Amanda Stuart

**Title**: canis lupus tingo
**Year**: 2014
**Dimensions**: 18.0 x 28.0 x 15.0cm
**Materials**: silica bronze, mild steel, upholstery fabric, leather, pins, stuffing

**ARTIST STATEMENT**

Difficult human-animal relations characterise the themes of my practice. In particular, I focus on the notion of the ‘outsider’ species, or animals that are considered to be pests or vermin, within an Australian context. This is directly informed by a science degree, my background in land management and previous experience as a park ranger in various parts of the country. I have recently focused on wild dog and dingo populations and issues associated with regional Australian farming communities. In this piece I wanted to create an intimate hand held object that would reference both a wild canine and a historic domestic object – such as a couch and a pin-cushion. The collision of two very different forms in one seemingly absurd object creates the intrigue and tension within this curious sculpture.

**ARTIST’S BACKGROUND**

Amanda Stuart is a Canberra based visual artist. Her practice embraces drawing, object making, sculptural installation, performance interventions in environments and the photo documentation of her work in situ. After studying land management and earth sciences at university, Amanda worked as a park ranger. It was during this time that she became aware of the tendency for humans to form arbitrary and often ill-informed judgments regarding animals perceived as pests. Amanda studied an Honors degree in sculpture at the ANU School of Art, and went on to complete a PhD in Visual Art, also in the Sculpture Workshop.

**VOCABULARY**

**Materiality**
The material quality of the object.

**Collision**
An unexpected and sometimes abrupt meeting of two or more things.

**Lost wax**
A method of casting metal or glass, where the mold is built around a wax form, the wax is melted out and the molten glass or metal is poured in.

**PROCESS**

Amanda Stuart’s art making process begins with primary research. This includes speaking directly with people affected by or involved in managing wild dog issues in south eastern Australia, making personal observations, photographic documentation, drawings and experimental sampling of forms. The internal armature of this work was made with a set of bronze canine teeth that were cast directly using the lost wax method, from a real wild dog’s skull. This dentition was welded to secure it to a steel frame, around which the artist used stuffing and fabric to render the form of a dog’s head. The text ‘canis lupis tingo’ written with pins was embedded in the object and secured with adhesive. The Eora aboriginal people of Port Jackson’s word ‘tingo’ was mistakenly heard by the white settlers in Sydney, and became the basis for the name dingo.

**Links**

Craft ACT Artist Profile

Brenda May Gallery: Artworks by Amanda Stuart
Caroline Huf

Title  De-Composition in M
Year  2013
Dimensions  14.5 x 13.0 x 4.5cm
Materials  100% post-consumer recycled paper, cartridge paper, DVD.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Landfills are both beautiful and disturbing. In this piece I wanted to decompose all this rubbish and create digital decay. Still images documenting the Merimbula Tip are sequenced into a video so that the images of rubbish appear to decay through the unfolding of time on screen. The digital image seems so distant and untouchable that I wanted to give it physicality, to shred, cut, and mulch the image like paper, and to give the impression that the rubbish was being digested by the screen. The sequences speed up until they blur into each other, dissolving into pixels. This work was done with the assistance of the staff at the Merimbula tip, Gary Louie (then waste co-ordinator), Bega Valley Shire Council Waste Management, and Steven Holland.

ARTIST’S BACKGROUND

Caroline Huf grew up on a farm in central Queensland. Her mother loved art, music, and writing, and took her children along to classes where they joined in. Caroline finished high school in Queensland in 1987. Following high school, Caroline studied Arts/Law, Drama and Cultural Studies at various universities. Caroline is currently a PhD candidate at the ANU School of Art in the sculpture workshop where she works using clay, objects, environments and performance to make animation works.

VOCABULARY

Video art  Art which relies on moving pictures and is made with video and/or audio data.

Decomposition  The state or process of rotting or decay.

Landfill  The mass disposal of waste material by burying it in allotted locations.

PROCESS

Caroline writes down her ideas and draws quick diagrams in her diary. To make this work she used the outdoor site of Merimbula Tip; a canon DSLR 5D camera; a tripod; and the editing programs Final Cut Pro and Nuke. Firstly, Caroline took hundreds of photographs, like a panorama, panning around the tip site. After importing all the photographs into Final Cut Pro, she experimented with the sequencing, duration and speed of the images. She then made a grid of the screen, and further experimented with Nuke to break the image down further. In developing this work for use in school classrooms, Caroline reworked a previous animation installation that was approximately 1 hour in length and presented on a flat screen in the gallery. This work is for viewing on a projection screen.

