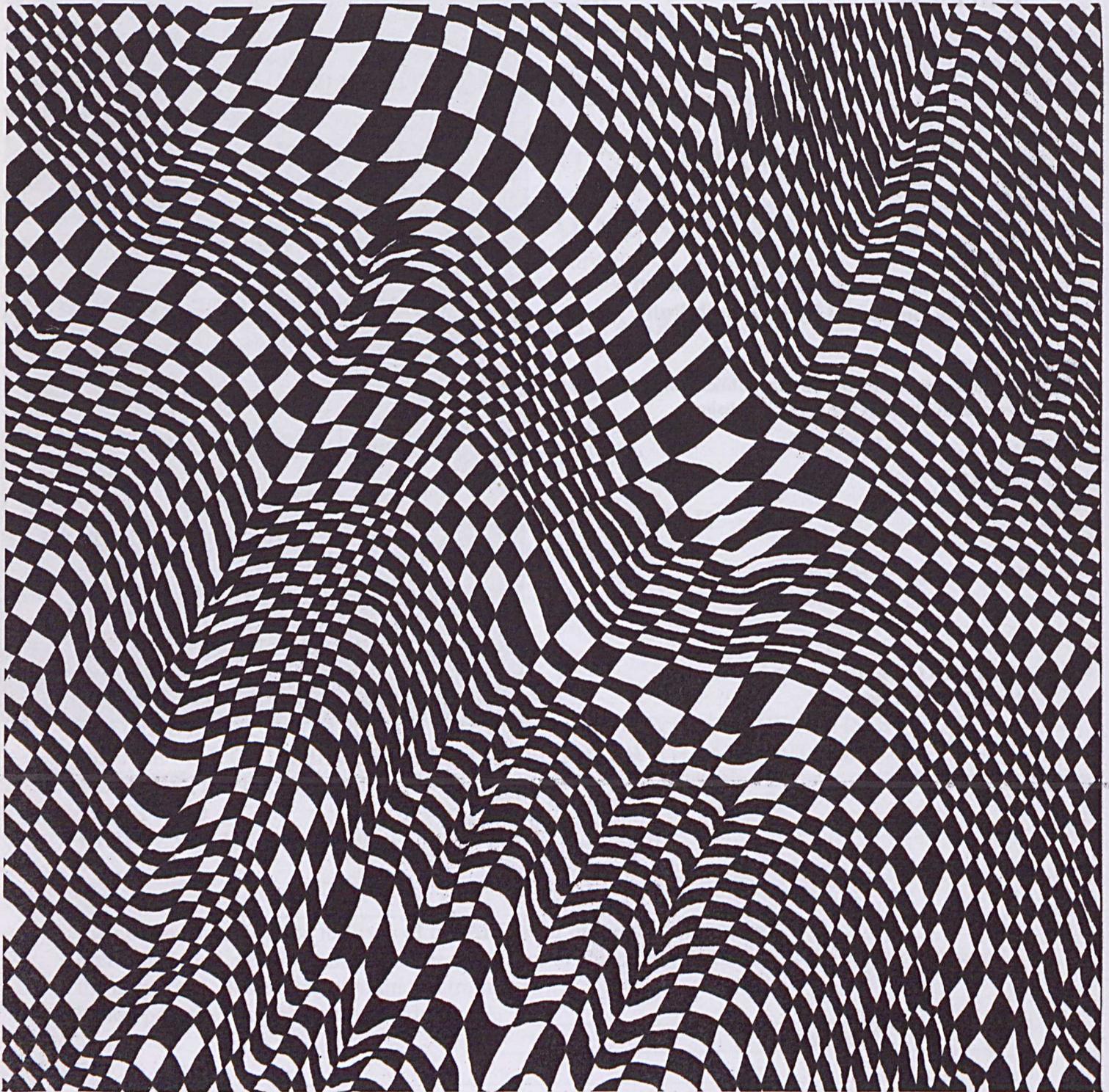


# LIVES OF THE ARTISTS #7



Autumn 2004

Cover image—*Frippertronics* by Ron Adams, 2004

**LIVES OF THE ARTISTS**  
*number seven*  
March 2004

'Lives of the Artists' is printed quarterly  
Edited & published by Elizabeth Pulie

Opinions expressed within this publication are not  
necessarily those of the editor/publisher

Cover image—*Frippertronics*  
Ron Adams 2004

THANKS to Phatspace for hosting the  
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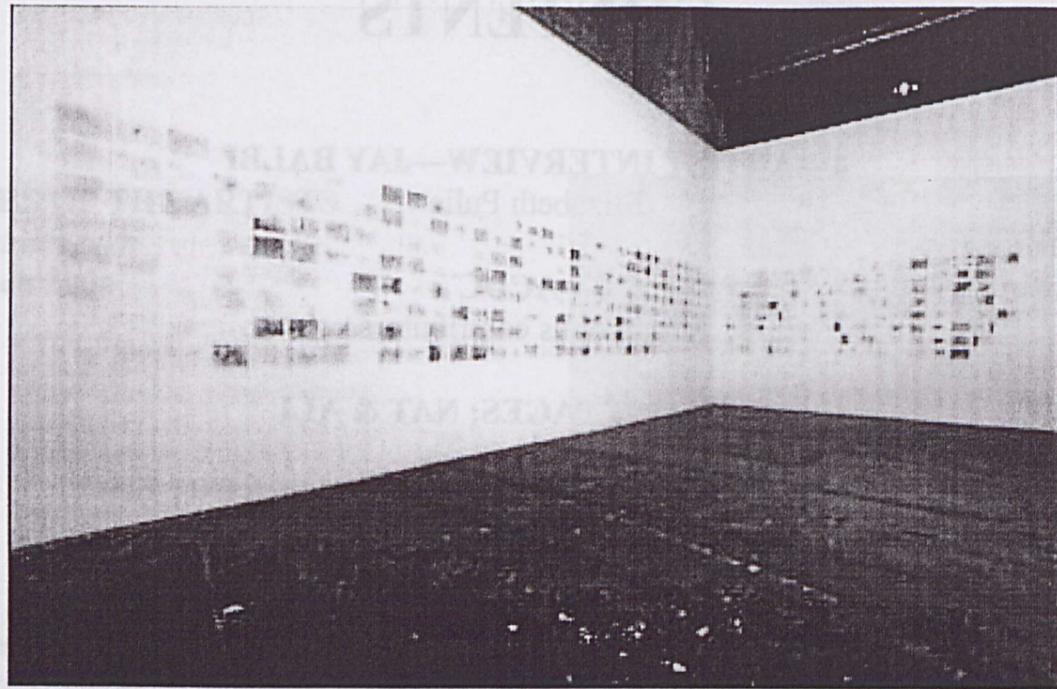
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\_\_\_\_\_ postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

# Artist Interview—Jay Balbi

by Elizabeth Pulie



JAY BALBI—K1 405 Drawings, 2001

405 x mixed media drawings on paper, dimensions variable

Installed as part of *Sunburn—New Art from Sydney*, at Kampnagel K3, Hamburg, curated by Anita Fricke  
Photo: Chris Fortescue

**When did you start making art? At what point do you think you became an artist?**

I started making art when I was a primary assistant at a school, and I started playing around with the photocopying machine. I don't know at what point I became an artist...I don't know, I don't like the term - 'artist', what is that?

