

H-O-L-D

F-A-S-T

The works of *Hold Fast* spring from a very particular order of human endeavour, a broad and expansive category encompassing the various objects and acts that human beings devise as physical and material solutions to metaphysical or immaterial problems. Whether faced with a problem of fortune, memory or the psyche there are myriad rituals and talismans – from tying string around one’s finger to harvesting four-leaf clovers - which promise sound and dependable solutions. This curious interplay between the corporeal and the incorporeal seemed loaded with possibility and consequently eight Adelaide artists were approached and invited to consider some tangible resolutions to intangible woes.

Stephanie Crase and **Bridget Currie** respond to two well-known marks of good fortune, rabbits’ feet and touching wood, respectively. With characteristic dry wit, Crase extends her sympathies to “legless bunnies, exhausted leprechauns, and shoeless horses everywhere.” Her darkly humorous pen drawing posits the notion that luck is a finite resource and that its acquisition must come at the expense of another’s fortunes. Currie’s work, on the other hand, embodies a gentler sense of humour. Her pocket sculpture ‘touch wood’ is seemingly worn and weathered by constant invocations of good luck. This truly indispensable item ensures that its carrier need never be at the mercy of fate again.

Works by **Lisa Harms** and **Christopher Orchard** depict the problems of anxiety and paranoia eliciting some desperate solutions. These artists strike a grim and sardonic tone in their commentaries on the contemporary climate. In ‘rearwindow (castlekeep)’, Harms pairs a state of anxiety with an act of surveillance (in the form of a visual quotation from Hitchcock’s ‘Rear Window’). In Orchard’s untitled drawing the bald everyman that has featured in the artist’s work for many years allays his insecurities by the most drastic means.

Gus Clutterbuck and **Laura Wills** contribute pieces from larger, on-going bodies of work. Clutterbuck’s ‘Ritual Object’ is one of a number of responses to the wishing rituals of traditional and contemporary societies. The work reflects the artist’s long term fascination with the craft traditions of India as well as the more recent medically-oriented themes of his ceramic practice. Wills’ ‘Urban Bend’ is one of several ink and crayon drawings executed on maps. The figure depicted in the drawing adopts a yoga-like pose, entering an unsettling relationship with both the picture plane and the map itself. This ambiguous gesture is simultaneously ostentatious and humble, alluding to communion, prayer and that delightfully physical metaphor ‘to bend over backwards’.

Finally, **Hugh Davies** and **Peter McKay** respond to the themes of *Hold Fast* with two entirely new ritual acts. Davies’ work continues his recent focus on mapping human relationships; in this instance, doll versions of Davies and his partner attempt to bridge the vast geographical distances that separate them. McKay’s ‘Untitled (FEAR BALLS)’ represents the first move on an ambitious future work comprising an indoor driving range and several thousand golf balls. In this future state, participants will inscribe the balls with illustrations of their worst fears and, in a cheerfully cathartic gesture, drive them from one end of the range to the other. In these works, those ever present human predicaments, fear and loneliness, are overcome with warmth and humour.

Roy Ananda