

The image is a full-page background featuring a painting of a muscular man. The man is depicted from the waist up, wearing dark shorts, with his arms slightly out to the sides. He is rendered in shades of green and yellow, with a blue and white reflection of his upper body and arms below him. The background of the painting is a dense, textured composition of various shades of blue and teal, with thick, expressive brushstrokes that create a sense of movement and depth. The overall style is reminiscent of expressionist or abstract art.

*Everything is
Connected*

20 - 23 MAY 2015

thehold

This exhibition catalogue documents *Everything is Connected*, an exhibition curated by Pat HOFFIE, featuring works by Domenica Hoare, Sally Molloy, Helen Bird, Fred Gooch, Kristian Fracchia, Ally McKay, Tess Mehonoshen, Trevor Tierney, Aishla Manning, Spencer Harvie, Vrinda Gleeson, Lauren Edmonds, Chloe Waters, Naomi O'Reilly, Susan Gourley, Lachlan Groves, Lauren Ryan, Matthew Sneesby, Sarah Poulgrain, Cosima Scales and Marisa Georgiou.

The exhibition opened on 20 May and continued until the 23 May.

Front cover

Kristian Fracchia, *In the Pool*, 2015

Over page

Sally Molloy, *how to fit in, in the bush*, 2015

Next page

Matthew Sneesby, *Blue Green, Blue Blue, Blue Orange*, 2015



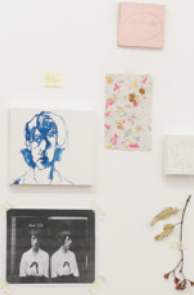
Luke Kidd & Kylie Spear
0466 314 541

www.theholdartspace.com
info@theholdartspace.com

Level 2, 274 Montague Road
West End Q 4101









Everything is Connected

2015 Honours Mid-year Exhibition

Pat Hoffie

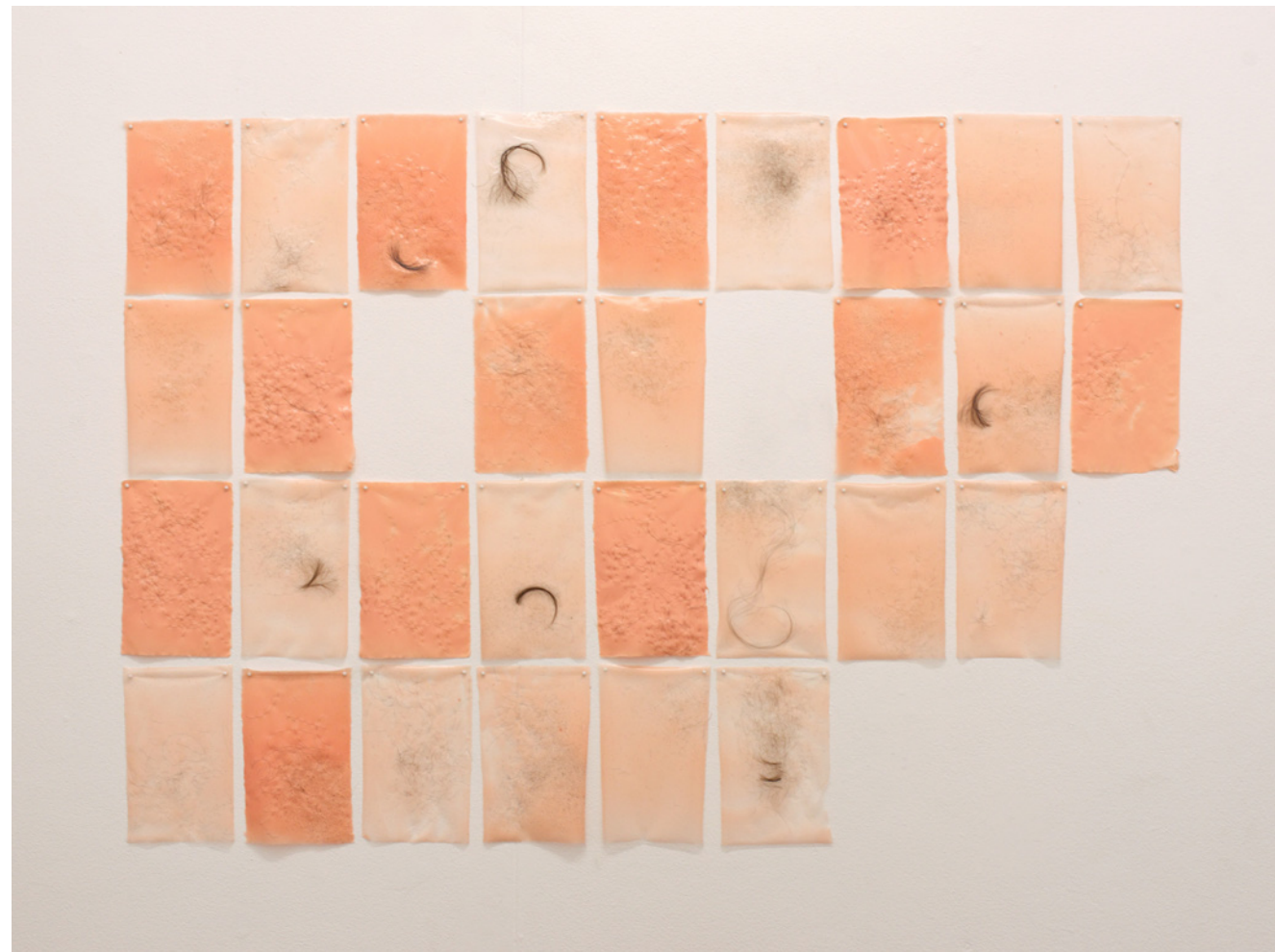
“Everything is connected” – the phrase seems reassuring; as if there is a place for everything and as if everything matters. It’s as if the whole is dependent on each of the facets; as if our presence in the world might have some kind of bearing on the presence of those located in other realms, perhaps in other times.