**Do you have a preferred medium in which you work?**

Drawing, perhaps?

**What compels you to make art?**

Probably now, the fact that I've made a lot (of it), and there's a lot of ongoing projects, and things that crop up out of those, and I just keep on doing them.

**How do you approach making a new work? How do you begin?**

I don't know that I...a new, complete new work? It all runs out of the ongoing process of what I've already done. I don't set out to make a brand new work, something crops up out of what already exists.

**There are particular themes or models that seem to run through your work, eg, the lexicon, praxis – can you describe some of these, and how they manifest themselves in your art?**

I guess they're like, ways of making up fictions that are useful, so that the lexicon is a series of drawings of words, which just becomes a great big long list that I keep adding to, that is sort of a meaningless fiction. But it's something that I do, and something that is an activity that gives meaning, or informs the ongoing.

**Are there any factors in life that you find prevent you from being an artist, or make it difficult to be one?**

No.

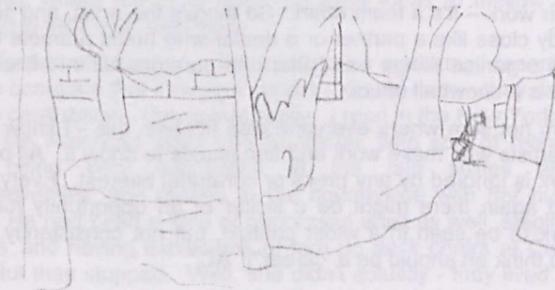
**The objects that result from your art practice – photos, sculptures, videos, etc – how do you see their place in the world? What is their role as objects in a world of objects?**

More and more they're just becoming an archive. They're not really made for galleries, they're made specifically to be stored, and for future reference, so I can go back and look over them, and enjoy them.

**What is the future of art in Australia?**

I have no idea.

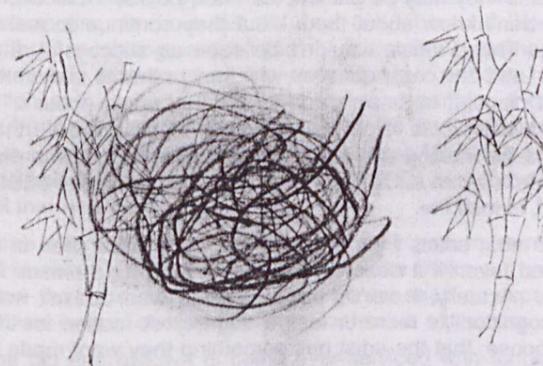
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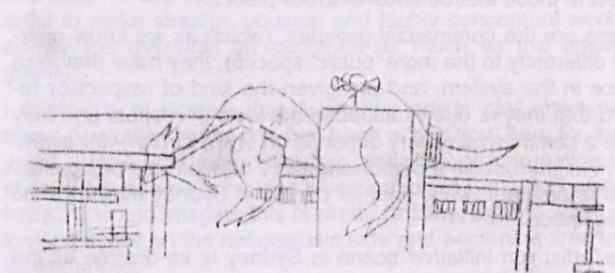
JAY BALBI—Kirkbride 15, 2001  
Detail from K1 405 Drawings



JAY BALBI—Kirkbride 47, 2001  
Detail from K1 405 Drawings



JAY BALBI—Kirkbride 252, 2001  
Detail from K1 405 Drawings



JAY BALBI—Kirkbride 340, 2001  
Detail from K1 405 Drawings

# ACDC

**From:** DC  
**To:** AC  
**Sent:** Monday, January 19, 2004 12:48 PM  
**Subject:** idea

I had an idea...I have been thinking about your comment, about being 'side winded' from art...that's quite a common feeling, I've found, among artists that I know. If I'm correct, it's a kind of feeling of disillusionment, or of being let down somehow by the art world?

My idea was that you could write to me describing this malaise, and I could publish the emails, retaining the email format. Like, this email could be the first one. DC

**From:** AC  
**To:** DC  
**Sent:** Monday, January 19, 2004 5:32 PM  
**Subject:** Re: idea

I like your idea, and I think I can articulate how I feel - I am very aware of negativity amongst artists, even very successful ones, and I would want to avoid that. My feelings relate more to the fact that the excitement and purity of making art is compromised, and tempered by all the business of the career-making and celebrity side of things. The big end of town seems to dominate.

What is Sydney like for artists these days? How does it work?  
AC

**From:** DC  
**To:** AC  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 05, 2004 10:02 AM  
**Subject:** Re: idea

The art world in Sydney is (like other art worlds) diverse. I feel like I'm in touch with a fair amount of it, but then I always come across someone who has a take on what's going on that I just hadn't factored in, or considered before. So I would have to talk about my own experience of the Sydney art world and how it works.

There's the obvious thing - that there are a few big institutions, and they are looked at as the 'official' art world, if you like, and treated as such. I'm thinking of the MCA, the AGNSW, and Artspace...those kinds of places. So I guess a lot of artists with aspirations and career-mindedness would look to being able to show at these places, and would also give a lot of respect to those that do show at these places.

There are the commercial galleries, (which as we know operate differently to the more 'public' spaces), they have their own place in the system, and are given the kind of respect or regard that they're due. I suppose the level of respect one may give a commercial gallery depends on one's 'circle' - for example, I might rubbish a particular gallery or dealer as being clueless or amateur, while another person in Sydney thinks it's the bees knees.

The 'artist run initiative' scene in Sydney is as diverse as the commercial gallery scene. Artist run initiatives are often lumped into one kind of animal, but when you get to know them all and how they work, they're quite different. I find that very few artist run initiatives are well run or interesting, but I like hanging around those couple that are. Spaces and initiatives start and finish all the time.

