

ARTWRITE 43: Diversity in Arts

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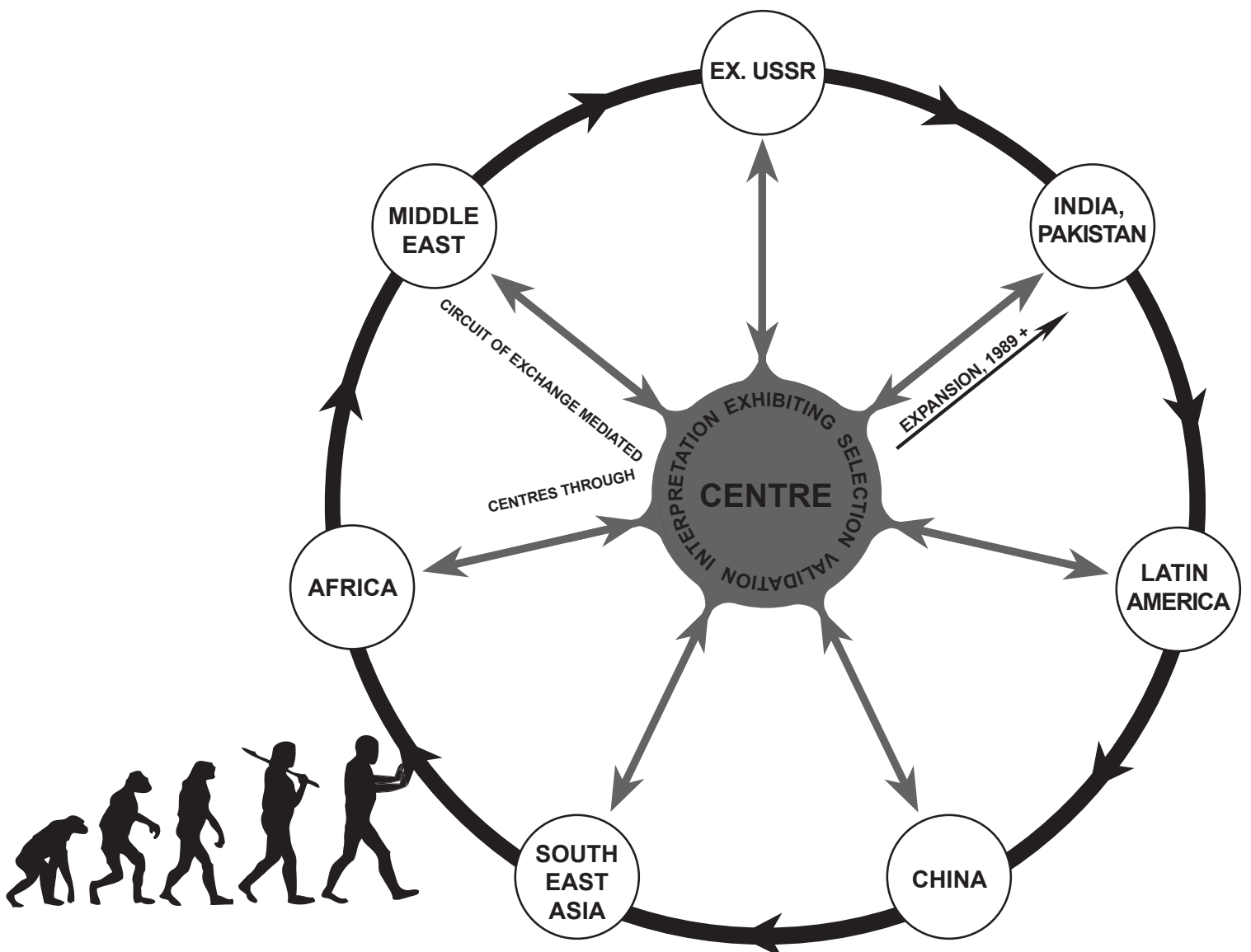
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ARTWRITE

Diversity In Art



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Editorial



A little over 150 years ago Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* was published and its impact is still being debated today. Presenting the scientific theory that life forms evolve over a course of generations, Darwin's ideas have great relevance when considering contemporary art and how it has evolved.

Indeed, the steady process of the diversification of the arts since the onset of modernism has culminated in the veritable melting pot of ideas, practices and forms that (loosely) define art of the 21st century. Art has long-since been relinquished of the flatness of the canvas and the fumes of the painting palette. Now, it is no longer confined to the white walls of high art institutions, or the exclusive viewership of the aristocracy. Art has been expanded to include any materials to which the artist has access, to appeal to more than the retina, and it is physically reaching out to a wider audience through its presence in public spaces. All these variables work within and amongst each other to (re)shape our understanding of and appreciation for art. In fact, the only constant in art is that it is constantly changing, widening and being redefined.

Most importantly, not only have art's practices changed, but in the 21st century, its purposes are also transforming to reflect the diversity of the contemporary world's characteristics; both its achievements and downfalls. Linking back to Darwin, one example of this is a renewed appreciation, respect, and concern for biodiversity. As the world becomes further embroiled in the social, political and environmental complications of centuries of industrialization and modernisation, artists have begun to address critical challenges to our environment and climate. Through their art we learn the true value of Earth's natural resources, and are reminded of the vulnerability of these gifts.

Finally, it seems that current art audiences are also responding well to these transformations, as they themselves are diversifying and expanding. According to the Australia Council's latest arts

participation research there is growing confidence in the value the arts brings to Australian society, while the Australian Bureau of Statistics tells us that in 2005-06 a healthy 16 million Australians visited an art gallery, museum or artistic performance. Like this audience, our class is comprised of a broad spectrum of students from different countries, ages and professional backgrounds. We acknowledge this by having a portion of *Artwrite* translated into Mandarin, for the first time in the publication's history. So while the struggle for funding and audiences may never end, occasionally we must stop, step back and appreciate the view.

In putting together Issue 43 of COFA's *Artwrite*, we saw the parallels between the evolution of the species and a myriad of artistic practices which now shape the contemporary art world. Here in the pages of *Artwrite* we explore this diversity. There is truly something for everyone; from the sweet delights of Ken Yonetani to the hard-core art influenced sounds of Sonic Youth, and finally to the poster art of a once isolated China. With the support and advice of Associate Professor Joanna Mendelssohn, the authors critique and question, revel in and appreciate all that art can offer.

While 'Diversity in art' seems a conveniently broad label under which to place the variety of writing styles, artistic subjects and texts in this issue, it is not contrived. Rather, 'Diversity' seems the only fitting theme to encapsulate the current and disparate forces which are shaping contemporary art. As such, this publication seeks to celebrate art's diversity and encourage continued artistic (r)evolution. ■

Vi Girgis
Kim Goodwin

Letters to Editor



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Lets hope David Elliot has composed his own song for survival.

Why is it that David Elliot so blatantly ignored the beauty and songs of survival of Cockatoo Island in the 2010 Biennale of Sydney? The decision to rig up makeshift gallery walls behind Dale Frank's sublime canvases did no favours for the artworks nor the space. Come on David, have a look around - if you don't want the historical and/or aesthetic inimitability of that particular space to impact on the works, then why not pick another one of the 70+ warehouses on the Island to place the work? Perhaps you should try and fit them in with the other 48 or so artists you laughably crammed into the MCA. Or why not squish them in as another afterthought into the thoroughfare of the AGNSW? ■

Emma Pike



Is populism the answer to relevance in the 21st Century for museums?

As the attendance at the ACMI Tim Burton show has gone through the roof, there is an emerging issue of museums inviting popular culture to boost visitor attendance.

Museum directors are sticking their nose into the entertainment business by turning museums into mini high-class shopping malls with fine dining experiences, quirky gallery shops and pop music concerts. Perhaps they also need to consider the original roles of museum – to exhibit, interpret and collect culture that provides knowledge and inspires creativity.

Making museums relevant in the 21st Century is one thing, but alienating loyal visitors is another. ■

Iris SiYi Shen



A NSW Aboriginal Art Gallery

It was great to see the Open Weekend which celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales over the October long weekend. The quality and popularity of the event highlights the concerning oversight that NSW does not have a Government owned and operated art gallery dedicated to Aboriginal art. Indigenous art is a huge part of the Australian art market both nationally and overseas and is an important link to our country's history and identity. I fully support the National Trust's call for an Aboriginal art gallery at the Barangaroo site. ■

Catherine Birrell

Bubble Wrapping Community Arts 3

When did criticism become a dirty word in community arts? In a field that submissively goes under the Australia Council moniker of Community Cultural Development (CCD), community artists too often dismiss critical evaluation on the basis of irrelevant, elitist or capitalist values.

Many a heartfelt CCD conference will slosh you with persuasive arguments for increased funding, gushing with exuberant success stories, but what of the projects that don't work? What about those that run out of funding, dissolve in conflict, meet with endless red-tape or collapse with an embarrassingly disheveled product? How are these projects received, and how can we learn from these failures?

By blanketing projects and participants from public scrutiny, community arts workers miss the opportunity to evaluate and develop better processes and products. Further, this over-protection serves to disempower participants, contravening the empowerment agenda so common to CCD. ■

Edwina Hill

在气泡纸保护下的社区艺术 / Bubble Wrapping Community Arts

从何时起，批评的声音对于社区艺术成为了禁忌之词？身处澳洲文化部门下的“社区文化发展部”，社区艺术家们常常以命题不相干、优秀人才论、抑或是资本主义价值观来摒除对于社区艺术批判性的评论。

许多充满诚挚情意的“社区文化发展”会议都会用动人的道理去争取更多的赞助基金，众多的成功案例喷涌而出。然而，那些没有成功的项目都到哪里去了？那些凌乱随意到令人尴尬的社区艺术产物不仅花光了资金，还以冲突为收尾，遭遇了无休止的繁文缛节或是全面崩塌。这些失败的案例是怎样被理解的，我们怎样才能从中吸取教训？

掩盖来自大众的审查，社区艺术家们失去了受到评估的机会，也失去了创作出更好作品的机会。此外，保护过度起到的作用只是降低参与者的自信心，违反了“社区文化发展”的授权议程。■

Author / 作者: Edwina Hill

Translator / 译者: Lunan Xing

Perpetual Volunteers 4

As an aspiring arts worker, I am very concerned regarding the job availability in the arts sector. We are encouraged to work as volunteers as much as we can, but I wonder if this can lead to decreasing job availability. Could it be that the many volunteers always ready to work for free undermines the possibility of finding paid jobs?

Further, arts organisations largely rely upon volunteers and interns to carry out their activities and projects. Will this dependence on often transient and unqualified workers lead to impoverished organisational performance? ■

Martina Baroncelli

永远的志愿者 / Perpetual Volunteers

作为未来的艺术工作者，我对艺术行业的就业形势有所关注。目前，越来越多的志愿者占据了为数不多的工作机会，导致艺术机构对于正式员工的需求急剧减退，并且影响到了艺术机构的服务质量和研究水平。这一现象在现当代年轻艺术工作者中十分明显。当我们取得硕士学位，得到许多志愿者经验后，依然被迫做一些无薪酬的志愿者工作，来增加我们的工作经验？这样的现象是否合理？我们可以说这种现象是由于艺术机构缺少资金而造成的。然而，这些艺术机构是否在利用人们对于艺术的诚挚热情而为自己制造“廉价劳动力”？人们牺牲了宝贵的时间和经验，投身于自己所钟爱的艺术行业，而艺术机构却借此免去了对于资深人士高价聘请的投入。■

Author / 作者: Martina Baroncelli
Translator / 译者: Lunan Xing

Censorship, moral panic and art

The focus of the art and censorship debate should be shifted from ‘is censorship needed?’ to ‘what kind of censorship can benefit both artists and audience?’

Art is not a free zone where artists can do anything they like as though nothing else matters. Artistic expression that signals the values of some individuals can embarrass or upset others.

In a democratic society, both ‘artist value’ and ‘audience value’ should be recognised. This validates art censorship in the public space.

Censorship is necessary. Thus, discussing how to improve the system by which government can regulate artistic expression seems more practical and more beneficial. ■

Qian Zhao

Short & Sweet

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***Jailbreak* - Damian Dillon**

Arterreal gallery
747 Darling Street, Rozelle
4th August-28th August 2010

The Damian Dillon *Jailbreak* exhibition, held at the Arterreal gallery, presents a slick selection of the artist's mixed-media photographs. Dillon digitally manipulates, graffiti's and draws on banal photographs of the urban built environment from major cities in Ireland and Australia. *Jaibreak* explores the connection between place and past and the conflicting emotions of Irish-Australian migrants. Dillon cleverly depicts sites that are not easily distinguishable from another, suggesting the reality of migration is moving from one dejected situation to another. Dillon's graffiti technique begs the question of what is blocked out and why. The photographs are engaging and raise culturally interesting questions. ■

Georgina Sandercock

***The Shape of Things to Come* - Benjamin Armstrong**

Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne
2008

Provocative, uncanny and organic are a few adjectives used to describe Benjamin Armstrong's sculptures. This applies to his new exhibition *The Shape of Things to Come*. However, none of these words can explain the ambiguity that is inherent throughout his sculptural practice, from early objects of pointy, conical shape to later rounded domes with fleshy wax material.

As reading is an important part of Armstrong's working process, perhaps the ambiguity of his objects is a window that allows open interpretation, similar to books. Therefore, time became a dimension that factors into the reading of the object. The longer the viewer observes, the more its meaning unfolds. ■

Iris SiYi Shen

***Dream/Life* - Trent Parke**

Untitled in *Dream/Life* 1999

This untitled black and white photograph from Trent Parke's first publication, *Dream/Life*, captures an intense loneliness and sense of futility emblematic of living in a chaotic metropolis. A flock of Japanese tourists march separately through the wide-angle frame, towards some unknown destination. Parke's signature grainy, high contrast technique diminishes the men to anonymous 'suits,' they become faceless silhouettes set against menacing clouds. Sydney's skyline is only vaguely recognisable, the Harbour Bridge reduced to an insignificant arch. The low angle and repetition of shapes create a complex tableau that is at once universal and hauntingly surreal. ■

Krystal Seigerman



Trent Parke
Untitled
 1999
 Gelatin silver print
 24 x 36cm
 Courtesy and copyright of the artist
<http://www.stillsgallery.com.au/artists/parke/>

The Edge of Trees **- Fiona Foley and Janet Laurence**

Museum of Sydney - public sculpture

29 pillars made from wood, sandstone or steel inhabited the area surrounding the first Government House. With an inspiring quote from the historian Rhys Jones to guide them, describing the 'first meeting' as the Aboriginal people hid within the edge of trees, Foley and Laurence have created a site-specific public sculpture for all Australians. The work integrates the concerns of Sydney's Aboriginal people, their life and culture, the people of the First Fleet and the rich and varied flora of the city, which is, juxtaposed against Sydney's skyscrapers. The site, which once symbolised cultural destruction, is now welcoming and comfortable and was seen by many as a step towards reconciliation. ■

Kate Finn

The Edge of Trees **- Fiona Foley and Janet Laurence**

悉尼博物馆 - 公共雕塑

29个柱子以木材，沙石以及钢铁制成，它们象征着曾经围绕第一个澳洲总督府而居的29个土著宗族。以里斯琼斯具有启示性的引语为指导，芳蕾和劳伦斯为所有澳大利亚人民创造了一个地点特定性的公共雕塑。这件和悉尼摩天大楼并置的艺术作品融合了悉尼土著居民，他们的生活和文 化，第一舰队带来的人民和城市丰富多样的植被。这里曾经象征着文化 的摧毁，但如今却是一个受欢迎而且惬意的地方，且被广泛认为是迈向文明化的标志。■

Author / 作者: Kate Finn

Translator / 译者: Shanjun Mao

Pop Rocks with Stupidkrap

Urban Uprising Art Gallery
314 Crown Street, Darlinghurst

Stupidkrap provides emerging and established urban art to a strong following on line. How, in conjunction with Urban Uprising Gallery they present *Pop Rocks*, an inspiring and refreshing body of work. Its tasteful but humorous Lowbrow style includes graffiti and protest art, Japanese erotica and pop surrealism with taboo, unconventional, and rebellious themes and extreme doses of originality and experimentation in terms of its content. Not a disappointment, this show is a colour explosion, a visual ecstasy tablet, with a huge local following; it is an exciting glimpse of local Australian talent set in a fantastically positioned gallery space. ■

Yasmin Haas

Pop Rocks with Stupidkrap

展览‘史土皮特科如普’在网站上追踪报道了新兴的和已确立的城市艺术，展示他们是如何与城市上升美术馆结合去呈现摇滚这种具有启发性和新鲜感的作品。通俗的涂鸦和抗议艺术，日本色情刊物和波普超现实主义与禁忌，反传统，叛逆的主题相结合，并且内容极度奇特和具有实验性，这一切都是‘史土皮特科如普’既有品味又有幽默感。这次展览让人充满惊喜的是一个色彩的探索，一次当地艺术的视觉的盛宴；是在一个位置极佳的展览区域对澳洲当地才华的一瞥。■

Author / 作者: Yasmin Haas
Translator / 译者: Shanjun Mao

For Children



The Marvellous Creature Ventures Iris SiYi Shen

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Benjamin Armstrong is a young artist from Melbourne. He has liked drawings ever since primary school. At the age of 17, he studied at art school to become an artist. He also likes reading and travelling. He says that journeys through books and the real world provide great ideas for his sculpture. Can you think of a time where you wanted to be creative as the result of a **journey**?

