VITAMIN

MAY CONTAIN TRACES OF VISUAL CULTURE

EPISODE FOUR FEBRUARY/MARCH/APRIL 2005

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All Kinds of Time ...

"Thus either Time his sickle brings
In vain, or else in vain his wings"
Thomas Carew, quantum mechanic, from *Persuasions to Joy*

There's all kinds of time: There's the time on the clock, which may or may not be real time; there's biological time, the tyranny of all but the very young; and there's that stuff which is relative. I love that relative stuff.

Lately, time - its relativity - has been on my mind - that and the objects we accumulate over time.

Assisting with the move of the South Australian School of Art from Underdale to City West has been a great deal of fun - as you might imagine. If 'time' itself is a complicated thing, 'lack of time' is something with which I have become well acquainted.

You may be surprised to hear, but regarding the important subject of time, my Stephen Hawking interactive figure has been next to useless. I don't know why I bought the stupid thing.

Stephen Hawking (collection of the author)

Time is terribly interesting. Did you know, despite what 'Fluffy' may have told you, all non-human animals live in a perpetual present? Any indications to the contrary do not stand up to scrutiny.

I prefer to live in the present tense too but, being partly human, my (partly) human mind dismantles the dividers between then, now, and what

may be. Time's arrow fails; I go to and fro, into the past as into the future. At livelong last, despite the allure of *tense* tourism, there's nothing like *right now*, my home sweet home.

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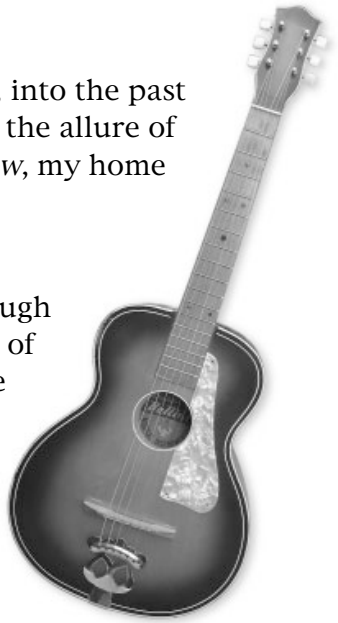
By way of living, by way of my trip through time, I have acquired a diverse collection of ephemera and paraphernalia . Some of these things recall a person or an event, but mostly they are just objects. What do they matter?



Bellini archtop guitar
(collection of the author)

I think the human penchant for acquiring objects is due largely to our particular predicament in regard to the passage of time, that is, we *feel* time.

It used to be unusual for a bloke not to wear a watch (they wear mobile phones now) and so, in a symbolic gesture, I threw mine away in 1981. Like a freed bird, it flew into the grey yonder and was never seen again. "Goodbye manacle", I whispered. "I'll be back", it cried.

Saint Augustine is supposed to have said that he knew what time was, so long as no one asked him. I had thought I knew what time was too until I decided to write about it.

Despite my sincere atheism, in *my time* I have known and cared about quite a few religious folk. One was named after the aforesaid saint. Sister Augustine and her musical troupe, including myself, used to go out to the Old People's Homes and entertain (torment) them. Once, after I had learnt to play a difficult piece on the guitar, she gave me a little Jesus ornament. She drove like a loon.

.....

Time travel is a dream.

So much of what we do today is based on what happened in the past, and what we think may happen in the future. In a practical sense, we are already time travellers.

Brian Degger, 35mm Badges (collection of the author)

Brian Degger's work, shown last year at Downtown Art Space, was an interesting intersection between art photography and popular culture. Not quite voyeuristic - the scenes are set in a public place. All the works portray a subject over time and suggest critical observation: Looking and *seeing*.

The main body of work was no less successful for its adoption of such a mundane form as the 'badge'. Indeed, this form added bathos not necessarily present in the actual imagery, and reinforced the humanness of the stories.

Degger's exhibition also included (digital) video loops. One showed a palm tree digitally swaying gently in a digital breeze - seemingly immune to time. There may have been more to it, but the artifice of the gallery environment made this scene strangely sad.

You can't save time. Don't feel too badly if you find you have squandered some of it. I think you owe it to yourself to spend at least a little time recklessly. Take a chance. *Engage*.

Shaw Hendry

Fran Callen
Jammin' at Markle's 21/12/04
Pen & Beer on cigarette packets

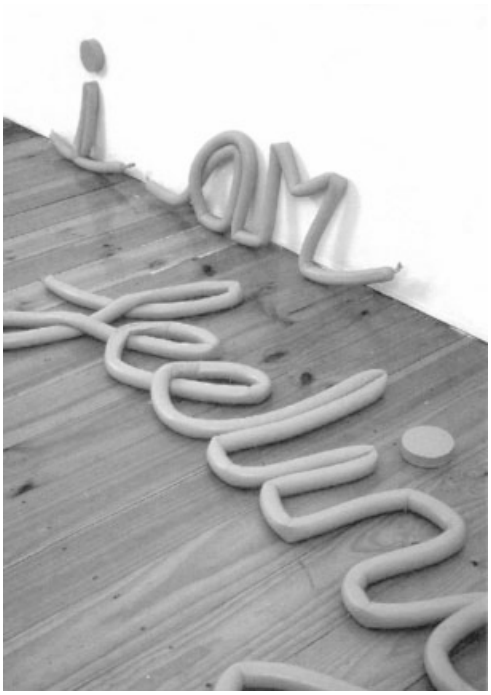
‘Artspeak’...is that a word?

