The Politics Of Picturing

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An exhibition of works by

Peter Burgess

Tony Coleing

Juan Davila

Pam Debenham

John Dunkley-Smith

Richard Dunn

Merilyn Fairskye

Tim Johnson

Lyndal Jones

Geoff Lowe

Peter Tyndall

Exhibition Curator

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The Politics of Picturing

In general, when political art is considered, it is understood as that art which is clear in its political references, has social purpose or attempts some social critique around particular issues — in other words that art which is politically overt.

These ideas of politics in art tend to isolate so called political art from mainstream artistic practice. The effectiveness of that art in any real sense, either aesthetic or political, is severely curtailed by its polemicized placement on the margins of artistic practice.

The definition of political art is too narrow. For some, the idea of political art has become synonymous with 'community' focused murals or the placing of artists within the community. In this case, social relevance 'the political', is the making of art which serves some apparent social function, independent and frequently critical of its studio production and gallery method of display. This simplistic view of the social function of art is linked in opposition to elitist 'art for art's sake' aesthetics. The use value of art is locked into this binary system.

What seems to dominate the thinking around and about this use of art is that public funding demands accountability, justification and responsibility — community needs versus 'excellence' for the few. There is, arguably, an element of expediency on both sides in the promotion of this polarisation. My intention is not to engage these arguments but to make some observations in passing, as a means to beginning to discuss a more specific concern with the strategies of current art practice.

The official enthusiasm for community artwork represents less a considered criticism of 'elite' art practice as much as a pragmatic solution to the need for democratic socialist governments to be seen to be acting on their principles. [1] Such refocusing of support offers a useful 'solution' on at least two levels.

First, that government funding of the arts in general is more attractive if viewed in terms of an ostensibly popular, broad and (hopefully) democratic base and secondly, that such government sponsored arts programmes, linked to community interest, advertise themselves in the electorate. Much work receiving official funding sanctions is problematic for the purpose of this discussion because of its demonstrated orthodoxy of representation or its mode of picturing.

Another view is that politics linked to art is identified with a period now passed — the late 60's and 70's — and is considered 'inappropriate' for these pragmatic times.

I want to open up the definition to include work which isn't normally considered overtly political in an issue or party-political sense. Work about which it may be argued there is an attempt 'to explore representational systems as apparatuses of power' (Louis Marin) informed either by notions of Marxist ideological criticism (emphasising what the work says) or, by post-structuralism's performative view (what the work does).

Here is the focus of my concern. The politics of picturing

is centrally linked to the codes of representation — the way pictures are constructed and their link with the world. The re-distribution of economic support for the visual arts may be desirable, yet seldom does, nor perhaps can, the officially sanctioned work offer a substantial critique of existing social formations by maintaining the transparency of the codes of representation. By failing to challenge the construction of representations within particular dominant codes there is a failure to identify the basis of power and its dependence on these material and interpretive structures.

The historical connection between Classical representation and 17th century social and economic life has been strongly argued in order to expose the essentially political function which representation served — *In Classical representation, the person who represents the world is transformed from a subjective being enmeshed in space and time into a transcendent, objective Mind that appropriates reality for itself and thereby dominates it.* [2] In moving from a single vanishing point to our world of 'a plurality of vanishing points, a plurality of *perspectives* ...' there is a consequent disruption of the codes, the 'representational apparatus' (the mechanics of transmission and reception) is fragmented and through this it becomes possible, *to articulate those implicit strategies and tactics whereby representation achieves its putative transparency* (Owens). In this sense, *'representation is used against itself to destroy the binding or absolute status of any representation'* (Frederic Jameson).

Returning to the question of orthodox representation it is relevant to take account of Derrida's claim that — *What (any) institution cannot bear, is for anyone to tamper with language ... It can bear more readily the most apparently revolutionary ideological sorts of 'content' if only that content does not touch the borders of language and of all the juridico-political contracts that it guarantees.* [3] If we take visual representation to be analogous to 'language', it may well follow that the ready toleration, absorption and problematics of much self declared political art is as a consequence of its failure to expose the nature and function of all representations.

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There is a further thread which must be drawn into this discussion and that concerns the relationship of the work in this exhibition with that more readily curatorially supported studio art (I am thinking of 'neo-expressionism') and the means by which the political dimension of these exhibited works can be conveniently diminished or denied. Such discussion begs the question of the context of display, where co-option into mainstream aesthetics under the rubric of, for example, the New Art which has been prescriptively labelled as 'expressionistic' or 'emblematic', serves to deny a critical voice on the part of the artist.

Still more poetic, at times theoretically sophisticated and extremely useful voices provide shelter for those who, using only the rhetoric of anti-interpretive positions, predictably deny 'engagement' or 'intervention' while planning strategies of individual survival (after the holocaust?!) predicated on collusion or capitulation. But these too are only fragments.

Of more substantial concern is to counter the accusation of 'paralysis' directed to deconstructive practice -- that positions of this kind may lead into another closed circle. Michael Ryan in addressing this problem suggests that such a fear arises from working *with too simple a notion of the sort of knowledge* (or science, if knowledge is taken as a matter of technology, construction and convention) *required for radical action ... Only from the viewpoint of capitalist rationalism or party patriarchalism does the persistent positing of an alternative, of a continuous displacement along a seriality of revolutions which is multisectoral and without conclusion, seem 'irrational or 'paralytic', It is paralytic of their rationalist power, but it is equally an opening onto a plural diffusion of powers.* [4]

There are a number of features which these works share in varying degrees. These are the use of the layering of images, the gathering of images cut from already existing sources, the use of images which are already subject to mechanical reproduction or in the process of building representations of the picture are further subject to mechanical means, and finally discontinuities within the representations built. These are all processes which may be identified with collage and montage.

