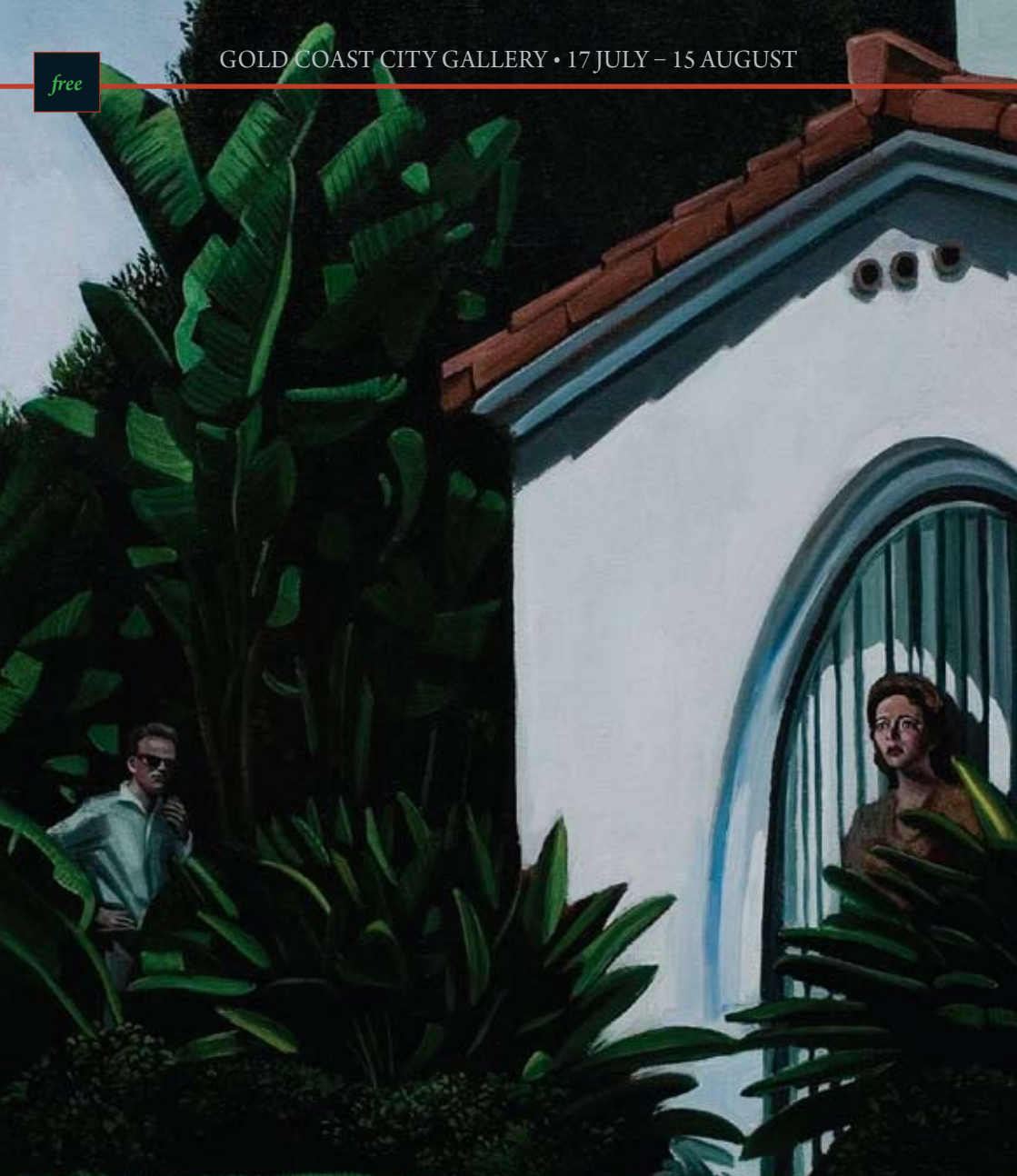


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GOLD COAST CITY GALLERY • 17 JULY – 15 AUGUST



NOBODY KNOWS



SIMON MEE • ROB McHAFFIE • ANNE WALLACE



Anne Wallace

Rehab

oil on canvas • 65 x 81cm

2004

This project has been developed by Simon Mee, Associate Lecturer, University of Southern Queensland, in partnership with Virginia Rigney, Curator, Gold Coast City Gallery.

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Rob McHaffie

Is 'home and away' on yet?

oil on linen • 46 x 36cm

2009



Simon Mee

Adam saw Eve

chalk and charcoal on primed paper • 144 x 133cm

2010

Prologue

by Simon Mee

With “*Nobody Knows*” I didn’t see myself as a curator so much – more as a chief perpetrator, given a chance to bring the three artists who share common interests to show together and allow the stories we each generate to play off against each other.

