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Acknowledgements
Thanks to Jan Manton Art and Artworkers for their support.

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ISBN
0-9757549-0-4

Front & Back Cover Image
Joachim Froese *The Resurrection of Christ* 2005 Silver gelatin prints Courtesy the artist and Jan Manton Art, Brisbane

Machine is a free bi-monthly visual arts publication. Machine has a focus on emerging Queensland artists and writers but publishes the work of artists and writers based outside Queensland.

2 Problem Child or Abandoned Child: Avant–Garde Film in the Artworld
Danni Zuvela

5 Blood, Beauty and the Black Period: An Interview with Kim Demuth

7 A Human Worth: Contemporary Figurative Sculpture in Queensland
Jessica Campbell

10 The Screen of Drawing, Inscription and the Internet:
Mark Webb

13 Wild Thang:
Nicholas Thompson

14 De Lama Lâmina:
Wes Hill

15 Species: Joachim Froese
Victoria Bladen

17 high light:
Din Heagney

18 Balgo, Australia:
Trish Barnard

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PROBLEM CHILD OR ABANDONED CHILD?

AVANT-GARDE FILM IN THE ART WORLD

DANNI ZUVELA

The relationship between film and video appears to be cordial. Nowadays, they are virtually interchangeable—we see films on DVD, 'films' shot on HD video, projections of time-based art, and everything on plasma screens. Film may be in its twilight years, but 'film look' (with options for controlling grain and flicker) is as simple as a home editing suite plug-in. Hybridity and digitalisation have, over the last decade or so, eclipsed what were once vital and relevant debates about the respective merits of video and film.

These days, to insist on the essential or distinctive features of a medium is as dated as orange and brown kitchen wallpaper. With good reason too, because medium specificity, in and of itself, does not lead to good art. As contrarian film theorist Noel Carroll argues, it can often lead to worse—lazy art which maximises purity and not excellence.[1] We can safely say that Clement Greenberg's elitism and formalist fundamentalism are so *not* hot right now.

However, in the post-specificity conflation of moving image technologies, concomitant with the elevation of video art to the 'default' setting in institutions, something has been egregiously overlooked.[2] The baby thrown out with the bathwater here is experimental film — that is, films made by artists working with celluloid.

Avant-garde / experimental / artists' / fine art film is incontrovertibly significant. Here in Australia, that importance has been ignored for too long. In the US, the success of key experimental films at the end of the 1950s and early 1960s put avant-garde film on the art-world map. The ease with which the techniques and effects of action painting could be read off the films of abstract filmmakers like Stan Brakhage gave the art world a readymade interpretive schema and provided entry for avant-garde filmmakers to visual art discourses. A framework for the consideration of film as an art form was established. Mid 1960s, this structure took on 'a tangible shape' when key institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, and magazines such as *Artforum* 'began to devote attention and resources to the interpretation, dissemination and presentation of experimental film.'[3]

So far, so 60s, but what was happening here? Well, given the recent storm over the Office of Film and Literature Classification's intervention in Monica Tichacek's video art, you might think that their interference set some kind of precedent for Australia's moral guardians to 'protect' Australians from moving image art. You'd be wrong (though it does, as has been noted, indicate a worrying conflation of cinema and video for the artworld). The entry of many film artworks to this country was interfered with, or even blocked. The members of Ubu, the radical Sydney-based 60s film collective, devised all sorts of clever strategies to avoid the censors, but still managed to be harassed trying to *leave* the country with an avant-garde film.[4] Even the undisputed king of the avant-garde canon, Salvador Dali and Louis Bunuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), didn't escape the censor's scissors (guess which scene?).[5]

Australian experimental film suffered not only from censorship. Such was the dearth of anything resembling a discourse of new cinema or artistic film that, when

Corinne Cantrill and Arthur Cantrill (with Ivor Cantrill)
Myself When Fourteen 1989 16mm 19 mins Courtesy the artist

pioneers Arthur and Corinne Cantrill returned from London, they had to start a film journal to provide a space for the discussion and legitimation of avant-garde and independent work (that journal, *Cantrill's Filmnotes* 1971-2000, went on to become the world's longest-running avant-garde film journal to date and today a remarkable source of documentation of Australian artists' cinema). Conservatism, hostility and ignorance characterised both the popular press and what little existed in the jejune fields of art criticism (some say little has changed vis-á-vis avant-garde film).

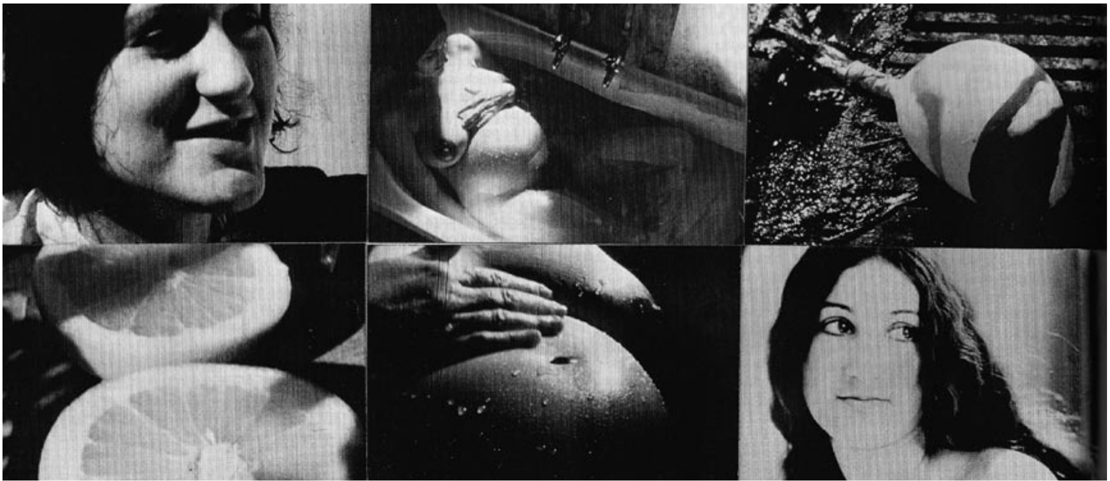
In other words, unlike the American art world's embrace of avant-garde film, Australian experimental filmers from the 60s through till today have suffered from a near-complete neglect by the Australian art world (the international art world, incidentally, has been much more perceptive, with multiple shows and print purchases). No major survey shows, like the Tate's recent A Century of Artists' Film in Britain, have been staged here, and only a select few filmmakers have been afforded a solo show. Exhibitions featuring a variety of media curated around a theme inevitably bypass the rich body of experimental films dealing aesthetically with pretty much every theme imaginable—in favour, inevitably, of video art.

Avant-garde film is incontrovertibly significant. Here in Australia, that importance has been ignored for too long.

It's as though curators pass over the huge body of artists' films (thousands of significant films, and numerous makers whose individual oeuvres number over a hundred) without a flicker of recognition. Some experimental filmmakers I've spoken to blame curatorial ignorance. Is this fair? Surely, our curators are products of a system: one where both art and film education are yet to afford experimental film proper respect. Film schools today are largely untroubled by film holdings and projection equipment, marginalise avant-garde film in coursework (usually relegated to a 'miscellaneous' week, or lumped in with feminist, queer and documentary) and are avowedly 'industry focused', i.e. anti-art. Art schools eagerly show some artists' films on DVD, but rarely on film with the serious amount of context needed to explain and situate such work. Big art institutions don't admit it, but the pressures of a neo-liberal clime weigh heavily, resulting in a move away from the 'radical unreadability' of experimental art towards a more bums-on-seats model to justify their existence. Invariably, 'tight budgets' are offered as the explanation for this pedagogical failure.