Such processes are used by these artists towards specific ends, and while they may open up meanings within the works, they are ambiguous only within limits. These processes operate to open up the images to allow a critique of orthodox codes which ensure consistency and accessibility yet are not so open ended as to suggest a disconnected world where any thing can mean anything — that aspect which has made Derrida so attractive to the 'apolitical' artist/ curator/dealer alike. It is through an open ended ambiguity that nothing can be said and no critique can be made. This is the means by which any form of engagement can be curtailed.

Suzanne Davies

Footnotes

1. It could be argued that in these conditions, socialism means the preservation of surplus value and the exploitation of labour under more humane planning and self management.
   Michael Ryan, *Marxism and Deconstruction. A Critical Articulation*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1982, p.224

2. Craig Owens, "Representation, Appropriation and Power", *Art in America*, May 1982, p.17

3. Jacques Derrida, "Living On: Borderlines" in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, Seabury, New York, 1979, p.94-5.

4. Ryan, opcit. p.213-216

Trying To Describe Things-Mon., Nov.21, 1983, Graphite/Erased Graphite, Electrostatic print on Laminated Papers, 2 sections — Irregular, approx. 81x183cm, Life size figure 67x191cm, 1983
Courtesy of the artist

Detail — 'Trying To Describe Things - Mon., Nov. 21, 1983'

Peter Burgess

Born 1952 Sydney, Australia, lives New York

Studied

1971-72 Architecture, New South Wales Institute of Technology, Sydney
1973-76 Studied Art and Education, Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education, Sydney, Dip. Art (Ed.)
1977 Post-graduate study in Lithography, Pratt Graphics Center, New York
1979-81 Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, M.F.A. (Photography)

1978 'Clearinghouse — some art reference', Coventry Gallery, Sydney
1981 'Information In.Formation', Pratt Gallery, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, N.Y.
1982 'Hebdomus and Other Works 1979-82', Art-Empire-Industry, Sydney
'Hebdomus', Avago Gallery, Sydney
1983 'The Dated Spectator', Artspace, Sydney (curated by Q.E.D.)
1984 'Private/Public Places, Photographic Works 1977-83', Garry Anderson Gallery, Sydney

Selected Group Exhibitions since 1980

1980 'Artist's Publications', Tweed Museum of Art, University of Minnesota
1981 'Artist's Books', Zone Center for the Arts, Springfield, Mass.
1982 '3 Offset Attitudes', Sydney City Library, Sydney

'Smallworks', New York University East Gallery, New York
'Australian and International Artists for the Fourth Biennale of Sydney', Coventry Gallery, Sydney
'5th Miami International Print Biennial', Metropolitan Museum and Art Center, Miami, Florida
1983 'Drawing '83 — U.K. Drawing Biennale', Middlesborough Art Gallery, then touring British Isles
'Australian Perspecta '83', Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
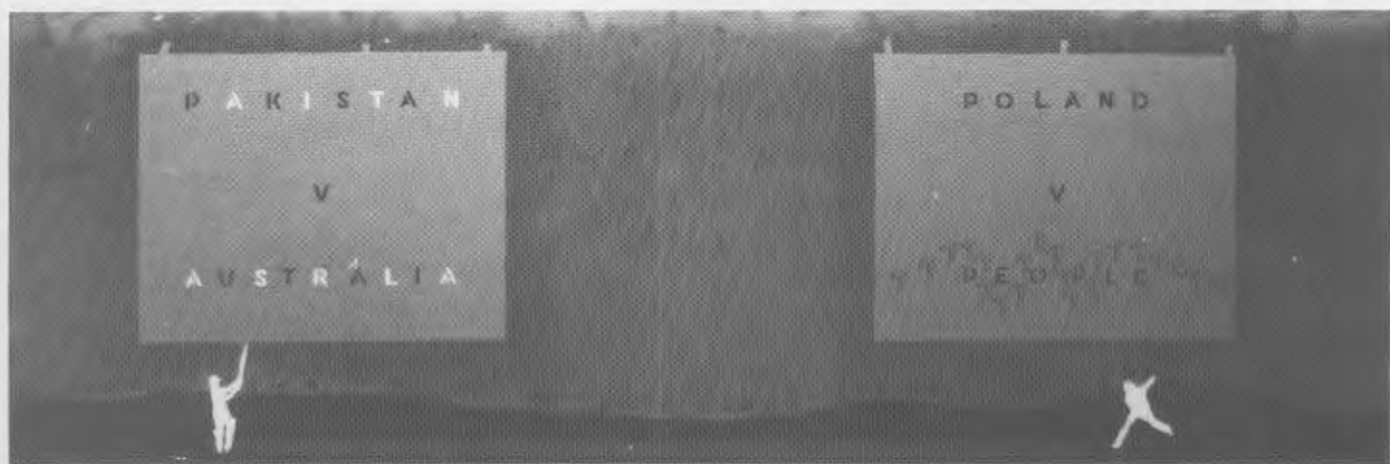'A.U.S.T.R.A.L.I.A.', Zona, Florence, Italy
'Taste, Place and Transition — Expatriates New York', Ivan Dougherty Gallery, City Art Institute, Sydney
'Artist's Books', Artspace, Sydney