The word world is in acceleration. Language, not surprisingly, has been revolutionised by the internet, altering at a rate never before seen. Pre-google, eBay and hotmail, new words took between ten and twenty years to shift from sub groups into mainstream language, where they were enshrined into dictionaries. Now, with the net and the speedy mass communication it affords, words are becoming common lingo (dictionary justified) in as little as five years. So, with dictionaries (on-line or hard copy) not able to chronicle fast enough to keep up with these swift times, there lives a world of words that never need to be held static in alphabetically ordered pages. There is a new freedom to be had in language.

It is said that Shakespeare invented between 1700 to 2000 words or terms (not including the faux Shakespeare vocabulary attributed to him on the net). He created language by putting existing words in new contexts, rearranging phrases to alter meanings, combining parts of words to form new words, turning nouns into verbs and verbs into adjectives, introducing foreign words and adding new prefixes and suffixes. Sometimes Shakespeare came up with completely new words, which seems like a difficult thing to pull off given that the reader would have no context on which to base the word.

Not much has changed with the invention of language now. We are still coining, blending, affix breeding, and playing with existing words and phrases to alter our language to fit our needs, or to just have fun. There is a whole stream of language stemming from the net and mobile phone technologies to allow us to speak about the changing ways of our lives. *Mondo Thingo*, the ABC TV show hosted by Amanda Keller, featured a humorous segment called *Mondo Lingo*. Here we were introduced to such words as, ‘cyberchondria’; imagined illnesses exacerbated by the internet where cyberpatients can match their symptoms with on-line medical advice, or ‘mouse potato’; what you are when you spend all day, every day, on your PC. Necessary terms, of course, for a changing world.

These tech-language concoctions have affected art. Katrina Simmons, in her SALA exhibition at the CACSA (2003), spelt-out, with concrete-stuffed sausage casings, a line borrowed from 'The Simpsons'; 'there is no emoticon for what I am feeling'. While referencing contemporary popular culture this line also uses the newish term 'emoticons'; the symbols people use in their emails and SMS' to put emotional context to what they are saying (eg, a simple version of happy (o: or sad)o: or more complex, joy m(^o^)m, secret smile (-_-), there is even a Spice Girl range and Princess Leila @(*-*)@). Emoticons, while very important for those who commonly use sarcasm, reflect our changing forms of language exchange and the need for language to adapt.



detail from Katrina Simmons' 'there is no emoticon for what I am feeling', 2003

Art language, or 'Artspeak' - a popularly coined contemporary term describing the discipline of language dedicated to the arts (not to be found in the dictionary... yet) - is reflective of art's shifting and swaying.

Some neo-artspeak for Adelaide art's shifting trends follow:

Adelexodus- the masses of Adelaide arts people escaping to the East Coast where art opportunities are numerous and snubbing is a thing of the past.

Adelaition – the opposite to Adelexodus, where residents of Adelaide are delighted to live in the city and to make the most of abundant car parking spaces. This trend slowly catching on.

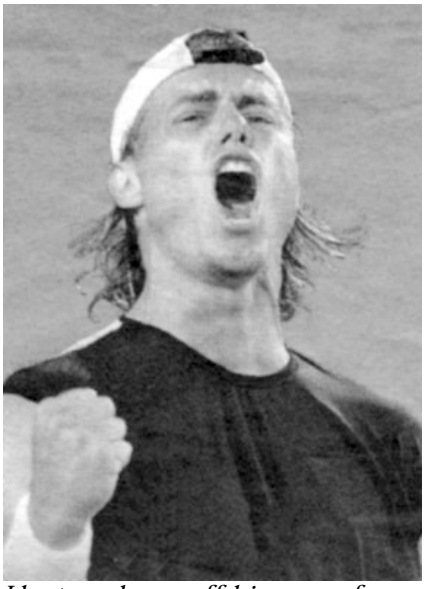
Festivularity – the regularity of festivals of all kinds in and around Adelaide

Dankoist – any seemingly entryless building or environment.

Timmsism – the study of Peter Timms' 'What is the matter with contemporary art' from many, many varied viewpoints

With the speed of language today, whether or not a new word makes an entry into the dictionary seems irrelevant. Validity, it seems, is connected with the source of the word (presented in a publication, television, internet) and the spreading power of it as a legitimate term for describing its purpose.