I don't know if that answers your question...there are artists who live here and who think the scene is dead and boring, and

that Melbourne is better, or New York, or Berlin, or London. DC

**From:** AC  
**To:** DC  
**Sent:** Friday, February 06, 2004 1:34 PM  
**Subject:** Re: idea

Well that was a pretty good summing-up - however, when I come to Sydney I never get the 'feel' of the art world. Perhaps it is difficult if you don't live in it - that it is a lived-in thing. Another question for you, prompted by something in your email...

Do you think successful artists have qualities, besides the quality of their work, that assist in their 'careerist' type trajectory? Is it about being good at socialising and operating, and getting to good contacts, etc?

I guess success is a variable thing - I know some artists, who I don't really think are artists, yet they are very successful and earn a living from their work. I dismiss this work as decorative, or without ideas, yet it is still real enough to those who produce it. Many art audience people think this kind of thing is art.

Then I know others who are very serious about the intellectual content of their practice, and have such earnestness, and yet the work remains empty - they are often successful too, because their desire for identification as an 'artist' is very great, greater than the work.

And then I know artists who are very lucky with who pushes their work - it's a team effort. So there's the artist, and somebody close like a partner or a dealer who helps promote them and organise things - and then the curators fall into line. So this is a snowball effect.

I am not sure where everyone else fits with this - I know a lot of artists who make work and find places to show it. All of this work is ignored by any press or curatorial interest. Every now and again there might be a flicker of an opportunity for this work to be seen in a wider context, but not consistently. Do you think art should be a 'career'? AC

**From:** DC  
**To:** AC  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 18, 2004 3:32 PM  
**Subject:** Re: idea

I suppose there is another category of artists - those who make good art for a long time, but never show at all, or hardly ever. They may be discovered later, or never discovered, so we don't know about them - but they continue to make their art. These artists wouldn't be seen as successful at all, I'd say, and one could question why they bother to make art in the first place, if no one's going to see it or know about it. I suppose this would raise the possibility that there are other reasons for making art, besides it being seen in some eventual context, by an audience. That it's somehow for the artist themselves, in their life.

Yet most artists I know want their work to be seen or recognised, even if it does exist as something for themselves in their life. Actually, I can't think of anyone who doesn't want this recognition, to more or less a degree. A reason for this is, I suppose, that the artist has something they want made known to others, via their art and its perception. And then if you want to reach a lot of people, you need to be 'successful'. The world is so large today, though, and the art world as well, and there are so many ways of reaching people, (or 'marketing oneself'), that it's daunting to even have to attempt this in the

first place. I think it's important that we question this system, if we have questions about it.

I'm taking having an art 'career' to mean that you sell your work and are recognised by people for what you do. Those things aren't very long lasting or profound - I think art's a bigger notion than that. I don't think art should be seen as a career, even if it's possible to have a 'career' as an artist. For me personally, it's not an attractive notion, because it can be conformist and soul destroying an experience. But I do identify with the desire to not make art in a vacuum, or have one's art totally overlooked. If nobody pays any attention, you may feel like what you do is just...nothing, and it could be hard to believe for yourself that you are, indeed, an 'artist'. And then, what are you? What else can you be? It's funny, there are people who are artists for a while, and then slowly they stop making art or showing it, and they fade out of existence...you don't see them at openings any more - yet, if you do think of them, you think of them as an artist, still. Maybe you think of them as an 'ex' artist, (or a 'failed' artist), but still an artist. It's like a brand, you can't lose it.

To me, real art is closer to something like spirituality, than to career - or closer to a way of life, perhaps. What do you think? DC

**From:** AC  
**To:** DC  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 21, 2004 1:27 PM  
**Subject:** Re: idea

I think that is the difference between the meaning of 'career' and 'success' - success can be thought of in many different ways, whereas career is more like middle-management, or a business, where the drive does not allow ideas to mellow or develop in their own slow time.

It is this part of being an artist that can be a strain. I recently said to someone that I thought maybe I should retire - they said 'artists can't retire!' This is true really. I read in the New Yorker about the American artist Lee Bontecou, who sort of retired after being very successful in the late sixties and early seventies, and moved to the countryside with her husband. He had been a kind of successful artist as well, staging 'events' and having exhibitions of torn up deck chairs at Castelli. But they stopped. Well, she didn't actually - they lived in the country and she taught in Brooklyn, commuting each week. She had a wonderful garden, grew all sorts of vegetables, had farm animals etc. He never made art again, but became an air pilot and worked in crop dusting (!) ANYWAY, this went on for over 30 years, but she was actually making work all the time. Now there are two huge retrospective shows of this work, in Chicago and Los Angeles. She is now eighty.

I wonder about those 30 years - as you say - you don't want to be in a vacuum, so how did old Lee feel about all those years without exhibiting, and all that unseen work? Perhaps she was totally immersed in the experience of milking her imagination and intellect in isolation, and then bringing those ideas out into 3D work (she's a sculptor). So as you said in part of your email - 'that there are other reasons for making art besides it being seen...by an audience. That it's somehow for the artist themselves, in their life'.

But I agree with you that most artists want their work to be recognised in some way - art is visual - you can make art endlessly, but the essential nature of it is to be seen or experienced. It is a form of communication. So there is a dilemma.

Here, the big end of town is being over-served with funding and opportunities for what I would call 'over exposed' artists - and the others are not being sustained. I would say that this is a risk for the big end of town eventually, because there is no development at other levels of art practice, which means there will be nothing to feed the larger institutions later on. They will

run out of artists to show. I think that was what I meant in the beginning, about feeling 'side-winded' from art - that it isn't the making or the thinking or the ideas, but the difficulties of feeling forced to compete with other artists. I find that this leads to ill feeling, and makes contact with other artists a strain rather than stimulating. Not always, but often enough to cause anxiety.

Then this causes some degree of discomfort, because as you say 'real art is closer to something spiritual or closer to a way of life'. I agree with this, and think art belongs in the better part of human experience, like philosophy and intellect - where finely attenuated ways of looking or perceiving things are articulated.

A question to finish - do you think Australia is a good place to live in as an artist? AC

**From:** DC  
**To:** AC  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 4, 2004 10:43 AM  
**Subject:** Re: idea

I think it's good to be an artist in Australia...there are a lot of artists here who think that the scene is dead and small, and not part of the international world of art...and it could be seen that way. I've been overseas a bit and witnessed some contemporary art scenes there, they are obviously much bigger, but the machinations of the art world I think are really similar the world over. Like, to 'make it' you have to be big in one of the centres of contemporary art (New York or London, I suppose) and I reckon that's the case whether you're in Sydney, Milan or Edinburgh. Like, you can still survive and make money as an artist in other cities, without moving to a contemporary art centre, but you don't get really BIG and famous, I guess.