But budgets and under-education don't fully account for avant-garde film's invisibility in institutions. Bridging the 'black box' of the cinema and the 'white cube' of the gallery space is challenging. Most avant-garde films usually have a beginning, middle and an end, presenting problems for the gallery flaneurist mode.[6] And even the most rigorously non-narrative artists' films have been carefully constructed with thought to a linear screening, often with sound, in a darkened space (blackout and sound-bleed control being two of the other major architectural considerations). Who wants to stand and watch a film for any length of time, with or without barrages of clattering schoolchildren on day release? As Chrissie Illes explains, in the enclosed space of cinema 'there is no circulation, no movement, and no exchange. In the darkness, spectators sink into their seats as though slipping into bed'. This model, however, 'is broken apart by the folding of the dark space of cinema into the white cube of the gallery.'[7]

There is also a mistaken belief in the mind of many of the digital generation that good



David Perry *A Sketch on Abigayl's Belly* 1968 16mm 2 mins Courtesy the artist

projectors and projectionists are hard to come by. Wrong: fleamarkets and garage sales continue to yield considerable bounty, and I've worked with ten different excellent 16mm projectionists in Brisbane alone. A bigger issue than technophobia, Nicky Hamlyn notes, is that unlike the noiseless, designed-to-efface-itself projection of digital devices, film projectors 'inevitably draw attention to themselves', so, in the echoing clean surfaces of a gallery, they need to work *with* the 'sculptural/mechanical presence of the projector, the filmstrip, and the projected image itself.'[8]

So pragmatism, amnesia and favouritism continue to lock avant-garde film out of the art world. Galleries and museums aren't perfect, and have to make choices that discriminate between artists and media all the time. That the pioneering avant-gardists of the 1920s were so avowedly anti-institutional and anti-art probably isn't behind art institutions' rejection of experimental film today; as we all know, those experiments were co-opted rapidly. However, as Corinne and Arthur Cantrill point out, 'there's always been a tension between the notion of art films as "art objects and treated as such" and the idea that "the avant-garde *shouldn't* be absorbed by the institutions."'[9] The militant alterity of the avant-garde's counter-systems of production, distribution and exhibition, and the failure of film artists, so far, to convince the art world that its films are *both* experiences and precious objects (in the form of limited edition prints), probably are a factor too. Pip Chodorov—experimental film maker, distributor and busy Frameworks listserv manager—has attempted to answer these tribulations with the opening of a new artspace, the Film Gallery, in Paris, showing, trading and celebrating fine art film prints. And there is increasing acceptance in fine art circles that the choice to work in film or video is a highly thought-out artistic decision, akin to choosing watercolours or gouache, rather than mindless essentialism.

It's time to upturn the too-hard basket and bring experimental film into the art world, where it may or may not belong, but at least can be appreciated by audiences who may never have another chance to experience this important art. This could also redress the currently unacknowledged debt to avant-garde film history by contemporary video art that unknowingly repeats experiments fully fleshed out over the last 80 years (though that's another story). With the 'return to history'[10] upon us, it's timely that important Australian artists receive the recognition they deserve, and their contribution to the international conversation around fine art film be celebrated. Prints should be editioned, purchased, cherished, preserved, and screened with context and discussion—and enjoyment. While it might be premature to suggest that the film world is giving avant-garde film its due, with the recent 'aesthetic turn' of film and television studies, a new appreciation of artists' film looms on the horizon. The question is whether the art world can be persuaded to do the same.

Danni Zuvela researches, teaches, writes on and occasionally makes experimental film and video. She is also co-curator of OtherFilms Festival, Brisbane

1 'Medium Specificity Arguments and the Self-Consciously Invented Arts: Film, Video and Photography', in *Theorizing the Moving Image.* United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1996. p16.

2 to use Cate Elwes' excellent phrase, see *Video Art: A Guided Tour.* London: I.B. Taurus, 2005. p1.

3 Kashmere, Brett. 'Underground Film, Into the Light: Two Sides of the Projected Image in American Art, 1945-1975.' *Synoptique* 8, 2005: <http://www.synoptique.ca>

4 as was the case with David Perry and his beautiful pregnancy film, *A Sketch on Abigayl's Belly* (1969) Obherhausen.

5 see '43 Years Later…*Un Chien Andalou:* Surrealist Cinema by Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel in the National Library of Australia Film Collection.' *Cantrills' Filmnotes* 5, 1971: p18.

6 see Uroskie, Andrew. 'Between the Black Box and the White Cube: Warhol, Expanded Cinema, and the emergence of the Moving Image in American art' [Ph.D dissertation] Berkeley, CA: University of California.

7 Iles, Chrissie. 'Between the Still and Moving Image.' *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977.* New York: The Whitney Museum of American Art, 2001. p33.

8 Hamlyn, Nicky. *Film Art Phenomena.* London: BFI Publishing, 2003.

9 Cantrill, Arthur and Cantrill, Corinne. Interview with the author, 2005.

10 see Part Four: The Return to History in Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams, eds. *Reinventing Film Studies.* London: Edward Arnold, 2000.

Blood, Beauty and the Black Period:

An Interview with Kim Demuth

This interview was conducted via email while Kim Demuth was in Barcelona on a 3-month Australia Council residency earlier this year.

Kris Carlon: Could you give me an idea of how your residency came about, what you are working on while you're away, and what you have planned for when you get back, along with any comments you might have on this kind of opportunity?

Kim Demuth: This residency was about a need to rediscover Goya in his own culture and history. Akin to Goya's work and life, Spain is a furiously passionate place, dynamic, tough and hardy, whose past history of turmoil and disaster, war and brutality has ironically contributed to the core of its humanity and beauty. I wanted to study this on Goya's own soil, not from afar.

Consequently, I have begun new works influenced by Goya's 'Black' period that are kind of propelling a sense of the past into the future, so that history is jostled about and that its parallel to the 'now' becomes lost somewhere else. I suppose it's kind of dealing with the idea that aspects of history tend to recur and the future suggests the same, yet conceptually at least, we always seem to attempt to place them at a distance.

So, this will be the type of new work that I'll be continuing when I get back. I'm not planning anything else until I do return, as my focus is completely fixated on the here and now. Three months may seem like a long time, but it really isn't. What I would suggest to anyone thinking about doing a three-month residency is to save up and stay longer! I'm sure glad I did.

You know, it's kind of stating the obvious, but you would have to be clinically dead not to register the dramatic impact this type of experience has, both on you as a person/artist and on your practice, and really, isn't that what residencies should be mainly about?

KC: Despite there being an insistent 'coldness' in your work, I always get the feeling there is something inherently 'human' about the questions your work raises.

KD: There is always a certain amount of emotional energy involved with existential thought or questioning, and to convey this via a cool, sterile aesthetic as in my work, is a means of 'snap-freezing' an imagined moment, thought or experience within a space and time.

I was already toying quite a while back with this notion of, let's say 'memory', in various ways. But, this is not a 'real memory' that I am creating, it is perhaps sensed, yet can never really be fully received, rendering it false; a psychological illusion or sham.

It has become a preoccupation of mine to find various ways in which illusionary devices can contest our own ideas of 'reality', what we see and believe. With the advent of the 'cyber-world' more or less fully upon us, it is not hard to imagine the potentials of it to be as exciting as they are terrifying. We are creating virtual worlds and it seems more relevant as an artist now to consider this epoch as the basis for the 'neo-human' and to treat it as in relation to our former history, with a scrutinizing 'eye'.