The term seems particularly appropriate to the time we live in; it suggests the inter-connectivity of the internet and global communications. It suggests - slyly, seductively, that communication and the distribution of information can travel in any number of ways, and that there is a chance for an interconnectivity based on the recognition that all things are of importance. Even though the distribution of privilege and access and wealth across the globe suggests that this is not the case at all. Despite this, the phrase presents as though the global interconnectivity of information has been built on practical frameworks that mimic the interconnectivity of the environment. The fact that what we deem to be ‘nature’ is based on a web of inter-connectivity is a new concept as well, one that replaces the triangulation of nature as the dominion of man given by God to do with as he or she likes. But if there is a growing awareness that even the smallest components of the ecology can have repercussions far beyond immediate locales, there doesn’t seem to be much of a growing need to change behavioural patterns to fit with the understanding of interrelated-ness.

Yet there is another sense in which this phrase – this synopsis of a new framework for understanding reality – this sense that everything IS connected, can harbour a growing realisation that the possibility of working and thinking outside the web – beyond the grid – is no longer possible. While the suggestion of an all-encompassing inclusiveness may be able to offer supportiveness and belonging, there is also a possibility that this mantra ‘everything is connected’ is capable of smothering difference; of suffocating critique in the absence of critical distance. There’s no longer any chance to say, ‘cut loose’.

Previous page: *Everything is Connected*, 2015

Left: Lachlan Groves, *Untitled*, 2015



Left: Alison McKay, *Paper sand paper*, 2015
Right: Naomi O'Reilly, *Flesh: Film*, 2015

The parameters of the title of this exhibition suggest that the artists involved are working in the productive gap of this contradiction - they work in the hope that the kind of ideas they have about the world might end up making a difference, for they operate in the knowledge that new patterns of communication give them access to audiences way beyond the immediate environments in which they were created.