A curator is meant to be objective, in this case however I feel am the exact opposite. I have deliberately indulged my personal delight and pleasure in working with two artists whose work I enjoy. Anne and Rob’s work have both filled me with that strange mixture of pleasure and envy brought on by the “I wish I had done that” feeling.

I believe that this feeling of “I wish I had done that” is partially based on that we do all share many interests in common. These commonalities could easily be mistaken for a curatorial rationale.

Each of us creates stories through our artwork, these stories allow for each of us to reveal and explore our own personal concerns. Each of us populates these stories with figures that reflect our individual interests in contemporary figuration, this is not done as an easy option or lack of awareness of abstract or conceptual debates, but because for each of us, it is the best and most interesting way to reach out to the viewer.

By dabbling our toes in the waters of the human psyche, each of us sees what fish we can catch, the imagery chosen is thus peculiar to each of us, because for this method to work, the image has to hook something within ourselves first. The desire is to share the experience of feelings of horrors and humour each of us explored, through the nuance and sometimes instinctual decisions of painting and drawing, as our chosen means of bridging the fissure between art and the viewer.

This bridge is built with an ambiguous goal. It is not constructed to use the historical as a reactionary gesture or as a means to critically view the distances of history through the cool lens of irony. Instead the goal seems to be to leave us in an undisclosed location; the viewer and artist left with a foot on each other’s side. Each of us use the historical not as an ironic playground but a means to a seductive end, an end which should be left shifting uneasily upon its seat.

Story telling in art revels in scenarios in which an action or a potential action is revealed and through this the motivations of the cast of its characters. Each of the artists creates stories around involving the viewer through humour, horror and shock. This aims to entice them into inhabiting the same space as the protagonist. Within a story there can be the residue or the ghost of an action, through which the viewer is drawn into interpolating the results thus making them complicit, an accessory after the fact.

There is no pure plane of art here, the pilot’s been slipped a mickey and is asleep at the Mondrian inspired bar. Take a road trip with us instead and encounter pleasure, decoration, humour, sex and death – final destination unknown. •



Anne Wallace

Blackmail

oil on canvas • 73 x 54cm

2007



Ch. I: Lipstick traces

by Ashley Crawford

The lipstick traces were blood red. She – he presumed it was a she – what self-respecting guy carries around lipstick? – had obviously been trying to leave a message.

He'd searched the bungalow with ruthless abandon – it was a joint laid out like something he'd seen in an old 1955 *Home Beautiful* magazine. All the stuff looked new, but there was something off about it, like it was some kind of weird replica of a past world.

He'd known this job was off pretty much from the start. Some guy calling himself a 'curator' had appeared in his office and stared at his ashtray like it was a nuclear dump. Took a while to work out he was even talking about art. The guy had verbal diarrhea – “each is slippery, exploring situations and feelings through the characters they use so we are left wondering where the psychological projection of the artist starts and our own subconscious stops.”

It got worse when he started pulling out the pictures. The things were downright weird – the curator had one thing right – they were damned 'slippery' indeed.

He lit another death stick and squinted at the curator through the smoke. The curator squirmed.

“So you think something's missing from this, whaddya call it? Nobody Knows?”

This was gonna be one helluvah job.

He set out to knock on some doors. The apocalypse had come and gone right on schedule. One could still see the blasted trees, the tarnished ruins populated by the denizens of post-capitalism, religious freaks most of them, Lennon libertarians and Ono-obsessive's and Shankar sadists, not worth the time of day, mutant natives staring at a damn jet-ski like it was a watery UFO. Children fornicating with cadavers. Around here it was all peace, love and decapitation. Salome and her ilk looked harmless enough until you got too close, then your head became a gruesome plaything on a plate.

Tucked away where the blast hadn't hit as hard the 1950s bungalows and pseudo Spanish houses looked barely touched, unless you went inside and found the inhabitants twitching on the floor complete with scabrous antennae. This was the world of blackmail and delusion – who wanted the neighbours to know Gregor Samsa lived next door?

Wherever you went these grotesqueries had been rendered into paintings and even jewelry, as though celebrating the mutated current could erase the memory of normality before the end-time. And walking down the cracked pavement, taking a short cut through the mutated but still green undergrowth of a semi-tended garden, one could almost remember the before-times. You could hear the jet-ski in the distance, hear the murmurings of the disposed would-be messiahs, the twanging of desiccated sitars. It was almost like the movies that had survived, a world of peace and quiet, at least on the surface.