KC: I find myself continually reflecting on the film 'The Abyss' when I think about your mirror works. That film seems to encompass a lot of the things I see in these works: coldness and beauty, inquisitiveness and intelligence, fear and exploration, the unbearable desire to plumb the depths of the void, to find out what lies beyond, to go where we should not (or can not) go. Have you seen the film and would you draw any of these parallels?

Kim Demuth *Mouth 2 Mouth* 2005 Mixed medium Courtesy the artist

KD: Yes I did see the film but when it first came out, so my recollection of it is a little vague. I think there is quite a filmic presence about nearly all my work, but more in the sense of the 'freeze frame'. This allows me to kind of suspend the notion of time, creating an edginess, suggesting that something is about to occur, but of course other than the slight flicker of a fluorescent bulb, nothing actually does.

These objects do ominously gape into what seems to be a void; however, where it actually goes, holds, or even what its purpose is, is not actually revealed. There are no conclusions, only a constant infinite space.

Speculating what lies beneath our deepest oceans is similar to gazing into the solar system, or for that matter ourselves, so there is always some kind of a void to peer into. The void in the 'mirror works' are meant to metaphorically shift from one possibility to another, and so on, like an endless puzzle.

By nature, humans always want to know everything (to be clever) and maybe the more we attempt to map things out, the larger these voids actually become. However, I don't think we 'should not (or can not) go 'there", as humans by instinct have, and will continue to go anyway!

KC: We've discussed 'beauty' in relation to your work (and in some other contemporary art) as a term that seems to be losing its guilty edge. Can you share your views on beauty in art?

KD: In terms of a contemporary art context at least, I think aesthetics have generally found their way into the 'concept'. Which is not saying anything really new; let's take Duchamp's 'Fountain' for example, a somewhat abject object perhaps, but for some a beautiful idea, is it not? However indifferent he was or removed from the ready-made in terms of aesthetics, I still feel they are beautiful when placed under the context of his intentions and the way that they have seeped into art history. Therefore, the aesthetic to respond to is embedded in its idea.

Maybe today, I am more comfortable in admitting that I have always thought of what I do in terms of beauty than I have in the past, even though this is still such a subjective and perhaps precarious topic for me to delve into. I am perhaps naively and unashamedly wooed by what I sense it to be, in many of its guises, and for that matter cannot banish it altogether from what I do, as it has, and remains to be, a crucial source from which my ideas and motivations are derived from. For me, an idea is only a 'starting point' when it becomes something that I can respond to in an aesthetic manner.

KC: So would you say that anything treated aesthetically has a kind of inherent beauty, whether it is superficially (or traditionally) 'beautiful' or not? Do you see this kind of beauty in Goya?

KD: That is a matter of opinion; perhaps it is just safer to say that there are differing forms of beauty, some that veer towards 'higher' taste and others towards 'lower' taste, which has been left to the 'experts' to decide in terms of a historical context.

Goya is more personal for me – he was one of the reasons why I first became interested in art as a child. I would even be as bold to say that I believe he was the first 'modernist' artist.

Goya's 'good' work gets into the 'dirt' where things begin; death begets life and vice versa, ad infinitum. He suggests that we are all struggling for survival or a better world for ourselves that can often unfortunately lead to carnage, even of our own kind.

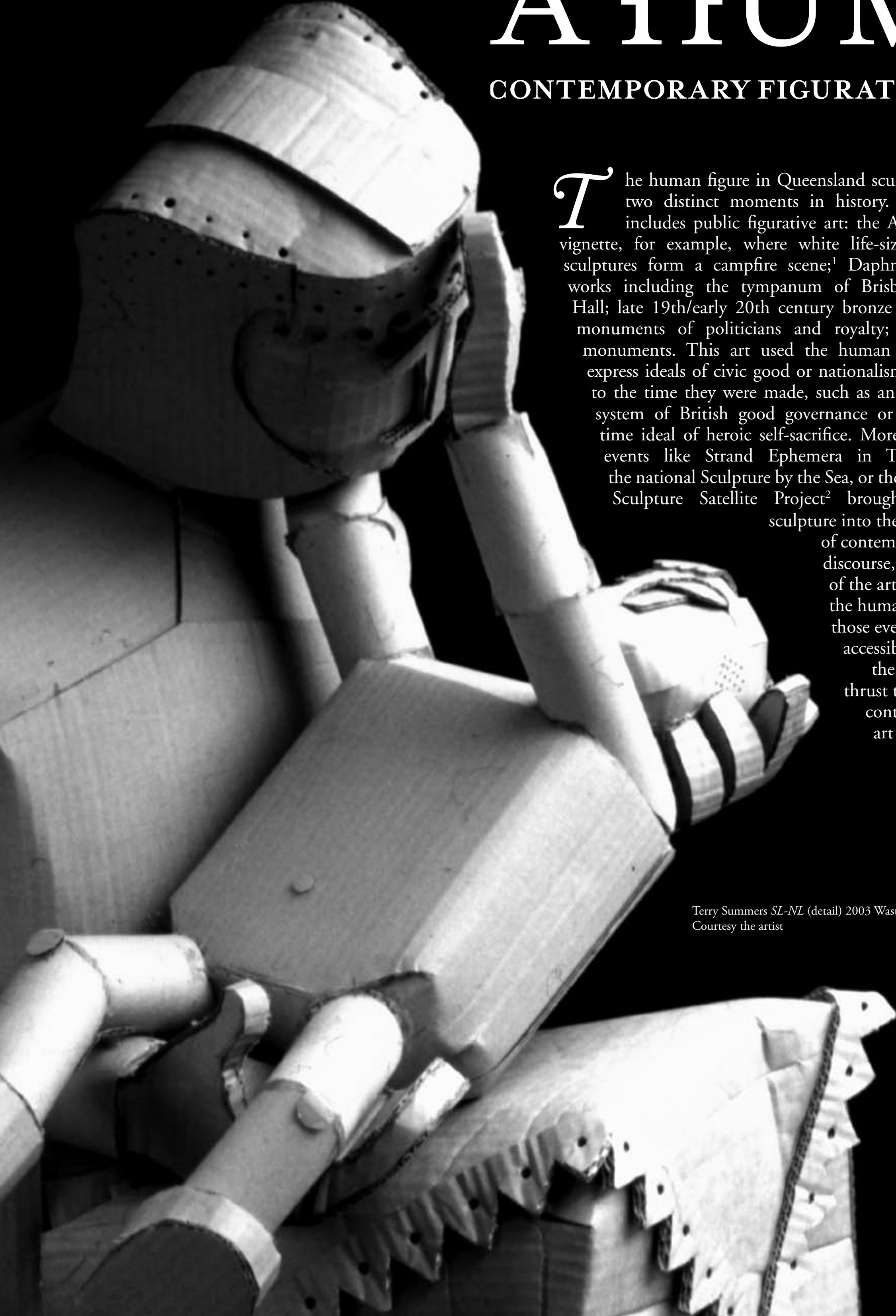
How can this be beautiful? Because it is true. His work aches, moans, and cries for what we have done to one another, and still do for that matter. He is not dressing up chocolate boxes; he wants to show us a gigantic mirror with a scribed 'Por Que?' (Why?) upon its face. For me, his greatest works are about 'human tragedy', our ability to recognize our flaws and to lament our losses, and I feel this is in a sense, most beautiful.

Blood and bone is a great fertilizer for flowering species and the like. Perhaps the same could have been said for Goya.

Kris Carlon is a freelance writer, curator & artist based in Brisbane.