And yet - because they work within an age of scepticism - they also work with a wry consciousness of the possibility that nothing they do will ever matter. In this they are not alone – legions of artists have worked in the productive margins where an all-but-numbing sense of futility spurs them on to do the ‘small act’ of bringing something into being: Beckett’s plays; T.S Eliott’s poetry; the paintings of Goya or Colin McCahon are examples of creative production spawned in the teeth of futility. And as a result of these ‘small offerings’, the world continues to grow and self-reflexively develop new ways of thinking and approaching dilemmas. They have given us examples of the potential of the human spirit to invent and reflect and create in the face of what often seems like overwhelming adversity – or (perhaps worse) in the face of drowning in the viscous sea of apathy.

This exhibition is scheduled at a mid-point of the Honours year. It offers the artists a way of critically reviewing their own work in the broader context of that of their peers, and of receiving valuable critical feedback about the extent to which their work reflects what they claim it does. Importantly, it also offers them the opportunity of working together collaboratively in a spirit of support in an environment where they can compare ideas and approaches.

If there are synergies and continuities running through this show, the central one lies with the issue that is of central concern to all artists – the important one of material choices and all the associations that are carried with such choices. While each of these artists has come from a particular studio area with a specific set of skills (refined during their undergraduate year), the Honours year gives them the opportunity to extend these skills in a range of ways. Some of them have made deliberate choices to work with new ways in media areas with which they are familiar. Others have chosen to experiment with media areas that are completely different to those they have chosen before. There are those who have made choices to work with an anti-aesthetic or ‘de-skilled’ approach, using materials that evoke a sense of the abject or the abandoned or wilfully ‘crummy’, so as to draw attention to notions of value and selectivity and to question just where the limitations of the boundaries of art might be pushed outwards.

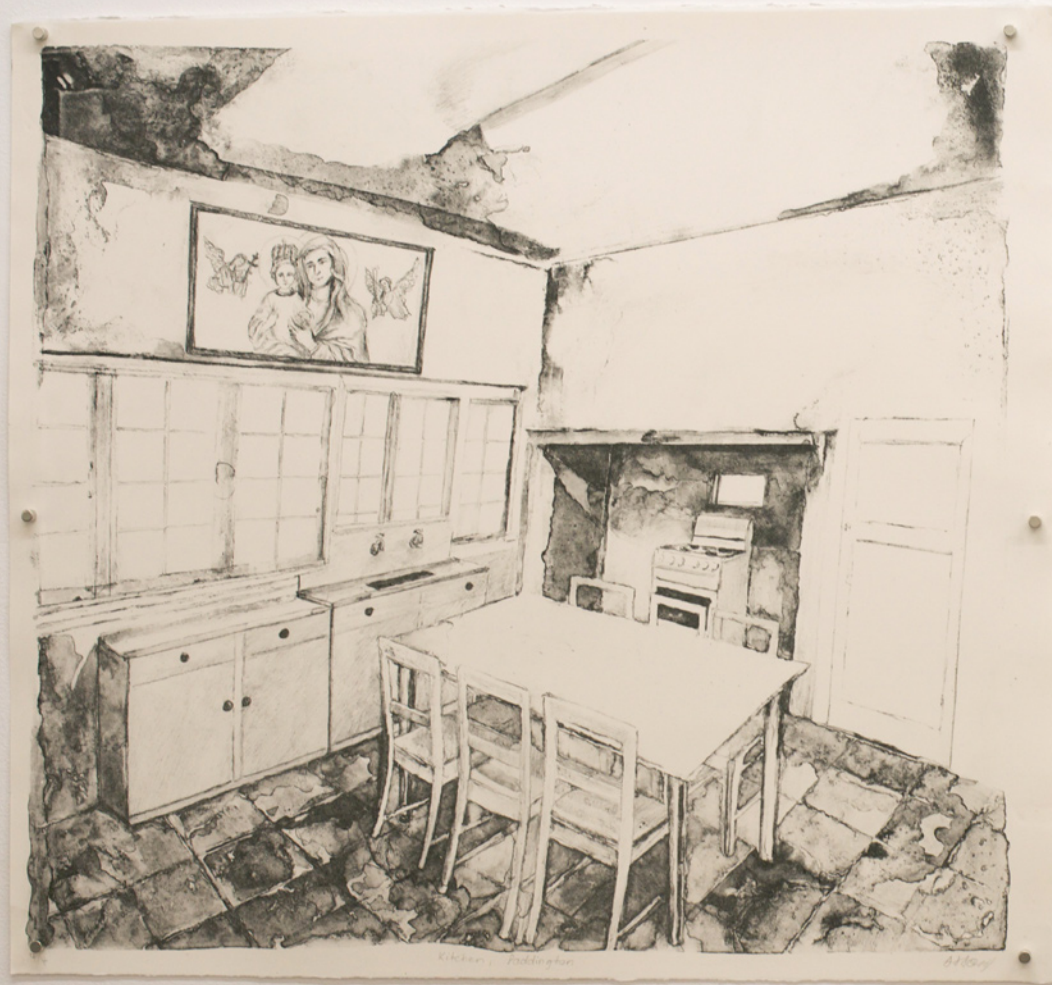
Top: Cosima Scales, *Real Wild I & II*, 2015