But then he saw the woman. Was it she that Nobody Knew?



Anne Wallace

Salto Mortale

oil on canvas • 116 x 89cm

2010





Simon Mee

The Hunt

oil and mixed media on linen • 122 x 185cm

2010

Ch. II: The Resurrectionists

Anne Wallace, Simon Mee and Rob McHaffie are, at heart, story-tellers. For many years in Australia and even internationally, this was largely anathema.

In 1968 the National Gallery of Victoria held an exhibition that reflected the impact of North American abstraction and colour-field painting on Australian artists. Such stylistic traits infiltrated the art schools and the commercial galleries. Figuration was 'off', it was old-fashioned. The notion of hinting at a literal narrative was a deadly sin.

But Wallace, Mee and McHaffie hail from another generation, one where popular culture – comics, films, television and books – were allowed to infiltrate their vision. By referring to recognisable tropes – children's books, pulp fiction, archaic fashion – they create a sense of what Freud called the *unheimlich* – the unhomely; something recognisable, but yet not quite right.

Yes they do so with a certain degree of humour and whimsicality – their figures move furtively or with dervish-like unpredictability – but the humour they may inspire is an uneasy one. McHaffie's dream-like *mis en scenes* have a hint of apocalypse, Mee's doll-like figurines have a whiff of tortured deformity and Wallace's is a world of grey skies and ominous shadows.

All three are like nocturnal somnambulists bringing their visions into the waking world, what Thomas Pynchon has described as “*that rare and luminous gift for reporting back from the nocturnal side of reality.*”

This slight sense of foreboding balances the more frivolous aspects of these artists' works. It is what adds the frisson and cuts through the deliberate aspect of the kitsch. McHaffie, Mee and Wallace take us to other worlds.

With nods of aesthetic precedents that embrace everything from Pieter Bruegel the Elder to the pulp paperbacks of the 1950s, this triumvirate of story-tellers illustrate a world only just out of reach. •

Ashley Crawford is a writer and critic based in Melbourne. He is the author of numerous books on Australian art including Spray: The Work of Howard Arkley (co-author, Craftsman House) and Wimmera: The Work of Phillip Hunter (Thames & Hudson). He has written on the visual arts for numerous publications including The Age, Australian Art Collector, Art & Australia, The Australian, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Australian Financial Review and Business Review Weekly. Crawford has also been editor of Photofile, Tension, World Art and 21•C magazines, Senior Visiting Fellow at the School of Art, Victorian College of the Arts and General Editor with Thames & Hudson books.



Rob McHaffie

your world and my world (canoe/jetski)

oil on linen • 86 x 71cm

2010

Rob McHaffie
hope for the disheveled seeker I
oil on linen • 56x66cm
2010







Simon Mee

Salome

chalk and charcoal on primed paper • 143 x 114cm

2010



Rob McHaffie

hope for the disheveled seeker II

oil on linen • 33 x 28cm

2010

• Anne Wallace •

1970 Born and lives Brisbane, Australia

EDUCATION

1990 Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts), Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane

1989-93 Arts Faculty (Part Time), University of Queensland

1994-96 Master of Arts (Distinction), Slade School of Fine Art, University College, London

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2009 *Release the Bats*, Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia

2008 *Recent Paintings*, Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2005 *Song Cycle*, Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney, Australia

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2009 *In every Dreamhome a Heartbreak*, Galerie Frank Schlag & Cie., Essen, Germany

Darren Knight Gallery at Auckland Art Fair, Auckland, New Zealand

2008 *Home*, Lismore Regional Gallery, New South Wales, Australia

2007 *Darren Knight Gallery at Ryan Renshaw*, Ryan Renshaw, Brisbane Australia

2006 *Parallel Lives: Australian Painting Today – TarraWarra Biennial 2006*, TarraWarra Museum of Art, Healesville, Victoria, Australia.

21st Century Modern – 2006 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia

2005 *Repositioning Photography, Number 2: Idiosyncrasy: Painting and Photography*, Queensland Centre for Photography, Australia

GRANTS & AWARDS

1999 Six month residency at Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris, awarded by the Power Institute of Fine Arts, University of Sydney and the Australia Council

1999 Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

1995 Melville Nettleship Award, Slade School of Fine Art, London, England

1993 Anne & Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarships

AUSTRALIAN COLLECTIONS

- National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
- Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane
- Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane
- National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

- Brisbane City Art Gallery, Queensland
- Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, Queensland
- Macquarie Bank Collection, Sydney