A HUMA

CONTEMPORARY FIGURATIVE SCULP



The human figure in Queensland sculpture has two distinct moments in history. The first includes public figurative art: the Ann Street vignette, for example, where white life-size human sculptures form a campfire scene;[1] Daphne Mayo's works including the tympanum of Brisbane City Hall; late 19th/early 20th century bronze figurative monuments of politicians and royalty; and war monuments. This art used the human figure to express ideals of civic good or nationalism relevant to the time they were made, such as an inherited system of British good governance or the war-time ideal of heroic self-sacrifice. More recently, events like Strand Ephemera in Townsville, the national Sculpture by the Sea, or the Brisbane Sculpture Satellite Project[2] brought public sculpture into the spotlight of contemporary art discourse, yet much of the art that used the human form at those events, while accessible, lacked the analytical thrust that much contemporary art demands.

Terry Summers *SL-NL* (detail) 2003 Waste cardboard
Courtesy the artist

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TURE IN QUEENSLAND. JESSICA CAMPBELL

encounter of different purposes within figurative sculpture. While the body is literally cut open or invaded to reveal as flawed the myth of man's interiority as privileged by humanist thought,[5] Robb's process of trying to accurately reproduce his own body seems to be a search for an epiphanic moment of self-recognition. It is as if the project of figurative sculpture could be redeemed from cynicism if Robb could prove that the ideal of self-awareness was possible. Finally, no hero emerges from the fibreglass. The busts remain abject, frail objects, although an awareness of our hope that they can capture the true spirit of man still persists.

Therefore at the recent Queensland University of Technology Art Museum forum on the figure in contemporary sculpture, it was surprising to hear the merits of the figure in today's sculpture seriously considered.[3] The forum, where Queensland-based artists Charles Robb, Stephen Hart, and Alasdair Macintyre spoke on their own and others' art, and curator Susan Ostling touched on the importance of the body in minimalist art, revealed a determination to carve out a place in contemporary art discourse for such work.

This type of sculpture works in a space of tension between creating an ideal human form (ideal in terms of humanism, heroism, nationalism or the sanctity of the body) and a criticism of such ideals; between cynicism and hope about the body and its potential to express civic good. Our figurative sculpture has worked on the assumption that such sculpture is capable of delivering the viewer from everyday human existence to a more meaningful or spiritual understanding of the viewer's self. The Noosa Sculpture by the Sea catalogue quotes Albert Camus on good sculpture:

[Sculpture's] intention is not one of imitation, but of stylisation, to catch in one significant expression all the passing furore of the body and its infinite variations of attitude. Only then does it erect on the pediment above the tumultuous city, the model, the type, the perfect, immobile symbol which, for a moment, cools the incessant fever of man.[4]

This type of sculpture works in a space of tension between creating an ideal human form (ideal in terms of humanism, heroism, nationalism or the sanctity of the body) and a criticism of such ideals…

In a similar vein, at the QUT forum Alasdair Macintyre spoke of seeking in his art a moment of epiphany for artist and viewer. Macintyre's tableaus, where toy-sized men engage in a battle with famous figures from art history, are thus imbued with a potential to reveal man's struggles as finally comprehensible.

This utopian potential of figurative sculpture is at odds with a global art-historical landscape that thrives on dissecting and interrogating the edifices of man and the body. Charles Robb's art, currently white portrait busts that are manipulated in startling ways, reveals this

Stephen Hart described as influences sculptors such as Antony Gormley (Britain, 1950-) whose large-scale sculpture *Angel of the North* (2005-) in Newcastle, UK, uses the human form as a symbol to invoke protection and empowerment. Hart's own work is more cynical—his figures seem weighted, somnambulant, struggling to stand upright. The confusion and pettiness of everyday existence is privileged here over the idea that man is filled with meaning. Citizenship of the rational, self-controlled society of humanist man is denied Hart's male figure: represented on a treadmill, trapped in a crowd which goes nowhere and achieves nothing, or merely standing still, hands in pockets, the antithesis of a hero. There is no record of success in the project of human worth in Hart's art, merely the recognition that such an undertaking is as endless as gravity.

Krista Berga is another important Queensland-based sculptor whose work negotiates between the potential of the ideal human form and a more cynical take on the project of figurative sculpture. Her works, to which the molten bronze medium and the chance nature of casting give a fluidity and randomness,[6] convey the sense of a time of reckoning between the rational control of man on his world and the spontaneous, irrational body, in particular the female body. Ultimately a grotesque, animal-like, unbeautiful figure emerges in bronze—traditionally the medium used in celebratory public sculpture—forming a reminder that Queensland's social history is not always reducible to the ideal, nor does it leave the human body unscathed.

In contrast to Berga's bronze, Terry Summers renders man at his most transcendent (the sacred moment between mother and child, for example), yet, constructed from cardboard, man is also disposable and dissolvable. Summers'

(below) Stephen Hart *Still moving II* (detail) 2002 Polychromed hardwood, mixed media
Courtesy the artist and Jan Manton Art, Brisbane

work suggests a human existence that is enacted between meaninglessness and brief moments of transcendence when human worth is realised.

Christine Turner's work with large decorative dolls arranged in choir-like rows has a different take on the potential of figurative sculpture, examining how it traditionally embodies a collective social destiny. As Simon Wright states, in that there are so many figures in Turner's installations, 'it is as if the human shape functions as an effective void…denying physical links to monumentality and particular expressions of identity.'[7] This points to how much figurative sculpture aims to express man's existence as comprehensible and filled with meaning, but this potential remains unfulfilled.

Indigenous figurative sculpture is crucial to this discussion and needs more investigation. Artists like Arnold Watt (Thuganmu) of Mornington Island, who makes love dolls that are traditionally used to seal the union of young men and women, point to how Indigenous people are otherwise missing from Queensland's figurative sculptural record. Sculptors like Ken Thaiday and Michael Boiyool Anning make art to be worn, carried, or inhabited by the body. They assert an Indigenous civic art that is part of daily life in a way that questions the physical distance between traditional non-Indigenous civic art and the audience i.e. its tendency to be separated from people by plinths or the gallery setting.

Finally, emerging artists are also making sculpture that problematises self-conceptualisation. Townsville artist Barbara Pierce was included in the 2005 Strand Ephemera with a work *Here I am/am I Here?* (2005) which critiqued identity in public sculpture. Brisbane artist Danielle O'Brien, recently shown at Blacklab Gallery, makes busts in polymer clay that examine the entrapment of subjectivity in the body.

The contemporary sculpture discussed here comes out of a Queensland history of figurative sculpture marked both by triumphalism and accessiblity but not necessarily by a capacity to engage. The new sculpture has moved beyond those historical limits and is now cynical about figurative sculpture's idealisation of the human figure. I would argue that this art has a critical perspective on figurative public art. It reveals how the ideal human form has been used as an attempt to understand the direction or identity of our society. If Robb, Hart and the others discussed here were to make art to be placed more publicly in Queensland streets and malls they would make this point even more strongly. They would create a public art that replied to and contested our past public art. It would be an art cynical of figurative public sculpture as a means of social transcendence or fulfilment, and an art that opened up the possibility of the body in sculpture as difficult, chaotic, and irrational.

Jessica Campbell is a visual arts writer and artworker based in Brisbane.

1 Currently removed for restoration, the sculpture will be returned to the site at the end of November 2005.

2 This event occurred just twice in 1994 and 1996 and featured the work of Queensland sculptors at various sites around the Brisbane CBD.

3 Wednesday 21 September 2005, 6—7.30pm, QUT Art Museum, Brisbane.

4 Albert Camus, 'Man in Revolt.' quoted in Tom Bass. 'An Essay on Sculpture.' *Sculpture by the Sea Noosa.* Noosa: Noosa Regional Gallery, 1998. pp 11—12.

5 Examining humanism is a project explicit in Robb's art and his writing on art, far more so than the other artists mentioned here.