“I wasn’t sure at first how I could do it, but I wanted to create the effect of the video decomposing like the rubbish.”

Links

Melbourne International Animation Festival
http://www.miaf.net/

Ubu Web
http://www.ubuweb.com/

1 Artist interview 2014.
2 “I like video art from the sixties - seventies; you can see a lot of this stuff on a site called Ubu Web” Artist interview, 2014.
Cathy Franzi

Title
The Ephemeral Dampiera fusca: Tinderry Range

Year
2014

Dimensions
9.0 x 17.0 x 16.0cm

Materials
Porcelain, engobe

ARTIST STATEMENT

Through my ceramic work I am exploring the impact of humans on Australian flora and the environment. For millennia plants have been a source of imagery in the ceramic medium, providing a backdrop of nature within the domestic realm. However we now live in a time when wild undisturbed nature is coming to an end. Like those before me I am fascinated by the decorative possibilities of form and texture that plants offer, but it is not an innocent appreciation. The tension I feel is between expressing my feeling of wonder and at the same time of loss. It is this boundary that I tread.

ARTIST'S BACKGROUND

In early high school Cathy Franzi had a great art teacher who taught her ceramics. In her senior year she dropped art and focused on science, going on to study a Bachelor of Science, including botany, at university. Cathy revived her interest in ceramics when travelling in New Zealand, and began working as a production thrower in a big pottery. In this job she was paid piece-rate, which means she was only paid for each successful pot. Cathy learnt a lot in the two years she was there, mostly from the other throwers. “What this experience showed me was that I could make a living from the craft of clay. I became an artist when I went to Art school to continue learning about ceramics.”1

VOCABULARY

Porcelain A fine and strong ceramic material, also known as fine china.

Engobe A white or coloured clay slip coating applied to a ceramic body.

Sgraffito To carve through a surface colour to reveal the clay body colour underneath.

PROCESS

Cathy Franzi takes photos, makes sketches and notes, and takes plant cuttings which she observes directly when carving the ceramic surfaces of her works. Using porcelain clay, her work is wheel thrown and the vessel walls are intentionally distorted and cut to evoke the hills and contours of the journey she made through the landscape. The forms are coated with engobe, carved using a sgraffito technique and glazed. The work is fired in a kiln to 1000 C and then glazed on the inside, colour applied to the flower and fired again to 1220 C. The sgraffito approach Cathy has developed is based on lino-block printmaking and she makes her own carving tools so as to create the marks that she specifically wants. Cathy considers negative and positive space, light and shadow, and texture and pattern in developing the surfaces of her works. The textural quality of the mark making provides a contrast with the smooth matt surface of the engobe.

Links

Dampiera fusca – endangered species listing

Tinderry Range botanists’ fieldtrip documentary by Richard Snashall
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FG_yY86U_h8

1 Artist interview, 2014.
Charles Walker

Title  Core Samples #0.5
Year  2013
Dimensions  Variable; heights: 23.5cm; 17.3cm; 10.0cm
Materials  Bullseye glass, stone sourced from Warrumbungle Mountain range

ARTIST STATEMENT

I have always had a curiosity to want to see into the landscape beneath the earth. As I am presented with the sheer monumental cliff face, I yearn to see within the solid form and impenetrable structure of nature, to discover how the whole jigsaw puzzle fits together, and to see what lies beneath my feet. I combine glass with stone to harness reactions between these materials, with the intent to reference the mountain forms and their hidden mysteries, within the heart of the Australian land. My work breaks from the traditions of glass by encouraging flaws and cracks to form within. I present the flaw as part of the phenomena of the material and something that has aesthetic value. I utilise the boundaries of material to harness the serendipitous beauty of the flaw.