Bottom: *Everything is Connected*, 2015





Sarah Poulgrain, *Pride and Prejudice: BBC 1995* (detail), 2015



Domenica Hoare uses lithography to reinterpret images salvaged from family photographs. The room in Kitchen, Paddington features a room from a home that had been owned by members of her family for over 100 years. Photographed at the point of sale, the artist's image shows the former hub of the home as a space that has been all-but cleared out, left only with the residues of memories of the past. Domenica pairs this with a lithographic print titled Gerry, an image of her great-uncle who once lived in the house. Seated behind the beer on the table in front of him, the figure's hands are folded in his lap. A record player sits on a cupboard behind him. A line of black welds the figure to his chair, to the table and to the objects of the room. The details offer a reflective paean to the past; the man sits in contemplation; the objects seem suspended in time. Together they offer a personal glimpse into private recollections and memories. The time-consuming, hand-worked surfaces of the paintings speak of the value of time; the processes required to make these images evoke the necessity of care and consideration and the images themselves reflect the weight of memories.

Sally Molloy arranges a polyglot assemblage of images, objects and materials to challenge the hierarchy that separates the importance of the everyday from the domains to which we relegate and elevate cultural production to the level of 'art'. Items that include a post-it sticker of a line drawing featuring a crocodile sits next to a small pink scrafitto painting of a possum. There's a black and white photocopy of a woman dressed in apparel from former times; the images seem more like mug-shots than portraiture. Nearby a dried plant cutting of a native species hangs suspended from tape. And there's a linear painting echoing the features of the woman in the photocopy to the side of a tea-towel-rack draped by a vintage tea-towel featuring a scene of Australian Aborigines decorating the edges of a cloth calendar. The images are assembled like phrases in a story. The gaps in between them suggest an imperfect narrative. Molloy's choice of images and materials form a domestic take on the past – on an Australian past, with clues about flawed understandings of place, nature and the people who inhabit it. Those spaces in-between are the points at which Molloy suggests the viewer might make connections in order to, perhaps, re-think the ways we anchor ourselves to identity, place, the past and belonging.

Helen Bird. A simple white shelf carries an assemblage of small objects. Tiny, precisely constructed, they seem poised in between the decorative, the functional and the iconographic. Created with the fine attention to detail of the jeweller, the crafting of the work reveals skills in working with metals, with enamels and with processes of soldering and firing. Yet closer scrutiny reveals that these tiny craft may also operate as strange little vessels of some kind – each has a receptacle that might

Above: Domenica Hoare, Kitchen, Paddington, 2015

Next page: Helen Bird, *Untitled (Trace Series)*, 2015



be filled with fluid. And each also carries with it the potential to travel – to roll or to be wheeled or moved. As such they seem like miniature artefacts that fall in between categorisations and easy taxonomies – they are at one and the same time artefacts, craft items, objects and tools with which to make new marks. Helen Bird is interested in working in those regions where the guidelines and maps of how art or craft production ‘should look’ have been left behind. She charts her course to work in zones where it is uncertain whether the art lies in the objects created, the processes themselves, or the implied performativity that is essential to these things being able to ‘work’.