• Rob McHaffie •

1978 Born and lives Melbourne, Australia

EDUCATION

2004 Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Visual Art) Melbourne University

2002 Bachelor of Fine Arts (Drawing), Victorian College of the Arts

1999 Brighton Bay Art, Design and Photography Programme

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2010 *Twenty20*, UTS Gallery, Sydney
Hell's Bottom Drawer, Hell Gallery, Melbourne

2008 *Slow Me Down*, USQ Arts Gallery, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia

2008 *Small Triumph*, Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney, Australia

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2008 *MCA Bella Dinner Art Draw*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia

Darren Knight Gallery at NEXT – The Invitational Fair of Emerging Art, Chicago USA

2007 *This Crazy Love*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Australia

2006 *Primavera 06 – Exhibition of Young Australian Artists*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia
The Armory Show Art Fair, New York, USA

AWARDS

2007 Residency, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris

2003 Linden Postcard Award

2002 VCA Contemporary Drawing Prize

1999 VCA Proud Exhibit Framing Prize

AUSTRALIAN COLLECTIONS

- Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne
 - Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane
- www.darrenknightgallery.com

• Simon Mee •

1970 Born Launceston, Tasmania
Currently lives Toowoomba

EDUCATION

Currently undertaking his PhD Arts and Design (Studio), Monash University

1999 Master of Fine Arts, Visual Arts.
QUT, Brisbane. Qld

1993 Bachelor of Arts, Visual Arts.
QUT, Brisbane. Qld

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2009 *The Triumph of Adversity*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne

2006 *The Suburban Sweet*, QUT Art Museum, Brisbane, Qld

GROUP EXHIBITION

2009 *The Fourth Estate*, Nyst Gallery, Gold Coast, Qld

2009 *Innocence*, Nyst Gallery, Gold Coast

1999 *The Drawing Room (contemporary Queensland drawing)*, Brisbane City Art Gallery, July 29–Sept. 15

1998 *Typically(?) Australian*, Curated by Humphrey McQueen. Brisbane City Art Gallery. May

CURATED SHOWS/PROJECTS

2009/2010 *The Wallpaper project* – wallpaper designed by Tiffany Shafran, Simon Mee, Megan Keating, Rob McHaffie, Anne Wallace, Lisa Radford, Sadie Chandler.

Foyer Gallery, USQ Toowoomba
Other venues: Ipswich Regional Art Gallery, Crows Nest Gallery, Hervey Bay Regional Arts Gallery, Stanthope Regional Art Gallery and Redland Bay Art Gallery

2009 *Kaiserville*, Kate Rohde.

Foyer Gallery, USQ Toowoomba
2008 *One Metre Eye Height*, Donna Moody, Vernon Ah Kee, Archie Moore, Evan Hollis.

Foyer Gallery, USQ Toowoomba

2008 *One plus One*, Ingo Gerkin, Sarah Ryan.
Foyer Gallery, USQ Toowoomba

2007 Michael Schlitz. Foyer Gallery, USQ Toowoomba,

2006 *Mobility*, Inflight Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania

GRANTS & AWARDS

2004 Queensland Creative Fellowship. Queensland Government–Arts Qld, Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology and University of Queensland

2001 New Work, Australia Council

2001 Overall Prize, Churchie Emerging Art Exhibition, ACGS, East Brisbane

1999 Product Development Grant, Arts Queensland

1998 Works on paper prize, Churchie Art Prize, ACGS, East Brisbane Qld

1997 Overall Prize, Logan Art Award, Logan City Gallery, Logan City, Qld

AUSTRALIAN COLLECTIONS

- Brisbane City Gallery, Qld
 - Rockhampton City Gallery, Qld
 - Logan City Gallery, Qld
- www.simonmee.com
www.lorrainepilgrim.com

This catalogue has been published by Gold Coast City Gallery
to coincide with the exhibition:

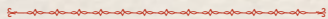
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17 July – 15 August 2010

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Blackmail

oil on canvas • 2007

Back Image: Simon Mee

Boating on the Styx

chalk and charcoal on primed paper • 144 x 130cm

2010



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www.theartscentregc.com.au



Rob McHaffie

'your world and my world (canoe/jetski)'

(detail)

oil on linen • 86 x 71cm

2010

THESE THREE ARTISTS ARE LIKE NOCTURNAL SOMNAMBULISTS BRINGING THEIR VISIONS INTO THE WAKING WORLD, WHAT THOMAS PYNCHON HAS DESCRIBED AS "THAT RARE AND LUMINOUS GIFT FOR REPORTING BACK FROM THE NOCTURNAL SIDE OF REALITY."

Ashley Crawford