ARTIST’S BACKGROUND

Charles Walker spent his childhood in the Blue Mountains and moved to Coonabarabran as a teen. His initial passion was animal research and at high school he aspired to study Zoology. As a student with Dyslexia, teachers didn’t expect Charles to finish Year 11 and 12; however he was determined. Without gaining the required ATAR for Zoology courses, Charles’s pathway to university included two years studying vet nursing at TAFE, and a Biology bridging course to gain entry into Zoology. Throughout his teens Charles attended classes run by visiting artists to his region, and it was during TAFE art classes that he realised he actually wanted to study art at university. Charles studied in the Sculpture and Glass workshops of the ANU School of Art and graduated with Honours in 2013.

VOCABULARY

Bullseye glass  A brand of glass comprised of soda lime crystal.
Annealing  Annealing is the process of control cooling glass over time in order to reduce brittleness and maintain strength.
Core sample  A cylindrical section of naturally occurring substance such as ice, sediment or rock, obtained by drilling into the substance.
Lost wax  A method of casting metal or glass, where the mould is built around a wax form, the wax is melted out and the molten glass or metal us poured in.

PROCESS

These works were made by first creating two-part plaster moulds using poly pipe to create the cylindrical form. Wax was poured into the mould to make a hollow wax cylinder, into which the artist embedded stones. A silica plaster waste mould was then built around this wax and stone object, and the wax was melted out. Using a kiln, glass was then melted into the mould and then annealed over about 11 days, before the mould was removed. On some days the temperature in the kiln was reduced by as little as one degree. When Charles embarked on this project he was told that glass and stone “cannot go together”. Charles spent the year researching how different stones reacted with particular types of glass, and experimenting with the annealing process, in order to make these works.

“I get tired of making the same thing over and over again, so I am always looking for a reason to push my ideas in a new direction.”

Links

Crystal Kingdom Museum, Coonabarabran

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1 Interview with the artist, Nov 2014.
**ARTIST STATEMENT**

*Piccaninny Paradise* (2014) is an image that shows a powerful symbol of mortality—the skull and crossbones—balanced with children playing on its surface that suggests a counterpoint of innocence and life. In some ways, this image speaks of the colonisation of Australia, and the end to life before that as it was known in this country. Accentuating this contrast between the children and the grinning skeleton is a background of bindweed and sunflowers, implying a changing nature through introduced flora.

**PROCESS**

Danie Mellor refers to photography and archival imagery from libraries, museums and collections to develop imagery. For example, when he was creating the figures in this work he looked at historical photographs from the Nth Qld rainforest area: photographers, such as Alfred Atkinson, who documented people and places of North Queensland in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Much of Danie’s works are large-scale works on paper, drawn and painted in predominately blue and white. One of his images can take up to 8 weeks to complete, from the research and sketching, to executing the work. For this version of *Piccaninny Paradise* (2014), Danie photographed an existing large work and had it printed on a machine-milled aluminium panel, the surface introducing a reflective quality to the image.

**ARTIST’S BACKGROUND**

During his childhood Danie Mellor’s family travelled extensively, including to Europe, the United Kingdom and South Africa. During his high school years Danie was interested in studying law, architecture or design, however in Year 11 and 12 he realised he wanted to go to art school. After working and travelling during a gap year, Danie studied a Bachelor of Visual Art at the ANU School of Art and also went on to gain a PhD. Danie has Indigenous cultural heritage through his mother’s side of the family, who are from the North Queensland rainforest area. Danie currently works from his home studio in the Southern Highlands of NSW. Danie’s work incorporates his ongoing interest in the intersection of different cultural perspectives.

**VOCABULARY**

**Cyanotype** A photographic process which produces a blue and white image.

**Wedgwood** A brand of bone china, usually featuring blue and white imagery.

**Colonial History** The history of colonisation and settlement of a country.

**Indigenous cultures** Indigenous cultural traditions such family structures; relationship to country; protocols for knowledge keeping and sharing; languages; art; performance and ceremony.

**Links**

Danie Mellor, website
[www.daniemellor.com](http://www.daniemellor.com)

UQ Art Museum (education kit online)
ARTIST STATEMENT

I have told the story of ‘Fishman’ many times over more than 20 years. Words play a big part in structuring the narrative. Large colour photographs supply the detail. I always use both – they relate well to build emotional atmosphere. Only when I talk about Fishman on radio promoting a public presentation of the story do words act alone. They have less than a minute to do their job: “I emerged from a cave at Wyambene in the Deua National Park with exposed film that revealed a human-like figure swimming in the stream that flowed through the main chamber. I could not believe it when we succeeded in getting a second image of this creature”.

