heart on your sleeve
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Curated by Kylie Johnson

Chris Chapman
David Michael Clarke
Julie Gough
Michael Harrison
Alex Lloyd
David Rosetzky

Plimsoll Gallery
Tasmanian School of Art at Hobart
University of Tasmania

12 August – 3 September 2000
I like watching people try on clothes in shops where the mirror is just outside the change rooms. I like watching people in clubs when they hear their 'all-time' favourite song come on and they fling themselves onto the dance floor, dancing like mad - the sideways glances from strangers and the grins from friends. I like spending time in bars where I can talk with people, drink and listen to them tell me things they think I should know - how they once met Tom Rowlands of The Chemical Brothers in a supermarket in Hammersmith, that their favourite possession is a pair of Versace boots and how they wish they could have sex more often. There is something attractive about these seemingly random moments. They bring basic issues of identity and self-presentation to the surface.

The idea that a true singular self exists somewhere beneath a myriad of layers is somewhat out of fashion. Tracey Emin, Douglas Gordon, Georgina Starr and Gillian Wearing are amongst the bright young things of contemporary British art to present identity as inherently multiple and fluid, defined for us as much by others as by ourselves. This idea is explored through quite disparate means but often with an emphasis on the autobiographical. On the back of such block buster shows as Brilliant! New Art From London¹, Pictura Britannica: Art From Britain², and Sensation: Young British Artists From The Saatchi Collection³, Britain is widely touted as the centre of this work. After all this is where Tracey Emin sewed the names of all the

2. Pictura Britannica: Art From Britain (Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia, 1997), touring.
people she slept with between 1963 and 1995 into the inside of a dome tent, and Gillian Wearing filmed herself dancing alone in Peckham shopping mall to the secret sounds of her walkman. The brash DIY attitudes that accompany this work can perhaps be seen as both a reaction against the dominating analytical theories of the 1980s, and the earlier Abstract Expressionist quest to reveal an inner human essence.

Heart On Your Sleeve has emerged out of a personal interest in work which explores the slippage between the private and the public, the social and the personal, fact and fiction. In the work of Chris Chapman, David Michael Clarke, Julie Gough, Michael Harrison, Alex Lloyd and David Rosetzky the 'stuff' of everyday life - relationships, memories, music, television, film and the popular press - has been utilised as raw material.

In varying degrees the work in Heart On Your Sleeve stems from direct experience. Experiences are tested in the diaristic images of Michael Harrison. Often sparse in execution, they are worked and re-worked over months, sometimes years - a method of on-going experimentation which seems to echo the process of forming an image of one's place in the world. An image revised by time. They appear as glimpses into mental spaces - careful not to give 'too' much away while simultaneously acting as a record of personal events and thoughts.
Like Harrison, Julie Gough's installations grapple with memory and time. Operating not unlike test strips, they are 'slices' of her personal memories activated by actual objects - bricks, abalone shells and a bronze plaque, etc. Experiences are fleeting and memories shift ceaselessly between the real and the imagined. It is this unsteady ground that compels Gough to enter hospitals long since abandoned in the hope of supplementing an unstable memory, of searching through second hand shops hoping to come across something that may fill in a gap and revisiting hardware shops on a quest to buy yet another sample pot of what may this time be 'the right' green paint. The reading of this personal 'multiple choice puzzle' is confined only by the individual viewer's experience of it, fixed in the broader context of his or her life.

In the same way that a familiar smell can trigger past memories and emotions, almost against one's will, so does the pop song. Pop songs tend to frame significant experiences in life. David Michael Clarke's two monitor work In Between Days utilises two Elvis Presley songs. The optimistic feel of I Just Can't Help Believing, is the soundtrack for a relationship in it's infancy - in the throws of passion and I'm Left, You're Right, She's Gone, accompanies the after effects of a break-up. Personal relationships are Clarke's subject matter, and in this instance he has filmed his real girlfriend and his real bedroom set to nostalgic Elvis tunes. Although these
tunes may not hold any specific nostalgia for those of
Clarke's generation they are used here to propose the idea
and create a mood rather than trigger individual memories.