Sometimes just understanding is enough. Recently, when describing Lleyton Hewitt's ability to tough out five set matches throughout the 2005 Australian Open, a commentator described the quality as 'sticktoitiveness'. Although not familiar with the word (American apparently), the term was understandable enough, and somewhat of a funny line thrown into the usual Aussie tennis-talk. New language keeps us on our toes.



Lleyton shows off his roar of 'sticktoitiveness'

Most of us are now equipped with our own personal computer and consequent language packages, we are free to add words as we please. So instead of consulting the dictionary for your word blending fun, the word you want to be in there, even if it is only to make you feel justified in using it, is a mere click away.

Sera Waters

Bianca Barling
Stills from *Forever*,
dual channel DVD, 2004

Australians in Hollywood

Photography, Cinema and Migration

Australians in Hollywood, a National Portrait Gallery Touring exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia, honours the achievements of Australia actors, directors, cinematographers and technicians currently working in Hollywood, as well as those from the silent movie era and early twentieth century film.

Juxtaposing over eighty photographs with historical commentary and biographies, this exhibition showcases a fragment of a substantially larger, complex and nuanced story. As the introductory wall-text informs us, Australians (defined here by birth or association) have - from the very earliest years of commercial cinema - made indelible contributions to American cinema. Given the immensity and complexity of these contributions, the exhibition does not record the "*the exploits of every single Australian who has left a mark on Hollywood film"* but celebrates key highlights of the story to date.

Annette Kellerman,
Daughter of the Gods, 1916

Upon entry, one encounters an ensemble of contemporary Australian performers whose triumphs in Tinseltown make them recognisable by their first names alone: Mel, Russell, Naomi, Miranda, Rhada, Noah, Frances, Hugh. Passing these high-flyers, we enter another time zone of suspended animation: coarse, grainy, black and white prints of acclaimed Antipodeans from cinema's silent era. These include such provocateurs as: the dynamic swimmer-cum-actress Annette Kellerman (1886 – 1975), who starred in a string of aquatically-themed motion pictures; moustachioed slap-stick comedian Harold "Snub" Pollard (1889 – 1962) who worked with Charlie Chaplin; and daring stunt-man Reginald "Snowy" Baker (1884 – 1953), who taught Rudolph Valentino sword tricks. Sharing the same space with

O.P. Heggie , born Angaston South Australia, 1879, famous as the blind hermit in Bride of Frankenstein, 1935.

these virtuoso performers are doyens of the supposedly "Golden Age" of cinema (the 1930s and 40s) like Errol Flynn (1909 – 1959), Merle Oberon (1911 – 1979) and Jeanette Elphick (1935 -1988).

As an admirer of aged photographs that conjure eras long gone, I find the gritty, tinted archival photographs featuring Annette Kellarman, John F. Gavin and other stars from the silent era particularly enchanting. Equally absorbing, for me, are the delicate black and white photographs of the glamorous but controversial Merle Oberon (her association with Australia remains a matter of contention). In an archival photograph of 1945, the smiling, reclining Oberon drenched in pearls, resembles an exotic dancer from the 'swing' era, or a 'can-can' girl working at the *Moulin Rouge*. Alternatively, Bob Coburn's soft, lush close-up of the self-claimed Tasmanian (who was actually born in India) in *Portrait of Merle Oberon* (1936), recalls famous photographs of Garbo, Piaf and Dietrich composed by 20th century greats like Clarence Bull, Cosette Harcourt and George Hurrell.

Athol Shmith's *Jeanette Elphick (Victoria Shaw)* (c.1953) also warrants commentary. In this crafty and captivating profile shot, the angles and curves of Elphick's face complement the arabesque contours of the hour-glass shaped, wooden appliance behind her - with Elphick's dark bun of hair gradually dissolving into the artefact's opaque and elegant form.

The limelight also falls upon a handful of Australian directors and cinematographers, photographed either on set or in action: Peter Luck photographs cinematographer Dean Semmler at work in Long Reach, Queensland in 1970; Gordon Glen snaps up an ice-cool Peter Weir on location for *The Cars that Ate Paris* in 1974; and Bruce Beresford is arrested by Richard Avalon's camera, whilst directing a western in 2003.

But super-star treatment is splendidly conferred on a distinguished handful. In gallery's centre, one side of a make-shift portable wall is coated a dreamy, vanilla-blue and adorned with colossal prints of Australia's latest silver screen Titans: Eric Bana, Nicole Kidman, Guy Pearce, Cate Blanchett, Rachel Griffiths, Rose Byrne, Phillip Noyce. Almost all of them are photographed by Karin Catt from 2000 to 2002 (Kidman excluded), and many strike poses synonymous with glossy magazines like *Who Weekly*: Eric oozes intensity, Guy appears shabby and anxious, Rachel acts the sultry seductress, Cate looks stylishly scruffy, Rose delivers her best sulky face, and Phillip is the *auteur* par excellence, with his silver film canisters and confident smirk.