Look carefully, **Benjamin Armstrong's sculptures are weird and strange**. What do they look like to you? These sculptures may look careless and unplanned but in fact are carefully designed by the artist through a lot of reading, drawing and experimentations. Sometimes, this process takes up to one year to finalise.

So what is he trying to make? Benjamin Armstrong does not want to tell you what he is making. You sometimes have to be a detective when you looking at his art. There are many hints in his objects.

This is made of glass and wax. The combination of clear dome shell and fleshy wax material looks like a creature that lives in a foreign land. Does it resemble a creature you might have seen somewhere else?

Did you know?

The key material in Benjamin's creature - **glass** - is sometimes made naturally in super-hot volcanoes. Perhaps the artist is telling us that his creatures are also creations of the natural world. What else is he telling us?

Now CREATE your own creatures.

What is your imaginary creature? Turn it into a reality! ■

Now you know what it looks like, construct your creature with **any material** you can find at home.

Look closely inside the wombat enclosure at the Melbourne Zoo and you might notice a funny looking animal waddling about in there. Not quite a platypus, not quite a mole, its long body and leathery skin is like nothing you've ever seen before. This is the siren mole, a robotic creature made by Australian artist Patricia Piccinini to join the wombats in their zoo home for a short time.

Patricia decided to make the siren mole when she learned that scientists had created a living creature from scratch in a laboratory. Her mind was immediately full of questions - where would such a creature live? What would it eat? Who would look after it? Why would anyone make a new animal anyway? So she made siren mole to ask those questions to others and make them think about the answer.

The siren mole is an example of an artist trying to make us think about the world we live in and how we live with it. As well as creating the robotic siren mole, Patricia Piccinini also made a series of photographs showing her siren mole with people. This is to make us think about how we could relate to creatures made by scientists and how to care for them. ■

Elinor King



佩翠西亚·皮翠尼尼 / Patricia Piccinini

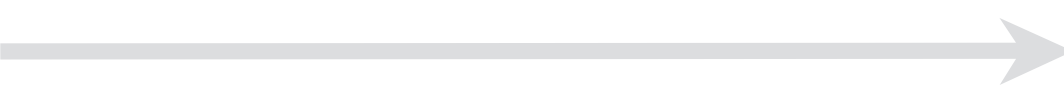
如果你仔细观察一下墨尔本动物园的毛鼻袋熊馆，你会发现有一只长相诙谐的动物在那里摇摆摆地走来走去。它既不完全是只鸭嘴兽，也不是只真的鼩，它长长的身体和它皮革质感的皮肤是你从来不曾见过的。它叫塞任鼩鼠（又叫汽笛鼩鼠），是被一位叫做佩翠西亚·皮翠尼尼 (Patricia Piccinini) 的澳大利亚艺术家制作而成并放到动物园的毛鼻袋熊馆里进行短期展出的机器小怪物。

当佩翠西亚得知科学家们在实验室里凭空就能制造出生命物体的时候，她就决定制作这只塞任鼩鼠了。因为当时她的脑海里就出现了各种问题—科学家制作的这种生物要在哪里生活？靠吃什么为生？谁来照顾它？而且为什么人们要制作新的动物呢？所以她就想制作一只机器鼩鼠来引发大家思考，看看人们都是怎么考虑这些问题的。

塞任鼩鼠是艺术家用来启发我们思考世界和生活方式的一个例子。不单单只有塞任鼩鼠本身，佩翠西亚·皮翠尼尼还拍摄了一系列图片来向人们展示这个小怪物。这些照片使得我们去思考如何去理解并关怀那些通过科学创造出来的小生物。■

Author / 作者: Elinor King

Translator / 译者: Jia Guo



Shadow play: a special puppet show 11

Chinese shadow play, also called 'Piyingshi', is one of the oldest drama forms in China. Its name means "lamp shadow play", and it also can be seen as a special kind of puppet show. Chinese shadow play has a history of about 2,000 years. Because of the way it works, it has been called 'the ancestor of movies', while for people today the shadow play was performed and developed more as a kind of cultural heritage. Puppets and figures from shadow plays have been collected by museums in many foreign countries. The Chinese government also likes to give it to foreign leaders as a special gift from the Chinese people.

The shadow puppets are made of clear plastic or buffalo and donkey's leather, and the figures of the shadow puppet show are from the Chinese myths, legends, stories and even classical books. People can tell a figure's character by their mask. For example, a red mask represents uprightness, a black mask, fidelity, and a white one, treachery. The protagonist has long narrow eyes, a small mouth and a straight bridge of nose, while the antagonist has small eyes, a protruding forehead and sagging mouth. A clown has a circle around his eyes, projecting a humorous and frivolous air. These puppets are painted using bright colors, making them become very lively and beautiful. In shadow play, the puppets are usually moved by artists' hands behind a thin screen with some music and singing which tells the story to the audience. ■

Suzy Shu



SWEET BARRIER REEF

This is called: *Sweet Barrier Reef*

It was made by: Ken Yonetani

It is made from: white sugar, icing sugar and foam

ABOUT SWEET BARRIER REEF:

This is an artwork by Ken Yonetani.

It is large and white and very sugary.

It looks like a sparse and lonely ocean floor,

With some beautiful coral shapes, and not much more.

But why is everything so bleached and white?

Shouldn't this seascape be colourful and bright?

Why, it's a warning from Mr. Yonetani;

To take care of our environment, including the sea.

For if we do not, the colours will disappear

And we will be left with the deathly whiteness you see here.

Though the elegance of this sweet work will truly amaze,

Remember its important message as upon it, you gaze;

To be kind and thoughtful to nature and all its creations,

So that the earth's wonders can be enjoyed by future generations. ■

Vi Girgis



Ken Yonetani

Sweet Barrier Reef

2005

White sugar, icing sugar, polystyrene foam

600 x 1200 x 160cm

Installation view Adelaide Biennial, 2008

Courtesy and copyright of the artist

<http://www.kenyonetani.com>

Polaroid Instant Camera 13

I'm sure you have seen photos on your parent's digital cameras or mobile phones. Maybe you have even taken some photos yourself. It wasn't so hard, was it? Just press the button and the image appears on the screen. However, taking photos was not always that easy. Back when people had to use films, they sometimes had to wait for up to a week to see the photos they took, until one day, when a girl asked her dad "Why can't I see them now?" Her dad thought this was a brilliant idea. His name was Edwin Land and he went back to his laboratory and invented a special type of camera called Polaroid. When you take a photo with a Polaroid, the photo comes out of the camera instantly.

When a photo has just come out of a Polaroid, it is still a dark brown, nearly black colour. It takes a few minutes for the image to show up on the surface and the chemicals to dry. Some artists make special effects on the photo while it is still wet. Look at the picture below. It is a photo generated by a Polaroid camera, but doesn't it look like a painting of wiggling strokes? Have a guess of how this was made.

People use Polaroids to make 'instant' photos, usually without too much thought. As soon as a cat jumps off a wall or a person makes an interesting expression, they press the shutter button and capture the moment which will be gone in the next second. The man making a funny smiling face in the photo below is Andy Warhol, a famous American artist. He was obsessed with Polaroid and took a lot of portraits with it. When he really liked how the person looks on the photo, he went back to his studio and painted it out.

Although it is very convenient for people to see their photos, Polaroid lacks functionality and quality. You won't find many buttons and

knobs on a Polaroid. Polaroid photos can be quite different from what you see with your naked eyes. However, some artists took advantages of this. Look at the photos taken by Andrien Tarkovsky, a Russian film director, and Hungarian photographer Andre Kertesz. The first photo, by Tarkovsky, looks like a very old image. It was instantly "aged" when it came out of the camera.

The other photo looks like two people bending their heads towards each other, but can you work out what the objects really are? I can't, because I've never seen anything like that before! Polaroid photos may be not accurate records of what you see with your naked eyes, but this also means it may surprise you with something very beautiful, just like those two photos. ■

Penny Xu



Polaroid instant camera
2009
Digital photograph
42 x 32cm
Courtesy and copyright of the artist



Emotional or Political: the misreading of the “gunshot” incident

14

The late 1980s in China was an age of innocence; a period where the government was liberalising and commercial pressures had not yet come to dominate society. It was a period for enthusiasts, idealists and dreamers. In 1989, an art exhibition was held in the official national gallery. It was the first time contemporary artists had formed a group in China to appear in an official exhibition area. The young artists were so excited that they made numerous exotic modern works, including some kaleidoscopic performance works for the exhibition. The most eye-catching one was the historic ‘gunshot incident’.

On February 5, 1989, female artist Xiao Lu stood in front of her ‘Dialogue’ installation, which was made out of two telephone kiosks, and fired a gun at it. The exhibition was closed because of this ‘gunshot incident’. The artist Tang Song, partner of Xiao Lu, was arrested for owning firearms illegally. Xiao Lu reported herself to the police later on. The incident was so shocking that it covered the front page of various key newspapers, each with a varying interpretation of her actions. However, contemporary art is always accompanied by misreading.

The ‘gunshot incident’ could be described as announcing the end of an era. Idealism was ruined both in art and society in general. ‘They had a strong historical, political feeling to explain the work like this, but I just have some emotional obsessions at that time in my own female world, which seems too small for the male’, said Xiao Lu years later. Back in 1989, Xiao had just graduated from college with a failed love, which made her believe that it was impossible to have an efficient dialogue between the two sexes. The ‘dialogue’ installation was created to express her personal feelings. The images of a female and a male were put separately inside the two telephone booths revealing their attempt to communicate with each other, while a microphone hung in between to show the failure of the conversation. The young artist at that time had no idea about performance art. She just wanted to destroy the installation in a speedy way to emphasize the idea of the work. A gun was an ideal method and available as she was the daughter of high-ranking officials.

After the bullets were shot on the exhibition, Tang Song, who actually wasn’t involved in the creation of the work, was arrested. Because of this, the two young artists fell in love with each other. Tang claimed himself as the creator of the artwork and interpreted it with the grand narratives from political, social and legal aspects. As both of the artists had high-ranking official family backgrounds, they were released after three days. Tang, who was experienced at talking in public, attracted considerable attention both from media reporters and art critics. Xiao, who loved Tang, chose to be silent.

The original intention of the work was to discuss the communication and paradox between two sexes, however what happened after the shot exceeded the expectations of everyone, including the artist herself. Tang and other critics perceived the work in a typical male-grand gesture way because of the political context. As a result of the failed communication and misunderstanding between each other, the original meaning was ignored and intentionally distorted. The female artist lost her voice. Fifteen years later, however, Xiao broke her silence to describe her original idea about the artwork in a letter also telling of her failed love affair with Tang, who had only loved himself and taken the gunshot performance from her. The tragic result of this love story forced Xiao to review the artwork, claim the sole right of the work and inspire her independence as an artist rather than just a lover of Tang.

In the long fifteen years, however, this artwork has always been accepted and explained by public from a political perception. ‘Dialogue’, no matter whether it was talking about the feminine private feelings or the masculine political metaphor, has exceeded the installation itself. All the issues surrounding the artwork can themselves be seen as performance art. Who was authorized to interpret the artwork? How many works in art history has been deprived its original meaning like this? Probably the process of continuing to question is the most meaningful thing. ■

Lunan Xing



What does it mean to be an Australian?: Hou Leong 15

Hou Leong is a Chinese artist based in Canberra since 1989 who focuses on the ideas of cultural appropriation and perceptions in relation to identity and tradition. Through his simple and clever works, Leong raises questions of identity by combining and contrasting images of Asian people or landscapes with those of similar and familiar Australian images. Leong challenges dominant Anglo-Australian values. At the same time, an Asian-Australian culture successfully mingles with Anglo-Australian culture in his works, which demonstrate both cultural conflict and reconciliation.

Leong was born in Shanghai in 1964 and graduated from Shanghai Huashan Fine Arts School in 1983. He completed his Bachelors degree in Visual Arts with honours at the Canberra School of Art, Australian National University.

His major solo exhibitions include "Paradox" at Canberra Contemporary Art Space and the Australian Embassy in Paris. He has also exhibited in "Transit" at the Art Gallery of NSW, the Moët & Chandon Touring Exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia, the Queensland Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Victoria. Leong is not tied to Australia, and has also exhibited in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Shanghai, and Japan.

Leong is best known for the photomontage series "An Australian". In this series he questions the meaning of an Australian by replacing the face of an Australian figure in the photos with his own. The background of the photos represents the stereotypical value of the Anglo-Australian. For example, an Asian guy is present in an Australian outback pub, perceived as a real Australian thing. The first impression of this photo is one of 'awkwardness' due to the presence of an unexpected Asian guy in a typical white Australian space. When we look at the photo we feel awkward and stereotypical mindsets are encountered and questioned.

"Why do we feel awkward?"

Another example is "An Australian-Crocodile Dundee", a parody of one of the most famous Australian icons, Mick Crocodile Dundee. *Crocodile Dundee* is a film which was directed by Peter Faiman and produced in 1986. The film parodies a stereotypically white Australian, Crocodile Dundee. At the same time, the film reinforces the stereotypes of Australia as a nation of white people with wild habits, to international audiences.

Leong has digitally reworked a still cut from the film. He has replaced Dundee's white face with his own. Leong's intention works effectively when people watch and are shocked when Dundee's white blue-eyed face is unexpectedly replaced with that of an Asian. This depiction questions the stereotypical mindset of the average Australian. (Edmundson, 2009)

Leong also raises symbolic and cultural questions by using photos of landscapes such as "Shells on Li River." He has placed the Sydney Opera House on the Li River in China, surrounded by Chinese mountains. The same awkwardness caused by unnatural combination occurs here as well. (Chiu, 1997)

In his recent art works, Leong's approach has been expanded by questioning Australian values and considering Western traditions and moral standards. For example, he fuses Asian and Western traditions and artistic styles by painting in ink and oil. His questioning on different cultures continues. ■

Jun-Dun Woo

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何谓澳洲人? :Hou Leong 16

Hou Leong 是一位澳籍华裔艺术家。现今创作于澳洲首府堪培拉，活跃于西方艺术领域。他的作品以文化、传统和自我定义为主题。作品对在与多元文化中，各自文化的自我定义提出质疑。通过俭约和巧妙的艺术体现，作品融合和对比了亚洲和澳洲不同的人文风情。Leong 的艺术创作不仅仅挑战了在澳洲根深蒂固的西方传统文化，而且成功的将东西方文化差异进行了完美融合。两种文化的相互冲击与包容都能在他的作品中得到很好的体现。

Leong 于1964年出生在中国上海，1983年毕业于华山美术学院。自1989年移居堪培拉以后，他以优异的成绩在澳洲国立大学，堪培拉艺术学院完成了视觉艺术本科学位。他的主要展览包括在堪培拉当代艺术馆和巴黎澳洲使馆的个人展“矛盾(Paradox)”。在新南威尔士州立美术馆的集体展“转变(Transit)”，以及在澳洲国立美术馆，新南威尔士州立美术馆，维多利亚州立美术馆，昆士兰美术馆的“moet & chandon”巡回展。此外，Leong 的作品时常在海外展出，其中包括香港，曼谷，上海和日本等世界各地。

Leong 最为人熟知的作品是蒙太奇影像系列“一个澳洲人。”在作品中，他将原有澳洲人形象的面孔以自己的面孔代替，照片背景仍保留原样代表澳洲传统的西方价值观。在其中一副影像中，照片取景于一个澳洲传统风格的酒吧。一个地地道道的澳洲酒吧因其中一个东方面孔的出现会给人带来很诧异的第一感觉。为什么我们看到作品会有如此感觉呢？这就是艺术家想要表达的艺术效果。

“一个澳洲人—鳄鱼先生邓迪(Crocodile Dundee)”是以模仿澳洲最出名的形象代表鳄鱼先生麦克邓迪(Mick Dundee)所创作的作品。鳄鱼先生邓迪是由Peter Faiman 于1986年导演的电影。电影以喜剧的手法讲述了一个在澳洲的鳄鱼狩猎人邓迪和一位美国女记者的爱情冒险故事。世界观众通过此部电影的影响，对澳洲的人文特点和传统文化有了深刻的了解，认识到白人社会的意识形态和喜好野外活动的生活特点。Leong 的作品通过对此电影的影像修改而体现了新的定义，他将原本邓迪(Dundee)的脸以自己的面孔代替。当人们看到此作品时，会因一个亚

洲版本的邓迪(Dundee)所惊讶，从而达到了艺术效果。他的艺术特点通过此类作品再次得到了很好的体现。此外，Leong 通过对风景照片进行艺术修改，从而体现文化差异。比如在作品“漓江边的贝壳 (Shells on li river)”中，他将悉尼歌剧院巧妙的粘贴到了以群山环绕的漓江边。在他的近期作品中，Leong 的新艺术定义已经不仅仅局限于澳洲，而是将领域扩展到了东西方传统文化和价值观。比如，他在水墨画和油画作品中，融合了东西方两种的绘画形式和风格。■

Author / 作者: Jun-Dun Woo

Translator / 译者: Xi Fu



Hou Leong
An Australia - Crocodile Dundee
Digital photograph
1994
50 x 70cm
Courtesy and copyright of Andrew Jakubowicz
<http://leong.com.au/hou/index.htm>

This Too Shall Pass, Tamara Dean

Charles Hewitt Gallery, 22nd July- 9th August 2010.

A DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHER DELVES INTO THE STAGED

The first impression is of the frames in silver, black, gold and bone, they are both exquisitely ornate and somewhat overbearing. However the photographs are unnerving in their intensity and they soon draw the viewer in.

Tamara Dean's recent exhibition, *This Too Shall Pass*, is in some ways a natural transition. Dean has worked as a photojournalist at the *Sydney Morning Herald* for nearly a decade and joined the independent photo agency Oculi soon after it was established in 2000. Her documentary work has long been characterised by a palpable intimacy made possible due to a strong rapport with her subjects.

In recent years Dean has travelled beyond pure reportage, fluidly incorporating the genres of classical portraiture and landscape. For her series *Ritualism* and *Divine Rites* Dean imagined scenes rich in symbolism and archetype, referencing sources as diverse as the Heidelberg School and the Pre-Raphaelites.

The fourteen images from *This Too Shall Pass* continue Dean's exploration of spirituality through staged photographs. Shot mainly in decaying urban locations, Sydney morphs into a world where nature threatens to claw back control. The ephemeral nature of the locations echo one of documentary photography's central concerns - to record our visual history before it disappears. Indeed Dean contends that most of these locations have now been transformed, hence the melancholy title borrowed from a well-worn proverb.

Although Dean includes some male models, it is the girls and young women who dominate. As in her documentary practice these women are Dean's friends, family and acquaintances; strong women, they navigate their place in an ambiguous world. While Dean uses period costume, there are deliberate slippages. In *The Evocation* two women in gypsy dress crouch on rocks in the foreground as a full moon rises. The otherworldly atmosphere is interrupted by a subject's tattoo peeking through her crimson shawl. These women are simultaneously exotic, yet human.

In *This Too Shall Pass* it is always dusk; blues and greens dominate with fleeting touches of complimentary yellows and reds. Dean's use of low-key lighting is luminous and adept, with echoes of Bill Henson's complex chiaroscuro. In *Kath*, a girl on the verge of womanhood stands in profile within a shadowy room as light falls from behind, modelling the folds of her simple cream dress. Her face is transformed into a silhouette, reminiscent of a delicate cameo brooch.

These formal portraits are in danger of jarring against the looser, exterior scenes, yet the consistent visual style holds them together.

Although stylised, Dean's images are freer and more dynamic than her contemporaries, such as Samantha Everton. While Everton uses complex studio lighting and seamless photomontage techniques to create staged tableaux, Dean's work remains indebted to her photojournalistic origins, with a use of subject movement and textured film grain.

As for the framea gallery staff member counters that Dean sees her practice as belonging to a continuum of art history and the framing further alludes to this tradition. It is intriguing to imagine where on this continuum Dean will voyage to next. ■

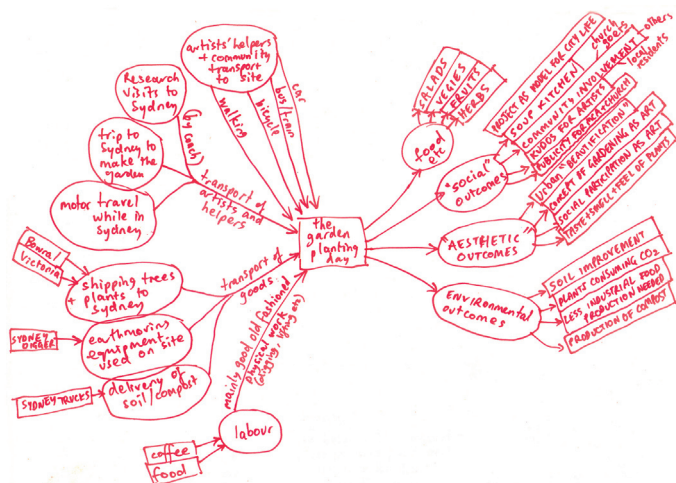
Krystal Seigerman



Tamara Dean
Kath
2010
Pure pigment print on
archival cotton rag
85 x 66cm
Courtesy and copyright
of the artist
<http://www.charleshewitt.com.au/artists/tamara-dean>

Lucas Ihlien
Environmental Audit
2010

Hand-drawn diagram; incomplete diagram for
The Artist as Family, Food Forest, July 2010
Dimensions unknown
Courtesy and copyright of the artist
<http://www.environmental-audit.net>



Lucas Ihlien plainly admits that there are trained professionals out there who can do a much better job than me at tallying up all the carbon emissions. I am an enthusiastic amateur, ordinary bicycle riding, compost-making suburban do-gooder. I've installed a half-flush toilet, I use energy saving bulbs, 'safe' toilet paper and I've signed up to 'green power', but I don't really understand whether I am making a difference.

If you are worried about climate change and not sure what you can do, then *In the Balance: Art for a Changing World* at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) is a must see. Over 30 artists and collectives, who are predominantly Australian, explore one of the most contentious problems we face at the moment. The artists in this exhibition have developed novel ways to get people thinking about climate change.

The exhibition is based around four themes: logging and de-forestation, Australian waterways, mining and sustainability, and recycling. Unfortunately, the majority of works are not spectacular or innovative. There is an abundance of video installations, living plants in jars, photographs of people chaining themselves to trees and anecdotal episodes on recycling - essentially, all the usual suspects one would imagine to be in an environmentally minded exhibition.

A notable exception to this is Olegas Truchanas' video work of Lake Pedder before it was flooded by the Tasmanian Hydro Electric

In The Balance

Commission. Exquisite vistas slowly merge into one another, showing a pristine wilderness that can never be recovered. Also, Angela Torenbeek's *Turtle* is a devastating reaction to the dangers marine life face due to fishing.

Unfortunately, Weathergroup_U's video installation was not in operation resulting in what felt like a dramatic under-representation of Indigenous people talking about their affinity with the land. According to the exhibition catalogue, the work interviews Jeffrey Lee, the sole custodian of the Aboriginal land of Koongarra. He is fighting to maintain control of the area to stop mining corporations accessing it for uranium deposits.

However, the truly successful part of the exhibition occurs when the artist calls directly upon the visitor to participate. Lucas Ihlien is conducting an environmental audit on the MCA and its power usage. He sits in a room surrounded by chalkboards for walls and a computer, updating his blog with his findings and holding discussions with visitors. That a visitor can talk with him about what he is doing is thrilling. The chalkboards, littered with annotations, measurements and tallies is an artwork in itself, visually demonstrating the tangled web of the energy consumed to perform everyday tasks, like visiting the gallery.

'Artist as Family', comprised of Patrick and Zephyr Jones and Meg Ulman, designed a public garden called *Food Forest* in Surry Hills where food is grown by the community to decrease the dependency on supermarkets. Their project also has a social benefit, as homeless people have the opportunity to feed themselves.

That the visitor is invited to follow the exhibition past the gallery wall to the outside ensures that the artists and curators have delivered on their promise to provide positive outcomes on what could have potentially been a somber exhibition. It is a small start, but *In the Balance* is a valuable excursion where art can be a vehicle for activism. ■

Genevieve Barry

Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan
In God We Trust
2010
Stainless steel, Jeep parts
439 x 171 x 121cm
Courtesy and copyright of
the artists and Jan Manton Art, Brisbane
<http://www.janmantonart.com/ARTISTS/AQUILIZANS/tabid/2190/Default.aspx>

Last Words (Phase 1)

4A Gallery, 181-187 Hay St, Sydney 2000
16th July – 28th August 2010

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art is a project of the Asian Australian Artists' Association. Located at the edge of Sydney's Chinatown, 4A presents contemporary Asian Art in Australia, aiming to increase the understanding of diverse cultures.

Last Words (Phase 1) is the first of a two-part group exhibition featuring Australian and Asian artists.

The notion of geography, and this regions' social-economic position in the world, has dramatically altered in the past 50 years. Where once the "Far East" was seen as a distant, exotic, colonial outpost of the British Empire, changes in economics, politics, technology and communications have radically altered the roles that both Asia and Australia play in the modern world.

Today we have an increased awareness of society and culture outside our home countries, facilitated by instantaneous communication and global migration. This knowledge brings not only understanding, but also improved analyses of international economics, global marketing and the changing ideologies of the region.

Last Words explores these themes through a diverse range of contemporary artworks. The ground floor gallery is dominated by Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan's *In God We Trust* (2010). The work, a WW2 army jeep decorated with the assistance of craftspeople from Manila, comments on the history of colonization within the region, and particularly the American occupation of the Philippines.

The upstairs space showcases artists from Australia, China and Japan. Chinese- Australian artist Shen Shaomin, recently seen in the 2010 Sydney Biennale, has two early works in the exhibition. Constructed from found materials including paper, the artist weaves Chinese and English texts with images of Australian political figures. With the mix of different cultures so prevalent in society today, there is still potential for confusion and misalignment of ideas. In this



way, Shaomin's works highlight the fact that cross-cultural understanding does not come easily.

Across the space, Japanese artist Hikaru Fujii makes a forthright statement about global branding and the role it plays in modern society with his work *Nike Politics* (2008). Alongside Fujii's piece are two video works by Zhang Ding. Both works featuring the artist as a central character; *Boxing I and II* (2007) tests Ding's physical limits as he boxes hanging cacti, while *The Great Era* (2007) depicts a cinematic portrait of Shanghai underpinned by a surrealist style narrative.

At the far end of the room is *The Fight* (2010), Eric Bridgeman's video work created during a visit to his mother's village in Papua New Guinea. The artist explores his own family's background and history, while reflecting on how tourism impacts the depiction of traditional culture.

The final piece shown is Archie Moore's *Mulgoa* (2010). *Mulgoa* is an interactive work where the audience hears a recording of "Bound for Botany Bay" when running a modified tape recorder over the pages of the *Book of Revelations*. Here Moore highlights the transformational impact the meeting of two cultures can have.

The second part of the exhibition, *Last Words (Phase 2)*, opens September 3rd 2010. ■

Kim Goodwin



Runa Islam: See & Think 20

If it is possible to see just one exhibition at Museum of Contemporary Art from August to September, then this outstanding selection of 16mm film installations by Runa Islam from the past seven years should be it. Runa Islam (1970-), a Bangladesh born British artist and nominee for 2008 Turner Prize, is internationally noted for her 16mm and 35mm film works. Her first solo exhibition in Australia displays her distinctive creativity to blend cinematic elements into display space and promote different ways of viewing.

Islam successfully 'moves' a cinema into the art museum, for she displays the works in cinema-like surroundings, which erases the boundary between museum art and film. There are plenty of spaces among each film work, and the audience is left in darkness, while the screens and labels on the wall are lit by dim light from the projectors. When the viewer is walking into the display space, they can feel themselves entering into a private cinema. Indeed, all the projectors in this exhibition are treated as part of the artworks. They either stand on the bases or in the well-designed cabinets which not only enhances the reality of cinema, but also challenges the notion that tools should always be behind the scenes. Additionally, sound in this exhibition plays a relatively important role. Islam either chooses natural sound or lets the sound of the projector to directly match the film. The whole installation of the exhibition greatly enhances the viewer's experience.

The exhibition not only requires the viewer's attention visually, but also questions their visual perceptions at the same time. *Untitled* (2008) is the smallest scale work in this exhibition while cannot be missed. By moving closed focus to distant focus, the artist shows that the more something is magnified, the less truth it reveals. An individual's vision often gives only one part of the story, which is often distorted by imagination. *Be The First To See*

What You See As You See It (2004) is one of her representations which challenges visual perceptions by creating subtle changes among scenes. Contrasted with the other five works, this short film shows distinct visual and acoustic effects with fresh scenes and smashing sound.

The success of this exhibition is achieved by deep experience and different ways of interpretation. Long shot is an important technique in Islam's works, which gives the audience time to be in deep contemplation, and the application of abstract and geometric shapes allows the works to be open to interpretation.

Magical Consciousness (2010) is a new work showing Islam's interest in Eastern meditation. This 8:22 minute film presents several changes of a rectangle Japanese screen and plays a visual game based on changing relationships between Yin and Yang, which in Chinese philosophy are complementary opposites within a greater whole, such as dark and light, visible and invisible, and falsehood and reality. The viewer is encouraged to project their interpretation to the aspect of Yin, which looks invisible but may possess more meaning.

This exhibition of six artworks requires viewers' time and patience, while it is an invitation to see and think. ■

Shanjun Mao



Glass Art: Dale Chihuly

The process of glass blowing and sculpturing tends to be very exhilarating. It is definitely a team art since it requires more than one person to create a more than average size piece. There are many tools and precise timing involved in creating a successful artwork. Glass comes in a raw material form and requires an enormous amount of heat, around 2400°F (~1315 °C), to transform it into a liquid substance. Following this the glass has to be given the opportunity to settle, temperatures are lowered and then the hot glass takes on a bright red and orange color. The glass that is used to create objects is sitting in a furnace at temperatures ranging from 1600 and 1900 °F (~870 to ~1040 °C).

Dale Chihuly, born September 20, 1941 in Tacoma Washington, is a veteran in the glass art world. He received a bachelor of design from the University of Washington, in Seattle. His process is very unique. To be a glass artist requires the strength to hold the tools needed to create your piece. Since injuring himself in 1979 in a body surfing accident where he dislocated his shoulder, he has been unable to hold the pipe required to glass blow. So he hires a crew to do all of the physical work necessary to complete his vision for his pieces.

"Once I stepped back, I liked the view"

He points out that it allowed him to see the work from more perspectives and enabled him to anticipate problems faster. Chihuly describes his role as "more choreographer than dancer, more supervisor than participant, more director than actor." (Chihuly 2006).

Dale has been very successful in the "art business", turning what he loves doing into a substantial profit. His works are pieces that can be sold in art houses and put on display in museums, but also are very site specific. Take for example the ceiling of the Bellagio Hotel, an installation specially commissioned by Steve Wynn where Dale and his crew hand blew over 2,000 glass flowers differing in size, shape, and color. The flowers are delicately placed very closely to one another. The installation provides the illusion the flowers are actually growing from the ceiling and will eventually grow down long enough to meet people.

Chihuly has not only been a part of the glass blowing world but also facilitated in making it what it is today. Chihuly "and his teams have created a wide vocabulary of blown forms, revisiting and refining earlier shapes while at the same time creating exciting new elements" (Taragin). The style and method he adopts in creating his work and the work itself has been the focus of many debates. Still, today he is working and creating not only beautiful glass pieces but also paintings, his first art love. Dale is a pioneer in the glass art world and fortunately he is here to stay. ■

Paige Singleton

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Primavera - A Diverse Experience of Work 22 by Emerging Australian Artists

Primavera 2010 at the MCA showcases multiple works by seven young Australian artists. Curator Katie Dyer has chosen to present several works by artists Akira Akira, Julie Fragar, Agatha Gothe-Snape, Alasdair McLuckie, James Newitt, Jackson Slattery and Emma White who work across a diverse range of media including painting, sculpture, performance, photography, film and mixed media installation. This annual spring exhibition is in its 19th year in 2010, featuring the work of young artists under the age of 35 across Australia.

On entering the exhibition the visitor is met with Julie Fragar's paintings where text is used or the image altered in a way as to break up the picture plane. In *Polygraph: You Changed the Way the World Looked* (2010), Fragar has fragmented a portrait painting so that the image appears warped, frame, inside frame. These layers of 'art' create a discourse between more traditional styles of painting and Fragar's own contemporary work. Referencing art history is a common theme in this artist's work. She often uses herself or friends and family as the subjects. The honesty of Fragar's work is arresting and invests the viewer immediately in the *Primavera* experience.

Akira Akira's *Spillsberg* 2010 looks like a large blob of black paint that has been spilt onto an IKEA table. *Spillsberg* is seductive, as the impossibly shiny texture of this 'paint' (which is actually automotive paint on polyurethane) practically begs the viewer to touch it. Ironically, the 'please do not touch' sign on the floor, which is not part of the work, prohibits it. Akira's work addresses the idea of perfection in the art-making process.

At 4pm on a Saturday, visitors will see Agatha Gothe-Snape's collaborative performance piece with Brian Fuata *Wrong Solo: Cruising At Primavera* (2010), adding a live element to the exhibition. *Wrong Solo* is a series of participatory presentations throughout the museum, led by the artists. The artists ask participants to experience the 'here and now' and to take notice of such things as 'the walls and the colour of the air in your mind's-eye'. The script for the performance

is projected onto the wall, leaving the viewer to ponder the 'here, now' and the pre-prepared. The 'cruising' element, central to the work, has multiple possible meanings from a leisurely stroll to a reference to gay culture. This performance element of the exhibition contributes to the complete and full artistic experience that *Primavera* 2010 offers.

Video works by James Newitt titled *Primavera* 2010 give an in-depth insight into the lives of the people and places. The people and places inhabiting Newitt's videos are real and so there is an element of honesty and friendship in the relationship that inevitably develops between artist and subject during the art-making process. Newitt's works are documentary like although in the process of making the video he creates his own story and the final work ends up with fictional elements. These works are moving, allowing the viewer to see the subject as an insider.