Trying to Describe Things — Wed., June 15, 1983.
Graphite/Erased Graphite, Electrostatic print on Laminated Paper.
2 Sections — Scraper board drawing 4'' x 6''
Irregular, approx. 36'' x 72''

Poland, acrylic on canvas, 170x430cm, 1982
Courtesy Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
One of six paintings in a series titled 'Recent Wars'

Tony Coleing

Born 1942 in Warrnambool, Victoria
Lives in Sydney

1962	Worked in New Zealand
1963	Lived in England
1963/68	Travelled in Europe
1964/68	Worked in Theatrical decor for the Royal Court Theatre in London
1965	Visited Iceland
1965/68	London, Europe
1968/71	Lived in Australia (New South Wales)
1971/72	Revisited Europe
1973	Returned to Australia

Studied

1958-59   National Art School, Sydney

Selected Individual Exhibitions

1969	Gallery A, Melbourne and Sydney
1971	Gallery A, Sydney
1974	Watters Gallery, Sydney
1975	Watters Gallery, Sydney
1977	'Surfboard Rider Drawings', Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
1978	Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
1980	Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane (with Marr Grounds) 'The Biennale: Visual Arts '80' (39th Biennale of Venice) Australian Pavilion, Venice (with Kevin Mortensen and Mike Parr)
1981	Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane (with Kevin Mortensen) 'We Point the Bone/Bone the Bomb', Ray Hughes

Gallery Downtown, Anne Street, Brisbane

1982	Roslyn Oxley 9, Sydney 'Clocks and Lorries' (with Margaret Dodd), at Adelaide Festival, Adelaide 'Recent Wars', (with Adrian Hall), Ray Hughes Gallery Downtown, Anne Street, Brisbane

Selected Group Exhibitions since 1980

1980	'The Queensland Connection', Contemporary Art Society, Adelaide
1981	'Ray Hughes Gallery at Pinacotheca', Melbourne 'Landscape into Art', Australian National Gallery, Canberra
1982	'Big Drawings', Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane 'The Collage Show: 1982/83', Regional Development Program No.10, Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, Sydney, 1982
1983	'Australia Perspecta '83', Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney 'Group Show', Artspace 'Nine New Prints', Ray Hughes Gallery, October, Brisbane
1984	'International Survey of Painting and Sculpture', Museum of Modern Art, New York

Pieta, photograph, collage, 91x79cm, 1984   Courtesy of the artist

Juan Davila

Australian
Born 1946 in Santiago, Chile
Moved to Australia in 1974
Lives in Melbourne

Study

1964-69   Law School of the University of Chile
1970-72   Fine Arts School of the University of Chile

Selected Individual Exhibitions

1974   Latinamerican Artistic Coordination, CAL Gallery, Santiago
1975   Matta Gallery, Santiago
1977   Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne
1979   Latinamerican Artistic Coordination, CAL Gallery, Santiago
1981   Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne
          'Hot Art', Video-performance, Melbourne City Square
1982   Roslyn Oxley Gallery, Sydney
1983   'Fable of Australian Painting', Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne
          'Ned Kelly', Praxis, Fremantle
          'Fable of Chilean Painting 73/83', Sur Gallery, Santiago
1984   'Adelaide Festival', Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide

Selected Group Exhibitions since 1980

1981   'Spectres of Our Time', Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
1982   'Vision in Disbelief', 4th Biennale of Sydney

'Nelly Richard, Carlos Leppe, Juan Davila, Martin Munz, Video-performance', Chilean-French Institute of Culture, Santiago
'Popism', National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne
'Sexual Imagery in Art', Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, Hobart
'Artist's Proof, Leppe, Cardenae, Davila', performance, XII Biennale of Paris
'Nu-View', Australian Video, State Film Centre, Melbourne

1983   'Fringe Network Festival', Melbourne
'Open Video Festival', Artspace, Sydney
'Australian Perspecta', Art Gallery of N.S.W., Sydney
'Comic Stripping', George Paton Gallery, Melbourne
'Continuum', Japan
'Anzart', Hobart
Metro TV video event, Sydney
'From Another Continent: Australia. The Dream and the Real', Museum of Modern Art, Paris
'Recent Australian Painting: a Survey 1970-1983', Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
'Vox Pop Into the Eighties', National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

1984   'Form — Image — Sign', Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
'5th Biennale of Sydney'

The Third Degree, cibachrome print, 102x147cm, 1980-84.
Collection of the Artist.