Maybe the reason it's good to be an artist here is because it's so far from anywhere central, and we get a little cut off and left behind. From what I've witnessed of the European art scene, their history of art, and the development of modernity and post-modernity, etc, weighs heavily on everyone - here, perhaps, we can ignore it a little more easily, and do what we like. What do you think? DC

**From:** AC  
**To:** DC  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 4, 2004 11:36 AM  
**Subject:** Re: idea

I agree that the 'tyranny of distance' can be in our favour in regard to making work without the traditional referents dominating local art practices. Perhaps that is why the modernist movement took off so well in America, now they have nearly as big a crowd of predecessors from that movement alone.

However, I like the depth of sensibility 'allowed' for artists I see overseas. I like the faith that a larger art public have in the artist to make strange, unusual and highly conceptual work. I admire the overseas art audience as much as the artists, I guess!

I think it is of interest that Australian artists can make work about Australia. In fact this has been a 'tradition' here for many years. Now with more than two decades of 'internationalist' style, there seems to be less investigation of the 'place of Australia'. I would imagine this is pretty healthy, the old work was looking a little on the nationalistic side and becoming tired in all its whiteness.

Still, there are interesting problems arising out of sense of place and distance, and social re-organising that could be worth artistic interest, but I suppose it is offset against a more global perspective for folks these days.

I think I've said enough.

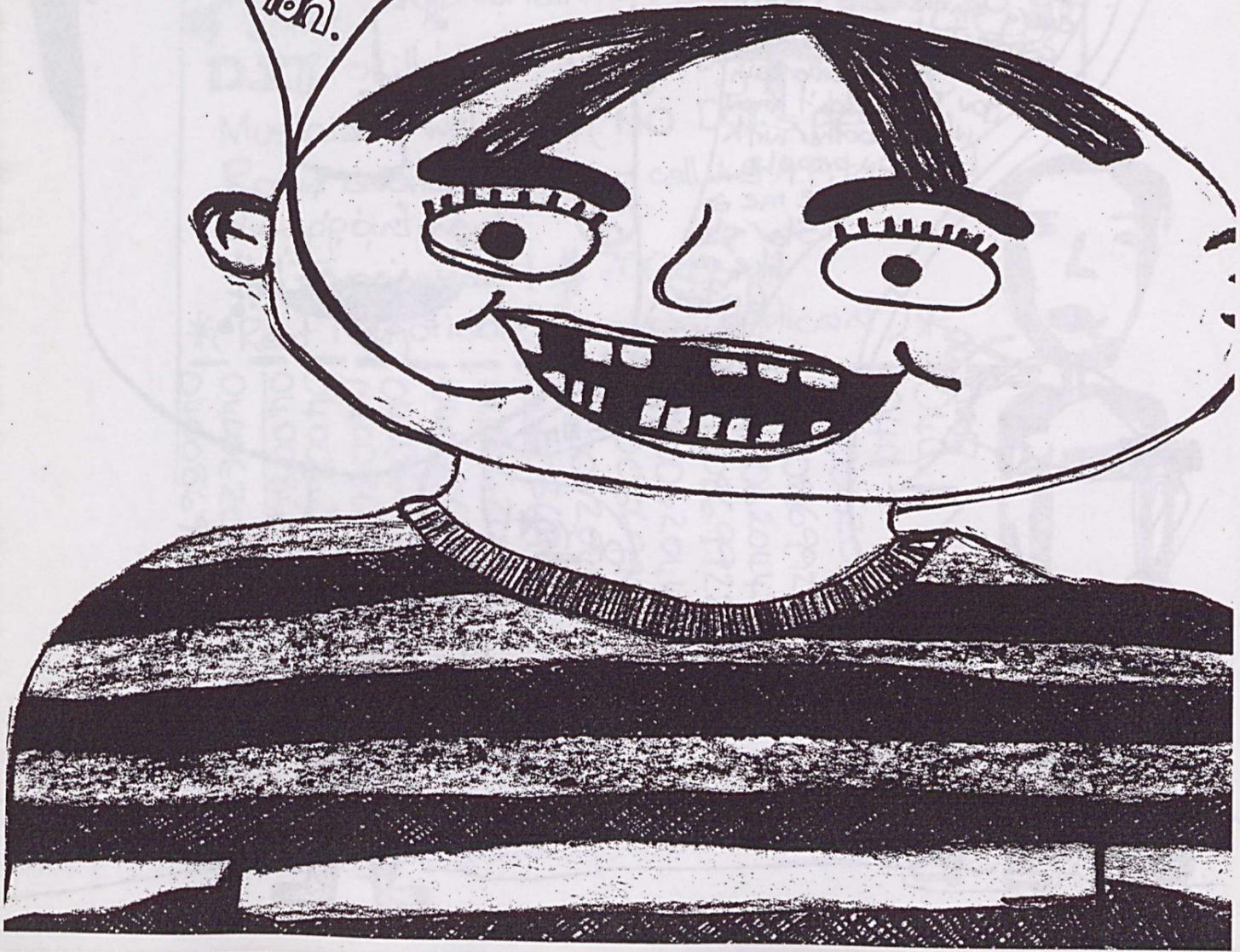
Love to you, hope you're well, and look forward to chatting on later. AC