6 Kubler, Alison. *Fathoming: Contemporary Australian Sculpture.* [Exh Cat] Brisbane: Regional Galleries Association of Queensland, 2002. Unpaginated.

7 Wright, Simon. 'Christine Turner: a world of ideas.' *Temperature: Contemporary Queensland Sculpture.* Brisbane: Museum of Brisbane, 2004, p56.

The Screen of Drawing

Inscription and the Internet

Mark Webb

In her essay for the 2004 Whitney Biennial 'Altered States', the curator of film and video, Chrissie Iles, discusses the notion that there exists a split between art made before the internet reset our spatial, perceptual, visual, social and political compass, and art made after its profound impact.[1] I have also previously written about these shifts, particularly in relation to the way in which many young artists were treating video, and how this split had significantly realigned the construction of their own subjectivities and realities.[2] However, given the amount of airtime being devoted to drawing in major exhibitions like the 2004 Whitney Biennial and Beautiful Losers at the Contemporary Art Centre in Cincinnati, as well as a flourishing of smaller, independent shows like The Dogs in LA, and All Wool and a Yard Wide assembled in our own backyard, an argument can be made that the current resurgence of drawing, like video before it, could be coming out of the same splits, shifts, and spaces.

There is, of course, the case for suggesting that the recent popularity of drawing is merely the art market's rapacious recycling of product at work, but I would like to propose some other possibilities for this reassessment of drawing in light of this post-internet partition. Firstly, it seems to signal that learning environments have become more rhizomatic and less dominated by a single, hierarchical system. A generation and a half has grown up accessing all manner of electronic resources for their information and knowledge needs. As this has slowly eroded the metanarrative generated by the authority of the book, it has also stimulated a tendency toward employing the multiple languages of screen culture when discussing much of what is occurring in contemporary art. Image, sound, and text all fold in and around one another, and in doing so construct a genuinely intertextual array of languages that have increasingly become the lingua franca of the internet. As a result, they have also significantly shaped the many developing art practices that have grown alongside the new frontiers of the web.

The widespread usage of these intertextual codes also suggests that Derrida's ideas on the formation of the self through language, in particular the inscription of the self into the world, more assertively map themselves across this expanded terrain of languages. Derrida's argument is that there is no prevailing hierarchy between speech and writing in the formation of language, and it is the interplay between writing and speech that continually develops language. Moreover, Derrida elaborates, all forms of symbolic inscription—drawing, painting, video, and even performance art—essentially share the same type of relationship that speech and writing do. Consequently, these modes of symbolic inscription are also not in any particular hierarchy of importance in the formation of meaning. They, like speech and writing, are intrinsically and deeply embedded within one another. They are simply another form of inscribing ourselves into the world, of enunciating our presence.

In this respect, drawing or video can then be thought of as being less contained by their historical conventions and forms, and less constrained by the expectations of their customary use. Thus these acts of inscription can be considered more as a process, one that activates the play between the artist and the intertextual potential of media in the exploration and construction of meaning. When considered this way, the page has not been replaced

by the screen, but rather is analogous with it. The perceived divides between these media are collapsed by the conceptual and perceptual drives that inform both. So while it may appear that video has been the most promoted and visible form of symbolic inscription over the last decades, it is likely that drawing has been in a continuing dialogue with it all along.

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The thematic and formal concerns evident in recent drawing exhibitions would also seem to indicate an ongoing discourse with video. Almost all of the work in these shows references everything associated with screen culture, from its spectacles to its subcultures—TV, films, video games, the internet, fashion, music, music clips, animation, advertising, etcetera. What is equally evident about this analogous relationship between screen and page is that drawing and video have began to resemble one another in both their content and usage. Much of the drawing in these shows is produced from stills taken from screen culture, or through projecting still images from video. American artist Raymond Pettibon, who has one of the most enduring and prolific of drawing practices, produces much of his work through pausing and tracing images off the TV screen. His drawing seems to epitomise the intertextual model of having no fixed place on the cultural map of contemporary art. It moves seamlessly from literature to pulp fiction, from screen to page, and from record cover to gallery space.

Many other works exhibited in these shows are made while watching TV, capturing the uneven flows of image and narrative as they move across the screen. This type of drawing often incorporates the dialogue as text within the work, such that image, text and sound are rendered equivalent on the page, and simultaneously reflect both the private thoughts and the episodic nature of these inhabitations.

More often than not, the works are displayed in multiples or as overlapping assemblages that are closer to the filmic techniques of montage than they are to methods of collage. These series of interconnected images also appear to mimic the narrative thrusts, and signify the displacements of time produced by screen media. In particular, some of the drawing functions as a kind of super-slow motion or a freeze frame, which enables a careful scrutiny of the moving image while at the same time placing it between mimesis and simulacra. Much of the drawing also reflects the long-standing relationship between the screen, comic books and graphic novels, as well as the recent adaptations of many of these forms back into TV, film and web-based media. These overlapping references also trace a distinctive movement between Western traditions of zines and underground commix, with the growing influence of the graphics, anime, and Otaku culture of Japan present in the work. One thing seems obvious though, most of this work rarely references or resembles the natural world or the abstract explorations of pre-internet artists, instead it is overwhelmingly motivated by the constructed realities of a pervasive screen culture.

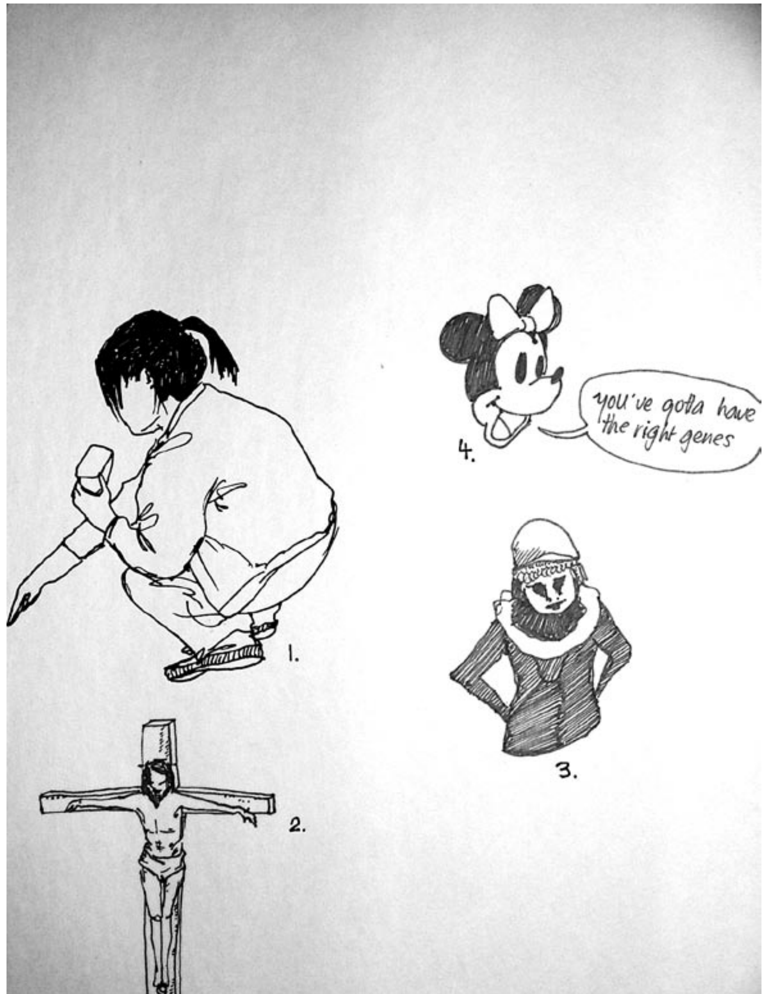
Although the importance of TV, film and video for artists in the last half of the twentieth century is self-evident, the more recent fluidity of movement between page and the screen appear to mark a shift between the motivations and characterisations of drawing practices before and after the internet. From my teaching experiences it has also been obvious for some time that video is being used as drawing has always been, as a tool for directly sketching

Alex Weiland *Untitled* 2005 Nikko on paper Courtesy the artist

and collecting ideas. It is no longer being thought of as having to be a complete work in itself, often with aspirations to high production values, or burdened with the need to compete with the spectacle of video installation, it is simply part of the process of exploration and inscription. This also appears to reflect the prevalence, and increasing influence of lo-fi and DIY subcultures operating over the last twenty years.