The exhibition has continuity (although curated without a specific theme) in that many of the works address the art making process. *Primavera* offers the viewer a complete experience and gives an in-depth look at each of these young artists' work. ■

Catherine Birrell



Agatha Gothe-Snape
Wrong Solo 2 2010
Image preparation for
silk-screen print
59.4 x 42.0 cm
Courtesy and
copyright of the artist
<http://www.mca.com.au>

Eat Your Art Sensations Series: Taste

http://www.liveguide.com.au/Venues/15880/Polymorph_Art_Gallery?event_id=672164

Polymorph Art Gallery
7/82 Enmore Road
Newtown NSW 2042

3 August – 29 August 2010

Tongues, toilets and tequila were three tempting delights recently on show at the *Eat Your Art – Sensations Series: Taste*.

The exhibition was a hybrid of young contemporary artistic talent waiting to be sampled, swizzled and swallowed. Prices ranged from a quick tequila lick of Allegra Holmes' chest for \$4 to Renee Gian's pink tongue cups at \$40. Tanya Baily went the whole hog and produced fleshy tidbits to munch on, such as a 'thigh' for \$340 and a water-coloured 'bum' for \$650.

The title *Eat Your Art* suggests that all exhibits are edible – they were not. However Brandy Alexander did shake up a cocktail of equal parts red and green jellied snakes and dark 'turdish' blobs – not a pretty sight and certainly not tempting. Nearby, small sugary tongues lurked in tiny teacups.

The taste sensation of the evening was lasciviously licking Allegra's chest, sucking small moist lemon segments and shucking a shot of tequila. Joseph Anger-Quilter's forked 'tongue' nervously waited for his turn.

Variety is the spice of life and this exhibition certainly had a plethora of every conceivable consumable medium, from cereal packaging to embroidery. Beth Dillon's steaks were carefully stitched with catchy titles like *Hell for Leather*, each plated to the wall.

It was unfortunate that Michelle Helen's *This is My Body* video was not particularly visible, but perhaps that's why it was 'not for sale'.

The exhibition was also studded with metallic symbolism, as depicted in the *Bastardchef* photographic prints by Ailsa Weaver. The safety-pinned crustacean and finely studded



chocolate-coated strawberry looked almost good enough to eat. Someone whispered that the fairy-floss swirls were really toffee-coiffed dog hairs rather than wispy-sugared frills, but I just savoured the flavour and forgot about candied canine confectioneries.

But it was the toilet humour that caught my attention. *Manneken Piss* stood motionless on a chair, save for the continuous flow of bright blue liquid issuing from his small, dimly lit body. Hanging on a far wall, Duchamp's *Fountain* was re-invented by Isaac Graves into *Undertow*, a curved corset-like structure sculpted from recycled car parts. Was I watching the waste products of the tequila being recycled, or was I consuming contemporary art?

The prize for best marketer at this gastronomic exhibition goes to Caryn Griffin who produced some amazing glossy fashion shots, meshed, melded and strung into posters. Postcard copies of individual photographs were carefully scattered and dying to be stroked. The cards were sexy to look at, sensuous to touch and the flip side showed Caryn's carefully caressed contact details. 'Come and call me' they cooed.

Grace Kingston's bold blue Facebook bean-bag lolled in a corner looking totally tantalizing, but I don't do leather.

Will I go back for a second helping? Certainly, as long as I get a chance to light Gemma McKenzie-Booth's vanilla cupcakes. They candled their way along the curves of the train tracks only to be snuffed out instantly by the harsh breath of a fan. I blinked and missed the whole performance. ■

Susie Packham

Features

A Coming together of Disparate Forces: 24 Career lessons from Dr Gene Sherman

The career journey of Dr Gene Sherman is now familiar to those with even a passing interest in the Australian Arts Landscape. First migrating to Australia at age 18 from South Africa, she and her family returned to South Africa after only nine months in Melbourne. The Sherman family then travelled to England before returning to Australia to establish a home in Sydney. This migration, plus extensive travel, has engendered a truly global mindset within Dr Sherman and her whole family.

Professionally, Dr Sherman spent 17 years in academia, firstly completing a masters by thesis and then a doctorate in French literature at the University of Sydney, before commencing teaching there. Following this she joined Sydney's prestigious Ascham Girl's School in the role of head of languages.

Sherman Galleries, originally run by Celia Winter-Irving and named the Irving Sculpture Gallery, opened in 1981. In the mid-1980s, as Australia's attention started to drift towards Asia, Dr Sherman joined the gallery and began shifting the focus from contemporary Australian and International sculpture, to that of art from the Australian-Pacific region. In 1989 the gallery moved from its original location near the University of Sydney to Paddington, and thirteen years later it consolidated two Paddington premises into one enhanced exhibiting space in Goodhope Street. In 2007 the Sherman Galleries closed and was reborn as the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation (SCAF), a Sherman family philanthropic enterprise dedicated to the public exhibition of significant contemporary art from Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. SCAF has four key aims as illustrated in the mission statement:

1. To exhibit significant works by innovative and influential artists from Asia, the Pacific and Australia, providing a space that can house works not always suited to private galleries,
2. To publish texts communicating to broad audiences including both the art industry and educational sectors,

3. To develop educational programs in association with the projects, illustrated by the launch *Contemporary Art for Contemporary Kids*, a partnership with Queensland Art Gallery's Children's Art Centre, commencing October 6th,

4. To continue to develop SVAR (Sherman Visual Arts Residency) a program for international artists considering short, medium and longer term exploratory trips to Australia, particularly to Sydney.

On Friday 24th September COFA announced that Dr Sherman and her husband Brian will gift \$2 million towards the new COFA Gallery. This generous donation will contribute to the construction of two new purpose built galleries, the first to be known as the Sherman Gallery and the second named in memory of Nick Waterlow, former curator of COFA's Ivan Dougherty Gallery, who died last year.

This brief summary of Dr Sherman's experience and the progression to the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation does not begin to touch on the leadership and educational role she has had within the Australian arts and academic community, from the sponsorship of scholarships, to contribution to publications such as the recently published *The Modern Woman's Anthology* (2010), to guest lecturer and philanthropist. Not to mention her donation of contemporary Japanese fashion to the Powerhouse Museum.

Given her incredible life experience, Dr Sherman can provide remarkable guidance to those interested in a career in the creative industries. What follows are some of the key themes and life lessons she has learnt to date.

Plan, prepare and be organised

'If you don't plan ahead, create templates and stick to the templates, then things go awry. Life being what it is sometimes, this is what they do.'

A constant in Dr Sherman's life is her focus on planning and preparation, often over considerable periods of time. She commenced the planning process, with the support of her husband Brian, nine years prior to the launch of the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation.

As a mother with two young children and undertaking a doctorate, organisation and planning was paramount. Dr Sherman dedicated eight years to her masters and PHD, and at every stage she had a five-year plan, one year, six-month, monthly, weekly and daily plan.

But what happened if circumstances interrupted her ability to complete her daily plan? She would set her alarm for the middle of the night, get up and completed her allocated tasks.

It was a combination of strict adherence to her templates, accompanied by a regular review process that saw her consistently achieve long-term goals that would leave many of us struggling.

Capitalise on your strengths and the strengths of those around you

'I'm both an educationalist and an on going learner. Every day I learn things consciously and subconsciously, and when somebody tells me something I find interesting, I try to learn something from it.'

Throughout her career Dr Sherman has built on her learning progressively, ensuring that she takes every new experience and consolidates it with existing knowledge. Her career at Sydney University gave her the teaching skills to take to Ascham. Her leadership experience at Ascham was then drawn upon as she made the move into gallery management.

Dr Sherman speaks openly about her passion for learning every day, and it is this, along with her ability to communicate and build relationships that form the foundation of her success.

We are never alone in developing our skills and achieving our goals. Dr Sherman describes her mother-in-law as her 'secret

weapon' in her ability to achieve such a mammoth task as simultaneously raising a young family, working and completing a doctorate. She never hesitates in recognising the support she has received from her family, both her mother in law who lived with the family for 10 years, but also her husband Brian who played a crucial business-mentoring role throughout her career. Her achievements are their achievements.

Like many successful people, she has cultivated guides and mentors along the way. While her husband coached her in the financial and business side of running a gallery, it was William Wright AM who joined the already established Sherman Galleries in 1992 as curatorial director, who Dr Sherman cites as being a key mentor and guide in the art world. Over time their role as mentors may diminish, but Dr Sherman always maintains and values these relationships.

Mix the creative, the educational and the business

'Crosspollination is so important. I was a university academic for many years, for 11 years I taught in a University. So of course when I came into the gallery world, I was an example of the cross pollination and in a way it was very natural to me.'

We often surround ourselves by like-minded people, and despite the increased flexibility in the modern employment market, most do tend to have linear career paths within the same, or similar industry. There are significant advantages, however, by building bridges between industries and this is something Dr Sherman has succeeded in doing on many occasions.

She has made a conscious effort throughout her career to bring the arts industry and educational institutions closer together. She speaks of her surprise when organizing a crate exhibition in the mid 1990s where she found many of the academics that attended had never seen a crate in which art is transported. It was then she realized those on the academic side of industry had very little practical experience. Over the past 20 years Dr Sherman has sought

to bridge the gap between the practical and the academic elements of the arts industry to enable maximum opportunity for all. Clearly the Sherman's most recent contribution to COFA demonstrates the value with which they hold relationships with the arts education sector.

Dr Sherman has also demonstrated the considerable benefits of mixing business expertise with artistic knowledge. Creative people who can ground themselves with the fundamentals of business theory will be at a distinct advantage. While this does not necessitate the completion of a Masters of Business Administration, of forming long lasting relationship with individuals in the business world who can share knowledge and provide support when called upon.

Read the external environment

'I never saw the world as confined to one set of ideas, or one set of practices. You couldn't if you had my background.'

The ability to understand and benefit from global trends has been a factor in the success of Sherman Galleries. Dr Sherman's skill in identifying Australia's shift toward Asia in the cultural, political, economic and artistic arena led the Sherman Galleries to be one of the first to specialise in Asian art. This then paved the way for art spaces such as 4A and White Rabbit.

Dr Sherman provides three lessons to determine success in this area. Firstly developing and listening to intuition, and in her case it was her father who played the role of visionary. At age six her father told her two pearls of wisdom, to be recalled 57 years later, that women could do anything and that the next century would be the Asian century. As Australia has recently transitioned from our first Mandarin speaking Prime Minister to our first female Prime Minister, clearly Dr Sherman's father was correct on both counts.

The second lesson is to be a global citizen. Dr Sherman grew up in a family that spoke five languages collectively, and her passion for travel and study of European and Asian cultures is well documented. While many families are global

in nature today, this was a more unusual circumstance in the mid-1950s. Dr Sherman has always understood this knowledge of other cultures as a strength to be nurtured and built upon.

Finally, to understand your environment you must foster intellectual curiosity. There is not a day that goes by where Dr Sherman doesn't extend her knowledge through reading. Not just reading for professional development, but reading widely and broadly across any subject that catches her interest. Prior to beginning her extensive travel to Japan, Dr Sherman chose to read Japanese literature translated into English for two years.

Dedication

'It comes naturally to me, I have to work at doing it, but I don't have to work at thinking I'm going to do it, it's my nature plus my training.'

The last lesson we can gain from Dr Sherman's experience is probably the one of most importance; that of applying dedication to everything you do.

It is clear from every anecdote Dr Sherman shares, she has never waived in her dedication to achieve whatever goals she has set herself, whether that be six years completing a doctorate or nine years in transitioning the commercial gallery into the contemporary art foundation. She applies that dedication even to her fashion choices, for 25 years she wore only three Japanese fashion designers. Not a single other thing.

The underlying theme from listening to Dr Sherman is passion. Dr Sherman describes herself as a coming together of passion and pleasure, a combination of disparate forces, the artistic, the academic, the business, the cultural, some would say it's a perfect storm. Whatever endeavor she has directed herself toward, she has done so with passion. This is the lesson we can all learn from. ■

Kim Goodwin

The New Exhibition Age of China

Initiated by three independent curators and avant-garde thinkers - Jiang Jian, Ji Ji, Qian Qian, and Ou Ning - in 2005, Get It Louder (GIL) is the first and biggest contemporary design touring biennale of its own kind in Mainland China. Organised by Modern Media Group, GIL welcomes its third edition this year in October.


By focusing on the young Chinese artists and designers who work in different locations around the world with an average age of 25, the biennale redefines the concept of exhibition and gives the new generation of designers and artists a strong voice. As one of the newest and the most significant art events in China, GIL is considered as a revolution in both the media and design industries of China.

In China, design used to serve politics. Thanks to the economic reform and the open policy, Chinese independent designers started to emerge. Since then, Chinese designers have been through three generations of evolution. The first generation of designers, who grew up in the '80s, received their traditional training from conventional art schools. They made their works by hand because computers were not so available at that time. The second generation was raised up in the 90s, the age of computer-aided design programs. As a result of being influenced by the trend of international digital design, they began to know how to use computers and to speak English. The third generation is the designer of today. They have grown up in the age of globalisation and the Internet and many of them have studied and worked overseas. They are proficient in the latest techniques and have a diversely broad vision of art. This is the generation that GIL focuses on. The Chief Curator, Ou Ning, has heard the voice within the passion of these youths, and he wants to "get it louder". He called them the "New New Designer", and he said in an interview conducted by Modern Weekly (29 April 2005): 'The exhibition attempts to put them (the new generation of designer) into China's 100 year design history, and then evaluates their status and

influence in such a context.' Since 2005, every edition has a fantastic collection of cross-media creations in a diverse range of creative fields, from poster design, illustration, photography, publication, toy design, t-shirt design, fashion, and product design; to animation, moving image, short film, interactive installation, digital media installation, architecture design, urban design, sound art, sound installation, and music performance.

Besides the spotlight on the young artists and designers, the curatorial team of GIL has also redefined the concept of exhibition. 'Art exhibitions aren't supposed to be like this', reported China Daily (24 August 2007) in its review of GIL's 2007 edition. This is however not a criticism but a compliment. From participants to venues, from exhibition forms to project operation, GIL is nothing like a traditional art exhibition, but is a visual noise from the emerging artists and designers, a passionate carnival for the newest China design industry, an art party for the new generation.

Before GIL, young independent artists, designers, and creative people could barely find a place to show or exchange their ideas, and their self-initiated, original creations were often unnoticed under the surface. 'I think it's a kind of accumulation of energy, after reaching certain level, then it is beginning to explode', Ou said (Modern Weekly, 29 April 2005), 'there was some kind of sub-culture is shaping up.' Ou planned to release the energy of every participant: 'Everyone coming out from the crowd could be a hero. Everyone could be a designer. Let the so-called Masters love themselves alone' (Modern Weekly, 29 April 2005). Moreover, to give the exhibition an international scope, GIL also invited talented artists and designers from Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Germany, Sweden and the US to give a series of talks and other communications. This year GIL will keep this practice by creating its own convention.



As a touring group exhibition, GIL chooses three to four big cities in China for each edition, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, in order to 'broadcast' the voice of art. The exhibition venues and exhibition models are unprecedented and unexpected. Instead of holding the exhibition at formal art museums or galleries, the curatorial team chooses fresh public spaces to exhibit artworks. Among them, shopping malls might be the most interesting choice. The main aims of GIL are to explore what inspires people's daily lives, to attract more public attention, and to examine designs and artworks as lifestyles, living attitudes, and as an integral parts of urban culture. Thus shopping malls as a large-scale consumerist space that can embrace thousands of people to interact with art seemed to suit GIL very well. Another reason that the curatorial team chose shopping centres rather than museums is that they are attempting to break away from the conventional exhibition model of biennials. Ou said in the exhibition catalogue of 2007 that they hoped they could get rid of the idea that the exhibition room needs to be a sanctuary, because he believes that the traditional exhibition model failed to let art enter people's lives and to bring art closer to the public. Moreover, shopping malls have the advantage to allow people to have encounters with art unexpectedly, and to discover artworks while enjoying their leisure time and consumer activities. This is a more effective and efficient way to encourage art into people's life rather than through rigid education or invariable ways of exhibiting. 'It's the first time we've put an exhibition in a shopping mall. We need to make sure that whatever we do doesn't disturb the commercial activities there,' said Liang Jingyu (Beijing Today, 12 May 2007) who is a principal architect of Approach Architecture Studio. He was in charge of the architecture element of the exhibition in 2005. Like a treasure hunt, 'a guidebook will be available for audiences to help them track down all the works', he added. The curatorial team continued this exhibition model in the edition of 2007, and they will also develop this model into a new level in the following edition of 2010.

Moreover, GIL developed a unique marketing method: instead of making money through selling artworks, GIL seeks to sell its advertisement spaces through exhibitions and create opportunities for artists and designers to cooperate with worldwide brands. For example, two main sponsors of 2005 Chivas and Grohe transformed exhibiting artists' creative ideas and designs into products (Modern Weekly, 29 April 2005).