## Pam Debenham

Born in Launceston, Tasmania, lives in Sydney

Studied

1977-79   Diploma of Visual Arts, Sydney College of the
           Arts
1982   Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts), Sydney College of
           the Arts

Selected Group Exhibitions since 1980

1981   'Womens Art at Work', 3 months touring exhibi-
           tion, Melbourne
1982   'All Australia Poster Show', George Paton Gallery,
           Melbourne University
           Print Council 'Exhibition 10', 2 year travelling
           show
           'From The Inside Out', Women and Arts Festival,
           Craft Council Gallery, Sydney
           'Out of Print', Art-Empire-Industry, Sydney
1983   'Continuum '83', Tokyo, Japan, exhibiting with
           the Lucifoil Poster Collective
           'Truth Rules O.K?', Experimental Art Foundation,
           Adelaide
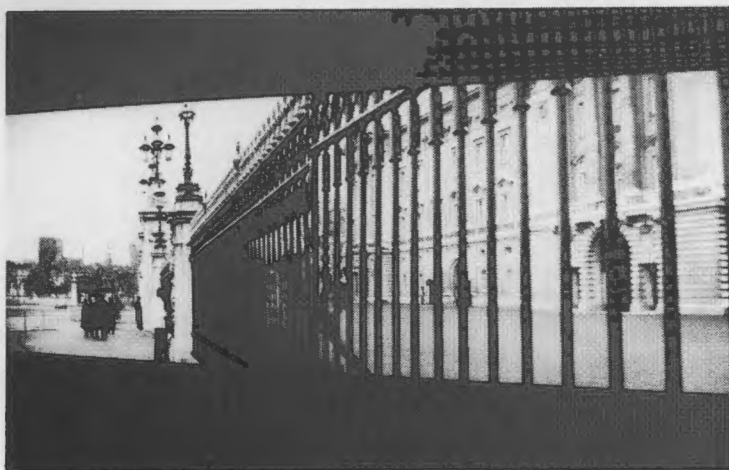
Exterior ... London (The Mall), Twin projector slide installation for darkened space, 162x35mm slides, colour, mute, indefinite duration, London, 1981. Collection of the Artist.

John Dunkley-Smith

Born 1946 in Ballarat, Victoria, lives Melbourne
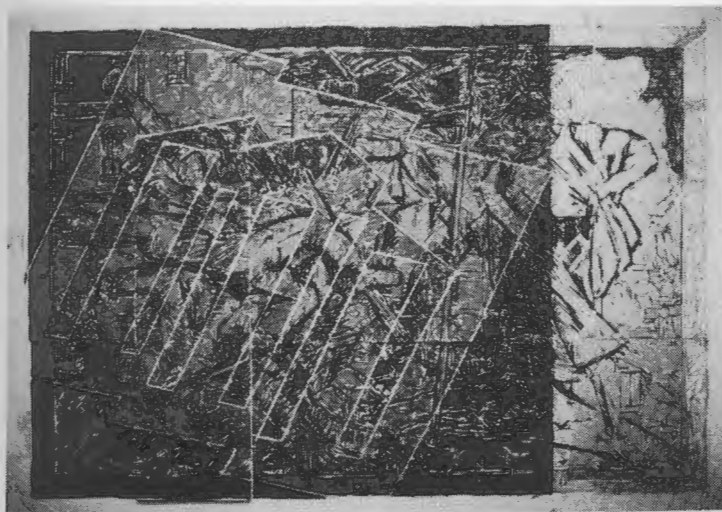
Studied

1964-65	Ballarat Teachers' College, Ballarat, Victoria
1966	Melbourne Teachers' College, Melbourne
1967-71	Ballarat School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat, Victoria
1974-76	Hornsey College of Art, London

Selected Individual Exhibitions

1979   'Window Sequences 1 & 2', Art Projects, Melbourne
'Film Works', University Gallery, University of Melbourne

1980   'Exterior with Seagulls', Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
'Five or Six Cityscapes', Art Projects, Melbourne

1981   'Interior No.1 1981', Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
'Interior No.1 1981', Art Projects, Melbourne

1982   'Interiors 2 - 5', PS 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York

1982   'Window Sequences 1979-1982', Art Projects, Melbourne

1983   'Exterior . . . San Francisco 1982', 80 Langton Street, San Francisco

1984   'John Dunkley-Smith — Installations 1979-1984', University Gallery, University of Melbourne
'Interior No.8', Artspace, Sydney

Selected Group Exhibitions since 1980

1982   'Ten Years of Living Cinema', The Collective For Living Cinema, New York
'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne
'Film as Art', Victorian College of the Arts Gallery, Melbourne and touring all Australian states
'Filmmakers' Visions', Wellington City Art Gallery, Wellington
'Preston to Phillip — A Survey', Reconnaissance Gallery and The Springworks, Melbourne
'Australian Filmmakers with Fourth Biennale of Sydney', Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
'Old World/New Works', The Clocktower, New York

1983   'D'Un Autre Continent: L'Australie. Le Reve et le Reel', ARC, Musee d.Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris
'Drawings (Schematic, Expressionist & Psychological)', Art Projects, Melbourne
'Continuum '83', Studio 200, Tokyo
'A Melbourne Mood — Cool Contemporary Art', Australian National Gallery, Canberra
'Australian Perspecta 1983', Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
'Tall Poppies', University Gallery, University of Melbourne
'Xenophillia', The Clocktower, New York

1984   'Australia: Nine Contemporary Artists', Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

The Tower, The Museum, The Banner, The Barricade, oil stick on paper, 228x336cm, 1984.
Courtesy Yuill Crowley Gallery

Richard Dunn

Born at Sydney, 1944, lived Europe 1966-1976, lives in Sydney

Studied

1962-64   University of New South Wales, Faculty of Architecture
1966-69   Royal College of Art, London, School of Painting