ARTIST PAGES

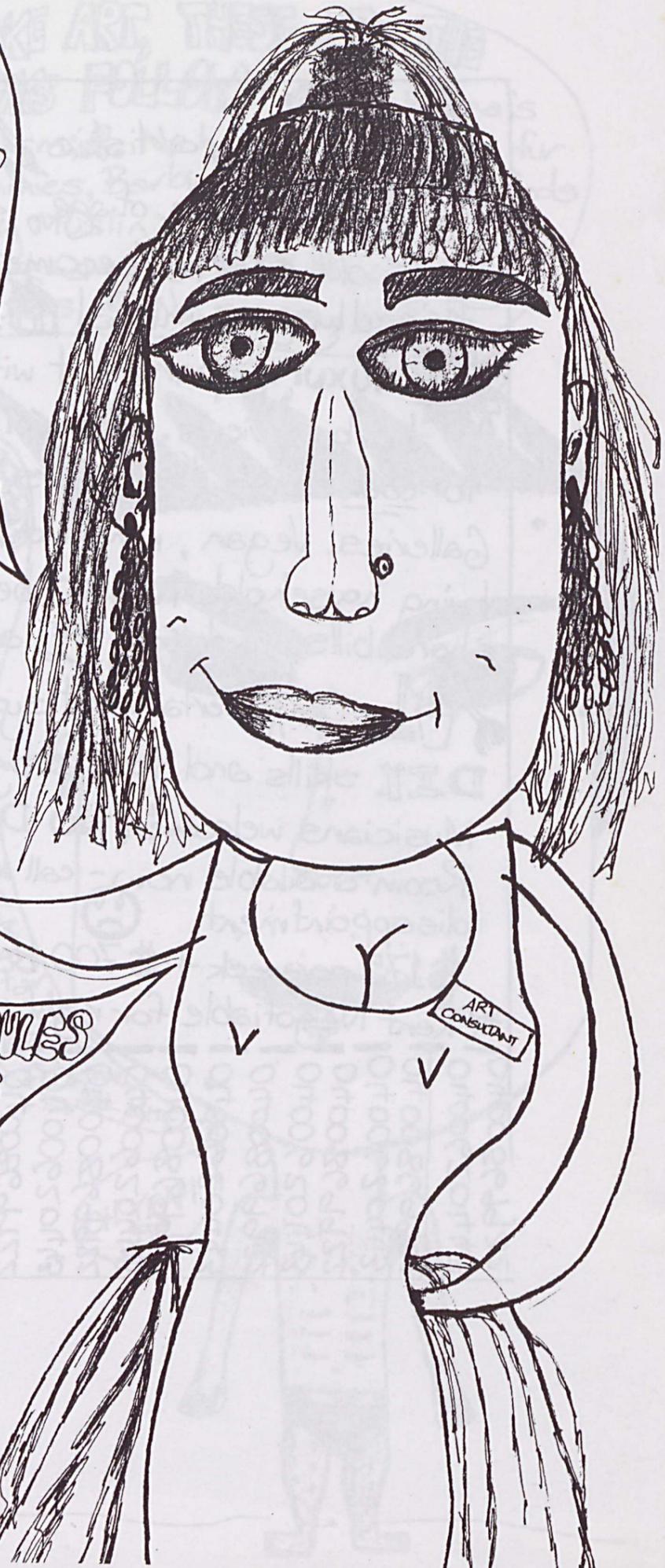
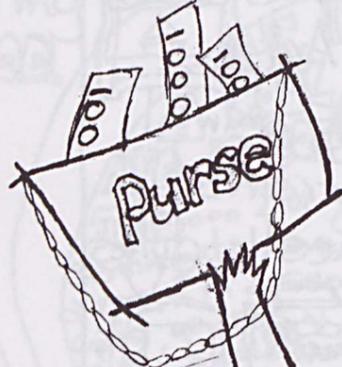
NAT & ALI

the artistic  
gestures of nat & ali  
confound the critics,  
but the punters will come  
-like dogs to an arse  
shitting  
convention.





ARTWORK  
SHOULDN'T BE  
HIDDEN IN A CORNER,  
BUT CAREFULLY  
DISPLAYED TO  
COMPLIMENT  
IT'S SURROUNDS



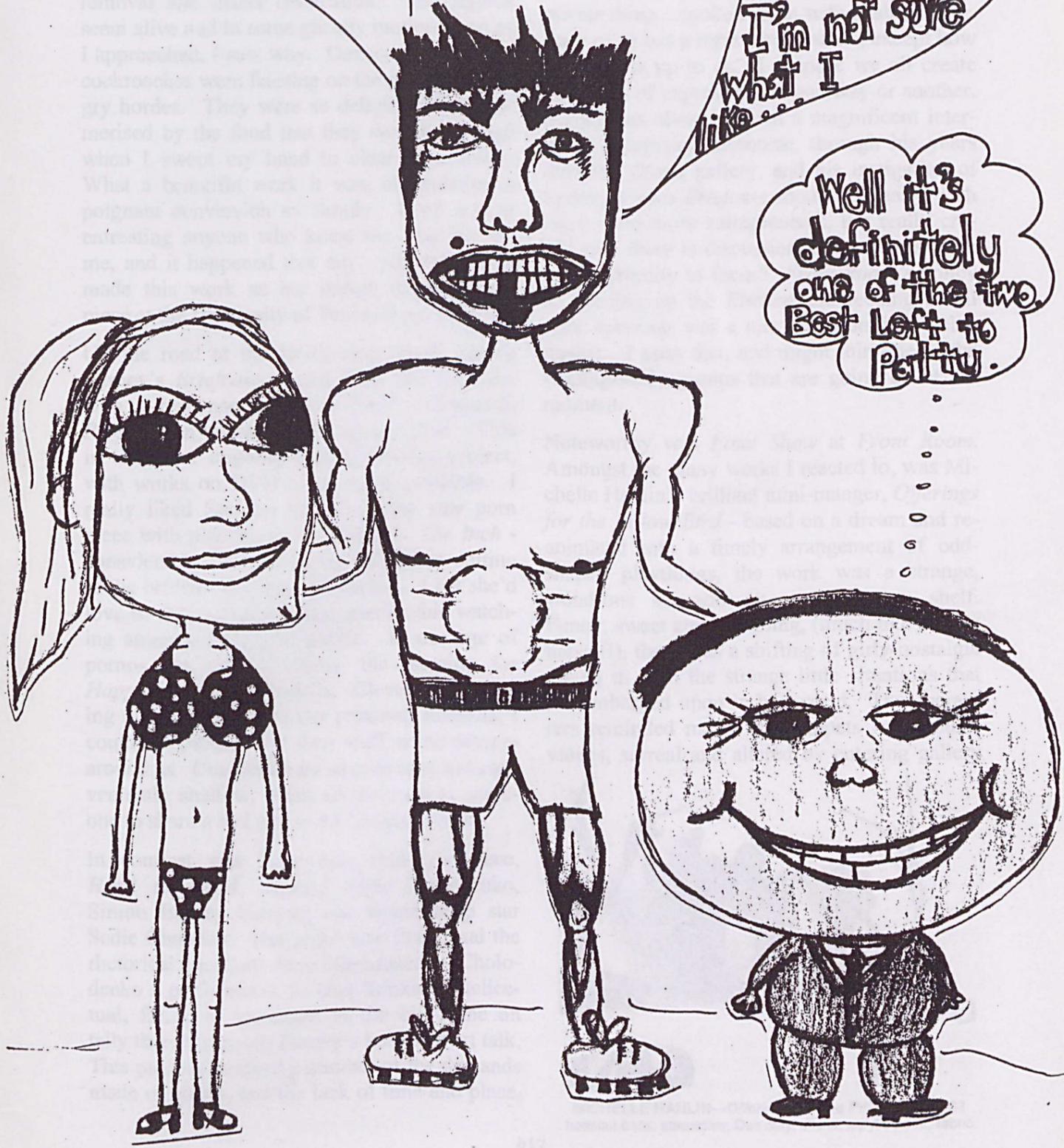
FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE RULES  
FOR SUCCESS

- CHOOSING ART**
- Symmetrical lines calm the eye.
  - Asymmetrical lines convey drama.
  - Landscape art gives small spaces distance and depth.
  - A touch of red tempts the eye to search for more red in the room.
  - Blues and greens have a calming effect.
  - Red is dramatic
  - Yellow is happy and cheerful.
  - Purple is elegant.
  - Orange makes you hungry.
  - Brown, black and grey are sophisticated.

