSW & Australia Council, Sydney

2006: Richard Dunn, *Intersecting Geometries*, with Nuha Saad, Artspace Projects 2005, Sydney

2006: Mark Titmarsh, *Shapes of inhabitation: Painting in the expanded field*, *Art Monthly Australia*, May no 189

2006: Anthony Gardner, *Re/Thinking, Art and Australia* 43

2005: Mimi Tong, *Mimi Tong Works 1999-2005* catalogue, Sydney

2001: Tania Peterson, *Fluid Geometries*, MNCBM, Artspace, Sydney

2000: Simon Ingram, *Squarepusher Experiment, LIKE*, vol. 12, Melbourne

## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Lisa Andrew** is a Sydney artist who has shown extensively in Australia as well as New York, Bogota, Paris Cologne, and Manila. Lisa is represented in Sydney/Cologne by Conny Dietzschold.

**Ella Barclay** is an artist and writer currently based in Sydney.

**Rechelle Beaufilets** is a local Shire resident and undertaking a Bachelor of Visual Arts in Painting at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney.

**Tracey Clement** is an artist and writer currently living in Sydney.

**Dr Uros Cvoro** completed his PhD in Art History at the College of Fine Arts, University of NSW in 2005. He currently lectures in Art History at the University of Southern Queensland.

**Naomi Evans** is a Sydney-based writer, artist and curator. She is currently Curatorial Assistant at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.

**Dr Ann Finegan** is lecturer in film and media arts at Sydney College of the Arts.

**Ray H.** was born in England and is currently living and working in Sydney as a writer. He has a keen interest in art.

**Simon Hollington** is an artist and lecturer, based working at Central St Martins School of Art, London.

**Sophia Kouyoumdjian** has worked in museums and galleries since 2001 and is currently the Visual Arts Project Officer (Curator) at Blacktown Arts Centre.

**Dr Jacqueline Millner** teaches art history and visual culture at the University of Western Sydney. She has published widely on Australian and international contemporary art in leading journals and anthologies. A book of her selected essays is due to be published by Artspace Visual Arts Centre in 2008.

**Dr Daniel Mudie Cunningham** was appointed Exhibition Coordinator at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre in June 2007. He has worked as an independent curator since 1995, has published and lectured widely on contemporary visual culture and is a co-director at MOP Projects.

**Sarah Rawlings** co-founded and co-directs the site-specific arts organisation Terminus Projects. Sarah has worked in a number of roles within the visual arts industry including writing, consultancy, curating, project management and media-marketing. Currently completing studies in cultural anthropology, Sarah continues to write and collaborate with artists on unique projects.

**Amanda Rowell** is a freelance writer, curator and admirer of the French historian Jules Michelet (1798-1874). She has been gallery manager at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, since 2001.

**Aaron Seeto** is an artist, curator and writer based in Sydney.

**Dan H. Sturel**, nickname 'Strudel', taught Philosophy of Humour at Charlottetown, Canada, and was last heard of teaching art appreciation to ghosts at Waukaringa, South Australia.

**Dr Marise Williams** is a scholar and writer. She lectures in visual culture at the University of Western Sydney.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our Lucky Country (still different)  
ISBN 978 1 921437 01 4  
Co-published by Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre and MOP Projects

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Sydney  
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www.mop.org.au

Directors: George + Ron Adams, Drew Bickford, Mitch Cairns, Daniel Mudie Cunningham, Nana Ohnesorge, Anna Peters

Our Lucky Country (still different)  
Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre  
8 December 2007 – 3 February 2008

Artists: Ron Adams, Liam Benson, Maria Cruz, Elizabeth Day, Sarah Goffman, Michelle Hanlin, Ruark Lewis, Adam Norton, Nana Ohnesorge, Anna Peters, Nuha Saad, Huseyin Sami, Soda\_Jerk, George Tillanakis, Mimi Tong

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Catalogue design: Ricafeli Design  
Photography: Craig Bender and Jennifer Leahy  
Image processing: Spitting Image  
Paper: 290gsm Printkote, 120gsm Onyx smooth ivory, 150gsm Opal A2 dull (Edwards Dunlop Paper)  
Printing: Playbill

DVD director/editor/producer: Lisa Andrew

Ron and George Adams would like to thank the Sutherland Shire, Michael Rolfe and everyone from Hazelhurst Art's Center, the artists, the writers, Ricardo Felipe, Lisa Andrew, Gavan Sandford, and everyone that's ever been to MOP Projects Redfern and now Chippendale. Many thanks in particular to Anna Peters, Nana & Holger, Daniel & Drew, Marita & Alex, Craig Bender, Jennifer Leahy, Mitch Cairns, Adam & Sam, Daniel + Adam for their continued support through this project from the other side and a special thanks to Naomi Evans from Ron.

Lisa Andrew would like to thank the following: all 16 artists for allowing her to film them; Angus Andrew, Aaron Hemphill, Julian Gross and the Liars, for letting her use their music; Stephane Zerbib for technical assistance and support; and Ingrid Rowell at Metro screens.

Liam Benson would like to thank Anastasia Zaravinos for her comical and professional contribution to my residency experience, Faye Green and the local belly dancers for their enthusiasm and inspiration. Shimmy-on! Liam would also like to thank Bridie Connell for being his local Shire guide and muse.

Maria Cruz would like to acknowledge the support of the Australia Council, VACF.

Huseyin Sami would like to thank the following people: Meryem Niazi, Robyn Fairs, Nafiya Katri, Margret Bradford, Zalhe Djemal and Anne Passmore.

Mimi Tong acknowledges the support of Rechelle Beaufilets, Simon Killalea, Michelle Tong and Vision Graphics.

All images courtesy of the artists.

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This project has been assisted by the Visual Arts & Crafts Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



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**DVD**

The DVD for *Our Lucky Country (still different)* documents 16 artists working in and around the Sutherland Shire and at the Hazelhurst Arts Centre in 2007.

Directed, edited and produced by Lisa Andrew  
DV PAL (1.067) 4:3, 60 mins