Fred Gooch. Big easy, loopy lines. Taut forms rendered by processes of hatched, deliberate mark making; broad seas of space; a relaxed ability to leave well alone once the image seems to have come together as if by its own volition: such attitudes characterise the work of Fred Gooch whether he works in printmaking or drawing or painting or uses all at the same time. This artist seems driven by the necessity of each work’s will to come into being more than he is driven by any sense of allegiance to a particular material. Gooch speaks of the importance of chance, of serendipity. He values the way art making can surprise the artist and he recognises the important humility of the apparently accidental. As a result his works often resonate with a commanding insouciance, where the final image reminds the viewer of the processes involved in its coming-into-being; where we become aware of the necessity of drawing connections between the act of thinking/drawing and thinking again.

Kristian Fracchia. The sense of disconnected isolation generated in the wake of immersion in social media is continued in recent work by Kristian Fracchia. In this new series his focus has moved from the lonely self-absorption of on-line sexuality to another form of isolating self-interest. For the ‘Pool’ series his focus on the single male protagonist changes context; in these the crepuscular gloom of suburban young-man-caves makes way for the glittering reflectiveness of that most Australian of sports zones – the swimming pool. However in these works the legendary teamwork, mateship and competitiveness have been replaced by a contemplative self-scrutiny. Fracchia works in oil, graphic media and watercolour to explore different aspects of the subject matter; in some the swimmer’s body becomes a site for reflecting on the contradictions of any idealisation of perfect forms (whether in art or sport); in others the slippery elusiveness of the pool’s immersive landscape offers a zone from which to explore the same alluring, slippery elusiveness of painted imagery; in the humbler small scale watercolours the headless body of the swimmer

Top: Fred Gooch, *That old Boy*, T.I.Y.L., 2015

Right: Kristian Fracchia, *The Swimmer (self portrait #2)*, *The Swimmer (self portrait #3)*, 2015





Left: Alison McKay, *Paper sand paper, Paper sand paper, Decay*, 2015

Right: Tess Mehonoshen, *Untitled (Floor Stack), Untitled (Folded) I, Untitled (Folded) II*, 2015



appears like an abstract cipher in a simple tonal world. Fracchia's preparedness to critique the social and gender assumptions of his own generation is at the same time confrontational and gentle; informed and intuitive.

Ally McKay. Small stands teeter on the high-heeled awkwardness of their hand-made-ness. Like young women affecting glamour, this wilful ungainliness is appealing and endearing. Each of them carries its own publication – little books that seem equally unsure of their own purpose and destination. Hand-made and tender, they sometimes offer clues about private hopes and gentleness; at other times they rebuff attempts at translation with the abrasive refusal of sandpaper words and barcodes. In these works McKay continues her exploration of the interconnectedness of art and text and the materials from which they are constructed. She dares to take the most ephemeral and fragile of personal whims and moments and reconstructs them into objects that often seem too private for public consumption. As a result the viewer becomes implied in a role that must be equally as careful; equally as caring in order to meet the artist in a tryst of sharing emotions, hints, fleeting whims and perhaps gentle, contingent truths.

Tess Mehonoshen. Suspended in what seems like mid air, these forms hover between being flat sculpture and three-dimensional painting. Behind them, their shadows are almost as substantial as the forms themselves. And beneath, a compendium of sheaves sits neatly, like an assembled library of references. What are these forms that appear to defy gravity? A celestial form of dirty laundry? The temporarily forgotten garments of angels? The suspended residue of the earth's essence? The elusiveness of their purpose forms a magnet of attraction for those who respond to the sensuous minimalism of their presence. Mehonoshen is interested in exploring the residues of 'place' – she is an artist who remains committed to the importance connections to place have on a sense of belonging – or identity. These works connect the gravity of groundedness to the immaterial weightlessness of dreams.