As part of the whole new concept of exhibiting, GIL has used the idea that 'Everyone could be a curator' to encourage participants to be their own exhibition's curators. Instead of being overruled by one curatorial team, the exhibition and its satellites are selected by several curators including pioneer curators from China, International professionals and even independent participants. In GIL's 2007 edition, nine curators including four Chinese curators and another five from United Kingdom and Japan formed the main curatorial team. Curators wereresponsiblefortheir own part of the exhibition. As a whole package, it brought a great mixture of diverse and creative innovation.

At the end of China's 20th-century, several sound art pioneers Li Jianhong, Jimu and their friends had trouble finding an appropriate place to perform in Hangzhou. To solve this problem, they began to perform at their own home or their friends'. GIL 2007 adored this idea and got it 'louder'. They applied it to a larger scale and called it Homeshow. Homeshow is the collective phrase for utilizing private spaces to hold small exhibitions, performances, talks, symposiums, and film activities. Traditional performances or shows insist on bringing audiences together to a particular place within a particular period. By contrast, as a natural result of a lack of public spaces for performances in China, the flexible Homeshow blurs the concept of public and private, and develops a new urban interpersonal culture. To borrow Ou's, concept 'an exhibition should be part of daily life, which can be easily found everywhere' (Ou, 2007). More creative

ideas can be found as a result of the Homeshows, and the idea that everyone can be a curator is no longer 'just a dream'.

GIL has become the most successful series of contemporary design exhibitions in China and has attracted over 120,000 visitors in the first edition alone. As China is going through a transitional period from the conservative to the innovative, GIL seems to be a consequence of this current situation, which explains the success of GIL. From a human perspective, GIL plans to let the public put more attention on the social value of creative arts and design, which could assist young Chinese artists so they can focus on the quality of their works more effectively, hence to promote the position of the design industry in China and gain International notoriety. From a sociological point of view, GIL helps to meet the psychological needs of young people as an underprivileged social group, and alleviate latent generational conflicts. Additionally, interactions between the public and art will help the society to form a new lifestyle with art playing a more substantial role, which will eventually be a benefit to the next generation and will help alleviate educational issues in China. Ou believes

that in the future, 'people will no longer do good deeds because of mobilization by the State, but of their own free will. This is remarkable progress for present-day Chinese society, and allows people to perceive the hope of a more civilised society.' (Ou, 2007)

To China, GIL is more than just an unconventional touring biennial. It encourages the younger generation to explore their creative selves; it promotes the design industry of China; it creates a new national and International identity of contemporary China; it gives a voice to emerging artists and designers and it starts the new exhibition age of China. After the success of previous GIL editions it will be interesting to see both public and critical reactions in response to GIL 2010. ■

Jia Guo

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中国艺术展的新时代 / The New Exhibition Age of China

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在两届“大声展”成功举办后，今年10月，由现代传播集团主办的第三届“大声展”将在北京开幕。2005年，四位中国新锐艺术家姜剑、钱骞、吉吉和欧宁自发举办了以推举中国新锐艺术设计师为主要目的的第一届“大声展”。五年后的今天，该展览已经成长为一个具备国际视野，反映最新锐的创作动向，独一无二的中国艺术展。作为创意工业内最具影响力的革命性艺术展，“大声展”汇聚了新一代的，世界范围内的新锐华人艺术设计师。这些参展的艺术设计师的平均年龄不超过25岁。他们的作品已经广泛渗透到社会各个领域，“大声地”展示着他们这代人的生活理念和创新思想。

中国建国初期的文艺政策是艺术为政治服务，艺术家只是政府的附庸。改革开放以后，中国新一代的独立艺术家开始浮现。相对宽松的政治环境和艺术政策先后孕育了三代艺术家。成长于80年代的第一代艺术家受传统艺术教育的影响，在艺术创作中很少使用电脑等科技的辅助。在这之后的第二代艺术家成长于被称为“数码时代”的90年代。被大量涌进中国的西方现代艺术思潮影响，这一代艺术家开始接受并熟悉高科技的艺术创作手段。他们对英语和电脑不再陌生。成长于全球化和网络普及化的今天，第三代艺术家中很多设计师都有在海外学习和工作的经验。这新一代的艺术设计师精通高科技艺术创作技术，英文水平很高且视野开阔。“大声展”希望推出的正是这新一代的艺术设计师。总策展人欧宁希望“大声展”能发出最大的声音，达到最大的影响力，使第三代“新新艺术设计师”的创作激情被更多人听见。欧宁曾在一次周末画报的采访中表示：“这次的展览意图将他们（新一代艺术设计师）置于中国100年来的艺术设计史中，衡量他们的艺术地位和社会影响。”从2005年开始，每一届“大声展”都汇集了社会各个领域内各种不同表现形式的优秀艺术设计作品。参展作品不仅仅包括海报，插画，摄影，印刷，玩具，文化衫，时尚，工业设计，还包括卡通，动画，短片，互动装置艺术，数码媒体装置艺术，建筑设计，城市规划设计，声效装置艺术，音乐表演

等等。

除了重点推出新一代的艺术设计师，“大声展”的策展团队还在中国日报中用“不同以往的非主流艺术展”这句似贬实褒的口号进一步细化了展览的主题。的确，从参展人员到展出场地，从展览形式到展览工作的实施，大声展的特别与不同使它超越了传统意义上的艺术展，成为大声传达新一代的艺术设计师创作理念的“视觉噪音”。可以说，“大声展”是新时代中国创意工业激情碰撞的盛大嘉年华和新一代艺术设计师共聚一堂的艺术派对。

在“大声展”之前，年轻的独立艺术家，设计师和一些有创造力的人很难找到合适的场合去展现他们的才能和交换彼此的意见，同时，囿于各种因素的制约，他们的独立见解和原创力也经常无法被充分的展现出来。欧宁说：“我觉得这是一种能量的积累，当到达一定程度之后，爆炸就开始了，这是某种亚文化正在形成，”（现代周刊2005.04.29）。欧宁希望能够释放每个展览参与者的能量：“所有的普通人都成为一个英雄，每个人都可以是设计师，让这些所谓的大师孤芳自赏去吧”（现代周刊，2005.04.29）。除此之外，为了让这样的展览具有全球规模，大声展还邀请了来自澳洲、新西兰、新加坡、德国、瑞典和美国的有杰出艺术家和设计师来做系列的演讲和进行各式各样的交流对话活动，而在今年，大声展将继续保持这一传统。

作为一个巡回的展览，大声展将选择三到四个大型城市作为展出地点，譬如北京、上海和广州，以利于“为艺术发声”。并且其展出的形式和地点都将是出人意料的。相反于一贯的选择艺术展览馆或者画廊，大声展的核心团队将选择全新的环境来进行展览，其中，大型购物中心就将是一个很特别的选择。大声展的目标是发掘人们日常生活中的想象力，以此来吸引更多的公众关注，并且可以在展出的过程中检验这些设计作品，譬如生活方式、生活态度。然而，作为城市文化的一部分，大型购物中心可以容纳上千人的大容积可以让人们和艺术作品充分互动，这也十分符合大声展的目标。选择大型购物中心的另一

个理由是，核心运作团队试图把“大声展”办成有别于传统双年展的样式。欧宁表示，在2007年的展览计划里，大声展曾希望将自己的形象与正统的神殿式的场所区分开，因为大声展相信，过于正式的环境不利于将艺术带着靠近大众。并且，大型购物中心有得天独厚的条件，可以让人们在享受休闲时光和消费活动的同时与这些设计作品不期而遇。相对于死板的教育和一层不变展览，这将是一个更为有效地将艺术带进人们生活的办法。“这是我们首次尝试在大型购物中心里开办展览，我们必须确保自己的行为并没有干扰购物中心正常的商业活动，”梁井宇（现代北京，2007.05.12）。梁先生曾是“走进建筑工作室”的主要设计师，并且曾负责大声展在2005年展览的结构设计部分。这就像一个寻宝游戏一样，“一本引导手册将帮助观众们全程了解这些作品”，梁先生补充说。大声展的核心团队保留了这个展览模式在2007界中，并且他们还将把这个展览在2010年带入一个全新的高度。

除此之外，大声展还开发出了一种独特的市场理念：与卖作品进行盈利的方式不同，大声展致力于销售广告位以及帮助设计师、艺术家和全球性的品牌进行合作。例如，在2005年，两个主要赞助商Chivas和Grohe就曾将参展艺术家的创意融入到了他们的产品中（现代周刊，2005.04.29）。

作为整个展览理念的一部分，“人人都可以是策展人”这个概念被大声展成功的应用来鼓励所有参加者做他们自己展览的策展人。与往常的一个策展团队控制全局的形式不同，大声展和它的相关展览将策展的权利交予了中国先锋策展人，国际上的专业人士，甚至是一些独立的参加者。在2007年的大声展中，9名策展人分别由4名中国策展人和5名来自英国，日本的策展人组成。每个策展人全权负责自己的展览部分。从整体效果来看，这样的策展形式为观众带来了更加多样化，充满创意和个人特色的展览。

在国内二十世纪末期，一些音像艺术的先锋艺术家如李剑鸿，积木以及他们朋友很难在杭州找到一个合适的表演场地。为了解决这个问题，他们索性在自己家或者在朋友家演出。2007年的大声展非常喜欢他们当时的创意，并且在此基础上做了进一步的发展。大声展为这种展览形式选择了一个更大的场地，并且称之为咖喱

秀（家里秀谐音）。咖喱秀是一个组合词语，用来形容使用私人空间来做小型的展览或者表演，讲座，讨论会，观影活动。传统的演出通常要求观众特定的时间到特定的场地集合。与之相反，作为一个由于缺少公共演出场地而自然产生的展出理念，咖喱秀模糊了“公共”和“私人”这两个概念的界限，创造出一种新的城市交互文化。借用欧宁的话来说，展览理应是日常生活的一部分，它可以出现在任何地方（欧宁，2007）。咖喱秀为我们带来了更多的创意，每个人都可以做策展人也不再是一个遥远的梦想。

大声展第一次展览就吸引了超过120000的观众，成为了中国最成功的当代艺术设计展。当代中国正在从保守向创新转型，大声展就是一个很好的例子。从人道的角度来说，大声展让更多的人关注创意和设计的社会价值，以此引导中国年轻艺术家更加着重于作品的质量，从而加强中国设计产业在全球范围内的影响。从社会学的角度来看，大声展满足了作为社会弱势群体的年轻一代的心理需求，缓解了这一代人潜在的冲突。除此之外，通过大声展建立起来的，大众和艺术的交互关系有利于新的生活方式的形成，这种生活方式中，艺术将成为一个重要的内容，而且最终会造福于中国的下一代以及中国的教育。欧宁相信，在不远的将来，人们做正确的事情不再是因为政府的鼓励或支持，而是因为他们自己的意愿。这是当今中国社会的显著进展，并且让人们感知到一个更加文明的社会的希望（欧宁，2007）。

对于中国，大声展不仅仅是一个颠覆传统的巡游双年展，它更是一个对年轻一代挖掘自身创造力的鼓励；它推动了中国的设计产业，塑造了一个新兴艺术家和设计师发出声音的机会，开启了中国新的展览时代。我们没有理由不相信，2010年的大声展将会有更大的成就。■

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Sonic Youth: when music and art meet 32

'Music is the creation of meaning out of the noise of the world' (Kaizen, 2001)

What does Sonic Youth mean in the 20th Century art and culture? More than just a band, Sonic Youth is an art collective that pays close attention to its artistic, musical and cultural context. It has been the pioneer in combining music with other artistic forms. Members of the band constantly reflect their musical creations to other forms of artistic innovation.

Before Sonic Youth, there were other bands that are closely involved with the art world. For instance, Velvet Underground's manager was Andy Warhol: 'Since I don't believe in painting anymore I thought it would be a nice way of combining music and art and films all together'. The pop artist had the idea of projecting images on stage when the band was playing. Velvet's performance is an elaborate multimedia show, where music, art and film are combined to create a total environment. Another example is UK band Pink Floyd. All members of the band attended the Cambridge Art School before founding the band. In 1967, they created *Interstellar Overdrive*: a psychedelic musical piece. The music was fully improvised and the piece could last between 10 to 25 minutes. These characteristics make it very similar to Hallan Kaprow's *Happenings*, improvised performances that are not rehearsed.

Artists and musicians used to meet and exhibit or perform in the so-called *art-lofts* of that time. The art and music scenes were the same. 'There was this whole crowd of people that moved to New York in the late 70s and formed bands,' says Lee Renaldo, voice and guitar in Sonic Youth. 'People came as visual artists and gradually everybody gravitated back to music with a more conceptual aesthetic, with the idea that you could take the elements of this art form that you loved growing up – rock music – and use that medium to make art' (Kaizen, p. 24).

Sonic Youth goes a step further. Members of the band not only take reference from visual art, they also produce, collect and later exhibit artworks. They started to work together in New York in 1981. Tod Jorgensen and Arleen Schloss were young artists who moved to New York in the late 70s. They turned a Soho loft into a club,

named A's – 'A' stated for both Atleen and Anarchy. They hosted performances by artists and bands (Basquiat's band SAMO also played there). Jorgensen's favourite band was a group named The Coachmen, whose guitarist was Thurston Moore. Moore later became the guitarist of Sonic Youth.

After the Coachman split up, Moore started to play with other musicians, including Kim Gordon. When she finished art school in California at the end of the 1980s, Gordon moved to New York and worked at a gallery. She settled in an apartment downstairs of Dan Graham, a conceptual artist who remained friends with Gordon. Before becoming the voice and guitar of Sonic Youth, Gordon started writing for magazines, including *Artforum*. She also made her own art under the label *Design Office*. Under this name, she created installations in various spaces, including the White Column Gallery. Around the same time, Moore organised the *Noise Fest* in 1981 at White Column Gallery, a polemic action against people who thought all music was just noise and nothing more. For the occasion, Moore and Gordon created the band Sonic Youth, and included Lee Ranaldo.



Mike Kelley
Dirty
1992
Sonic Youth album cover and insert panel, print on paper
12 x 12cm
Courtesy and copyright Sonic Youth
<http://www.sonicyouth.com/mustang/lp/lp9.html>

At the beginning of their musical career, as Kaizen observes, Sonic Youth investigated unexplored territories, using tools as screwdrivers and drumsticks combined with radical guitar tunings and configurations (Kaizen, p. 24). For their visual materials, the band worked with appropriation of mass culture symbols, and used the Xeroxing technique (original name for

photocopying) to represent the noise of the rebellious young generation. Photocopying is the artistic production that represents the essence of Sonic Youth: quick, cheap, not refined, condensed with images, catchy, capable of grasping an idea and transpose it to paper with low expenses in a short period of time. They used this printing technique for album covers and gig flyers. The flyers created for their gigs were made to look rough, produced by repeated Xeroxing that caused the image to look undefined and degraded, illustrated by Kaizen. (Kaizen, p. 23).

For the cover of the album *Confusion is Sex* (1983), the band used a drawing of Gordon on the front, and a collage of Ranaldo on the back. The design was repeatedly Xeroxed until the images deteriorated. After this album, they started to collaborate with influential artists for the design of the covers. The album *EVOL*, was named after a video of Tony Oursler, a friend of Kim Gordon from her California art school days. A photographer and filmmaker, Richard Kern designed the cover. Kern took pictures of the band members as if they were victims of the serial killer Charles Manson, then used these for the video *Death Valley '69* (1985). Gerhard Richter, famous German painter, designed the cover for the single *Death Valley 1969* (1984), and also for the album *Daydream Nation* (1988). Other famous artists involved in designing album covers for Sonic Youth included Raymond Pettibon (*Goo*, 1990), Mike Kelley (*Dirty*, 1992), Richard Prince (*Sonic Nurse*, 2004) and John Fahey (*The Eternal*, 2009). Many of these artists were friends, or friends of friends of the Sonic Youth members. They all shared the same kind of culture, or refusal to adhere to a certain culture.

In 1992, Mike Kelley was asked to design the album cover of *Dirty*: pictures showing stuffed puppets representing Sonic Youth's audience. In a special edition of the album, Kelley put another image hiding behind the CD, showing performance artists Sherri Rose and Bob Flanagan performing obscene acts with stuffed toys. This was Sonic Youth's reply to Nirvana's grunge revolution. The collaboration with artists is often perceived as a way for artists to earn some money. But, this can also be perceived as artistic participation in the creative process.

Through the years, the band continued to operate across different creative disciplines, pursuing a blending of experimental music and

art. Its members, not only produced artworks, projects and collected art, they also established collateral networks within the art and the music world. In 2008, they collaborated with independent curator Roland Groenenboom for the exhibition *Sonic Youth etc.: Sensational Fix*. It was not a retrospective but rather a survey of collaborations between the band and artists, filmmakers and designers (Shwarzbart, 2009). At the beginning of the expositive space, works by John Cage and Maciunas were exhibited. These artworks showcased Sonic Youth's music in its improvise and experimental sense. Dan Graham is one of the artists that believed the most in this cross-disciplinary nature of creativity. He sets up a separated section within the exhibition where he presented video and recordings of gigs, from his archive and the archive of the band. The arrangement and selection of the works aims to set the band in dialogue, enable us to hunt for fresh meanings in a cultural universe anew. The result of this relationship is found in disc covers, posters, films and artworks all exhibited in the show.

