

NEVERWHERE

Neverwhere brings together the work of eight contemporary Australian artists to disturb distinctions between our real and imagined selves, between authentic and fantastical scenarios. Works in this exhibition perform and postulate identity however narratives are largely informed by external – often mysterious – forces, both seen and unseen. The characters and identities represented here all seem to have fallen through the cracks of reality and landed somewhere different, into an underside; somewhere that is *Neverwhere*.¹

Neverwhere might be read here as Australia, of course, and the works suggestive of how nations, identities and selves are implied, inflected and inferred. At the exhibition's very outset, Kathy Temin's *Audition for a pair of Koalas* (2004) sets up this proposition, while simultaneously complicating it. While she was undertaking a residency in New York, the artist advertised for American actors to attend auditions and impersonate a pair of koalas mating. Most people that came to her auditions had never seen a koala in the flesh, of course, and brought to the work their own projections and fantasies about how a koala – and, by extension, an Australian – might behave.

Behaviour of marginal characters is highlighted in *Captain Thunderbolt's sisters*, a video Mikala Dwyer made with Justene Williams in 2010. The two artists, dressed in striped prison outfits, bushranger helmets and high heels, clamber around a circular bunker on Sydney's Cockatoo Island – the site of a former prison and reform school for errant girls. Either invoking, or possessed by, the dead girls' spirits, the artists bash violently at the metal fixtures; citing Australia's colonial history at the same time hammering societal boundaries. Such transgressive female agency is also evident in *Miss Universal* (2014), Claire Lambe's recreation of a 1976 image from Crazy Horse (the infamous Parisian cabaret). In this work, Lambe selects Australian women with real body types, and forces her subjects into clay shoes, impeding their movement but lending an air of absurdity to the scenario. Of course, it can be seen as a powerful statement to turn your back to the audience and these women

¹ *Neverwhere*, the exhibition, takes its title from an urban fantasy novel and television series set in London Below, a magical realm that coexists with the familiar city of London (referred to as London Above). London Below is a dark mysterious place, where talking rats and violent assassins run wild, and magic is slippery and capricious. The series was pronounced in *The Guardian* as 'a creepy, funny and deeply odd gem'. (Neil Gaiman, *Neverwhere*, HarperCollins, 1996).

seem determined to wrestle power back from the viewer.

Power relations are clearly at work in Tony Garifalkis' *Mob Rule* (2013) in which the artist has obscured the faces of national leaders and military figures with black spray paint, referencing his interest in forms of censorship as both a political and an aesthetic gesture. As with Lambe's work, these images serve to draw attention to the ways in which power (both social and political) is signified and performed through popular culture and in our collective imagination.

The urge to perform, or make things perform, is evident in each of the works in *Neverwhere*, but perhaps most explicitly in Clare Milledge's *Academic Suspicion: Staging a Hermeneutics of Incommensurability* (2015). The artist invites active participants into the shadowy world she has created, which is full of motifs she has borrowed from tribal art, mythology and spiritualism among other sources. However, Milledge's rituals seem to be invented by and only known to the artist and, as viewers, we are never quite sure what is being celebrated. As in the worlds inferred by Mikala Dwyer, invisible psychic energy abounds.

Play is important here, too; in the works of Milledge and Dwyer, but also in those by Veronica Kent and Lou Hubbard. But these are deeply unsettling forms of play; full of dark imaginings rather than innocent abandonments. Typifying this ambivalence is the figure of the clown; a keenly divisive figure, engendering fear and loathing, as much as it does laughter. This contradiction is tested by Kent in *Clown Transfer #1* (2010) but also in *Cloak* (2011), in which a resting child is watched over a maternal figure – presumably her mother but, in fact a monstrous one-eyed character. The work conjures a complex relationship between mother and child, but also between subject and object. Performing and seeing are equally important in Hubbard's *Eye Ops* (2013), for which the artist enacts a series of operations on confectionary eyeballs, examining the dysfunctional eyes as an optometrist might, before performing the necessary corrections as a surgeon would. Though performed in deadly earnest, the work ultimately relies on absurdity to render the familiar so strange. As with much in *Neverwhere*, there is a continually shifting stance between sincerity and satire and a propensity towards darker psychological turns.

Brook Andrew turns the gaze firmly back on Australia with *Anatomie de la mémoire du corps : au-delà de la Tasmanie* (2013). Interested in uncovering the often-invisible histories of colonial societies, the artist's work is deeply informed by his own mixed cultural background. Andrew offers a *wunderkammer* filled with human bones alongside rare books, objects and ephemera relating to the legacy of

colonisation fraught with strange juxtapositions that problematise any straight reading of the work. These new combinations, however, become a personal exploration with new possibilities, stories, histories and implications.

Such merging of facts, fictions and fantasies runs rampant throughout the exhibition. Works challenge given cultural and social perceptions and draw attention to the unseen and to our own personal relationships with memory and ritual. We are left suspended in a time and space of uncertainty and contemplation: somewhere and anytime. *Nowhere*.

