

New staff profile : DR TROY RUFFELS

Troy Ruffels took up the position of Head of Photomedia at the Academy of the Arts in February, 2007.

Hood

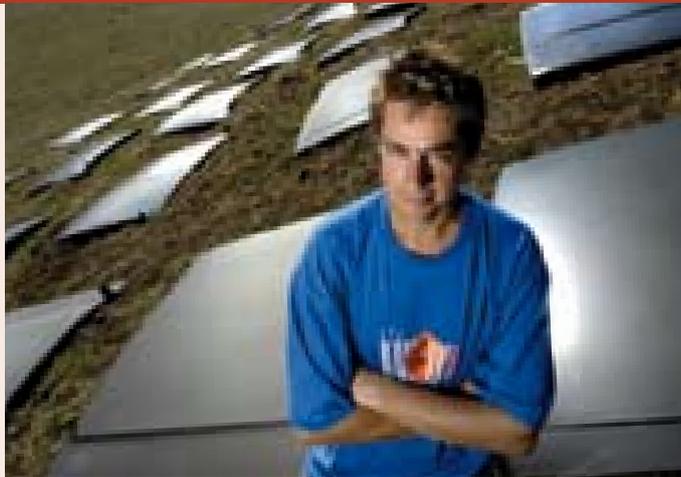
A landscape intervention

Isle of Plenty - 10 Days on the Island 2007

'Hood' was commissioned as part of the Isle of Plenty Project, a statewide contemporary arts project, produced by Tasmanian Regional Arts for the Ten Days on the Island Festival 2007. The Isle of Plenty project saw three regional artists, Troy Ruffels, Nicolas Goodwolf and Sandra Lancaster, being commissioned to design and install three site specific landscape installations, reflected their region's unique identity, people and place in their artwork.



Photography : Top : Michael Rayner
Above : Angela Barrington



Troy Ruffels with 'Hood'

Each installation resonated within the local region, stimulating discussions and debate and connecting with a wider audience through accessible prominent locations and community celebrations.

'Hood' involved the placement of 150 car bonnets into the Don headland along Lilloo Strait on Tasmania's North West Coast, and extended my ongoing fascination with the reflected image as a motif in visual art. The polished bonnets with a combined weight of over 3 tonnes were carted across a paddock and fixed to a steep embankment of parched earth and volcanic basalt rock using 450 star pickets, and over 400 metres of wire rope. Over a dozen volunteers secured the work in place overlooking the spectacular coastal vista, over a two day period.

From a far distance the work read as a digital brushmark in the landscape, suggesting the detached viewpoint many of us have of landscape - as something glimpsed only in passing, or viewed through the lens of a camera. Digital cameras freeze occasionally fragmenting and rupturing the picture plane in a series of pixelated marks on screen. The artwork, in this way was intended to be a 'glitch' in the unfolding experience of the landscape site, an ambiguous mark, encountered when travelling along the highway.

Hood was intended as both a playful intervention and a memorial artwork. Viewed from above the starkly polished black bonnets

reflected the Bass Strait and the far distant horizon; from below, the installation mapped washes of light and a continually

changing skyscape. The car bonnet was used as a metaphor relating to both loss of life and loss of environment. The automobile and the engine hood became a reflective tableau for the ephemeral and least fixable aspects of nature.

Integral to the concept for the work was that it would be shaped and transformed by the environment around it, and that those travelling the highway would be aware of its transformation under changing light. Installed in a regimented formation like solar panels, the car bonnets became imaging mirrors, radically transforming in appearance in direct response to the time of day, changing light, and weather patterns of the surrounding environment. At twilight, the black bonnets hovered like blue video projections above the landscape, while passing by under moonlight, one glimpsed a flicker of lights, like a ripple unfolding across pool. At other times, under cloud cover, the bonnets loomed dark and ominous set back into the hillside.

Above all, it was the very nature of the intervention that surfaced. Simply through the act of placing the car bonnets in the landscape the viewer was asked to consider their relationship to the landscape, to the environment, and to the automobile. It was a meditation on our relationship to environment, our dependency on oil for our way of life, and both the positives and negatives that result from this dichotomy.