What makes the story of *Australians in Hollywood* particularly absorbing is the question of migration. Photography emerged at a time of massive social expansion and tourism and contributed immensely to movement across national boundaries. Significantly, migration has also played a pivotal role in both the careers of some of our most exemplary cinematic exports and, more broadly, the history of Hollywood itself.

Reading the captions, it transpires that the experience of migration – both to, and from Australia – underscores the biographies of distinguished Australians like Naomi Watts, Jane Campion, Guy Pearce, Mel Gibson and Olivia Newton -John (all of whom were born outside of Australia, but lived and worked here before migrating to the U.S.). Historically, Hollywood has been (and still remains to some extent) a major destination, a cinematic 'centre' towards which performers and film makers in the 'peripheries' (like Australia) gravitated in pursuit of international recognition.

However, migration is not a linear process but assumes multiple and reversible paths; since the 1920s right through to the more recent founding of Fox Studios in Sydney and Warner Road Show Studios in the Gold Coast, Hollywood productions, (and with them, American performers and directors) have migrated to our own shores. Perhaps a follow-up exhibition may take its cue from here and showcase the obverse story - 'Hollywood in Australia'.

Varga Hosseini

Sera Waters
detail from *Mobile Map*
mixed media, 2004

Trend-setting Adelaide

a cool slice of contemporary culture

Contemporary art is trendy. With high art having well and truly submerged within the pop realm, it is the commercial market that dictates all. Art stars abound, but then didn't they always? Perhaps one difference is the lack of an aura of genius about them. That would be *unfashionable*.

In his recent book *What's Wrong With Contemporary Art,* Peter Timms considers all that may be amiss with contemporary art. Indeed Timms convincingly puts forward his argument, including scathing opinions of art marketing and hype, art as mere commodity and, to the dismay of many, the crowd pleasing Matthew Collings to name but a few. 'Contemporary' art is deemed to mean the 'right' kind of art, actually disguising a value judgment that cannot be acknowledged as one. Instead of meaning 'current', contemporary surreptitiously means fashionable, popular and selective.

I don't mind a bit of trendiness every now and then. I rather enjoy it. As long as it is the right kind of trendy.

It isn't always a frequent occurrence in Adelaide to see contemporary art appear on walls outside of the white cube while still remaining immediately accessible to the general public. The unassuming Hotel Richmond in Rundle Mall has recently undergone a rather chic transformation and houses an art collection that is definitely a selective, 'contemporary' line up. The *First Bar* devotes space to works on paper by Sally Smart, paintings on canvas by Dale Frank and Annette Bezor, photographs by Frank Grauso and there is also a Patricia Piccinini, all to be found in the grandly refurbished, 1920's ballroom-type interior.

With no expense spared, chocolate brown and stainless steel are out in full force while still maintaining integrity with a combination of classic and eclectic furnishings. Subdued by the designer ambience of the entire place, and despite the lack of sufficient lighting on the Dale Frank at the entrance, I am more than impressed by the slickness of it all. The art almost merges into the surrounding abundance of lovely fashionable things.

While probably functioning as part of a bigger, swanky interior design scheme the *First Bar* collection seems to correlate with the amount of market and media coverage surrounding these artists. Although details about the work are vague, associations can be easily drawn to one prominent Adelaide gallery. Smart and Bezor have long shown at Greenaway Art Gallery. The photographs by Frank Grauso surrounding the bar recall the August- September exhibition in 2004 and Piccinini was the star attraction for the last Adelaide Festival. Deserved as it is, could it be that the *First Bar* is an example of an increasingly common occurrence, (one that is a concern raised by Timms), that