Video, then, becomes just another page to write one's self through, sometimes scrappy and unexpected, sometimes more deliberate and contemplative, and occasionally hysterical and confronting. Like writing and drawing, video is accessible and portable, it can manifest itself privately or publicly, it directly reflects our presence and absence, and in retrospect helps us to recognise what we might be, or where we might be at any particular time. Drawing is not so much the new video as video is the new drawing. They are neither and both, and they are grafted together in new hybrid forms.

Not so long ago, photography and film, then TV and video art, reset our perceptions of the world. The process called drawing kept up an exchange with these changing scenarios, it grafted itself across these processes, reinscribing and countersigning these new media and experiences. It enabled us to think of drawing and video as interchangeable and complementary in the process of inscription. Now, websites, blogs and wikis can similarly be used to explore the intertextual possibilities of this grafting process, and to keep us asking just what it is it we mean by drawing. And anything that keeps us asking just how we might conceptualise what art might be, is a welcome, if perhaps unintentional, legacy of the internet.



Marianne Templeton *The right genes* 2005 Pen on mounting board Courtesy the artist

Mark Webb lectures in Visual Art at QUT, Brisbane.

[1] Iles, C. 'Altered States.' *The Whitney Biennial* 2004. New York: Abrams, 2004.

[2] *Next Gen Video* [Exh Cat] Metro Arts, Brisbane. July 5—August 25, 2000.

2004 Whitney Biennial
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
March 11—May 30 2004

All Wool and a Yard Wide
H Block Studios, QUT, Brisbane
22 August—3 September 2005

Beautiful Losers: Contemporary Art and Street Culture
Contemporary Art Centre, Cincinnati
March 13—May 23 2004

The Dogs
Karen Lovegrove Gallery, Los Angeles
July10—August 7 2004

Wild Thang: Post-Pop from the Museum of Contemporary Art *Gold Coast City Art Gallery | 22 October–4 December 2005 Nicholas Thompson*

Günter Weseler *Atem Object (Breathing Object)* 1972 Bread, fur, wood, electrical motor © Günter Weseler, Licensed by VISCOPY 2004 Courtesy Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Surfers Paradise

In the conceptualisation of an exhibition, to what extent should marketing and popularisation diverge from what is presented? Is it reprehensible to adopt an incorrect theoretical premise for the attraction of an audience, or should emphasis be on gallery attendance rather than thematic accuracy?

The Gold Coast City Art Gallery's current exhibition, Wild Thang—Post-Pop from the Museum of Contemporary Art is less an exploration of post-pop as identifiable period or style and is instead a display of acquired international works, which loosely adhere to a pop aesthetic. The works presented hail from the JW Power Bequest, originally administered through the University of Sydney, now held at the Museum of Contemporary Art. In his catalogue essay, curator Craig Judd, credits the collection with providing a 'vital focus' for Australian artists, being the 'first real contact with radical formal and conceptual experimentation.'[1]

The MCA works are primarily the product of international artists, with two Australians represented. The Gold Coast City Art Gallery additionally presents a selection from its collection, which is arguably where thematic cracks appear. What qualifies as post-pop? Does it refer to the multiple styles of works which succeeded pop art, or to works which continued its aesthetic after its heyday? The definition is never clarified; but apparently anything colourful or possessing some form of reproducible insignia warrants inclusion. Michael Taylor's *Overnight Sleeper* (1967) scrapes into the category by stenciled numbers on a figure owing more to cubism than pop. In Jenny Watson's contribution, a reproduced Myer catalogue qualifies the work. Nowhere is any relationship established between these Australian and international works, despite the supposed significance of the collection.

With a colloquial rock and roll title and punchy alliteration referencing an undefined period, has thematic accuracy been sacrificed for the attraction of the public? Many of the works from the MCA collection seem to owe more to op art and even colour field painting, than the period advertised. The feminist premise of a number of works overshadows any other categorisation. Despite the fact that the artists were operating in the eras following pop art, should their work be simply categorised as 'post-pop'; or is the range of influences and adopted styles too diverse? The Gold Coast is arguably the Australian equivalent of writer Robert Venturi's praised Las Vegas, the home of pop cultural ambivalence. If the exhibition had been presented as an example of this unapologetic collision of pop styles, it would have been more legitimate—instead it labours under an improperly realised context, failing to fully demonstrate what was advertised.

Ultimately the exhibition feels less structured around a coherent theme and more an excuse to present groovy artwork from the basement. There is nothing inherently wrong with this; the argument as to whether our public cultural intuitions should entertain or educate is a complex one. However would it have been more accurate to title the exhibition 'Works from the JW Power Bequest—1968 to 1980'? If the works featured had such a profound effect on Australian artists, could not more dialogue between the two have been presented? The exhibition could have been an engaging presentation of an influential collection, instead of opting for a display of kitsch work with largely irrelevant local additions.

Nicholas Thompson is an Honours student in Art History at the University of Queensland.

[1] Judd, Craig. *Wild Thang! Post Pop from the Museum of Contemporary Art.* [Exh Cat] Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005: p7.

De Lama Lâmina

Arc Biennial, Brisbane | 28—30 October, 2005

Wes Hill

Matthew Barney *De Lama Lâmina* 2004 Production still
© 2004 Matthew Barney Photo: Chris Winget Courtesy Gladstone Gallery

De Lama Lâmina (translated: 'of mud, a blade', 2004) screened at the Dendy cinema on 30th October as the closing event for the three day Arc Biennial. Blending documentary footage with closed set filming, the structure of the film involves the documentation of a performance for the Carnaval de Salvador in Brazil—an annual six-day street party celebrating Afro-Brazilian culture, which has purportedly prevailed since the eighteenth century. A floating stage attached to the back of a forestry truck travels through a crowd of costumed dancing and singing revellers, music provided by Brazilian-American sound artist and Barney collaborator, Arto Lindsay. The truck carries a tree that has been pulled out of the ground, its roots still intact. Throughout the performance a naked, muscular man (a Brazilian porn actor referred to in the credits as 'Greenman'), roots or bulbs in both his mouth and anus, ritually eroticises the driveshaft underneath the truck; at first imitating the ritual of spindling and pottery, then using the driveshaft to stimulate his penis.

In this short space I could get very lost if I detailed the significance of the numerous metaphors present in this work, and typical of Barney's work thus far, suffice to say that *De Lama Lâmina* focuses obliquely on the relationship between land conservation and industrial production, using the local myths and narratives of Brazilian and American culture to generate the symbolism.