People acting out their 'real lives' for the camera may be
weird but it is not new. Surely Aussie soap opera icons
Charlene (Kylie Minogue) and Scott (Jason Donovan) were
acutely aware of this oddness every time they kissed on or
off camera. The sense of construction and viewer
manipulation in Clarke's videos sit alongside moments of
apparent sincerity. Perhaps it is the fact that neither Clarke
nor his girlfriend are professional actors that allows the
'stagedness' of it all to slip. But I suspect however, that it
is more to do with a desire not to be too pent-up about it
all. The things that just happen are often the most
significant aspect of this way of working. The framing,
editing and imposition of a soundtrack suggest a desire to
neatly package emotions in order to try and make some
kind of sense of them. What Clarke has achieved by doing
this is to emphasise the futility of this desire.

Unlike Clarke, David Rosetzky probably wouldn't even
entertain the idea of letting the 'façade' slip. Paced by a
deadpan soundtrack, *Summer Blend 2000*, is both banal
and intriguing. The viewer is witness to a work where the
participants rub cream into their skin as the camera slowly
pans down their bodies. The video acts not unlike a two
way mirror. The viewer is permitted to watch and to look
directly into the blank expressions of the subjects without having to interact or be implicated in anyway. Viewed in a darkened space, links with pornography are inevitable. But this is a seductive look also evident in lifestyle magazines, fashion photography and product ads on television. This slick orchestration denies any reference to the hand of the maker causing Rosetzky to become conspicuous by his absence. The viewer is made complicit in the experience of engaging with this work, at once seduced by its restrained glamour and critically aware of the influence of surface appearance. Rosetzky sets up a strange tug-of-war between his subjects lack of outward emotion and the physical nature of their performances.

Placed on the high rotation play-lists of radio stations, nightclubs, cafes and shops; catchy tunes, beats and lyrics are hard to avoid in day to day living. Alex Lloyd's *Lucky Star* is one such song. The refined audio and visual production in the video accompanies Lloyd singing lyrics such as, *I want you to know there's someone, I'll be there for you.* The pop song format allows things that are normally voiced or thought of in private to enter a multitude of public realms. Somehow the addition of instrumentation and a pop star personae give words a legitimacy; words which otherwise would be dismissed as soppy when delivered in a public context. Lloyd can be seen to parody the idea of what a pop star is while also being one. This duality becomes less problematic when set

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alongside Douglas Gordon's view that 'the way life is heading... is an absolutely schizophrenic experience. But schizophrenia isn't necessarily always one body battling with all the different personalities... it is a kind of cohabitation of one body'. The music video is a valid form of short film. The integration of the pop song and music video format into contemporary visual art can conceivably be seen to coincide with this acknowledgment.

Everyday experiences are both subject and platform for the artists in Heart On Your Sleeve. Simple, understated things such as sitting alone in a laundromat (Alex Lloyd) or lying in bed with your girlfriend (David Michael Clarke) are transformed for and by their placement in a public context. The displacement often serves to foster uncertainties about how much of what we see in front of us has been manipulated, modified, tampered with; and why.

Process is candid in Chris Chapman’s untitled drawings of boys pissing. Sourced from gay ‘water-sports’ magazines they are reproduced on tracing paper with ink, hand coloured, framed and placed on a gallery wall. Somewhat reminiscent of fifties ‘boys own adventure’ illustrations in style, the taboo nature of the act is modified by a change of context while for Chapman the physical execution relates to 'a certain delicacy and lightness akin to the activity itself'.


This exhibition has sought to focus on intimate experiences and their re-presentation in a public context. Out of the intermingling of fact with fiction, and the personal with the social, forms have emerged within current art practice which actively encourage varied and contradictory readings simultaneously. The reason for this is perhaps best summed up in an interview Douglas Gordon gave - 'I think the difference between our generation and previous generations is that it isn't just a flow of images and information that we have to deal with - it's a deluge. The way this interview is going is absolutely indicative of this - there are so many things happening. Since we came into this flat, where we are having a conversation in real time, we are remembering what happened five minutes ago, we are anticipating the next question, we can hear the road works outside, the TV is on, the telephone is ringing, there is music playing. This is absolutely not the way someone like Broodthaers lived and certainly not Duchamp.' These concerns, expressed by Douglas Gordon, sit alongside those of artists in *Heart On Your Sleeve*.