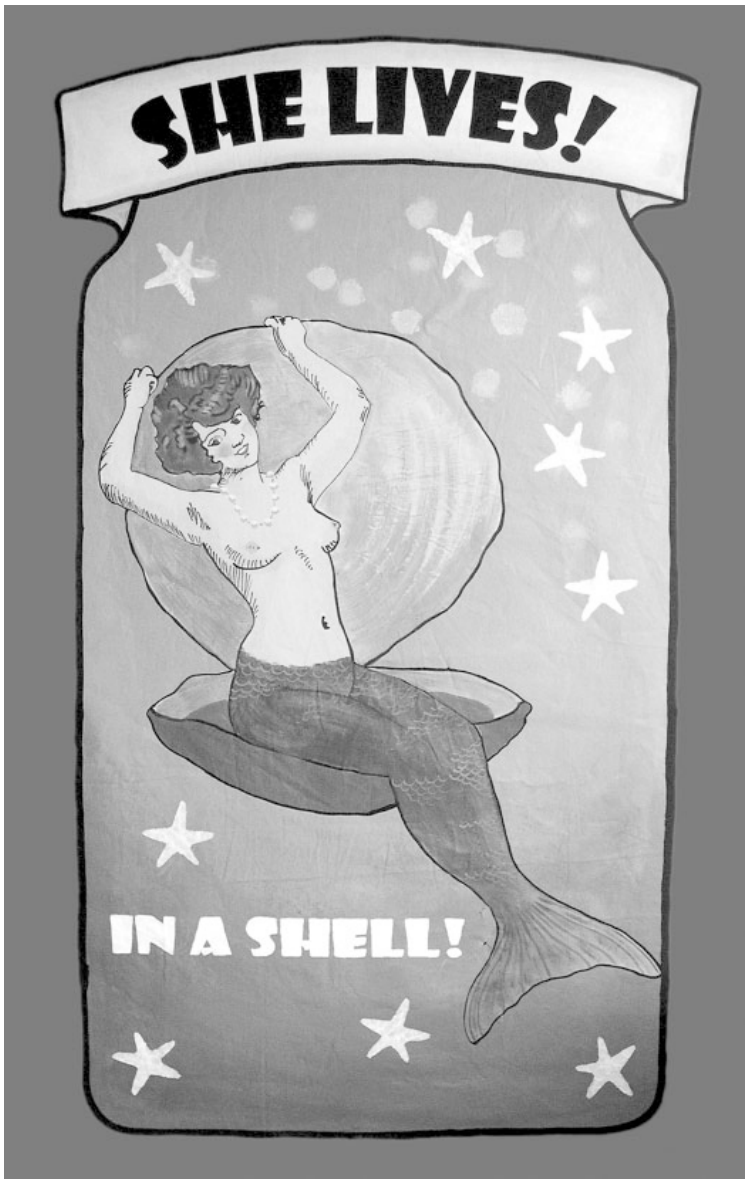
Enjoying a coffee with Sally Smart in background

indicates private and particularly public collections are now more often built upon the prominence and commercial success of particular artists showing with certain galleries? Is there a quandary brewing within art circles, does the commercial market dictate 'culture', does it really matter and is there actually an alternative that avoids merely replacing one set of value judgments with another?

Where as public collection may in some instances serve to validate the market, the *First Bar* collection reflects both commercial and cultural interests with a bias directed towards well known South Australian artists, surely a positive outcome and coincidently all achieved without a Bromley in sight.

Something a little different for Adelaide, *First Bar* is exciting and fabulously extravagant. The interior of the hotel is a sumptuous array of art, design, and furniture. This combined with food and drink has seen *First* gain rave reviews and Vogue awards for best boutique hotel. Looking out from the balcony, the fluoro glow from the 'Toys "R" Us' sign radiates across the mall. In this instance, commercial culture reigns. Art in turn becomes an object of desire along with the rest of it. Refreshingly unique, *First Bar* is definitely intended to be trendy.

Sarah Quantrill



David Archer
She Lives - in a Shell!
acrylic on canvas banner, 180 x 110cm, 2005

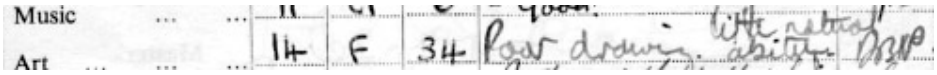
Little Natural Ability

Question: "When you survey the artistic landscape and consider the future, do you feel despair or hope?

Answer: Neither despair nor hope, but only the ironic detachment of a participant observer with certain unpopular values."

(Donald Kuspit interviewed by Emmet Cole in the Modern Word)

In episode two of Vitamin, Shaw Hendry identified one relationship to art as being those that participate and those that watch. Living on a council estate in London and going to a Secondary Modern School, I knew what I was from the moment my Art Teacher wrote "little natural ability" in my school report: A designated watcher! The journey was how to shake off the designated label and move from a watcher to a participant, albeit one with "little natural ability".



For years art was for other people. I immigrated to Australia in 1974, by the time I left England I'd only seen two exhibitions. The first was an exhibition of local artists in the Council Gallery at Southend on Sea. I can't remember much about the exhibition, but one drawing stands out in my memory. It was a picture of a man having sex with a pig in a churchyard. Later that week the local newspaper proclaimed on the front page "Obscene Picture seized by police at Council Gallery". I don't think I was aware at the time how fortunate I had been to witness the heavy hand of State censorship in action at my very first visual art experience.

The only other visit to a gallery was in the early seventies to an exhibition of British pop art at the Tate Gallery. I would love to say that my mind had been opened and I was finally on the path to being a participant. I was attracted to the exhibition because I read that there were exhibits by Paolozzi, Blake and Hamilton. This appealed to me because Eduardo Paolozzi had taught Stuart Sutcliffe

at the Liverpool Art School. Sutcliffe had met up with John Lennon and became known as the fifth Beatle. Peter Blake produced the 'Sergeant Pepper' album sleeve and Richard Hamilton 'The Beatles' album sleeve otherwise known as the 'White Album'. How could a mad Beatles fan resist an opportunity to see such work? The exhibition had a more general attraction as they linked into the pop culture sensibility that anyone growing up in London in the sixties had deeply ingrained in their psyche. Nevertheless, I still felt a distance between the world of visual art and myself.