1972   Gallery A, Sydney
1975   Gallery A, Sydney
1976   Warehouse Gallery, Melbourne
1977   Gallery A, Sydney
1978   'Six Positions', modernArt, Sydney
1979   'Heuristic Models', Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
1980   'Tools of Coincidence', Art Projects, Melbourne
        'Monastery', modernArt, Sydney
1981   'Barricades', QED, Sydney
        (a dialogue of objects), Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
        'Barricades No.3 (The Sheet, The Monochrome and The Banner) 1848', Art Projects, Melbourne
1983   'A-K: Normal and Domestic', Yuill Crowley Gallery, Sydney

Selected Group Exhibitions since 1980

1980   'Frame of Reference', Ewing Gallery, University of Melbourne
1981   'Frame of Reference', A.G.D.C. Touring Exhibition
        'Australian Perspecta', Art Gallery of N.S.W., Sydney
        'The Beacon', n-space, Sydney
1982   'Popism', National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
        'Temple of the Winds', n-space, Melbourne
        'New Acquisitions', National Gallery of Victoria
        The Philip Morris Arts Grant, 'Australian Art of the Last Ten Years', Australian National Gallery, Canberra
        'The Seventies', Australian Paintings and Tapestries from the collection of the National Australia Bank, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
        'Attitudes to Drawing', Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney
1983   'From Another Continent - Australia', The Dream and the Real, Paris ARC, Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris
        Gallery Beiderberg-Muller, Amsterdam
1984   Drawing 'Sex', Yuill/Crowley Gallery

Shortcut to Romance, oil and acrylic on canvas, five panels each 122x122cm, 1984

Merilyn Fairskye

Born 1950, Melbourne, Australia
Currently lives and works in Sydney

Studied

1970-72, 74 National Art School, Sydney
1975   Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education, Sydney (Dip.Art)

Selected Individual Exhibitions

1980   Avago, Sydney
1981   Art Workshop, University of Sydney
1982   "The Easter Show", Filmmakers Cinema, Sydney

Murals

1979   *Garibaldi* with Michiel Dolk, Garibaldi's, Riley Street, Darlinghurst
        This is Your Life, Ardwirkz Billboard Collective
1980   *ACI Glassworks Mural* with Michiel Dolk and Jeff Stewart, ACI Waterloo
1980-82 *Woolloomooloo Mural Project* Stage 1, with Michiel Dolk, Woolloomooloo
1983   *Positions Vacant-Painters and Decorators, Refs Required* with Michiel Dolk, a disposable mural with installation, Art Gallery of NSW
        We Are Still Here with Carol Ruff, Kingston, Tasmania
1984   *Person to Person* with Michiel Dolk, Woolloomooloo Mural Project Stage II

Selected Group Exhibitions since 1980

1981   'Japan' with Sandy Edwards, Filmmakers Cinema, Sydney

        Australian Centre of Photography, Sydney
1982   'The Panel Show', Australian Centre of Photography, Sydney
        'From the Inside Out', Craft Council Gallery, Sydney
        'Sexual Imagery in Art', Tasmanian School of Art Gallery
1983   'Australian Perspecta '83', Art Gallery of NSW
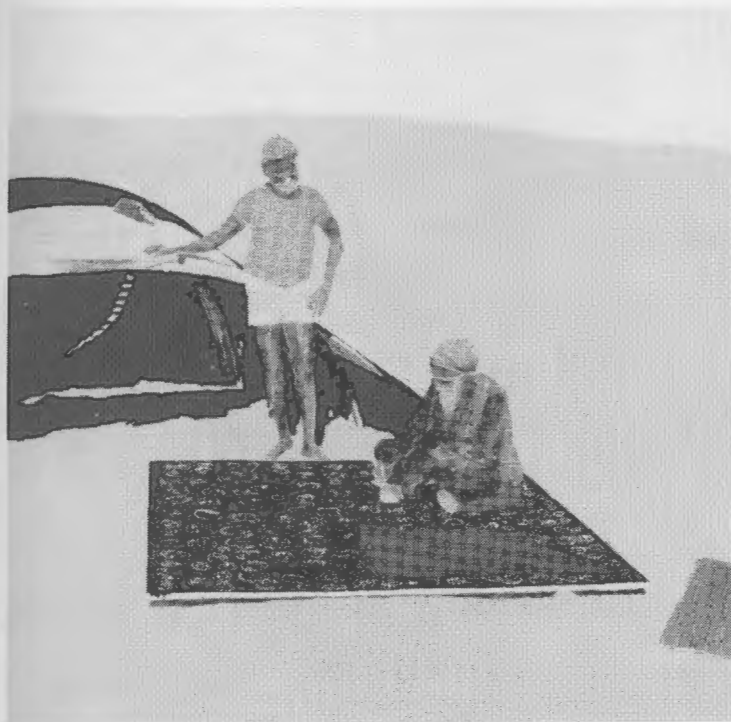
Anatjari No.1 and John Jagamara at Papunya, acrylic on canvas, 61x61cm, 1981
Private collection

Tim Johnson

Born 1947 in Sydney, New South Wales
Lives in Sydney

Studied

University of New South Wales, Sydney
University of Sydney

Selected Individual Exhibitions

1970	'Off the Wall', Gallery A, Sydney
1971	'Installation as Conceptual Scheme', Inhibodress, Sydney
1972	'Diary, Voyeur, Fittings, Disclosures, etc.,' Pinacotheca, Melbourne
	'Installation as Conceptual Scheme', Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
1973	Photographs of performances, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Brisbane
1974	Paintings, Gallery A, Sydney
1976	Paintings, Erskine Street Gallery, Sydney
1977	'Notes on Painting', Gallery A, Sydney
1979	Paintings, Mori Gallery, Leichardt, Sydney
1982	'Wheel of Life', paintings, Mori Gallery, Leichardt, Sydney
1984	'The Drunken Boat', Mori Gallery, Leichardt, Sydney