Trevor Tierney. The immediacy and directness of Trevor Tierney's work comes partly, it could be argued, from a single-minded devotion to maintaining his own practice of painting that has continued for much of his busy working life. Subject matter, materials and approaches may vary, but the candid nature of the amused and at times wry gaze persists. Here the pages of a beautiful big hand-made drawing journal depict vignettes from a range of destinations both from home and abroad. Next to the graphic energy of these gestural notations is a portrait rendered with an almost naïve energy – acerbic in both colour and form, the face is both humorous as well as critical. In such works the connections between the

Above: Trevor Tierney, *Artist Book, Portrait of Bill Platz*, 2015

Next page: Aisha Manning, *Elongation Tool: Grate, Elongation Tool: Slice, Elongation Tool: Scrape, Get Soft Leg Skin*, 2015

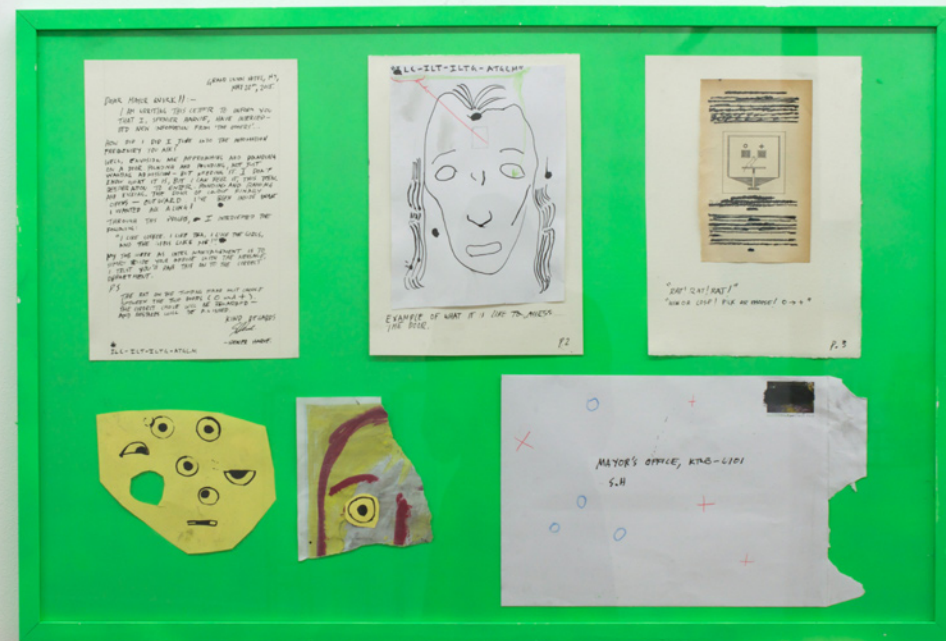


observations of everyday life are connected to those from history; Tierney's long interest in art and collecting both informs and hones what at times may appear at surface level as an appealingly childlike immediacy of image-making.

Aishla Manning. A line-up of DIY implements could all-too-well be considered as forensic evidence for an appallingly unsolvable suburban crime scene. Aishla Manning specialises in creating videos that invite recognition of the most private matters and yet which ultimately collapse into untranslatable events of an almost (but not quite) obscene nature. In this installation, implements that include podiatry apparatuses for heel-skin-shaving and a cheese grater have been equipped with neck-lengthening 'prosthetics.' So many of Manning's video 'performances' occur around domestic spaces traditionally identified as the provinces for 'women's work'. Yet the corners in these laundries and kitchens are far from the glamorous stagegrounds of real-life television. In the place of scripted smoothness, Manning's version of My Kitchen (or Laundry) Rules features the botch-jobs of the inept. The result is an unnervingly hilarious reflection on the fact that things can, in the end, be forced to NOT work with efficiency, predictability and bland sameness.

Spencer Harvie. Drawing from selected arcane ideas from Russian theorist and philosopher Boris Groys as a kind of DIY manual, Spencer Harvie carries forward his self-directed theory that all art stems from a version of conspiracy theory. The implied connectedness of random data is central to the methodology of this approach, where Harvie invents wilfully complex charts that explain nonsensical and yet oddly appealing interconnectednesses to the disbelieving. Harvie packs irony, playfulness and irreverence into his bag-o-tricks, much like that once-Australian trickster Felix the Cat also did. The resultant concoction is an admixture of imagery, text, poetry, persuasion and the sense that all this nonsense just might have more truth in it than the most weighty of tomes, the most distinguished of discourses. Harvie's self-appointed role as the artist-trickster is not a new one, but he uses it to new ends; in a world where connectivity seems to be irretrievably stitched-up, Harvie shows us that there are still ways where the wires can be snipped, unravelled and re-connected into alternative configurations.