In 1980, while studying at Flinders University, I met a friend who became the catalyst to my interest in the visual arts. He had started collecting prints by South Australian artists and later became a serious collector of contemporary Australian art. On weekends I would visit his flat we would play a bit of music and then wander round to Anima Gallery in North Adelaide to chat with Robert Steele, the gallery owner. My friend and Robert would discuss current trends in the South Australian art scene and new works coming on to the market. I did as any good student living on a miniscule allowance would and concentrated on drinking the free wine that Bob supplied. Over time, and as the visits grew, I started listening to the conversation and then having a look at the art works. Suddenly it seemed OK to visit galleries.

The real liberation was realising that no one asks you to sit an exam on leaving the gallery. Did you mistake the fancy rubbish bin in the corner for a piece of installation art or, even worse, did you mistake the installation for a rubbish bin and throw some rubbish into it! Just letting my impressions speak to me seemed to be the most important factor in getting to appreciate and enjoy art. Later, I started

to make an effort to get to know something of the history of art and the concerns to which particular periods and styles were responding.

Alighiero Boetti, Zig Zag, 1966

One lesson I learnt about the appreciation of art was at an exhibition of Alighiero Boetti at the Whitechapel Gallery in the East End of London - close to where I was born. A drawing contained a series of symbols that represented events in each year of the artist's life. I watched with delight as a group of six year olds were encouraged to create symbols that represented their few years. "That symbol represents my Granny" said one to his teacher. Touching and amusing at the same time, and an indication that when an unprejudiced mind looks at something an adult might see as obscure, there is no problem in understanding.

There's the pleasure from local art that reflects the issues and images of the Adelaide community. The fun of getting involved in SALA week and getting to meet local artists. Over the years it is the local exhibitions I've come to love and appreciate. There's the wonderful public art that I love taking interstate and overseas visitors around to see. For me it is such a crucial part of the Adelaide that has become my home.

So this is a thank you to all the artists that have made my life richer. A thank you to those that have challenged me to reflect on my society, and myself, and that have amused and given me so much enjoyment over this journey of discovery to become a *participant watcher*.

John Hewson

Vanessa Brady
Femme
acrylic on canvas, 61 x 61cm, 2003

Water, Fire, Darkness and Light

The theatre dims to complete darkness, (even the safety exit lights dim). As the audience adjusts to the absolute blackness, a distant rumbling begins. Then the rumbling mixes with hints of the orchestra, and the sound of water falling. Behind a curtain of water a luminous blue grid of light slowly moves downward and forward. A sloping shaft elevates at stage front, and the Rhinemaidens begin their teasing frolics with Alberich. And so the lust for possession of the Rhinemaidens' gold begins once again, but this time Wagner's operas are unfolding in Adelaide, at the Festival Centre.

My friend Craigh Marsden not only talked me into co-curating an exhibition to coincide with Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, but he also convinced me to part with many hard-earned dollars to attend all four operas.

Craigh had attended the previous imported production of *The Ring Cycle* at the Festival Centre, in 1998, where he was surprised to find no associated exhibitions of contemporary art. The 2004 production was an entirely Australian production, and so organising a selection of South Australian artists to respond to the themes of *The Ring Cycle*, was very appropriate. We knew that the exhibition would attract a national and international audience.

We contacted Stephen Phillips, General Manager of State Opera of SA, and Fulvia Mantelli, Director of Artspace, and with agreement all round, *Avarice, the tragic lust for gold and power* became an official *Ring Cycle* event.

The nine artists in Avarice produced a diverse range of thematic and media explorations based on different aspects of the operas.

Christine McCormack painted a doll with a small bear, an imagined childhood Brünhilde with hair of gold and a plastic demeanour. The Brünhilde I witnessed in *The Walkure* was adult and brunette, but with a voice to raise the hairs on the back of your neck.

Jim Parker,
The trade of
Fafner and Fasolt

Jim Parker melded bricklayer's trowels with the tuning heads of classical musical instruments making a witty reference to the trade of giants Fafner and Fasolt, (the builders of Valhalla paid by Wotan with the stolen and cursed Rhine gold).

One of Roy Ananda's works, *Siegfried ershlagt Fafner,* is a response to an incident later in the operas where Siegfried kills Fafner (who is in the guise of a dragon) and takes some of his treasure. In this work, a small painting of Siegfried and Fafner is cleverly curled in upon itself to allow Siegfried's sword to physically penetrate the painted form of the dragon.