Selected Group Exhibitions since 1980

1980	'Leichardt Performance Festival', Sydney
	'Aboriginal Land Rights Exhibition', National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney
	Anti-Uranium Mining Exhibition, Sydney
1981	'APMIRA: Aboriginal Land Rights Exhibition', Paddington Town Hall, Sydney
1983	'Artists for Peace' exhibition, Sydney
	'Perspecta', Art Gallery of New South Wales
	'Waiting for Technology', 'n' space and Yuill Crowley Gallery, Sydney
	'The Life of Energies', Artspace, Sydney
	'Minds on Masonite', Art Unit, Sydney
1984	'Artists for Peace' exhibition, Sydney

Books by Tim Johnson

'Spare Parts' (1971); 'Fittings' (1971); 'Public Fittings' (1972); 'Disclosure' (1973); 'Be An Artist' (1974); 'Coincidence' (1974); 'E.S.P.' (1976); 'You' (1976); 'Alienation' (1976)

Films by Tim Johnson

'Public Fittings' (1972); 'Disclosure' (1973); 'Excursion' (1973)

Tim Johnson
Visit to Papunya II, acrylic on canvas, 76x91cm, 1983
Private collection

Anatjari No.1 Jampitjinpa
Kulkulka, acrylic on canvas, 183x183cm, 1980.
Collection of Tim Johnson

Prediction Piece No.7, Version 1, Mixed media installation, 1984

Lyndal Jones

1949   Born in Sydney, New South Wales, lives Melbourne

Studied

1968-72   Monash University (B.A. Dip.Ed.)

Performance Works

1977   *At Home Coming and Going*, 'Ten Years at La Mama', La Mama Theatre, Melbourne

1978   *Fair Weather* (in collaboration with Nanette Hassall)
Festival of Sydney, Sydney Town Hall
Storey Hall, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne
'European Dialogue', Biennale of Sydney (1979), Sydney Town Hall
At Home At Home, La Mama Theatre, Melbourne

1979   *At Homes On The Road Again*, La Mama Theatre, Melbourne
'ACT 2, Festival of Performance Art', Australian National University Arts Centre, Canberra (1980)
110 Chambers Street, New York City, New York (1980)
At Home Ladies A Plate, George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne
Dances To Order, University Gallery, University of Melbourne

1980   *At Home Domestic Bliss*, George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne

1981   *Short Travel*, 'First Australian Sculpture Triennial', La Trobe University, Melbourne
Prediction Pieces Nos 1 - 4, George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne
'ACT 3: Ten Australian Performance Artists', Canberra School of Art Gallery, Canberra (1982)

1982   *Prediction Piece No 4 (Versions 1, 2 & 3)*, 'Vision in Disbelief', Biennale of Sydney, Cell Block Theatre, Sydney

1983   *Prediction Piece No 5 (Versions 1 & 2)*, 'Image '83', Extensions, Melbourne
'Continuum '83', Studio 200, Tokyo Japan

1984   *Prediction Piece No 7 (Versions 1, 2 & 3)*, 'Australia: Nine Contemporary Artists', Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, U.S.A.
'Anzart in Edinburgh: Meaning & Excellence', Richard De Marco Gallery, Edinburgh, U.K.

Selected Group Exhibitions since 1980

1980   'Act 2: Festival of Performance Art', Australian National University Arts Centre, Canberra
Solo Performance, 110 Chambers Street, New York City, New York

1981   'First Australian Sculpture Triennial', La Trobe University, Melbourne

1982   'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne
'Vision in Disbelief', Biennale of Sydney, Cell Block Theatre, Sydney
'Act 3: Ten Australian Performance Artists', Canberra School of Art Gallery, Canberra
'Works by Australian Video Artists', touring exhibition, Japan

1983   'Australian Perspecta 1983', Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
'Image '83', Extensions, Melbourne
'Continuum '83', Studio 200, Tokyo, Japan

Photography: John Dunkley-Smith

The Idea of Bad Government, acrylic on linen, 152x366cm, 1982/83,
Collection of Budget Rent-a-Car

The Idea of Good Government, acrylic on linen, 152x366cm,
1982/83
Not in this exhibition, but the pair to 'Bad Government'

Geoff Lowe

Born Melbourne 1952
Currently lives and works in Melbourne

Studied

RMIT 1969-72

Selected Individual Exhibitions
7 solo exhibitions in Melbourne and Sydney

Selected Group Exhibitions since 1980

Recently exhibited in 'Figures and Faces Drawn from Life'
at Heide Gallery and 'Apocalypse and Utopia' at University
Gallery, Melbourne, curated by John Nixon

Peter Tyndall
detail
A Person Looks At A Work of Art/
someone looks at something ......
SOMEONE AND SOMETHING BECAUSE ......
(apparent)
black & white & colour photocopy and acrylic paint, 244x472cm,
1982
Collection of the Artist
Collection of Melbourne College of Advanced Education

Bibliographies

Peter Burgess

Maloon, Terence; 'Art', *Sydney Morning Herald*, (October 30), 1982

Blackall, Judith; 'Italy — A.U.S.T.R.A.L.I.A. at Zone', *Art Network*, Vol.II pp.44-45, 1983