VOCABULARY

Fishman A shy and elusive creature photographically documented by visual artist John Reid in the remote headwaters of rivers in SE Australia.

Aesthetics A discipline concerned with the identification, documentation or creation of high quality relationships between things.

Fine art discovery A realisation about the world that arises from an aesthetic experience.

Wilderness experience A full sensory encounter with the world unmediated by artefact.

ARTIST’S BACKGROUND

John Reid is a visual artist, graphic designer, curator, educator and pedagogic researcher. As an undergraduate student at the ANU John Reid studied Earth and biological sciences, philosophy of science and SE Asian civilization. John became hooked on the power of visual media to influence social behaviour after a poster he designed (image and text) gained national media attention. He later studied a Master of Fine Arts at UNSW. John works with the media of photography, collage and performance. The environment and human rights are the enduring themes of his artwork.

PROCESS

This work arises from field experience, lots of photographs and, back at the desk, lots of writing/rewriting. Accompanied by a selection of 80 photographs, John has told, refined and retold the Fishman story (as a live event) over the last 22 years, resulting in over 30 versions of the narrative. This three volume (book) presentation of Fishman was produced specifically for the Suitcase exhibition.

Fishman website

Canberra Museum and Gallery

The Canberra Times: Tim the Yowie Man

Monga intacta: A celebration of Monga Forest and its protection
http://www.robter.com/mongaintacta/read.html

Links

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1 Steller, Robyn. Monga intacta : a celebration of the Monga Forest and its protection / edited by Robyn Steller Braidwood, N.S.W 2005
Nicola Dickson

Title  Pigeon of Norfolk Island-(extinct)
Year     2012
Dimensions  28.0 x 18.0 x 1.6cm
Materials  acrylic and oil on wood, buttons, brass

ARTIST STATEMENT

I am fascinated by animals, birds and plants and my relationship as a human being to them. Many of us, especially those living in urban Australia, have little contact with these creatures of the natural world. Even when we do have contact, often we do not notice how wondrous they are. When European settlers first arrived in Australia they were acutely aware of how different and strange our flora and fauna was. In this period many artists, professional and amateur, drew pictures of the new species they saw. In my effort to make artwork that conveys a sense of wonder and fascination of plants and animals I utilise these older illustrations. Archives, like the National Library of Australia, are rich treasure troves of these early illustrations. I search these archives for subjects that I wish to make paintings about. When I make my paintings I 'quote' and then alter the subjects of the historical illustrations. By doing this I can refer to different factors that shaped the lens though which settlers viewed the unique natural world they found themselves in.

ARTIST BACKGROUND

Nicola Dickson has enjoyed painting and drawing since she was young. Her first university studies were in Veterinary Science. In her thirties she decided to shift her career and began training as a professional artist. Nicola completed a PhD in Visual Art at the ANU School of Art and currently works in her studio at M16 Artspace, which is a community art facility in Canberra.

VOCABULARY

Quotation  In the visual arts, this involves the artist reproducing part or the whole of a pre-existing art work and presenting it in a new way.

Settler  A person who has migrated to an area, often already occupied by indigenous people, and who now lives there permanently.

PROCESS

As Nicola wanted to convey the idea of loss of Australian species since European colonisation, she used an image of a bird now extinct as her source material. This bird had been originally drawn by a member of the First Fleet to Australia, George Raper. The oval shaped wood panels were laser cut, then sealed with acrylic binder and 3 coats of gesso were applied to the front, back and sides of each panel. Using screen printing, Nicola applied a patterned ground on the outside panels. She then painted on the images with oil paint. Lastly a small hole was drilled for the buttons and the hinge inserted.

“To convey the idea of death and loss I made this work like a Victorian 'momento mori'. These were often hinged panels, with skulls and other symbols to remind people of the fragility of life. Using this symbolic format and imagery people looking at the work can understand that the subject is death and loss even if they do not know the particular bird is now extinct.”

Links

Nicola Dickson, website  http://www.nicoladickson.com


1 Artist interview, 2012.
2 Search for illustrations by George Raper, Governor John Hunter and Thomas Watling