Shaw Hendry's work *Though you laugh and lie* is a galaxy of swirling plants and hands in a cosmic grab for the Rhinemaidens' gold. In contrast to the implied malevolence of what is happening, Hendry painted his wire-cut polystyrene forms in lurid pinks, greens and yellows.

Craigh Marsden created four printed images, works popular with *The Ring Cycle* audience, each print being symbolic of the major thematic element of each opera. *Quickening, Waiting, Questing, Purging*, were exquisite intaglio prints integrating gold leaf and digital elements.

Roy Ananda,
Siegfried ershlagt Fafner

Christopher Orchard also created four works in response to the operas; his ambitious charcoal drawings rejoicing in their Wagnerian scale. The drawings featured giant-like figures in powerful atmospheric works titled *Fire, Earth, Air* and *Water.*

Shaw Hendry,
Though you laugh and lie

Olga Sankey focussed on the Rhine River and its movement through the opera. Sankey's relief etchings *Shimmer, Sparkle and Glitter,* capture, as Chris Reid observed in his catalogue essay *Avarice*, "the feel of the river as the flow of music and as the eternal flow of life".

Sandra Starkey Simon created a suite of theatrical, and sensually beautiful monoprints. Layers of inks and detailed linear visual elements highlighted narrative scenes from the operas.

My own work for *Avarice*, took an illustrative response to the protagonists and their journeys in each of the operas. Printed images signified key moments in each opera, with linkages between characters and operatic moments being painted onto the underside of the glass used in framing the works.

Avarice was well attended during the many intervals of the four operas in *The Ring Cycle*. We would sometimes go and sit in the gallery to have a coffee from our thermos, and a pick-me-up snack. Many others as well, ventured into Artspace during the intervals, and viewed the exhibition. It was exciting to have been involved in a project that had intersected visual art and opera so well. Attending the operas was an inspiring experience. The costumes, sets, and set changes between scenes were amazing; they were aesthetically very beautiful and very perceptive. I am so glad I went to all four operas. *The Ring Cycle* remains, well over a century after it was first performed, a rich and layered operatic sensation.

Dianne Longley

Trevor Wren,
Turning a Blind Eye,
plastic pipe, 350cm x 350cm, 2003

Graffiti, Sweat Magazines, and White Trash

Forbidden Art and Lowbrow culture in the new Global Pop Culture

Preface: We're not all going to get along or agree...

No matter how much pluralism is rubbed into our maw, we can't really expect to agree with, or tolerate, every person's taste. If, like me, you hate the crime drama genre, then you may struggle to find anything to watch on commercial TV. Problems like this get worse when fault lines of time, age, class, gender or nationality are involved - let alone the big guns of sex and violence. Better yet, by creating something to annoy the shit out one sector of the community, you can be sure another will lap it up. What does the future holds for offending people and global youth culture? Well here's my one dollar bet's worth...

Part1: Graffitti: Good, Evil, or happening no matter what we think...

For kids who tag the shit out of everything, pissing off the people who own and control the sense of order is an end in itself. Nowadays though, with graffers' pro shops, fashion labels, public art, world tours and more, it would seem that maybe the world is mellowing out about this art form. With West Coast Jeans, Coke, Target and numerous feminine hygiene products using graff images, surely it's becoming too mainstream to be considered dangerous or rebellious. It's just what urban young people do now days right?

Watch what happens when you see a kid from the 'burbs doodling a few graff style outlines in a note book on a train. Bam, the rail police will question him, check out his book and give him a hard time. People I know who have been busted have had every notebook and photo removed from their homes. These are never returned and there are no

explanations - presumably rail cops are building a Rosetta stone of who's who in the "I gotta paint on a train like a kid in New York 82" scene.

For lots of suburban kids, graff is the dominant visual style. It's little wonder a teenager might draw that way. A lot of them know a surprising amount of history about what they're doing (see the awesome DVD version of "Style Wars"). Rail cops, and the cleanup crews who paint the same tunnels every week, hate these kids and everything about them. With high schools cutting art programs in favour of sport and languages, the traditional graff apprenticeship system of do-it-yourself vandalism might be a valid course of art training.

In little Adelaide this may seem tame, but in L.A. the council will fine you if you have graff on your property, and they can break and enter your property, remove it, and bill you. In L.A. graff spreading into your hood, lowers land values and scares away basic civil services like the mail. It is a sign your hood is going to hell in a handbag.

Local Legal Comedy: You can't carry Aerosol paint without risking a fine. You can't use it at home without risking a fine cos of industrial zoning, safety etc. You need pretty much a legal spray booth.