Sonic Youth were pioneers in combining music and art whole-heartedly. During the 1990s, more and more bands and DJs started work across music and art. The Mint Chicks is a band from New Zealand (now living and working in Portland in the US) that uses art in their musical projects. They label their music as 'troublegum,' a neologism that define unconventional sound between punk and rock. This also applies to the design they created for album covers and their video-clips.

While Sonic Youth is very engaged in the theoretical side of art, the Mint Chicks refuse to work with art in this context. 'I feel like the (art) work seems more relevant when it's used for something,' says Ruban Nielson, guitarist and composer of the band. Their creativity is also expressed in the way they release their new album *Bad Buzz*, 2010. The album is released digitally as mp3s and in a USB stick designed by Nielson. He studied fine art at the Elam School in Auckland. He then worked as assistant for the painter Stephen Bambury. When he started to make enough money with the Mint Chicks, art became a way for him to escape from the collaborative nature of music to something more solitary (Nielson, R., pers. comm. 23rd Sept 2010).

His art is visible in album covers and video-clips on the blog of the band. With the album, *Crazy? Yes! Dumb? No!* (2006), Nielson won the award for best album cover in New Zealand in 2007. The style of his images is linear and graphic. It resembles magazines design. He creates sick and hallucinated environments that well suits the music of The Chicks. The video-clips have the same sort of aesthetic. In the clip *Don't Sell Out your Brain* (censored version, 2009), he created animation using the same style of the covers. He does step further, resume aspects of the grunge culture that also informed the early works of the Sonic Youth. Nevertheless, Nielson's works belongs to another generation. While creating disturbing images, his style is polished and refined. This may be influenced by diffusion of magazine and the proliferation of the Internet. The Mint Chicks is not interested in being fashionable. Rather, they use visual images that reflect their own generation.

As artists often do, Nielson also collects art. He said: 'I like going to shows when I can and if I see something cool I'll buy it if I can afford it'. He is not very interested in the theoretical aspect of art. 'I just don't think associate art with critical theory anymore', Nielson further stated; 'I think you can learn and think a lot more about art if I keep my mouth shut. I don't think there's any way of connecting one object to an interesting idea any more than another object, and I do think of art in terms of objects and perceptions, but that perception of objects doesn't end when I leave a gallery.' He is interested in illustration artists, the ones that he can see at exhibition he goes to. 'I buy art like some people buy clothes. Just as an impulse, I buy because I just feel like I want to take something home and see if I like it over a period of time' (Nielson, R., pers. comm. 23rd Sept 2010). He buys art based on what he likes at the moment, without any sort of theoretical influences. Lately he has been interested in the art of Theo Ellsworth and Skinner, whose art resemble Nielson's art. Apart from the Mint Chick, he is working independently on some images that take inspiration from street-art, mass culture and graphic design.

Karmann Ghia is one of the last works of Ruben. In this image, he incorporates an urban environment with Sci-fi and comic style. At first glance, the background seems like a photo, but instead Ruban makes graphic interventions that converge to create an unreal atmosphere. In *The Short Bus*, the landscape is openly unreal:

mountains and river (a reference to his homeland New Zealand) are defined by sharp lines and painted with shiny and unnatural colours that created a flattened image. He then placed the school bus with monstrous creatures. Nielson's opinion is that 'you can learn and think a lot more about art if I keep my mouth shut' (Nielson, per comm. 2010). The Mint Chicks seek Sonic Youth as inspiration, expressing the will of their generation to take distance from the over-theorisation characterising part of the art world. ■

Martina Baroncelli



Ruban Nielson
Karmann Ghia
2010
Digital image
18 x 18 cm
Courtesy and copyright of the artist
<http://themintchicks.com>

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China and Revolution

The exhibition '*China and Revolution: History, Parody and Memory in Contemporary Art*' examines the relationship between poster art made during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) from 1966 to 1976 and the work of contemporary artists who respond to the events of that period. It is based on the research project, 'Posters of the Cultural Revolution,' funded by the Australian Research Council. This project re-evaluates the Cultural Revolution by analysing the propaganda in China during the period, focusing on political posters. Since the exhibition is based on the research project, there is a close relationship between the artworks displayed. As the title suggests, we can also read the position of the exhibition on the Cultural Revolution and communism in China. Furthermore, it has several upsides and downsides from a curatorial point of view.

The exhibition can be divided into four sections: the revolutionary Chinese posters, the portraits of Xu Weixin, the new Propaganda Posters of Liu Dahong and the parodistic paintings of Li Gongming. Each artist talks about the Cultural Revolution through their recent works. Thus the original revolutionary posters from the time of the Cultural Revolution allow us to compare and contrast the different responses to them in contemporary art in China.

Revolutionary Chinese Posters

The GPCR was an incredibly tumultuous period when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) reinforced its plan to modernise China, boosted its gross national product, and increased the pace of Chinese socialist transformation (Esmein, 1973). The creation of art was strongly regulated by the CCP during the GPCR. It was forbidden to use Western or classical Chinese styles because the GPCR aimed to build a new socialist nation without reliance on the corrupt Chinese values or the values of other countries. In addition, the

CCP supported art by people who were workers, peasants, and soldiers and the art style it promoted was narrowed to Socialist Realism, with no abstraction or reference to modernism (Galikowski, 1998). The revolutionary Chinese posters are good examples of the art of this period as they were 'part of a comprehensive and highly controlled media apparatus whose objectives were the consolidation of authority and the transformation of society' under the communist government (Crushing & Tompkins, 2007, p. 9).

Standing guard for Our Great Motherland (Shen Jiawei, 2007) depicts the soldiers guarding the border of China. Their exaggerated and powerful figures, painted much bigger than nature, represent the power of the CCP. Not only that, they encourage people to believe in the utopian communism society by showing the strength and optimistic vision of the government through the soldier's eyes looking far beyond. *Aerial drawing of Dazhai & surroundings*, another picture in the exhibition, shows the features of human development, such as power lines, bridges, and irrigation. These modern transformations of the landscape present the greatness of the CCP and its policies aiming to protect people from repeated natural calamities such as floods, earthquakes, and droughts (Crushing & Tompkins 2007).

Xu Weixin

Weixin draws portraits of figures represented in the book *Chinese Historical Figures 1966-1976*. In 1966, shortly after the GPCR, he was a class representative for the second grade. Most of the students were brainwashed by the ideal of classless society and denounced landlords because those who had private property were seen as the enemy of the communist ideal. At that time, there was a rumor that his homeroom teacher was the daughter of a landlord. Weixin 'heroically' painted the portrait

of his teacher on the blackboard to mock her, in the current fashion of caricaturing people in authority. When the homeroom teacher found the portrait Weixin was very proud of himself and felt that the enemy was punished as deserved. When he grew up, he realised his wrong behaviour and we can see feelings of guilt and reconciliation in his recent portrait works. This childhood experience led him to portray the historical figures who engaged with the Cultural Revolution. Besides questioning his behaviour, he also refers more generally to Chinese people's behaviour during the Cultural Revolution: 'Should not we resolve to repent and examine ourselves and our actions?' (Donald & Evans, 2010, p. 25).

Liu Dahong

Dahong's works are parodies of paintings created during the Cultural Revolution that deified Mao. Dahong's *Red Calendar in four seasons and Fairytales of the Twelfth Month* are examples of the parodies. It is a common strategy in communist countries to make leaders look like gods. Stalin and Lenin were depicted as huge figures in many Socialist Realist Posters in the Soviet Union, and the leaders of North Korea were also shown as gods in political posters. Dahong critiques this strategy and produces parodistic version of the posters. In *Four Seasons – Summer*, Mao is shown as a hero with a sword on his back. However, figures assuming funny poses, that look comic book characters, ridicule the process of deifying Mao. Through these parodies, Dahong reports the dark side of the history filled with the tears and the blood of the republic, when people could survive by unconditionally believing in Mao. (Donald & Evans, 2010)

Li Gongming

As a member of the New Propaganda Work Group, Li Gongming, creates *New Propaganda Posters*, a modified version of the revolutionary posters made during the Cultural Revolution, where he adds critical thinking and new technologies. Through these posters, the Group members

criticise the widespread repression and inequality of contemporary Chinese society, calling for social justice and equity. The work of Xiaoyan, another member of the Group, looks identical to the original revolutionary posters, they do however, have different purposes. The text in Gongming's poster means 'call for a harmonious countryside and a prosperous life for farmers' and in Xiaoyan's work it means 'call for social justice.' Both works use the style of revolutionary posters but they point out the promises that the CCP has not kept yet. (Donald & Evans, 2010)

Revolutionary posters VS New forms

The key to the exhibition is a comparison between the revolutionary posters and the new works responding to them. The original posters were produced as propaganda to reinforce the communist ideal during the Cultural Revolution. Conversely, the new works are mocking of and complaining about the communist ideal, as well as creating personal reconsiderations about the artist's own behavior during the Cultural Revolution. Liu Dahong directly mocks the ideals of the Cultural Revolution, by ridiculing Mao, the symbolic and physical power of Chinese communism, he responds to the Cultural Revolution critically. Li Gongming and New Propaganda Work Group respond to the Cultural Revolution requesting actions from the government in order to solve social problems of contemporary China. This activism differs from Dahong's lyrical attitude. Xu Weixin responds to the Cultural Revolution very personally. He finds the Cultural Revolution in his memories and reconsiders the past from the present point of view, trying to reconcile with his guilty memories.

The Display of the original revolutionary Chinese posters opposite to Liu Dahong's works and new propaganda postcards is very effective. In spite of the small size of the gallery, the space is used very pragmatically. The *New Propaganda* posters are hung from the ceiling and Dahong's video is projected onto a small fireplace on the wall. Despite the clever use of the space, some

aspects are disappointing. Not every exhibition needs to be contextualised, but *China and Revolution* should provide more information to visitors to help them understand it, because it is difficult to fully appreciate it without the background of the Cultural Revolution and the recent history of China. For example, there is a documentary video, which is integral to understanding of the whole exhibition. There is no explanation as to why Weixin draws portraits and what Dahong tries to show unless visitors watch the documentary video. But this is located in a corner of the gallery, which is difficult to access. Furthermore, there is no guide to distinguish the revolutionary Chinese posters from new propaganda posters except the catalogue on sale. Since both posters have the same style, visitors cannot easily tell the difference unless they can read Chinese.

History, Parody and Memory

As the title of exhibition suggests, some would expect to find the political position that the three artists and the exhibition have in relation to the Cultural Revolution and communism. On the contrary, the works shown are neutral, so the position of the exhibition on communism is unclear. This might be the attitude that most artists and people have towards communism and the Cultural Revolution in China, since they cannot freely express their opinion on political issues. The artists are not necessarily neutral, but they are politically ambiguous because they try not to show that they are against communism. Dahong could depict Mao more aggressively and Gongming could criticise the government more critically. Weixin through his work could question why the CCP brainwashed innocent people to take control over them rather than just portraying historical figures. Instead, Dahong and Gongming simply parody the styles of the Cultural Revolution and Weixin just talks about

his memories. Nevertheless, all of them respond to history actively. That may be the reason why the exhibition is titled not 'against communism or anti-communism' but just '*History, Parody and Memory*'. ■

Jun woo Do

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Shen Jiawei
Standing guard for Our Great Motherland
 1975
 Poster
 53 x 77cm
 Courtesy and copyright of the artist
<http://sydney.edu.au/museums/>



Would you call this “social sculpture?”

Fairytale-Art Event Documenta 2007

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‘Ai Weiwei’s artistic output, based on the formulation of ideas, is interwoven with his political thinking and illuminates for the audience the internal struggles China currently faces, as well as deep human concerns.’ Gene Sherman, Chairman, Executive Director of the SCAF

First inevitably comes the idea, the fantasy, the fairy tale. Then scientific calculation. Ultimately, fulfillment crowns the dream. (Ammer, 2007).

These words condensed the whole process, conceived as an artwork itself, of the large-scale, multi-faceted project about ‘possibility and imagination’.

Project 1-1,001 Chinese visitors

The first project was the invitation of 1,001 Chinese travelling to Kassel free of any costs. It involved exploring what it means to be Chinese beyond the physical limits of place. Most of these participants were selected because they would never have otherwise had the opportunity to travel overseas and were chosen in a relatively random manner as an open invitation published on Ai’s blog.

In terms of size and concept, *Fairytale* is the biggest and the most multilayered work ever developed by Ai, and one of the most ambitious projects ever presented in the history of Documenta (Smith, 2009). A part of the project included living individuals visiting the small town of Kassel. The travelers, whose ages range from 2 to 70, come from dissimilar social classes and have dissimilar occupations and life styles. Because of the support the sponsors allowed a 3.1 million Euro budget, Ai was able to initiate an enormous process with several different aspects such as the planning of the tourist and educational activities, the location of suitable infrastructures, the creation of proper living and sanitary conditions, the design of utensils and furniture, the recruiting of personnel (cooks, video makers etc.), the processing of visa applications and travel insurance, in which every stage of the processes required overseeing by Ai and his FAKE team.

Ai states, *‘I see the whole process as the work itself. I see what kind of hopes, what kind of worries, what kind of frustrations... and waiting and anticipating. Many people said that it is already a miracle for them, it is already a fairytale’* (Colonnello, 2007).

Ai Weiwei is one of the most innovative artists of the contemporary art scene. Widely regarded as an agent provocateur, Ai chooses art as a means through which to express his disdain for the political pressures of a system condemning society to cultural improvement in China. His work outrages conservative traditionalists as he questions the role of culture and its historical and ideological nature (Alnertini, 2008). Until he discovered the works of Marcel Duchamp, he had no idea that art could be a lifestyle, which brought an instant end to the struggle with the form of painting. Ai decided that painting was “a dead-end form of expression” and devoted his energies to create sculptural assemblage, which he constructed using objects appropriated from daily life (Smith, 2007). In recent years much has been made of the apparent tendency towards the neo-Dadaist gesture in Ai’s approach.

Fairytale

In thinking through the conceptual potentiality of the ‘Readymade,’ underpinned by the notion that art practice is but the administration of things, Ai Weiwei expands the concept to such a degree that he reinvents it. *Fairytale*, specifically made for the art event Documenta 12 2007, could best be explained as a type of performance or happening. It was conceived as three interlocking projects that extend the critical engagement with concept of China not only in its conception of China as a physical construct but as a constructed identity, in which reply to the three leitmotifs of the exhibition, *‘Is modernity our antiquity’*, *‘What is bare life?’* and *‘What is to be done?’* he displayed a characteristic desire to work outside conventional art forms and create a work with ordinary people at its heart (Close, 2008).

Ai cheerfully showed his guests a quotation by Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, the pioneering Russian space theorist, printed on one of the first pages of the introduction for the project:

The 1,001 Chinese travelers were in Documenta as tourists, viewers and as part of the artworks. One of the topics stressed in *Fairytale* is the person as a single individual and their individual experience within the context of their lives as citizens of a Communist country where the importance of the individual is lost to the dominance of the State. The choice of 1,001 participants was significant, not simply because of the logistical involving that number of people. Ai discussed the decision to invite 1,001 people to take part in the work:

'The choice is due to the fact that what we really want to emphasize is "1" not "1,001". Each participant is a single person, and that's why our logo is "1=1000" that means that in the project 1,001 is not represented by one project, but by 1,001 projects, as each individual will have his or her independent experience.' (Colonnello, 2007).

That is, the person sees him or herself as an individual rather than as a collective or undifferentiated part of a mass, a not insignificant concept given the recent past of China. Each participant was asked to fill out 99 questions and was filmed on occasion from the preparatory stage through to their returns to China. This becomes a very foreign experience in anyone's personal life, which will help each participant to think differently:

Against the backdrop of a totalitarian past and massive social changes, China is particularly in need of an exchange not based on institutions but rather on the individual. (Ammer, 2007).

Project 2-1,001 Ming and Qing dynasty chairs

The second project was the installation of 1,001 late Ming and Qing dynasty chairs in clusters across the different exhibition venues. The chairs echoed Ai's past use of 'Readymade,' but their connection with the 1,001 Chinese participants added a more personal resonance to the way in which the objects were received. Able to be moved around and used by the public, the chairs provided an individual and collective place for people who came from all over the world for dialogue and exchange. Ai Weiwei's *Fairytale* had staged a massive encounter between totally different cultures, each confronting the other and the unknown, in a context that was both familiar and strange.

Ai states, *'I think that past and future, these two realities which are both internal and external to each person, are all integrated in very different forms and possibilities that make each individual unique.'* (Colonnello, 2007)

Project 3-TEMPLATE-1, 001 Ming and Qing dynasty wooden window frames and doors

The third project, *TEMPLATE*, was composed of 1,001 late Ming and Qing dynasty wooden window frames and doors, which formerly belonged to destroyed houses from areas all over China, where entire ancient townships and villages had been destroyed.

In many of the works discussed so far, the materials used in their construction have been identified as recycled elements of the past. Things that are no longer of use themselves, and that would otherwise be cast aside or thrown away.