Like Barney's *Cremaster* series, (1994–1993) *De Lama Lâmina* was surrounded by didactics, both in the promotional material and at the beginning of the screening, that detailed scientific narratives and mythological themes, and which directed the viewer's understanding of his performative compositions. It is Barney's skill in staging and framing that was the strongest aspect of the film for me. He produces some amazing image juxtapositions, which coupled with the impressive scale and fastidiousness of the project, means that it is hard not to be impressed. Certain scenes are reminiscent of pre-photographic painting (the filmmakers of their time), particularly the early 19th century French Romantic painter Théodore Géricault (1791-1824) whose iconic works, like Barney's, have a highly charged energy and grandness of scale that is imbued with a sense of erotic morbidity. Barney's relationship to pre-photographic painting is interesting because his use of scientific and historical/mythological narratives reflects the pre-modern practices of artists like Gericault for whom the separation between the Arts and Sciences was not so strictly defined and whose depiction of myth and history is predominantly located around the depiction of the human body. In using narrative and performance in this way, many viewers speak of being confounded by a Matthew Barney film as if they expect it to elaborate didactically on the specific sociological and mythological narratives that surround it. Like the work of Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), it is in the acting out of these specific myths/histories that an entirely different (visual, pluralistic, subjective) vocabulary is brought into the world; one that both artists regard as being lateral, rather than subordinate, to analytical assessment.

Finally we got to see a Matthew Barney work on the big screen in Brisbane; hopefully it won't be the last. The playful use of metaphor, the multitude of simple, imaginative progressions and masterful managerial skills made me realise, at least in part, why such hype surrounds his work.

Wes Hill is a Brisbane-based writer. |

Species: Joachim Froese

Jan Manton Art Gallery, South Brisbane | 28 October—3 December 2005

Victoria Bladen

Joachim Froese *The Last Supper* 2005 Silver gelatin print
Courtesy the artist and Jan Manton Art, Brisbane

This photographic exhibition by Joachim Froese presents the viewer with an intriguing series of images. Peering through these mysterious windows is like looking down a well of multiple layers of temporality and intertextual referencing, the surface of which also reflects back some version of our own image. Nine works present visual narratives of commonly depicted scenes from the Bible. The episodes map key markers of the Christian ideology of sin (the temptation and fall) and reparation, through the sacrifice of Christ. There are also sub-themes of betrayal (Adam and Eve, Judas and Pilate) and loyalty (Mary Magdalene).

Froese's photography captures evidence of a theatrical performance that has happened sometime in the past, and which itself references various other pasts. The actors' faces are inscrutable; we cannot read the pain of the tortured Christ, the sadism of his persecutors or any joy in his resurrection. There is good reason for this: the actors are toy animals. Yet, we find we already have the mental and visual apparatus to read these images. The first of many paradoxes in these works is that they comprise, after the initial unfamiliarity, deeply familiar visual and intellectual structures.

While the works' titles and subjects refer to textual sources, namely biblical episodes, the compositional familiarity of the works parallel prominent Renaissance religious artworks by Masaccio, da Vinci and Piero della Francesca. Such artists were heralded for achieving new types of 'realism', and experimented with three-dimensionality. This was seen as an innovation and a break with the two-dimensionality and stylisation of medieval art. This referencing provides an interesting background to Froese's interplay between the two-dimensionality of the photographic surface and the three-dimensionality of his animated / 'animal-ated' scenes.

Intellectually, the Renaissance was a unique syncretism of Classical (pagan) aesthetic forms and Christian ideology. There is an inherent classicism in Froese's scenes that he cleverly distils and conveys: in the delicate marble effect of the sets' sugar-cube architecture, in the stance of the figures and in the cold sparseness of the space in which the episodes occur. This emotional sterility counters the significance of the subject matter and psychological drama of the episodes.

The theatrical appearance of the scenes references the relationship between Renaissance religious art and religious drama. Froese places us in a position analogous with an audience of an early European religious performance. Far from being a passive observer for whom meaning was provided, the spectator was an active participant in the creation of meaning, bringing their own knowledge of narrative, typology (the symbolic linking of Old and New Testament figures and episodes) and iconography to these performances. Likewise, we bring meanings to these images. At the same time, the theatricality emphasises the fictional mode of purported sacred history. This counters the journalistic and documentary atmosphere we often associate with black and white photography. Cropping reminds us that images are constructed, not captured.

The Renaissance artworks that Froese references were situated in religious physical and mental spaces with meditative, spiritual, didactic and pedagogical functions. What does it mean for an artist to resituate these narratives and transpose these compositions into ostensibly non-religious spaces and contexts? Why does it work here?

Perhaps it is because of the archetypal nature of the narratives that they are transportable in some form. It may also be our experiences of the pseudo-sacred atmosphere of the contemporary gallery space where objects are presented for metaphysical contemplation at some level. There is in fact a distinct 'miniature gallery' feel to the sets of these scenes.

As with Froese's previous work there is much in little. Images from the microcosmic world link with meanings in the macrocosm. There are subtle and deeply resonant layers of meaning in small objects. The fish in a bucket is a subtle reference to Christ. The umbrella held by the Magdalene above Christ's head in *The Last Supper* (2005) is emblematic of Christ's halo. However an umbrella is also shelter from the sun. The 'sun/son of God' pun was commonplace in Renaissance literature and iconography. Such historical symbolism shares space with contemporary references. The prominence given to Mary Magdalene references the current popularity of *The Da Vinci Code* with its theory of Mary as the secret spouse of Christ.

Another intriguing detail can be found in *The Resurrection of Christ* (2005) with the inclusion of a leafless tree to one side and leafy tree to the other. These details represent the artist's extraordinarily perceptive comprehension of the significant arboreal iconography in Renaissance art. Christ was commonly identified as the tree of life, a symbol of immortality, so leafless trees (signifying sin, death and the crucifixion) were commonly juxtaposed with verdant trees (signifying Christ's resurrection and the regeneration of the tree of life) in the backgrounds of religious scenes. If we read these details in Froese's work as mere trinkets we would miss the subtle nuances of the scenes.

What meanings might be derived from the use of toy animals as protagonists? Toy animals are usually designed with the proportions of small children (large head, small body, large forehead etc). Children instinctively respond to these versions of themselves in cartoons and toys since they can watch or re-enact their own negotiation with the unfamiliar world about which they are learning. To transpose these biblical scenes onto toys is to implicitly place us in the position of children watching, as if for the first time, scenes of transgression and violence. The effect is to defamiliarise us with otherwise known stories and force us to re-interpret them. What might a child make of these stories:

- If that's the goodest man in the world, why are they killing him?

- If his Daddy wants him to die anyway, why is Judas a bad guy?

If a subject traditionally at the pinnacle of subject matter hierarchies is now presented as child's play, does this suggest such beliefs are infantile and part of our historical childhood? Or that we remain entrenched in our traditional mythologies? Alternatively, are we situated as children and thus rendered innocent as if enabled to approach deity; 'suffer the little children to come to me'? Do the images remind us of the Christian rhetoric, which is structured on a language of parental relations: 'Our Father'; 'my Son'; 'God's children'? Potential readings ripple out from these enigmatic images.

The title of the exhibition, 'Species', is a word we generally apply to other living things, excluding ourselves from 'Nature'. However these works present us with some kind of mirror and imply that the questions they raise are for us to address as a species. Do we delude ourselves if we think of humans as cute and cuddly instead of violent and predatory? Why do we purport to condemn violence and see it as an aberration, while in most religions, including Christianity, violence as reparation, requisite cleansing sacrifice or necessary path to ideological domination has been justified and sanctified? At the core of these well-known images is a narrative of collective transgression and guilt and the killing of a man as reparation for our inherited sin and as the promise of eternal life. What strange manner of beast are we that have these enduring trans-historical narratives, archetypes and myths? Do we read contemporary international violence as clashes of such narratives or as the raw and savage battles of different species of beast over resources and territory?