Part 2: Retro Trash Nouveau (A-Go-Go)

It's amazing that a new generation of young women have taken on of the world's most beloved B&W era (soft) porn stars to heart and let her live again. I'm talking of Betty Page of course and, if you ever had a smackering of interest in her, you can now buy t shirts, ashtrays, lunch boxes, shoes, belt buckles, Zippos and more. What kicked Madonna off the shelf and brought back the likes of Betty I'll

never know (possibly the sincerity). The White Trash revival movement is a celebration of everything about the 50's that "Happy Days" tried to hide; Elvis quiffs, b-grade horror, retro cars, dark wave country and rockabilly zombie punk music, strippers, roadhouses, nasty tats, piercing, fetishism and more. Juxtapoz magazine catalogues a whole national gallery scene of similar (expensive) trash art.

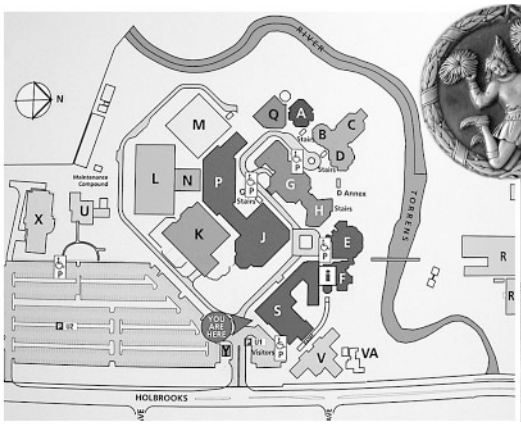
Better still, you could be a skater punk. Or maybe it's the "straight edge scene", because there just aren't enough heavily pierced, death metal lovin' Christians enjoying the odd bit of gambling and strippers. Of course, as a straight edger you'll have to drop the drinking, drugs and smoking, and have some biblical verses tattooed on your chest or private parts (for social respect). The straight edge guys in Adelaide I've met are as sweet as pie (at least they are to me). Apparently the scene is several thousand strong in S.A. and many start young because the music scene is all ages. I admire them because they are a living deconstruction of all the good old day lies about the 50's. As for their brand of religion, I still wonder where the hell it comes from (Catholic/Latino Gang/Old Sailor tats). They are very into art, but in the form of tattoos, graffiti and their own brand of retro chic.

I wish someone could invent a Bedazzler that can press chrome skulls instead of rhinestones - and stud them straight into living flesh.

Chris Tamm
(serial whinger)

Episode Three Launch

*18th November 2004 - **SA School of Art Painting Courtyard**, between L, M and N buildings, UniSA Underdale Campus*



Launch photos by Daniel Torchio

Sera presented Shaw with a very fine cheerleading award

VITAMIN

Episode Four – February/March/April - 2005

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Cover image by Paul Hoban

Insert art - *The wanton desires of a suburban Post-box*
Anne Weckert 2005

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2005

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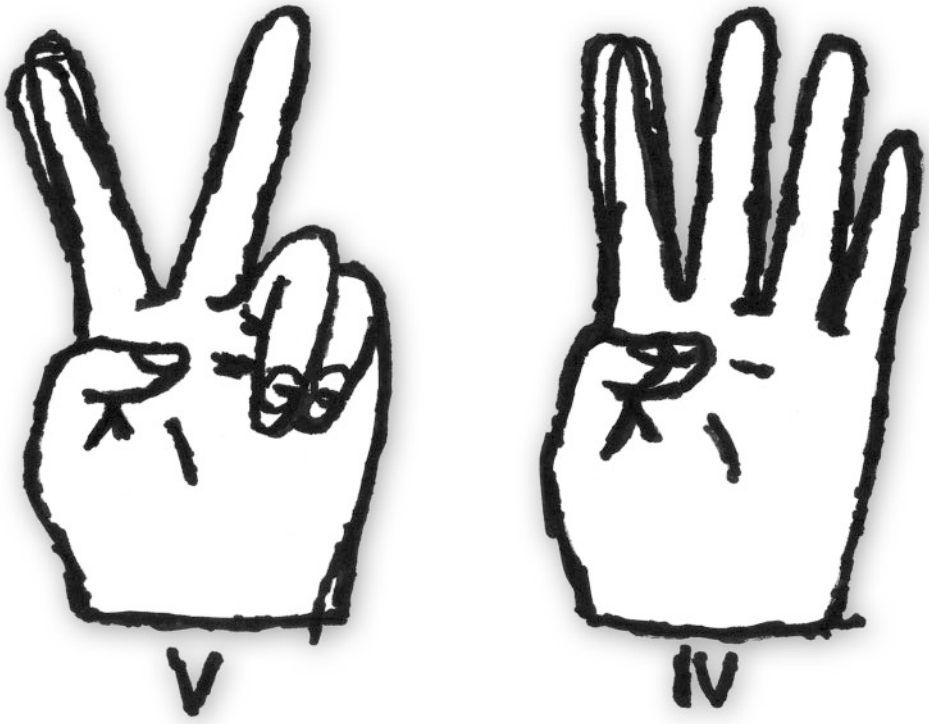

EPISODE FOUR -
FEBRUARY/MARCH/APRIL

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