Kylie Johnson

2000
Chris Chapman lives in Adelaide where he is currently the Director of the Experimental Art Foundation.

Chris Chapman has worked at the National Gallery of Australia and the Art Gallery of South Australia where he curated the 1996 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art. He writes regularly on contemporary art and culture for catalogues and magazines and has also exhibited his work in numerous group exhibitions including Wunderkinder, Top Floor, Adelaide 1999, Fifty Bucks, Gallery 19, Sydney 1999 and Autopsy, Performance Space, Sydney 1998.
Chris Chapman
List of Works

*Untitled 1997*
Ink on tracing paper
420 x 530 mm
Courtesy of the Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide

*Untitled 1997*
Ink on tracing paper
420 x 530mm
Courtesy of the Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide
David Michael Clarke
David Michael Clarke was born in the United Kingdom and is currently based in France.

In Between Days
2000
Video stills
David Michael Clarke
List of Works

*In Between Days* 2000
Two monitor video work with sound
7 mins.
Courtesy of the artist
Julie Gough lives and works in Hobart, Tasmania.

Julie Gough has exhibited extensively in Australia and overseas. Most recently her work has been included in Australian Painters Today, Access Gallery, Curtain University, Western Australia 2000, the Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art, England 1999 and the Cologne Art Fair, Germany 1996.
and how it's been
2000
Installation detail
Julie Gough
List of Works

rail 2000
Tasmanian oak, metal, acrylic
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

how they got here 2000
Bricks, mortar, cast iron
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

and how it’s been 2000
Bricks, mortar, abalone shell, photograph
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist
Michael Harrison
Michael Harrison lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand.

Thoughts Laid Bare
1997 - 1998

Start All Over
1995 - 1998
Michael Harrison
List of Works

Yours and Mine 1997-98
Acrylic on paper
295 x 211mm
Courtesy of the artist and
Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Start All Over 1995-98
Acrylic on paper
295 x 211mm
Courtesy of the artist and
Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Thoughts Laid Bare 1997-98
Acrylic on paper
295 x 211mm
Courtesy of the artist and
Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Line of Descent 1997-98
Acrylic on paper
295 x 211mm
Courtesy of Australian Galleries,
Sydney and Melbourne

Knowing When to Stop 1997
Acrylic on paper
295 x 211mm
Courtesy of Australian Galleries,
Sydney and Melbourne

Annabel 1999-00
Acrylic on paper
297 x 210mm
Private collection, Sydney

Hair and Shoulder Blades 1995-1998
Acrylic on paper
295 x 211mm
Private collection, Sydney
Alex Lloyd
Alex Lloyd lives and works in Sydney, Australia.

The single *Lucky Star* from Alex Lloyd's debut solo album *Black the Sun* won the 1999 Aria Award for Best New Talent and the Triple J Listeners' Number 1 Album in 1999.

Further details are available at www.alexlloyd.com/artist.html
Details from *Black the Sun* CD booklet
1999
Alex Lloyd
List of Works

Lucky Star 1999
Music Video
4 mins.
Director - Simon Needham, The Attick
Courtesy of EMI, Australia
David Rosetzky lives and works in Melbourne, Australia.

David Rosetzky is the Founding Director of First Floor Artists and Writers Space, Melbourne. His solo exhibitions include Society Lite at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, New Zealand 1997/98, Custom Made at the Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne 2000. He has also exhibited in numerous group exhibitions including Rent, Overgarden, Copenhagen and the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne 2000, the 1999 Moet Chandon national touring exhibition and the 1998 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art.
Summer Blend 2000
Video stills
David Rosetzky
List of Works

*Summer Blend 2000*  
Video with sound  
20 mins.  
Courtesy of the artist
acknowledgements

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