I don't know  
much about art  
but I know  
what I like

NO.  
hang on,  
I know a lot  
about art, but  
I'm not sure  
what I  
like...

Well it's  
definitely  
one of the two  
Best Left to  
Patty.



## Sarah Goffman's Art Crawl Marking Time

Late 2003/early 2004

### *Context and process...Pertinent pieces*

On a building at the corner of Hunt Street and Wentworth Avenue, pasted up with flour and water, are (still) the remnants of white paper silhouettes of people, made by Rebecca Alperstein - cut-out people shapes engaged in waste removal and insect eradication. The figures seem alive and in some ghostly motion - and as I approached, I saw why. Dozens of big, burly cockroaches were feasting on the paper, in hungry hordes. They were so delighted and mesmerised by the food that they wouldn't budge when I swept my hand to clear them away. What a beautiful work it was, engendering a poignant conversion so simply. I left a note entreating anyone who knew the artist to call me, and it happened that day. Alperstein had made this work as her design degree major piece at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Up the road at the Hollywood Hotel, Simon Barney's *Briefcase* started back late last year with a response to Maria Cruz's *Shangri-la Project* - an all-boy revue; *Happy Hour*. This is to be an ongoing (non-separatist) project, with works on DVD to be made available. I really liked Stephen Birch's funny raw porn piece with pigeons, set to Peaches' *The Inch* - considerably dainty scoring and adept editing to the brilliant rhythms of Peaches...I bet she'd love it. It's embarrassingly memorable watching animals mating in public. In our age of pornos, docos and videos, the merging for *Happy Hour* was delightful. Cleverly magnifying the observation of our primeval instincts, I could see people strut their stuff in the mirrors around us. Our rituals are so awkward and conveniently shallow, when all we want is someone to share a bed and some company with.

In contrast was funny-man Barney's piece, *Head to Head*, starring Alan Cholodenko, Simon Barney himself, and future soap star Sadie Chandler. The script was sharp, and the rhetorical questions were illuminated by Cholodenko's performance as beer drinking intellectual, far more interested in the big game on telly than answering Barney's incessant art talk. This piece quantified a number of the demands made of artists, and the lack of time and place,

(especially in Oz) for certain debates. I go out socialising with lots of artists, and we often spend more time arguing about films than we do about the visual arts. Discussing theory critically is reserved for seminars, and reduced to late drunken whinges. Theory, and the way we combine all our discourses, seem quite a private thing...spoken about with hushed allies. Each of us has a repertoire to share, except how we do it is up to us. I suppose we all create platforms of expression, in one way or another. Barney has always shown a magnificent interest in increasing discourse, through his years directing *South* gallery, and his instigation of Sydney's own *Briefcase* model. I really wish there were more entrepreneurs, it's really crucial that there is discussion, but when is there an opportunity to focus? *Front Room's* policy of opening up the *Kitchen* and feeding us all after openings was a rare opportunity to delve deeper. I miss that, and might join one of the reading/study groups that are going on at the moment.

Noteworthy was *Final Show* at *Front Room*. Amongst the many works I reacted to, was Michelle Hanlin's brilliant mini-manger, *Offerings for the Pillow Bird* - based on a dream and re-animated into a timely arrangement of odd-shaped playthings, the work was a strange, wondrous scenario on an eerie toy shelf. Funny, sweet and absorbing, (much like Hanlin herself!), there was a shifting of girly nostalgia mixed in with the strange little situations that are embarked upon in her world. The characters reminded me of the puppets from music videos, surreal and altered by entering gallery



MICHELLE HANLIN—*Offerings for the Pillow Bird* 2003  
hessian sack, statuettes, Das clay, sticks, acrylic paint, fabric

## -----Original Message-----

**From:** Grant Doorey [mailto:[grantd@areliusproductions.com](mailto:grantd@areliusproductions.com)]  
**Sent:** Friday, 5 March 2004 2:37 PM  
**To:** [all@areliusproductions.com](mailto:all@areliusproductions.com)  
**Subject:** Ferdy's leaving drinks - 4.30pm, Dimitri's Wine Bar

"Like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives"

With the myriad changes at Lucus Aurelius Productions in recent times - the comings, the goings, the shameless absconding to the opposition and the like - it almost feels as if one is enmeshed in a soap opera. The guys aren't as hot, the breasts aren't as fake (or are they?), the hair isn't as big, but there are enough twists and turns to keep one glued to the (computer) screen, eagerly anticipating the latest plot development.

With ratings in a bit of a freefall in the last survey, the writers have come up with an ingenious plot twist to keep the punters transfixed. "What if we, oh, I don't know, have a sales person who brings in the bucks, *leave* for a sales job with a competitor!" "That's effing genius! But let's not have him walked straight away. I think we can really heighten the drama if he stays on for a week, squirreling away as many confidential files, strategies, financial details and such forth as one man can carry!"

Of course I jest. That's really not Ferdy's style (and the security guards positioned at all exits with x-ray machines, sub-machine guns and rubber gloves will make sure it doesn't suddenly become his style).

Ferdy's contribution to Lucus Aurelius Productions over the last few years has been invaluable. His knowledge, experience, professionalism and commitment to Lucus Aurelius Productions have made him a cornerstone of the sales team and he will be sorely missed. There comes a time, however, when the chick is no longer a chick (gender reassignment surgery has come along in leaps and bounds in recent years) and must leave the nest, spread his wings and fly. Fly Ferdy, fly!

Of course, no one need panic as the sales team is in very capable hands. And there's the contingency plan that Julio put in place before jetting off to the States (did someone say "junket"?): Marketing Solutions will be break dancing at Town Hall every Saturday night; Finance will be cooking the books; Marketing will be joining the team at Dancers, and Production will be spamming our users with Nigerian "give me your bank account details"-style scams. These measures should cover any very unlikely shortfalls in budget.

So come and wish Ferdy all the best for the future, with a few soothing beverages at 4.30pm in Dimitri's Wine Bar. Whilst he is kept occupied at Dimitri's our security staff will be ransacking his bag.

See you there!