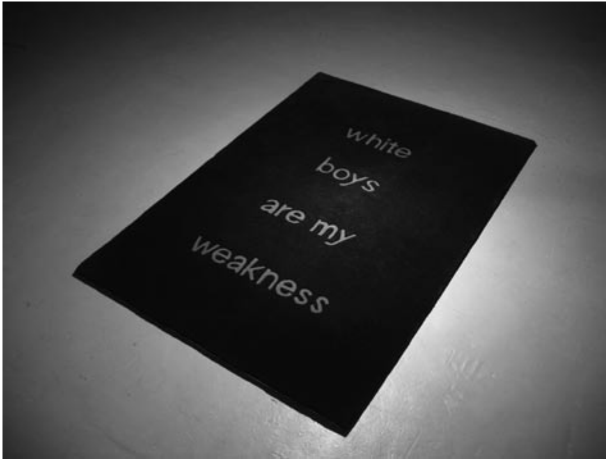
We could imagine the past as a machine in which we are always partially enmeshed and yet paradoxically free to escape from, redefine or re-engage with. This exhibition is a significant, intelligent and articulate engagement with art and ideas of the past. It is also relevant to our present and the contemporary political and social climate of justified or sanctified violence. The exhibition deserves a wide audience and ideally for the series to be held and maintained as a whole.

Victoria Bladen is a PhD student in the School of English, Media Studies and Art History at the University of Queensland.

high light

Blindside, Melbourne | 27 October—12 November 2005

Din Heagney



Selina Braine *Untitled* 2004 Vinyl lettering and lighting Courtesy the artist

Darkness can sometimes make a place feel small and empty. For the first time, the Blindside studio windows had been covered up, paper and white gaffer blanking out the south-side view across the river. The usual background distractions to mark time and place were abruptly absent. In this stark but simple removal of natural light, curator Chris Comer had successfully set the tone for high light.

Comer posited high light in the context of theatricality as 'a meeting between aesthetic artifice and social reality.'[1] While new media practices can be clearly labeled artificial, are they any less an artistic ruse than an oil painting that renders naturalistic light through simulation? As Peter Weibel writes: 'Art has increasingly turned from the illusionary representation of natural light to the real application of artificial light.'[2]

This interest in light was recently played out in Melbourne with Martin Creed's installation in the unlit rooms of ACCA. Similarly, the light-based work of artists such as Dan Flavin and Olafur Eliasson show a popular shift from objectified art spectatorship to a more experiential, insubstantial way of seeing. In this sense, the theatrical premise is more clearly understood; without light an audience would be unable to watch a staged performance and nor could the works in high light be properly viewed.

Six object-based works made up this exhibition, each reconstituting artificial light in the absence of natural light. Ben Murrell's *Untitled (Wall Relief)* (2005), a glass light box fragmented into a spiraling geometric pattern, focused the application of light into its primary function of illumination, albeit in a decorative and mesmerising way. Kim Demuth's *Trace* (2004), on the other hand, hid the blue light source within its structure, as two glass shelves jutted from the wall, one imprinted with a pair of naked footprints, the other with a set of handprints. The allusions shifted between forensic fingerprinting and performative memory. The precarious glass plinth tugged at the subconscious with a desire to stand on it but any physical interaction with Demuth's work would destroy it.

Selina Braine's wool carpet was set in the middle of the room as an unusable respite. 'White boys are my weakness' woven into the carpet worked like a domestic admission, a racial confession, woven in a softly cushioned sexual sigh. Simone Hine's *Woman and Red Object* (2005) was beautifully installed with the red object/subject of the video reappearing as a framing container for the video—itself a take on the female subject with built-in cinematic expectations to action where none resulted.

The blown out figures in the video accompanying Chris Comer and Conan Fitzpatrick's *Untitled (Hello)* (2005) was perhaps the most satisfying work. It was a little surprising but also refreshing to see the art of a curator in her own show. The soundtrack, a repetitive 'hello', progressed through a gamut of emotions to reveal that the power of expression can be placed definitely with the aural.

The inclusion of Jose Da Silva's print of naked soldiers facing a flood of light, *Untitled (Unter Männern)* (2004), seemed the most unresolved aspect of high light. The connections with the surrounding pieces seemed tenuous and added a male sexuality that felt somewhat out of place with the decidedly feminine tone at work.

Din Heagney is a multipurpose unit based in Melbourne.

[1] Chris Comer. *high light* [Exh Cat] Blindside Editions, Melbourne, 2005

[2] Weibel, Peter and Gregor Jansen. *Light Art from Artificial Light.* [Exh Cat] Karlsruhe: ZKM | Museum for Contemporary Art, 2005.

Balgo, Australia

Woolloongabba Art Gallery, Brisbane | 23 September—27 November 2005

Trish Barnard

Boxer Milner *Purkitji* 2005 Acrylic on linen © the artist and Warlayirti Artists
Courtesy Woolloongabba Art Gallery, Brisbane

The Woolloongabba Art Gallery recently hosted the first survey exhibition of spectacular paintings from the Balgo community in Western Australia. 'Balgo, Australia' presents a Brisbane audience with an experience that is the culmination of two years preparation by curator Simon Turner, in conjunction with Steven Williamson, Manager of Warlayirti Art Centre. Twelve artists are represented by a flamboyant display of expressive colour that characterises Balgo's unique style.

Warlayirti Art Centre was established in 1987 and many of these artists have been committed to painting on a daily basis since then. Eubena Nampitjin is one of the most highly respected senior law women who began painting instinctively prior to the establishment of the art centre. She has played a pivotal role in the development of Balgo's distinctive painting movement over the past twenty years and has become recognised for her signature style of rhythmic strokes in warm yellow, orange, red and purple, evident in *Midjul* (2005). Central to this work is the Midjul rockhole, surrounded by the sand dunes seen in her traditional country along the middle and upper stretches of the Canning Stock Route.

Boxer Milner's contribution has also been extensive with his own unique and innovative approach to representing his country, yet both Boxer's and Eubena's names are not in the psyche of mainstream audiences who are readily familiar with other Indigenous art, such as that from Papunya. These communities have presented the wider audience with a plethora of amazing art. It is not a case of whether or not one is better than the other, it just seems that Papunya has been promoted with more emphasis over the same period of time. Boxer is a traditional owner for Purkitji, represented in his vivid paintings that reflect his intimate knowledge of the river systems and watercourses that provide the more lush vegetation on the edge of the Great Sandy Desert.

Such knowledge of country is passed on to younger members of the community, although when referring to younger artists, we must recognise that they are around forty years old, and their confidence is developing under the guidance of the senior artists. This is evident in Lucy Loomoo's work *Yuluntjiti* (2005), influenced by Tjumpo Tjapanangka's linear style. This exchange reflects the intra-community dialogue between committed artists whose enthusiasm contributes to the success of the art centre.

The Balgo artists are not market driven, have never had preconceived rules about painting, and continue to dedicate their days to expressing principal themes of their relationship to country. There is a strong vein of power evoked in each work, especially those created by the more senior artists. The textured canvases of the Balgo artists, who have an ability to interpret the earthy tones of their country through a more flamboyant palette, have a more expressive and liberating quality than the more restrained compositions of Papunya artists. Similar to Papunya though, some of the paintings, especially by the more senior members, conceal a sacred meaning beneath layers of colour only visible to those who have a particular level of traditional knowledge.

This exhibition endeavours to be the catalyst for a succession of shows of the same standard, and perhaps create the impetus towards a greater awareness by a wider audience of the rich diversity of art available from seasoned artists across the whole of Australia.

Trish Barnard is the Collection Manager for the Cultures & Histories program at the Queensland Museum.