

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This year we continue with part two of the Vernacular Terrain at QUT. This exhibition continues to explore how artists engage with culture, language and local dialects, environment and technology.

We have included several acclaimed artists from China such as Lu Chunsheng who recently had a retrospective show at Red Mansion London, curated by Hans Ulrich Orbist of the Serpentine Gallery. Serpine gallery exhibiting along side established indigenous Australian artists whom reflect upon the Vernacular Terrain through aboriginal new media as it relates specifically to the socio-political and dialectical landscape, with our floor brochure essay being written by Djon Mundine OAM, Indigenous Curator Contemporary Art, currently based at Campbelltown Art Centre NSW.

Stephen Danzig
DIRECTOR, IDAPROJECTS



Kuang-Yu Tsui, The Shortcut to the Systematic Life: City Spirits, Part 1-5, 2005, single channel video, 7:50 (digital still). Courtesy of the artist and Eslite Gallery.

VERNACULAR TERRAIN

*One Night the moon
Came a'rollin by
Drove a big cart
across the night sky
One night the moon
Came a'rollin by
Called all the dreamers
To come for a ride.*

One Night the Moon, 2001.

Christine Peacock, Rebekah Pitt and John Graham's animation 'Boy and Moth' tells a type of classic moral tale of where knowledge, enlightenment and special powers of perception are placed on an unwitting, unsuspecting innocent hero for them to wonder at, enjoy, and rationalise and come to terms with. Aboriginal art is art made by Aboriginal people whatever its form, scale, practice or material. Certain inherent features of a technology can shut particular people out from access to it, from knowledge or a system of power associated with it.

Our world is aptly described within the title Vernacular Terrain, a moulded landscape of pathways, sites of aggregation, collection, and settlement. A variegated terrain of the personal and social, more so than spatial. Where information, ideas, expressions, feelings and concepts are ambiguously connected to sites and people and yet exchanged or discarded; overpowered and subsumed or escaping to fly free; in a constant state of flux, a temporal and spatial state of being.

Our landscape is strewn with sites of specific actions, people and their stories both creative and destructive. Aboriginal people have always sat uncomfortably in Australian colonial history and Aboriginal art sits somewhat incongruously in 'white-Australian' western art history, our very contemporary existence a challenge to both.

*This land is mine
All the way to the old fence line
Every break of day
I'm working hard just to make it pay
They won't take it away from me*

Father [Paul Kelly], *One Night the Moon, 2001.*

Some would tell us that new technology is supposedly race, gender and politically neutral yet we know how by its very 'newness' it reinforces [challenges] the stereotypes it supposedly refutes. Are we making old art with new technology? Certainly it appears cyber art forms move faster than laws, experiences and concepts, than people can keep pace with.

Jason Davidson's Martial Arts & Multimedia: A Tribute to Wally Nickels aligns itself with the Wadeye [Port Keats] traditional society's youth culture. Here the community is dominated by two warring, extremely visible street gangs 'The Judas Priests' and 'The Evil Warriors' despite an intense Aboriginal religious life, language retention and many other 'traditional' practices. It is in these communities that Asian 'Kung Fu' action movies were the most popular films, where the language of the script was

rendered irrelevant but the constant fight sequences remained significant; where the small defeat the powerful, good overcomes evil and those aggrieved achieved some form of justice.

*This land is me
Rock, water, animal; tree
They are my song
My being's here where I belong*

*This land owns me
From generations past to infinity
We're all but woman and man
You only fear what you don't understand*

Tracker Albert Riley, *One Night the Moon, 2001.*

Franz Fanon wrote of how colonialism and racism are a form of violence that is embedded through every facet of colonial cultural expression, so subtle and pervasive as to be invisible. To make his point he described the cruel disjunction of a black man watching the film 'Tarzan' with a black audience in colonised Martinique, watching the same film in a 'white' audience in Paris. Overcoming racism through the appropriation of coloured people in film histo-graphies and critique lies in the roll-call of Jenny Fraser's witty titled work 'name that movie', vignettes of Hollywood films.

Postcards were already a 'holiday item' when the 'Box Brownie' camera technology democratically liberated photography for the masses [including some yet to be identified Aboriginal people]. Popular among myriad exotic postcard images were those of the stereotyped primitive other. Andrew Hill's composition reverses the gaze to unveil the stereotype of the westerner we see exposed in all its true ugliness.

Our historical landscape, our terrain, pathways to enrichment and positive adventures, through British colonisation became unguarded openings to the heart of our societies and our dreams. r e a 's dream sequences alternate from soft pleasurable, 'prenatal', almost indescribable experiences and memories to the jarring, equally unbelievably, brutal, inhuman colonial violence 'maang [message stick]'.

When the British visited the Australian continent in 1770 there were at least 250 distinct languages living in myriad of 'vernacular' groups and differing cultural and physical environments across Australia. Through the colonisation processes, over the last 200 years, a flattening of this terrain, to some extent, has happened. However Aboriginal people continue to still live, work, create and dream in an extended number of ancient and new pathways, lifestyles, expressions, contemporary dreaming tracks and song-lines. We remain in a persistently optimistic, confident and extremely visible outlook on our futures as part of a modern vibrant contributing Aboriginal culture life.

Djon Mundine OAM
INDIGENOUS CURATOR CONTEMPORARY ART
CAMPBELLTOWN ARTS CENTRE, APRIL 2008



Andrew Hill, Untitled, 2006, digital print. Courtesy of the artist.



Meiya Lin, Lost Paradise, 2007, DVD, single screen, 8:59 (digital still). Courtesy of the artist.



Christine Peacock, John Graham & Rebekah Pitt, Boy, 2005, 3D animation, 6:00 (digital still). Courtesy of the artists.

PRESENTED BY



IN CONJUNCTION WITH



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Jacina Leong

EXHIBITION DESIGN
Lubi Thomas



Robyn Voshardt & Sven Humphrey, *Parametabolic*, 2007, DVD, single screen, 3:08 (digital still). Courtesy of the artists.

IDAP ARTISTS 2008

- Tiong Ang (Indonesia)
- Shoggoth (Italy)
- Chieh-Jen Chen (Taiwan)
- Lu Chunsheng (P.R. China)
- Stuart Croft (UK)
- Jason Davidson (Australia)
- Jenny Fraser (Australia)
- Andrew Hill (Australia)
- Robyn Voshardt & Sven Humphrey (USA)
- Mei-ya Lin (P.R. China)
- Hans Op de Beeck (Belgium)
- Christine Peacock, John Graham, Rebekah Pitt (Australia)
- Qing Qing (P.R. China)
- Andrew Brown & Andrew Sorensen (Australia)
- Laurens Tan (P.R. China & Australia)
- Kuang-Yu Tsui (Taiwan)
- Goang-Ming Yuan (Taiwan)
- Xu Zhen (P.R. China)
- Jiang Zhi (P.R. China)
- 8GG (P.R. China)
- Billeneeve (Estonia)
- re a (Australia)



Laurens Tan, *BabaLogic*, 2008, installation. Courtesy of the artist and Imagine Gallery, Beijing, and Teapot, Cologne.

PUBLISHER CREDITS

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