**From:** Bindy Aye [mailto:[bindy@areliusproductions.com](mailto:bindy@areliusproductions.com)]  
**Sent:** Friday, 5 March 2004 3:47 PM  
**To:** Grant Doorey  
**Subject:** RE: Ferdy's leaving drinks - 4.30pm, Dimitri's Wine Bar

Sorry to be a killjoy, but having read this again it is a bit of a shocker - Julio and Deidre are going to freak - just some really inappropriate things to write to all staff. We need to talk on Monday.  
Bindy

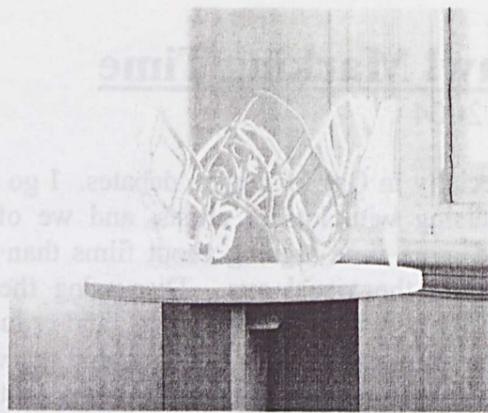
**From:** Bindy Aye [mailto:[bindy@areliusproductions.com](mailto:bindy@areliusproductions.com)]  
**Sent:** Monday, 8 March 2004 11:28 AM  
**To:** Grant Doorey  
**Subject:** RE: Ferdy's leaving drinks - 4.30pm, Dimitri's Wine Bar

I'm getting a lot more feedback from Snr management about this note - please just keep a low profile in the next 3 weeks and don't cause anymore controversy. I want you to end on a high note and not to burn any bridges 'cause it's just not worth it. I imagine you will also want some very good references :)  
Let's just get lots done and have fun in the next few weeks (and spare me any grief :))

Thanks,  
Bindy

**From:** Grant Doorey [mailto:[grantd@areliusproductions.com](mailto:grantd@areliusproductions.com)]  
**Sent:** Monday, 8 March 2004 11:40 AM  
**To:** Bindy Aye  
**Subject:** RE: Ferdy's leaving drinks - 4.30pm, Dimitri's Wine Bar

Yep, fair enough, I don't want to leave on bad terms, and certainly don't want to send any grief your way. Sorry! (Personally, though, I don't find it controversial, and a sense of humour might serve some people well. That's my two cents worth! But I'll be sure not to offend anyone's delicate sensibilities in the remaining 3 weeks!)



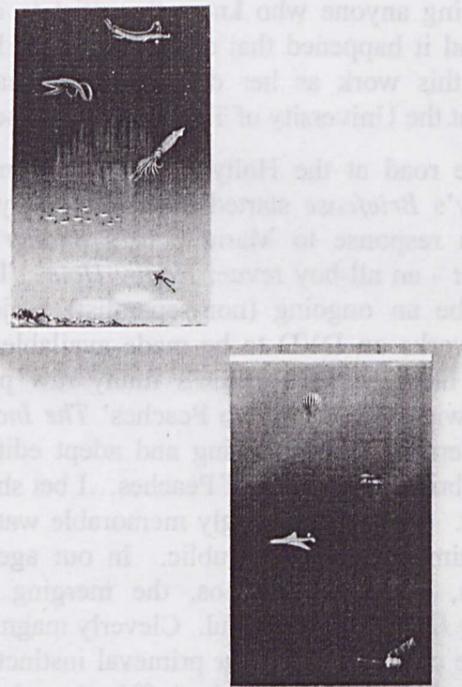
STEPHEN RALPH—Roundabout 2003  
Perspex, wooden stand

situations. I also loved Stephen Ralph's car sculpture proposal for a roundabout. With its silhouette initiative, the cars became decorative emblems, and far less trouble than in reality. The Perspex Marquette was cut out in a circle of cars following each other around...like dogs sniffing each other's arses, or elephants walking holding each-other's tails. I like the play on archetypes that Ralph engages in, modernising the ancient, and excising the present.

In the *Kitchen*, I enjoyed Andrew Hurtle's two ink-jet prints on polyester of underwater worlds, titled *Horizon*. "Sea" convolutes the gases, with the airborne calmly placed below the water's horizon line. In descending order; a hot air balloon aloft; beneath it, an older style plane flies, below which a Boeing style craft soars. In the dark depths of this ocean a satellite navigates its way. "Sky" moves us above the green mountains, to another impossible scenario. A scuba diver drifts at 100m above sea level, over them a school of fish, and up higher, more strangers from the deep weave their way into outer space. What fantastic imaginings and subversion of our missions - our very own planet hosts stranger and more alien forms than we can dare imagine occupying outer space. They reminded me of classroom scrolls for JG Ballard.

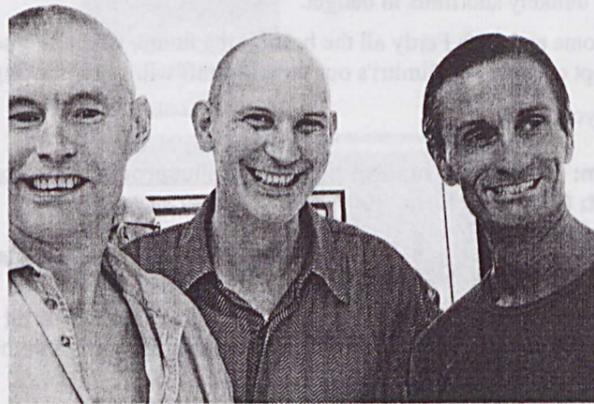
*In the Green* should have been the title of Lisa Andrew's show at MOP. Her installation magnified the use of this colour as though it were going out of fashion. Andrew chose images from a variety of sources, newspapers as well as her local area, and had them printed on interface and polyester. Some were stitched into quite decoratively, some were formally placed. One piece, depicting the Redfern towers with a pine tree in front, was embroidered in red - tantalisingly reminding me of Xmas, but weaving

a web; like a cross stitch, then abandoned. This speaks much about our recent 'Redfern riots', as these were the buildings where TJ Hickey lost his life. The amalgam of images that Andrew displays confront me, from images of war and destruction overseas, to her video with a soundtrack from *The Ghosts of the Civil Dead*, titled *Happiness*, and played out in the bunkers near Long Bay Correctional Centre - a criminal's retreat, in an ex-convict territory. The luxury of green is a sight for sore eyes, and works in tandem with formulating a link between depressing images and nature. Domesticating images by turning them in to decorator window-blinds challenges me into thinking about repetitious imagery forming patternation, and the consequences of living in a non-blinkered world.