THE ARTISTS

BROOK ANDREW

Born 1970, Sydney, of the Wiradjuri nation; lives and works in Melbourne, Australia. Brook Andrew uses neon, installation, performance and video to challenge cultural and historical perceptions. His commentaries on local and global issues regarding race, consumerism and history have more recently expanded to incorporate rare ethnographic materials, continuing his exploration of unacknowledged histories and the colonial gaze.

Andrew's work has been presented in major exhibitions nationally and internationally, including the 1996 and 2006 Adelaide biennials, the Biennale of Sydney, 2010, and the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale, Japan, 2012. His work has been the subject of numerous solo and survey exhibitions, including *Brook Andrew: Eye to Eye*, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, and touring, 2007, and *Brook Andrew: Theme Park*, Museum of Contemporary Aboriginal Art, Utrecht, the Netherlands, 2008. In 2013 he curated the exhibition *Taboo* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.

Brook Andrew is represented by Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris and Brussels.

MIKALA DWYER

Born 1959, Sydney; lives and works in Sydney, Australia.

Mikala Dwyer's complex installations are full of uncertainties and contradictions, never lending themselves to definitive interpretations, and her work often invites viewers to participate. She sets up open-ended conversations that draw our attention to the unseen – to invisible materials such as helium, or the voids between her forms, but also to hidden histories and our own highly personal relationships with magic, memory, sexuality and ritual.

Dwyer completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Sculpture/Sound) at Sydney College of the Arts in 1983, studied at Middlesex Polytechnic in London, UK, in 1986, and completed a PhD at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Garden of Half-Life*, University of Sydney Art Gallery and *Hollowwork*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne (both 2104); *Panto Collapsar*, Project Arts Centre, Dublin and *Goldene Bend'er*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (both 2013) and *Drawing Down the Moon*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane and *Divinations for the real things*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery,

Sydney (both 2012). She has also presented solo projects at major institutions such as the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and the Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa, and has participated in the Sydney and Adelaide Biennales.

Mikala Dwyer is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

TONY GARIFALAKIS

Born 1964, Melbourne; lives and works in Melbourne, Australia.

Working across photography, collage, sculpture and installation, Tony Garifalakis's artworks question the power and legitimacy of political, social, religious and artistic institutions. In *Mob Rule*, Garifalakis modifies a selection of prints and posters of military and royal figures through a similar process to that used by government agencies when censoring sensitive material. This process of concealment shifts both meaning and context of the images.

Garifalakis completed a Bachelor of Fine Art (Painting) at RMIT University in 2000. Recent solo exhibitions include *Mutually Assured Destruction*, Ryan Renshaw Gallery, Brisbane, 2011; *Affirmations*, Daine Singer, Melbourne, 2012; and *Angels of the Bottomless Pit*, Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide, 2013. Recent group exhibitions include *Monanism*, Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, 2011; *Negotiating This World: Contemporary Australian Art*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2012; *A Postcard from Afar: North Korea at a Distance*, Apex Art, New York, 2012; and *Theatre of the World*, Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, 2012. Garifalakis has undertaken several international studio residencies, including at ISCP, New York, in 2008, and SOMA, Mexico City, in 2011.

Tony Garifalakis is represented by Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide.

LOU HUBBARD

Born 1957, Brisbane; lives and works Melbourne, Australia.

Lou Hubbard's video and sculpture practice focuses on training and submission, with the artist often subjecting objects to various modes of duress through which they must yield to her rules. The effect can be perversely humorous or even strangely sentimental, but the work always questions the power relations inherent in training and discipline.

After a career in the film and television industries, Hubbard completed a Master of Fine Art at RMIT University in 2001. She has exhibited widely throughout Australia and internationally, with recent exhibitions including the major solo project *Dead*

Still Standing at West Space, 2015; *Making It New: Focus on Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2009; *NEW10*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2010; *Change*, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2010; *Yakety Sax*, with Claire Lambe, Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne, 2011; *Antic Measures*, Galerija Gregor Podnar, Berlin, 2011–12; and *FX*, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, 2013. Hubbard is currently Head of Photography at the Victorian College of the Arts.

Lou Hubbard is represented by Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne.

VERONICA KENT

Born 1970, Sydney; lives and works in Melbourne, Australia.

Veronica Kent's works explore image, beauty and psychic energy, and how they might each shift and change through time and space. A recurring theme across her work is the visual representation of invisible forces such as telepathy and love, and her practice incorporates wide research and investigation into myriad periods of art history and visual culture.

As The Telepathy Project (a collaboration with Sean Peoples) Kent has realised projects in Australia, France, Germany, India and Spain, in public, university and artist-run spaces. Their exhibitions include *You Are Probably My Favourite Person in the Whole World*, The Academy, Long Beach, United States, 2007; *Telepathy and Love*, Australia Council for the Arts Studio and Apartment, Barcelona, Spain, 2011; *Speech Objects*, Musée de l'Objet, Blois, France, 2011; *The Telepathy Project*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2012; and *Dreaming the Arabian Sea*, (en)counters, Mumbai, India, 2013.