Davies, Suzanne and Dunn, Richard; 'Grappling with Diversity; Australian Perspecta, 1983', *Art Network*, Vol.10 pp.11-15, 1983

Maloon, Terence; 'When Fake Masterpieces may be Something Else', *Sydney Morning Herald* (May 14) 1983

Stringer, John; 'Taste, Place and Transition — Expatriates New York', catalogue essay, pub.City Art Institute, 1983

Dupain, Max; 'Photography', *Sydney Morning Herald*, (March 3) 1984

Tony Coleing

Ross Lansell: 'Melbourne Commentary: Harald Szeemann in Australia', *Studio International*, London, Vol.182, October 1971

Alan McCulloch: 'Australia', *Art International*, Lugano, Vol. XIV, No.4, April 1970

Alan McCulloch: 'Letter from Australia', *Art International*, Lugano, Vol. XIV, No.10, December 1970

Terry Smith: 'The Provincialism Problem', *Artforum*, New York, September 1974

Sandra McGrath: 'Tony Coleing', *Art and Australia*, Sydney, Vol.11, No.4, April 1973

Noel Hutchison: 'Sculpturscape '73', *Art and Australia*, Sydney, Vol.11, No.1, July 1973

Venice Biennale: Visual Arts '80, General Catalogue, Biennale of Venice, 1980

Suzanne Davies: 'Australians in Venice', *Art Network* 2, Spring 1980

Robin Wallace Crabbe: 'Tony Coleing', *Venice Biennale 1980: Australia*, Australian catalogue, Sydney, Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1980; reprinted in *The Collage Show: 1981/82*, Visual Arts Board, Regional Development Program No.10, Sydney, Australia Council, 1982

Juan Davila: Writings by the Artist

'The Nude in Contemporary Art', *CAL* magazine, Santiago, 1979

'Tod/Etcetera/Ratman', Papers of the Freudian School of Melbourne, 1980

'Spider Woman in Australia', *Art & Text* No.4, Melbourne, 1981

'Love of Chile', *La Separata*, Santiago, 1982

'Love of Australia', *Art Network*, September Issue, Sydney, 1982

'Leppe: Southamerican Waiting Room', *La Separata*, Santiago, 1982

Interview of Nelly Richard, *Art & Text* No.8, Melbourne, 1983

Photo-Romance, *Virgin Press*, February Issue, Melbourne, 1983

Jenny Watson catalogue, Roslyn Oxley Gallery, Sydney, 1983

'Good Luck', *Stuff*, May Issue, Melbourne, 1983

Comic Stripping Catalogue, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 1983

'Landscape Art in Western Australia', *Praxis* M, Fremantle, 1983

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The Politics of Picturing

Notes on the Works   Suzanne Davies
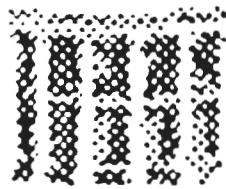
1. The Source of Peter Burgess' imagery in "Trying to Describe Things', 1983, is the media, specifically the front page of the New York Times. It is through this vehicle that he attempts to describe his relationship to the world and on its supplied images that he elaborates by bringing forth associated images, severing and layering. His focus of interest includes the complicity of the context, American culture, within which the reporting of these events is received.

2. Like Burgess, Tony Coleing's 'Poland', 1982, uses the media, the relation between the local and the distant, and two 'wars' (current events) as its basis, by drawing an ironic analogy between the civil strife of Poland (real conflict) and the then current cricket match between the Pakistani tourists and the Australian XI (constructed conflict). The similarity of these two spectacles is already determined by their representation for us by the media.

3. Juan Davila's 'Pieta', 1984, reflects work done on the subject within psychoanalytic theory (Jacques Lacan) and its significance for feminism, and within art history (Leo Steinberg). Davila challenges the familiar codes and conjunctions, in this case by his radical and provocative disruption of relationships within the Pieta scene and his location of it within a domestic environment. His indexing of other artists and the elements in the work (Dittborn, Immendorf) further disrupts the function of normal discourse, by relocating the discourse within the realm of figures of authority, and the *suture*.

4. Pam Debenham's 'The Third Degree', 1980-1984, interrogates the construction of art history and theory by 'revising' Tom Roberts' 'Shearing the Rams' adding a photomontaged self-portrait to her own hand separated print 'Strong Feminine Labour', 1980, which was based on it. It foregrounds the role of women as producers (labour and imagery) while suggesting a critique of the application of Roland Barthes' term 'second degree' by Paul Taylor and others. 'The Third Degree' is a copy of a copy of a copy, with each subsequent version further specifying and elaborating new, yet coherent ideas drawn from that much reproduced prime source.

5. The construction of John Dunkley-Smith's slide installation, 'Exterior ... London (The Mall)', 1981, is based on the difference between images (a 360° panorama of Pall Mall, London) through their arbitrary matching or mis-matching, as they proceed through the two carousels. Moments occur when new meanings are suggested by coherence in the conjunction or its unexpectedness. The structuralist bias of the work both allows and severely limits the range of meaning and conjunction of imagery. A degree of realism enters the work apart from the clear and significant play with its material (film, tripod, slide, projector) as the neutral gaze of the camera records the site, its people and weather. Yet this is no ordinary site but the site of the Monarchy.