Ai explains, *'the materials I use comes from objects destroyed in the name of development, or would be used by antique dealers to make copies of antique future.'* (Colonnello, 2007)

The artists recovered these pieces and, joining together five layers per side, formed an open vertical structure with an eight-pointed base, creating in its centre the volume of a traditional Chinese temple. The work had been exhibited in the courtyard of the greenhouse designed by Lacaton and Vassel also known as the 'Crystal Palace,' a temporary building erected ad hoc for Documenta 12. Ai bought the last fragments of that civilization and relocated them in a completely contemporary setting. Ai (2007) explains, 'It really is a mixed, troubled, questioning context that protest for its own identity.' Once counted, the pieces of which the Template is made up of surprisingly turned out to be exactly tantamount to 1001, a coincidence that Ai Weiwei finds significant (Smith, 2009). While standing in the middle of Template, the viewer is surrounded by a space that is fictional, abstract and ethereal.

Ai states, *'I'm not religious, to me the temple itself means a station where you can think about the past and future, it's a void space. The selected area, not the material temple itself, tells you that the real physical temple is not there, but constructed through the leftovers of the past.'* (Colonnello, 2007).

Constructed around a void, the structure becomes an empty shell, a void as in the spaces of 'provisional landscapes'. The void is the disappearance of the civilizations from which the fragments were taken in the process of China redefining itself. Salvaging the leftovers of the past is not about the preservation of relics, or sufficient to construct something self-sustaining. Whatever meaning they had no longer exists.

Ironically, *TEMPLATE* as a structure collapsed under heavy weather conditions some days after its inauguration (Smith, 2009). This is the condition of time, a condition of temporality that governs everything and therefore offers no guarantee as to what will come after. One can only create the conditions of possibility through the actualisations that reveal the material force of its being. These actualisations are what is given at the time but they contain, nonetheless, a potentiality or virtuality which is yet to be determined. This then is the freedom of the work itself, and in turn the freedom of its audience.

Post-project

The significant impact *Fairytale* made on the lives of the participants was the outstanding success of the work for Ai. By providing the 1,001 participants with the opportunity to travel overseas, Ai enabled them to be exposed to foreign culture and ideas, many for the first time. They were also able to experience a new world of ideas and possibilities that they would take with them on their return to China. In this way the impact of project continues to resonate for participants long after the event itself is over.

Ai explains, *'It's like a dream; they said it's affected their lives and the way they look at the world...I really think a new awareness has been added to their lives.'* (Colonnello, 2007)

While *Fairytale* has been discussed as a modern mobilizing of the masses, directly reflecting the socio-cultural climate in China, the mass unity associated with socialism and its lingering impact on China's social structure and strata, the communists' emphasis on the group above the individual, restrictions of personal freedoms as well as the 'reconnecting' of China with the international community. For Ai, the intervention was emphatically aimed at the 1,001 individuals. Kassel is the home of the Brothers Grimm, hence Ai's choice of title, which alludes to the unleashing of the imagination that makes

fairytale so beloved by children (Merewether, C, 2008). 1,001 people sounds like a big group, but the impact of even visiting Kassel could only be understood at an individual level. Only of its results in a force for change, personal experience is the foundation for social change. Ai explains:

'Everyone responds differently. I wanted to give the participants an opportunity to be conscious of that, to learn something about their imaginations and differentiations.' (Colonnello, 2007)

Taking a cue from Warhol's charge that 'actually you have to change (things) yourself,' this notion of art as a 'force for change' is the meridian running through Ai's practice, uniting the form it takes, the materials it deploys and the diversity of activities it embraces (Smith, 2007). As a body of work, his art is emblematic changes, which again manifests in the diverse range of his practice as well as in the ambitions that drive the work and the scale of individual projects. All such opportunities are potential means of furthering the process of change. ■

Xi Fu

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Ai Weiwei
TEMPLATE-1, 001
 Ming and Qing dynasty
 wooden window frames
 and doors
 Dimensions unknown
 2007
 Installation view,
 Documenta 12
 Courtesy and copyright of
 the artist
<http://www.aiweiwei.com>

Review of the A.R.P. at Cockatoo Island opening and selected artworks

Between Friday the 10th of September and Monday the 4th of October, Cockatoo Island was the stage for the Artists in Residency Program, or 'A.R.P.', the Harbour Trust's new initiative, set up as a trial to help local emerging and established artists with studio space. The Artists in Residency Program brings eight established and emerging modern artists to Cockatoo Island to create an ongoing spring exhibition. The artists were Sydney-based installation artists Mikala Dwyer and Justene Williams, architect Richard Goodwin, visual artist Keg de Souza, painter Daniel Boyd, installation and video artist Margaret Roberts, interactive media artist Mari Velonaki and Australian activist art collective boat-people.org. All participated in an Artists Residency Program on the island during the last twelve months. Annie Laerkesen is organiser and curator of the exhibition, which is the first of what is hoped to become an annual event.

As I am a volunteer, I was invited to help at the opening. I did not know what to expect, as I had not heard much about the exhibition, but made an assumption from the little that I knew that the crowd that it would 'draw' would be the typical Sydney art scene. Indeed, the ferry was almost packed to the brim with 'artsy' types, which was unsurprising as it was an opening to a semi-obscure event, on a cold, wintery spring evening. However when I got to the island I was pleased to see a range of people from all walks of life and from all parts of Sydney – small children to elderly grandparents – actively enjoying each one of the artworks. Of course, the highlight of the evening was the band which played at the end, but people braved the rain and the cold to walk to many of the outer buildings in order to experience the video installations and artwork. Indeed, when it came to the end of the evening, it was hard to pull some viewers away from said works as we tried to shut them down. This is a positive start for something that is a trial!

The exhibition had a wider range of paintings, photographs and installations regarding various topics, however the following artworks, installations and opening presentations give a broad overview of what the A.R.P. is about, and what can be expected of a visit to Cockatoo Island to see the exhibition.

Mikala Dwyer and Justene Williams

Mikala Dwyer and Justene Williams joined forces to create a video installation inspired by the story of Captain Thunderbolt, the Australian bushranger who was held on the island and aided in escape by his wife, Mary Anne Bugg. The installation depicts figures in striped outfits reminiscent of prison clothes drilling and building within the 1940s bomb shelter where this installation is housed. After watching for a few minutes, it is revealed via a stilettoed heel that these faceless figures are in fact women, adding an element of sexiness and intrigue to the situation. Both artists were intrigued by the story of Thunderbolt's escape and the love of his wife, and have symbolised the plight of bushrangers such as himself that were held on the island through the costuming.

This is a bi-polar piece, set on two screens. Although the images are generally similar, their editing and overall presentation are quite different. One section has been overly digitally enhanced, with red and green printings coming on and off screen for no apparent reason whilst the female goes about her business of sawing the ground. The other is sleeker, focusing in muted tones on the 'prisoner' and their work before showing the reveal of the stilettoed foot. I am unsure which artist created which video, but the differences in style are very striking. This in turn has two effects - it can cater to a wider audience through the differences in style or polarise them as there is not enough unity through the works. One looks messy and like something a first year time-based art student would create, whilst the other is a

sleek, sexy production that you would almost expect in an arthouse film.

Indeed, throughout the evening it was interesting to notice which video the audience was drawn to – many would watch the sleeker video for a few minutes, quickly glance at the second video, and walk out again. The location of the installation was also problematic – set away from the rest of the exhibition in an outhouse, and as one patron observed, not indicated well enough so that people could easily find it – many audience members accidentally stumbled upon it when trying to find the toilets. The concept behind the installation is quite interesting, however, and it was perhaps one of the better video installations presented at the exhibition.

Boat-people.org

Boat-people.org created a video installation and series of lit photos from their Muted Sydney show. This collective focuses on the issue of boat people and came into being in 2001 as a reaction to John Howard and the Coalition's policy regarding illegal immigration. According to their website:

'...The government of that time, led by Prime Minister John Howard, exploited the deep vein of xenophobia in this profoundly colonised nation. Their rhetoric of 'illegal migrants', and 'boat people' took hold of the national imagination, so that the majority of Australians supported the incarceration of refugees and their children in detention camps... Boat-people.org was formed in response to such policies, which over the past 12 years profoundly harmed the emergence of a multicultural and tolerant society.' (boat-people.org, 2010)

It is interesting that this is part of the exhibition, as once again boat people are topical within Australian politics and this is one of the few works that addressed a topical issue. The photographs are sharp, well focused, almost reminiscent of something you would see on the front of Australian Government brochures

promoting 'Young Australia' (sans the flags wrapped around the head). The flags symbolise the 'national blindness' of the Australian people as according to the collective's website. Mounted and backlit, the images looked almost like stills from a film, and in fact some viewers asked that exact question – were they watching a paused movie or were these deliberate photographs? By themselves the images are striking, and with the added context even more so. These were some of the more effective photographs of the exhibition.

The Choir

As an added extra for the opening, a choir consisting of a guitarist, pianist, singer and approximately twenty computerised heads mounted on a Medusa-esque statue performed a series of three songs for the crowd. Their songs combined a mixture of humour and pathos, although their point often seemed to be lost as the words were drowned out by extremely loud drums, bass and digital faces. It also didn't help that the band was situated in a giant shed, thus making everything echo. The choir is quite new and has great potential. This was particularly apparent at the beginning of the performance, which consisted of a 'sing-off' between the digital faces and the singer, mimicking the digitalisation. It was not apparent whether this was intentional or not, but it certainly could be interpreted as a commentary on the autotuning of human voices – not only can digital voices mimic and recreate human voices, but it can also work vice versa, and perhaps even sound better coming from a natural voice. Was this the choir's way of pointing out that nothing can replace the natural beauty of a human voice, or were they just trying to be clever?

The second song, combining different sound effects, snippets from films such as *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and different faces, was too long and convoluted. Many in the audience were left shaking their heads as to what it was all about, once again partially because the lyrics kept getting drowned out. Overall, although the

concept of a semi-digital choir is a clever one, the novelty of the faces wears thin when the songs become too long. The band needs more opportunity to experiment and see what they can do. Things that worked well and therefore need to be focused on more include the concentration on facial expressions that occurred, mainly at the beginning of the performance. It made each digital face appear more real and gave each a personality. Using snippets from old films also worked well as it added some humour to the songs, however the choir must be careful not to overload on loud noises at the expense of good song writing, and the human female singer must be given more to do in order for her role not to become superfluous.

In summary

These very different artworks are quite interesting but do not show anything particularly original or daring - it's all been done before. Perhaps with the exception of boat-people.org, most of the artworks err on the side of caution, easily palatable and not necessarily there to make the viewer think. Even boat-people.org's photographs, although topical in nature, are sleek enough to not be completely confronting. However this is not necessarily a bad thing. If the Harbour Trust are running this residency as a trial, the works needed for the exhibition to be a success (if success is counted as visitor numbers as well as benefiting artists) must be readily accessible to a wide audience. It is hoped, however, that in future years the works would present more of a challenge to the viewer whilst still being able to maintain an interest for the general public.

Overall, there are some concerns regarding the exhibition that should be remedied in future years. One concern is that in order to find out more about each artwork, viewers must do their own research after the event— the caption is generally insufficient for many of the works. This

is particularly true of the boat-people.org captions, although in this case, that is perhaps a good thing as generating interest in their website and therefore their cause is part of the collective's aim. It is concerning for the other works, however, as many have interesting stories and hidden meanings that cannot be interpreted from a caption yet would help give a broad audience a wider understanding of each piece.

Another concern is the venue itself. Cockatoo Island is a difficult space to run an exhibition at the best of time, and this is no exception. Although most of the works were placed in a large shed, some were in a smaller building and the Dwyer-Williams installation was in an outhouse 500m away from everything else. There were no maps or signs to show people the location of different works, and this led to some confusion as to both the location of the toilets and the art. This led to some works being missed altogether, which is concerning as this is an exhibition whose partial intent is to expose works to a wide audience. The echoing chamber in the shed did not provide appropriate acoustics for the choir. However in other ways Cockatoo Island has aided the artists and the works. Once again, the installation by Dwyer and Williams is an example of this, as the island directly inspired their artwork.

Overall, the Artists in Residency program on Cockatoo Island is a positive experience although in some ways it seems to have been under planned. Although the works are not necessarily challenging, they are interesting and it is great to see that they are reaching a wide audience. By focusing on organising the layout of the exhibition better and perhaps with some better promotion, the A.R.P. has the potential to become a highlight of the annual Sydney cultural calendar. ■

Elinor King

Global warming CAN be over: the art of Ken Yonetani. 44

As much of the art industry thrives on the neo-liberalist spirit of consumerism, making luxury goods of art, many artists also crusade for social, political or environmental causes. Ken Yonetani is one of the latter. While many of his ephemeral works escape the commercial quality of being sold, they are poignant and powerful vehicles for raising awareness of some of the ecological - and hence social - problems which plague our modern world. Yonetani is part of a growing breed of artists who are 'getting to grips with the idea of ecological systems as art...as the substance of art practice itself' (Editorial, 2005, p.14). However the tireless efforts of artists like Yonetani, who so passionately create works in the hope of informing and educating audiences, beg a very important question: can art really affect change?

An increasingly unnatural world.

In a disturbingly prophetic essay titled 'Art and Ecological Consciousness', first published in 1970, Gyorgy Kepes warned that:

Disregard for nature's richness leads to the destruction of living forms and eventually to the degradation and destruction of man himself...we are all carried along by the uncontrolled dynamics of our situation and continue to develop ever more powerful tools without a code of values to guide us in their use. (Kepes, 1972, p.2)

Indeed, since the dawn of industrialisation, the natural environment has always been a faint afterthought in the pursuit of technological greatness that boosts both profits and mankind's insatiable need to tame and control nature. And while Kepes recounts fleeting moments of poetic caution over the centuries – more than a hundred years ago, John Ruskin proclaimed, 'Ah, masters of modern science...you have divided the elements, and united them; enslaved them upon the earth and discerned them in the stars.'

(Kepes, 1972, p.1) – the narrowly-focused task of advancement at any cost has proceeded relatively unobstructed. It is only in the final decades of the twentieth century that the environmental consequences of a hitherto uncapped project of technological progression were acknowledged by citizens that formed the privileged minority. We came to realise, as Kepes so eloquently reflected, that 'shaped with the blighted spirit of cornered man, our cities are our collective self-portraits, images of our own hollowness and chaos' (Kepes, 1972, pp.3-4). Although it may not be too late, much of the damage is certainly irrevocable, causing great anxiety and uncertainty for the future.

At the same time, art's relationship with nature became precarious as industrialisation gained more steam, and ecological apathy became the norm. Both, as Felicity Fenner writes, drifted apart and 'each suffered at the hands of social and political indifference' (Fenner, 2007, p.422). While artistic expressions of nature and the natural order still existed, such forays were intermittent and became more sporadic as humanity and nature became more disparate. 'While oblique reference to the natural world is found in geometric abstraction of the modernist era,' Fenner claims, 'it wasn't until the 1960s, when a renewed socio-political interest in the environment inspired a young generation of revolutionary artists, that nature again became valid subject matter in contemporary art' (Fenner, 2007, p.422). Land art and works addressing ecological issues came to the fore as artists began to register society's discomfort with their increasingly concrete and artificial surroundings. Pioneering artists such as Richard Long, Dennis Oppenheim, and iconic, ground-breaking - sometimes literally - works such as Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* brought art and artists back to nature, albeit a permanently altered nature. Now at the dawn of the 21st century, the need to preserve the natural world has become

an imperative, and artists are at the forefront of a movement that seeks more accountability from humans for their ecological footprint.

While they were once polarities art and science are now, more than ever, joining forces for a greater cause. Given the increasingly destabilized state of today's natural environment, artists and scientists are collaborating to raise awareness of the issues and to offer solutions. In the last decade, international art collectives such as Ecoarttech, super/collider and Cape Farewell have emerged to fuse the pragmatism of science with the creative processes of art to, as Cape Farewell's mission states, 'stimulate the production of art founded in scientific research' (Cape Farewell, n.d.). Such developments highlight the recognition of the universal need to make concerted efforts towards ecological revival and sustainability. The partnership between art and science therefore represents the holistic actions that need to be taken: art to present the environmental damage caused by human activity and to further re-imagine a better, more ecologically-viable world, and science to impress upon us the disastrous consequences of not striving to attain this world. Simon Torok, CSIRO scientist and *Artlink* contributor, offers an uplifting and hopeful illustration of how collaboration can affect change: 'together, art and science can inspire an emotional response, inspiring changes in our attitudes and behaviour that ensure our landscapes survive in more than photographs, paintings and memories' (Torok, 2005, p.17).

An artist on a quiet mission.

Ken Yonetani started his working life in one career and has ended up at the other end of the spectrum. Originally a finance broker in Tokyo, he was immersed in the narrow, pragmatic, ecologically disinterested world of profit and economics. After three years Yonetani quit his job and spent several more years searching for his calling, which he found in art, as an apprentice to the master potter Kinjo Toshio in Okinawa.