Veronica Kent is represented by Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne.

CLAIRE LAMBE

Born 1962, Macclesfield, United Kingdom; lives and works in Melbourne, Australia.

Over the past two decades, Claire Lambe has utilised the material and transformative possibilities of sculpture – and more recently the relationships between object/form and image/photograph – to unsettle conventional notions of gender, class and sexuality. Drawing on the experimental art, music and club scenes of the 1970s, her work engages the female body to address underlying histories of sexuality, violence and social discontent.

Lambe completed a Bachelor of Fine Art at Bristol College of Art in 1985, followed by postgraduate studies at the University of New South Wales in 1990 and a

Master of Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, London, in 1995. Recent solo exhibitions include *Beadlestaff*, Switchback Gallery presented by Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2011, and *Lazyboy*, Sarah Scout, Melbourne, 2012. Group exhibitions include *Ertographomania*, CAST Gallery, Hobart, 2010; *Yakety Sax*, with Lou Hubbard, Sarah Scout, 2011; *Strangefellows*, with Lisa Young, West Space, Melbourne, 2013; and *Like Mike*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne, 2013. Lambe was co-founder of Death Be Kind, an artstrun project that ran from 2010 to 2011 in Brunswick, Melbourne.

Claire Lambe is represented by Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne.

CLARE MILLEDGE

Born 1970, Sydney; lives and works in Sydney, Australia.

Clare Milledge produces complex installations comprising paintings, textiles and sculptures that are highly informed and engaging – but also slippery and ambivalent – to consider our relationship to science, nature and language. She often invites collaborators to stage experimental performances within her installations, which complicate any logical narrative and render the familiar uncanny.

Milledge completed her Doctor of Philosophy at Sydney College of the Arts, the University of Sydney in 2012. Part of her candidacy was spent at the Universität der Künste, Berlin; she completed her Honours year at the Statenskunst Akademi in Oslo and maintains an active engagement with Norwegian contemporary art, including working with ongoing collaborator Tori Wrånes on her installation at the 19th Biennale of Sydney. Recent solo exhibitions include *Theoretical Regression: A Warm Sheen Against Received Ideas*, The Commercial Gallery, Sydney (2014); *Altus Duel: Total Environment*, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne (2014) and (2013); *Maximalist Ritualist* (with Carla Cescon) at the Australian Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide (2012).

Clare Milledge is represented by The Commercial, Sydney.

KATHY TEMIN

Born 1968, Sydney; lives and works in Melbourne, Australia.

Kathy Temin's work engages the inherent contradictions of dualities such as public and private; monumental and domestic; sincere and ironic. Her sculptural monuments, which are both minimal and sentimental, invoke references to interior design from the 1970s; solid and heavy, yet softened with Temin's signature

synthetic fur upholstery. As models for commemoration, her *Pet Cemetery* works allow for both pathos and celebration.

Temin completed a PhD at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne in 1999, and has exhibited nationally and internationally since 1990. Selected solo exhibitions and projects include at 200 Gertrude Street (1991), Australian Center for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (1995), Galerie van Gelder, Amsterdam (2003), ICA, London (2004), Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney (2007), Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne (2009), Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne (2009), Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (2010) and The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2011). In 2012 she completed the public artwork Garden Islands for the City of Stonnington in Claremont Street, South Yarra and in 2009 her work was the subject of a 20 year survey exhibition at the Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne and in 2012 her work was featured on the ABC on the program Art Nation.

Kathy Temin is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

THE CURATOR

VIKKI MCINNES (born New Zealand 1969) has worked in Victoria's contemporary arts sector for two decades including from 1996 to 2003 at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), where she was Program Manager. From 2003–04 she was Curator at the TarraWarra Museum of Art and since 2005 has worked at the Victorian College of the Arts (University of Melbourne) where she is Director of the Margaret Lawrence Gallery. McInnes has curated numerous exhibitions including *A Time Like This* (2008), *Bird Girls and Cock and Bull* (2007 and 2009, both with Kate Daw), *Backflip: feminism and humour in contemporary art* (2012, with Laura Castagnini), *Sleep on the Left Side* (Delhi, 2012) and *Ghar ghar ki baat* (2013) among many others. She has written for art publications including *Art Monthly*, *Photofile*, *un Magazine* and *Australian Art Collector* as well as numerous catalogue texts, and acts as a peer reviewer for the *Australia New Zealand Art Journal*. She has co-edited three collections of writings on contemporary art: *Red* (2001, with Stuart Koop), *Bureau* (2009, with Kate Daw) and *Bureau 2* (2014, with Laura Castagnini). McInnes has been the recipient of Australia Council Skills and Development Grants in 2005 and 2012, and numerous project grants from state and federal funding bodies. In 2009, with Kate Barber, she established Sarah Scout

Presents, a private gallery committed to representing and developing opportunities for a number of outstanding early to mid-career artists with critically engaged conceptual practices.