6. Richard Dunn's 'The Tower, The Museum, The Banner , The Barricade', 1984, self-describes its images layered one *within* the other by a process akin to filmic montage. This work is drawn both from, and compounds, images and signs within two previous installation works ('Barricades' 1981-1984). While having apparently overt political subject matter through the use of Alfred Rethel's 1848 'Death on the Barricades' the role of artist as producer and the qualifying authority of the museum are more appropriately read. However, the use of metaphor in image selection complicates this dialogue of images, for instance, 'The Tower' is both 'chimney' and 'beacon'.

7. Merilyn Fairskye's 'Shortcut to Romance', 1984, combines fragments of a text drawn from the Sydney Morning Herald reports of a judge's findings after application for damages in a rape trial was rejected. The text is elaborated through its 'illustration' by images from both media and constructed sources. This elaboration throws into question the trial, the media report and 'acceptance' of rape as an aspect of 'romance'.

8. Tim Johnson both uses and celebrates his relationship to the Papunya people, further commenting by overlaying Buddhist imagery in what may be read as tragic pictures of destruction of a culture, as if at play with a romantic discourse, yet clearly taken out of the context of anthropological or ethnographic concerns. 'Anatjari No.1 and John Jagamara at Papunya', 1981, provides in the context of this exhibition the source of Anatjari No.1 Jampitjinpa's 'Kulkulka', 1980, the author himself, and confirms Johnson's position as subject to this authorship.

9. Amongst the predictive methods explored in Lyndal Jones' 'Prediction Piece No.7' 1984 is astrology — that extreme form of determinism which attributes 'essences' to the subject. Yet here the method of astrology is used against itself since, as Lyndal Jones says,
   Central to all Prediction Pieces is an examination of the act(s) of prediction ... The processes through which we arrange our future(s) within our minds and, hence, our ability to plan, to intervene. it is an examination of the foundations upon which we can organise and create change. ✱

10. Geoff Lowe's diptych 'The Idea of Good Government', 1982/3 and 'The Idea of Bad Government' 1982/3 is based on the allegorical frescoe of the Italian trecento Lorenzetti brothers. Allegory provides a means of layering images and meanings, where the modern text speaks through the historical text and becomes a method of mediation and retrieval. It is significant that the model is Medieval, based on collective practice rather than individual endeavour.

11. In Peter Tyndall's 'detail, A Person Looks At A Work of Art/someone looks at something ... SOMEONE AND SOMETHING BECAUSE ... (apparent)', 1982, newspaper images of 'famous' people, the Princess of Wales, Red Brigade's Machine gun granny, Russian cosmonauts, a local football hero, (ex) President Gultieri and two children playing (with paint) share a hand gesture or gestures and are appropriated into the confines of 'Handspace' — Tyndall's nominated method of framing and display. Depending on the original context and who speaks through these gesture, so the reading of the images chages from aggression, repulsion, display to greeting.

✱ This installation includes the transcript of a speech to be read 3 times, the speaker being represented here by the 3 personas in the catalogue photographs. The invitation is extended to anyone to read, to speak, to actively assume a part.

Peter Burgess

Trying To Describe Things-Mon., Nov.21, 1983, Graphite/ Erased Graphite, Electrostatic print on Laminated Papers, 2 sections — Irregular, approx. 81x183cm, Life size figure 67x191cm, 1983

Trying To Describe Things-Wed., June15, 1983, Graphite/ Erased Graphite, Electrostatic print on Laminated Papers, 2 sections — Scraper Board Drawing 4x6", Irregular, approx. 36x72"

Tony Coleing

Poland, acrylic on canvas, 170x430cm, 1982
Courtesy Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
One of six paintings in a series titled 'Recent Wars'

Juan Davila

Pieta, photograph, collage, 91x79cm, 1984

Pam Debenham

The Third Degree, cibachrome print, 102x147cm, 1980-84.
Collection of the Artist

John Dunkley-Smith

Exterior ... London (The Mall), Twin projector slide installation for darkened space, 162x35mm slides, colour, mute, indefinite duration, London, 1981. Collection of the Artist

Richard Dunn

The Tower, The Museum, The Banner, The Barricade, oil stick on paper, 228x336cm, 1984.
Courtesy Yuill Crowley Gallery

Merilyn Fairskye

Shortcut to Romance, oil and acrylic on canvas, five panels each 122x122cm, 1984
Collection of the Artist

Tim Johnson

Visit to Papunya II, acrylic on canvas, 76x91cm, 1983
Private collection

Anatjari No.1 and John Jagamara at Papunya, acrylic on canvas, 61x61cm, 1981
Private collection

Anatjari No.1 Jampitjinpa
Kulkulka, acrylic on canvas, 183x183cm, 1980
Collection of Tim Johnson

Lyndal Jones

Prediction Piece No.7, Version 1, Mixed media installation, 1984

Geoff Lowe

The Idea of Bad Government, acrylic on linen, 152x366cm, 1982/83, Private Collection
Collection of Budget Rent-a-Car

The Idea of Good Government, acrylic on linen, 152x366cm, 1982/83
Not in this exhibition, but the pair to 'Bad Government'

Peter Tyndall
detail
A Person Looks At A Work of Art/
someone looks at something .....
SOMEONE AND SOMETHING BECAUSE .....
(apparent)
black & white & colour photocopy and acrylic paint, 244x472cm, 1982
Collection of the Artist