From there, a natural progression to conceptual and environmentally-focused art occurred, as the artist recounts:

I am from the concrete jungle of Tokyo. I felt an urge to draw on my own experiences, and from this moved into the realm of conceptual art. For me environmental loss caused a sense of anxiety: working with my hands, I was able to regain a sense of calm. It was only natural to link the calming action of art-making back to something with an environmental message. (Yonetani, 2005, p.33)

A large part of his environmental message is to bring to light the destructive desire of humanity. Yonetani believes it is important for people to 'see and feel actual works rather than virtual things.' Many of his artworks, especially the earlier ones such as the *fumie tiles*, physically recreate this propensity for destruction. These tiles were destroyed shortly after their unveiling on both occasions of their showing at the CSIRO's Discovery Centre in 2003 and the *Asian Traffic* project at Gallery 4A in 2004. In both instances, the tiles, which contained models of endangered Australian butterflies that Yonetani himself had individually handcrafted, were placed at the entrance of the exhibition and crushed under the feet of opening night guests, effectively destroying months' of work with disturbing voracity. Julia Humphrey offers a detailed recollection of how the installation unfolded at the CSIRO exhibition, drawing parallels between the human condition and the act of destroying another person's work:

Some people...stepped across the tiles below with a sense of dread. Others stomped across the breaking floor with a kind of pained glee... titillating and yet excruciating... desperately trying to save some of the tiles...Several children also picked up some unbroken tiles, only to place them down once again and smash them with a loud and forceful stomp. After they had been smashed, the children then carefully began trying to place the pieces back together

again...Several people began putting tiles into their handbag or under their arms, laying claim to them with a sense of triumphant defiance. Yonetani smiled. This too was another display of human desire - the desire to possess and stake a claim of one's own. (Humphrey, 2004, p.23)

The reactions and emotions by visitors are a telling portrayal of the human desire to both inflict wanton destruction on their surroundings, and then realise the futility of trying to recreate such a fragile environment. 'I cried a lot with those ephemeral works,' Yonetani recalls, perhaps lamenting not only the destruction of his hard work, but what such destruction reflects about the human condition. Many of these broken *fumie tiles* were subsequently put together to create a new installation of a butterfly mandala. The butterfly pictures of this new work, Yonetani explains, 'form the ghosts of the destroyed tiles, sacrificed by human's impact on nature, and a gateway to the spiritual world' (Yonetani, Westspace, 2005).

Sweet barrier reef, Yonetani's most celebrated work, is a quiet, subtle comment on the state of ocean floor habitats. In its monumental scarcity, the large sculptural installation, modelled after a Zengarden form and made entirely of sugar, represents the coral wastelands that much of our oceans' underwater ecosystems have become. The sugar is at once metaphorical and literal; it directly points to the sugar industry's chemical run-offs as the primary cause for the bleached coral, and also stands as a metaphor for the Western world's increasing gastric gluttony and desire, manifested through excessive consumption, at any (environmental) cost. At the opening night of *Once Removed*, the group exhibition in which this work represented Australia at the 2009 Venice Biennale, models in coral-inspired bridal dresses meandered through the throngs of guests, holding delectable, intricately designed wedding cakes, sculpted by the artist. The bright colours of these dessert sculptures were a stark contrast to the deathly white of the installation they accompanied. The performance, entitled *Sweet barrier reef for the*

21st century – play Strauss's waltz grandly, included a choreographed dance followed by the models serving up the cakes to guests, creating a relational space which facilitated an interaction and dialogue between artwork and audience. In this case, as well as indulging in one of life's great culinary pleasures – a wedding cake! – the audience became complicit in the physical destruction of Yonetani's exquisite sugary sculptures, but metaphorically too in the destruction of the ecosystem that these sculptures represented.

Yonetani's most vocal, assertive and political attempt to create environmental awareness in the general population is a performance piece he delivered in collaboration with his wife, Julia Yonetani. *Global Warming is Over! (if you want it)* was a bed-in staged in the middle of Melbourne's Federation Square on a hot, 35ish°, February weekend in 2010. Emulating John and Yoko's famous 1969 Amsterdam 'War is Over!' bed-in, the performance, which received Yoko Ono's blessing, was staged to draw attention to climate change and the need for action. 'The message is the same as the message that John and Yoko had', Julia explains, 'if you want something you can actually make it happen...Both of them (war and global warming) we should be able to stop by human action, because they're caused by human action.' (J. Yonetani quoted in Pardi, 2010, pp.31-32) The public element of their performance, in which the couple stayed in their Fed Square bed all weekend in John and Yoko wigs, also helped the Yonetanis to take their work and message to a wider audience. 'People we had chats with in our performance are quite ordinary and do not go to gallery openings often', Yonetani explains. 'We discussed about global warming with various opinions. It was very interesting to talk with different people.' Furthermore, the performance can be considered a direct call to action, informing the public that global warming can be over, if they want it, if they are willing to work for it. The sweltering heat only served to re-enforce the urgency of the message.

Given the conceptual strength of Yonetani's artistic practice, and the social importance of its message, the artist does not fall into the trappings of 'crusader'. Rather, his works act as quiet, reflective protests; they impress upon the audience the necessity for change, yet leave the onus for action on the individual. In fact, the only violence in Yonetani's practice is that which is inflicted on his intensely-laboured creations.

The artist's next step will be an intense foray into interdisciplinary practices, as the Yonetanis begin their three-month artist residency in Mildura, on the border of the Murray River in Victoria. Long established as a hub for experimental projects where art and science join forces in the quest for ecological revival, Mildura seems the perfect place for Yonetani to begin his next artistic journey. Here, the couple will be collaborating with local scientists to explore the nature of salt, water and salinity as such issues are pertinent to this dry continent, and important to the artist. No doubt what the Yonetanis create will be a telling reflection on humanity's (mis)use of that most precious of resources – water.

Is art enough...?

In 1972 Kepes introduced the notion of consigning the artist to the task of creating an ecological consciousness. Kepes expounds on 'the role of the artist in educating the public to understand our ecological situation, and how he can serve to renew the sense of happy equilibrium between man and his environment.' (Kepes, 1972, p.170) While many artists like Yonetani have enthusiastically stepped into this role, one wonders if art really is enough to change the world. What is the real, practical reach that artists can have on a largely uninterested first world which continues to burn through natural resources faster than they can be replenished? What's more, should it be the social expectation, or burden even, of artists to take on such a monumental task as changing the mindset and careless living patterns of a population based on rampant consumerism and immediate

self-gratification? In other words, is it really the responsibility of artists to change the world? While one's immediate response would be a resounding 'No!' when asked this very question, Yonetani humbly, yet resolutely, replies, 'I think it is not only given to the artists. All the people have a responsibility to try to change the world.' From here, it appears that there's nothing left to say, only do. ■

Vi Girgis

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Julia Yonetani
 Photograph of Ken Yonetani and daughter taken at Bottle Bend, Mildura
 2010
 Courtesy and copyright of the artist
<http://yonetani2010.anat.org.au>

Lupin the Phantom Thief in the Arts: Banksy

In last August 2009, Bristol, the most populous city in South West England, was packed with a huge crowd. In front of Bristol's City Museum & Art Gallery, people had to stand in line for up to six hours to see an exhibition of their own world-famous artist, Banksy. Bristol is his hometown and he is an artist who tends to hold a narrative structure and investigate public aspects of the visual art by various methods. He raises diverse contemporary issues through his famous street art, and questions what is the essence of the art, the role of artists and the nature of appreciation behind his insistence. Banksy has concealed himself thoroughly behind a veil of anonymity. He makes his art under an assumed name. People call him a 'guerrilla artist' or an 'art terrorist.'

One of his famous quality vandal performances was to stealthily hang his own work, 'Early Man Goes to Market', in the British Museum. It even had a caption that the work was an example of primitive art, which was, of course, a hoax. Besides the British Museum, he secretly exhibited his novel artworks in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Museum. Museum managers never realised that these works were hung inside until the artist revealed their presence. Surprisingly, the British Museum made the decision to add the work to a list of permanent collections. Banksy's intention to perform these events was that he had a strong desire to ridicule art gallery managers who were not able to draw a line between masterpieces and counterfeit works, and suggest sarcastically what criteria made a great piece at the same time.

Banksy is a public artist and the form his public art takes is what is often described as graffiti art. His subjects are mainly issues such as politics, society, environment, capitalism, anti-war movement and peace. However, his motivation is based on the idea that he would like

to change the world to be better and brighter by reporting the irrationalities of society to the public and satirizing absurd stereotypes. He once said 'Some people become cops because they want to make the world a better place. Some people become vandals because they want to make the world a better looking place' (2005). The reason why he has managed to maintain complete anonymity and even entrusts an interview to his representative is because under British law, graffiti is considered an act of vandalism. In order to avoid any illegal excuse he remains anonymous which means he enjoys the freedom of outspoken creation.

Parody is one of mechanisms that have had more than enough usage in contemporary art. An issue is that parody in a work can be defined differently amongst other mechanisms such as plagiarism, theft, citation, borrowing and pastiche owing to the direction of intention. Banksy's strategy is to borrow old master paintings everyone knows and indicate the source clearly so that he cannot be accused of plagiarism or theft. Therefore, no one has objections to the rationality and legitimacy of his works by disclosing the source. Instead his parody seems to be utilized as a tool to bring up universal issues such as environment, religion, war, race and recovering traditional values against authorities. As a parodist, Banksy's work contains his strong insistence on returning to tradition in the true sense of the term by obviously showing pre-existing issues of our society, and he demonstrates his interest and consideration of historicity and sociality.

One of his outstanding parodied works is based on Edward Hopper and Jack Vettriano. Hopper's *Nighthawks* is parodied to criticize British chauvinism in dispatching troops to Iraq for the Iraq War, and he parodied Vettriano's *The Singing Butler* to demonstrate opposition to the war. In particular he transformed Leonardo Da

Vinci's masterpiece Mona Lisa into a combatant with a rocket launcher. Also, naughty Mona Lisa lifting her hips is a kind of gesture to take off the masterpiece's mask of authorities symbolizing the highest masterpiece in history.

Rats and children are his most frequently used images. They are often used as a tool of personification and their roles vary. A rat holds a placard while wearing a 'peace sign' around its neck, sometimes they carry a marker or a spray can for graffiti. The implication of using rats seems to be a desire of the artist himself. As rats rummaging through a ditch ask for peace and freedom, they play a role to speak for the minorities who were castrated by the authority.

Children are also one of his favourite subject matters. They are often used in scenes in which they are sacrificed to violence and unfairness. The famous Vietnam Napalm Girl who ran through flames during the Vietnam War now comes out along with Ronald McDonald and Mickey Mouse, which makes for a bittersweet comment on today's consumerist society based on money and greed. Apart from these kinds of works, which criticise capitalism dominating the mind indirectly, innocent children in Banksy's works are constantly suffering from an unjust society. Even though his works make people laugh because of a keen satire on society, they also encourage people to think and question the world around them.

Most of his works comment on the Government and/or authority, which are always depicted in a negative view. He calls himself an anarchist. Uniformed police officers in his works uncover their personal desires. When they get undressed out of their uniforms, they are no longer police officers and reveal insidiousness of authority and power behind uniforms.

His main canvas is the wall itself. Like more established artists such as Barbara Kruger and New York's Guerrilla Girls he also uses the wall. As well as painting directly on the wall, he

sometimes uses more traditional mediums such as paper and canvases. In particular, he loves to use the stencil technique, which allows a graffiti artist a neater and more desired effect. It is a popular technique for many street artists as it allows for a quick departure. Banksy is not tied down by a need for specialised spaces for exhibition such as more typical art gallery and museum settings. Moreover, he attempts to communicate with the public transcending both legality and illegality, which is why his paintings should be included in the realm of public art.

While stenciling on walls around the city, Banksy shows his artistic attitude, which is generally based on urbanism. His main stage is, as everyone knows, the city and his works are quite provocative towards oppression, coercion, hypocrisy and authority for indiscriminate development by people living in the city. In instances where Banksy has hung fake pieces of 'art' in world-famous galleries including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the British Museum, the Louvre Museum and the Brooklyn Museum, the purpose has always embodied a message of resistance. His principle aim is for an open society escaping an inflexible thinking posture and liberating people's pressure from uniformed governance in terms of showing interest in minorities and the Third World countries. At this point, Banksy seeks to revive a neglected class of people who do not fit in to the typical high-art scene largely due to elitist nature of the arts.

Banksy says, 'As far as I can tell the only thing worth looking at in most museums of art is all the schoolgirls on daytrips with the art departments.' He casts blame with the modern art galleries who choose to display artworks in the middle of white-painted spaces and announce that it is art just because it is in the art gallery. In one of his particularly famous displays of revolt he sprayed 'Mind the crap' on the steps of the Tate Britain before the Turner Prize ceremony, unlike other artists, his works do not need the white wall of art gallery to make a statement. Strong images involving social issues attract

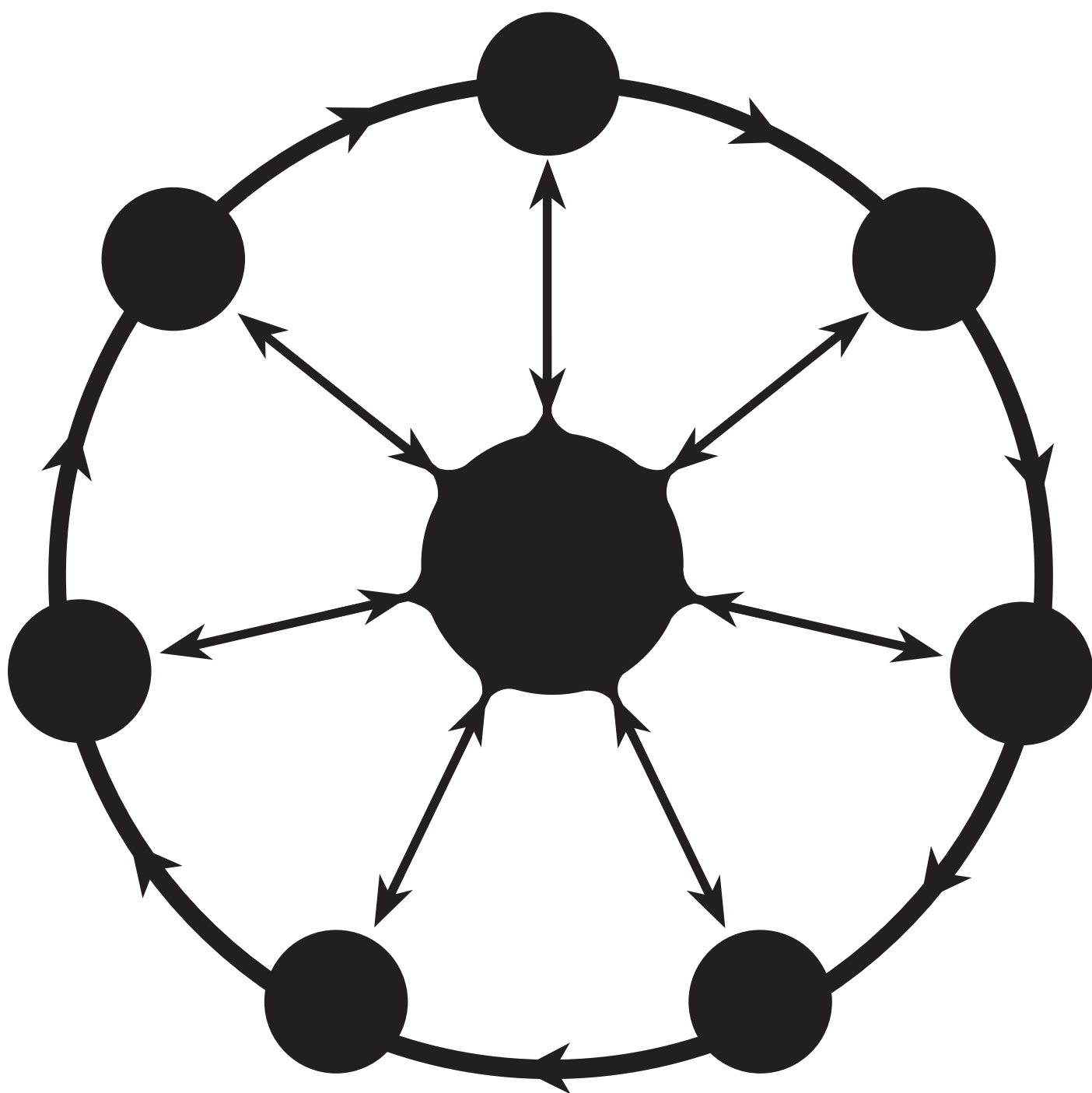
people's attention and can have a lot of influence over their values and opinions. His underlying attitude denies the commercialisation of the art. In the mean time, Banksy paradoxically has become commercialized, as a result of his notoriety, and the fact that his works have now been hung on the white walls of art galleries, he has forever resisted. It could be seen that what people want to get from Banksy's works is not an earnest discussion over a true value of the art or discussion on social issues which Banksy likes to evoke, but instead a hot issue or easily accessible topic in order to satisfy their curiosity.

It is noteworthy that Banksy has now become a figure of the artistic establishment, despite his best efforts. It will be interesting to keep an eye on his position in the art realm, to see whether he will be remembered just as the Lupin, the phantom thief in the arts, or rather will be seen as a creative pioneer in the evolution of making and displaying public street art. ■

Young-Gu Kim



Banksy
Transforming Mona Lisa into a new shape
 Date unknown
 Spray paint stencil
 Dimensions unknown
 More of Banksy's work can be found at <http://www.banksy.co.uk>



THE END.