ANDREW HURLE—Horizon 2003  
Inkjet on polyester & MDF

Balancing what is going on in the world around us with the art work, along with the serious issue of paying the rent, is a dilemma faced by a lot of artists. I view works, and have to admire the courage and sacrifice made by most artists. The attempt to configure conceptual work into our lives is ongoing and awkward. The art world can be banal and bastardised, but by engaging in it, I find a wealth of creation and progress that would otherwise remain invisible. Our journeys are reliant on each other as much as on Duchamp, or anyone else!



**THE CROSS ART PROJECTS Opening 13/2/04**

*IT ALL STARTED AT PATCHS* Lance Cunynghame, TC Green & Bill Morley, curated by Robert Lake  
Clockwise from top left: Richard Gurney & Tim Hilton; Lesley Walford & Jacqueline Hyde; Colin Davies, Jo Holder & crowd; Paul from Blue Heaven, Robert Lake & TC Green; Lionel Bawden & John Tonkin; Geoffrey Dawson & Jeffrey Stewart; Robert Wellington; Jim Anderson, Lance Cunynghame, Kate, Aña, & friends  
Photos: William Yang



**MOP Opening 10/3/04—AMP'D**, curated by Michael Graeve & Billy Gruner; *EXPERIMENTS WITH COLOUR* by Elizabeth Day  
↑ Clockwise from top left: Adam Norton, Jay Balbi & Leo; Michael Graeve & Billy Gruner; Ron Adams, Dante & Phillipa Veitch; Sarah Goffman & Christopher Dean; Lisa Andrew & Jay Balbi; Christopher Dean & Elizabeth Day  
Photos: Elizabeth Pulie

**PIGEON GROUND PUBLIC Launch 3/3/04**

↓ Clockwise from top left: Robert Pulie; crowd outside the shop; Agatha Gothe-Snape; Amie Turnbull & Leo; Shane Haseman; Michelle Hanlin & Lauren Dyt  
Photos: Elizabeth Pulie/Amie Turnbull



## REVIEW

### *Queens of the Stone Age*

#### **QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE** Enmore Theatre, Friday 2nd January 2004

Reviewed by Elizabeth Pulie

I'm a big fan of Queens of the Stone Age (QOTSA), and so I was excited to be attending their concert at the Enmore Theatre. They're such winners, how could it be a bad concert?

Perhaps that was the problem—that they were too good. They truly rocked—they improvised, and performed new songs...but somehow they sounded almost too much like themselves.

QOTSA played many of their tracks, and most of their hits, including an interesting take on their all time classic, *No One Knows*, which was given a new life, of sorts.

I sense my disappointment with this concert may not necessarily have been due to my high expectations, but that my expectations were misplaced. I view QOTSA as a fairly radical rock & roll/pop band, and certainly a band of today. It was disappointing, then, for the audience to be greeted with, 'Hello SYDNEY!', as the band came onstage. Why is it so widespread, this experience of live bands addressing their audience thus? 'Hello MONTREAL!'; 'Hello BOLOGNA!'; 'Hello MISSISSIPPI!'. It's impersonal, and for me, induces a sensation that I am merely another bum on another seat, in another town on the tour.

QOTSA were similarly boring when it came to ending their show. They played the last number (expertly), and duly left the stage. The audience waited...but the house lights did not come up. Two roadie-type gentlemen appeared onstage to begin fiddling with the equipment...still no house lights. We audience members waited in semi-darkness...some keen attendees began to shout for encores, while some clapped...finally—QOTSA were back on the stage. People cheered, because they had received their encore, and didn't have to wait in the dark any more.

How many times have you seen this type of thing played out at the end of a concert? It doesn't seem sincere—because it isn't. I'm sure there are some audience members who *are* desperate to squeeze some precious extra songs from their idols, but why not let that be expressed spontaneously? Why must all bands conform to this absurd charade?

I can't help but think that a need for cash is at the heart of most live performances (no matter how credible or radical the band may be), and that when an act reaches a certain level of popularity (or record sales), the pressure to perform live and sell tickets would be almost impossible to defy. The music industry and its promoters would, no doubt, be of considerable influence regarding the manner in which these shows are staged, marketed and funded. They are probably the real force to be reckoned with here, and the most deserving of criticism regarding the production-line nature of concerts such as this one.



## **SOCIALIST SARAH**

All questions answered...

Email your questions to: [socialistsarah@yahoo.com.au](mailto:socialistsarah@yahoo.com.au)

*What's with all the Simons in the art world?*

There are a lot in Sydney aren't there! Barney, Cavanaugh, Yates...I wonder what the female name equivalent would be...Lisa, Liz...?

*Are there any art books that most artists have?*

From my limited summation - other than contemporary catalogues, most probably something by Roland Barthes and/or Robert Hughes.

*What is the best adhesive?*

Hot glue, of course!

*Is it best to dress up or down for openings?*

I dress round and round! Just stay away from the patchouli oil!

*I'm often short of cash for drink donations, what's the etiquette?*

Offer to buy 2 drinks next time, and then rub up with the queue.

*How flippant is this column?*

Imbecilic, but if you want better answers, give me better questions!

*Is it true that if the toilets are clean, the galleries show better work?*

It depends on if they're communally used or what the story is, commercial galleries don't count. Interesting to note who does neglect theirs - *Front Room* has always been very clean, for openings. *Firstdraft* needs to put some elbow grease in to theirs. *MOP*, please, how about some toilet paper and soap? *Phatspace*, get to work in there, it's a beautiful little room - hire it out for an exhibition space! *Gallery 4A* needs some serious cleaning, constantly. *Artspace* toilets are great except for the can of air freshener, I've left matches there for people to use. This is really the most effective way of annihilating odours - cheap and simple. They're on the top of the door frame, if you need them.

*How much should I charge for an original art work?*

Enough to warrant being paid to do it again, (if you had to).

*Are art openings good places to pick up a date?*

Not necessarily, but sometimes.

# **P H A T S P A C E**

artist run initiative

## **Calling for proposals for 'Chewing the Phat'.**

An artist curates an evening of video, digital and sound based work. These evenings are relaxed and informal allowing for work that is both experimental and encourages dialogue between artists.

## **Seeking new works for the video library.**

The library is a permanently available resource for local, regional, and international emerging artists working within the fields of video, sound and performance art.

**For further information please  
contact the gallery.**

Room 35 level 2  
94 Oxford Street Darlinghurst  
PO Box 522 Darlinghurst 1300  
[www.phatspace.com](http://www.phatspace.com)  
[phatmail@phatspace.com](mailto:phatmail@phatspace.com)  
0011 612 2 83540344