Vrinda Gleeson. In a world where media saturation has rendered all things hyper-visible, the possibility of the inferred, the suggested, the alluring hangs in the balance like a threatened species. This may especially be true in terms of representation of the naked woman, where the opposing corrosion of feminist critique on the one hand and hyper-extended sexualised marketing tropes on the other have, to all



Top: Spencer Harvie, *Letter to the Mayor*, 2015

Right: Vrinda Gleeson, *Artist and model as nude (self portrait #1), Nude model resting (self portrait #2)*, 2015



This page: Lauren Edmonds, *They liked the onion, 'We need more flags'*, 2015

Next page top: Chloe Waters, *Body to Body, Face to Face*, 2015

Next page bottom: Naomi O'Reilly, *Flesh: Fragmentation*, 2015



extents and appearances, rendered the subject's potential to produce new meanings bankrupt. Yet this is the subject Gleeson takes on as a challenge – facing it head-on, as it were, as both model and artist. In these images the 'framing' of the subject is itself part of the subject of the work; the material nature of paint is as viscous and fleshy as that which it attempts to render; incidental details like the pattern of a sheet become important registers that run across the surface of the image like repetitive insistent reminders of the flatness of the picture plane. The model looks back at we, the viewers, head thrown back, legs akimbo, with an insolence that defies critical impartiality. Gleeson's work seems to suggest that, for this generation of emerging painters, sexuality and immediacy in representation continue as themes worthy of taking on anew.

Lauren Edmonds. The chattering onslaught of almost-daily political polling has become a droll background to our everyday lives. In these works Edmonds had used the already outmoded detritus of the morning newspaper to fabricate the already outmoded detritus of yesterday's political policy making. Like wind-up toys form a former epoch, these artefacts parody the power and control associated with national politics and reduce them to fragile redundant playthings. If this political critique is unflinchingly direct, the approach is mediated by the quiet absorption of the objects' careful construction – the viewer is made all-too-aware of the time and consideration the artist has brought to the fabrication of these items. In sharp contradistinction to the soundbytes and info-grabs of what politics has become, the artist's slow deliberations of thought and care and concern are the residues of an alternative approach to dealing with the concerns at hand.

Chloe Waters. In the decades that have unfolded under the consecutive waves of feminist critique the ideals of beauty and the aesthetics of appearance have been systematically critiqued, deconstructed and reconsidered. And yet despite the intensity and focus of such scrutiny, the lure of the 'beautiful' persists. For this generation of young women artists, the rational understanding of the vacuity of such endeavours does little to dispel the allure of seduction. Waters recognises the contradictions inherent in such pulls, and explores them in drawings in which erasure, over-writing and self-correction are recorded as processes where prevarication arises as the ultimate subject matter for consideration. The awkwardness of such works are deliberate, and the inconclusiveness of drawing offers this young artist a means of exploring ideas that are overlaid with contradictions and complexities.

Naomi O'Reilly. The uncomfortable proximity of close focus camera pans acts as a kind of ersatz porn – the gaze is too close; the camera's selective scrutiny blurs out





Naomi O'Reilly, *Flesh: Formation*, 2015

in a failure that is poetic and as suggestive as the forms whose contours it traces. O'Reilly has focused on the subject of bodies and intimacy and gender throughout a number of series in which she has incorporated sound, imagery and objects. In this new series she moves one step beyond her own performative role and redirects her energies to creating a mini-cast of characters whose identity and gender are difficult to determine. Next to the televisual evidence of these creatures she arranges a compendium of evidence of the features of their convincing prosthetic creaturehood – pink squares of latex and hair clippings from a range of bodily destinations. O'Reilly's work is both appealing, at times endearing while at the same time operating in zones of repulsion and the abject. She navigates these contradictions through reconsidering new possibilities for traversing zones of intimacy and understanding.

Susan Gourley. An obsession with 'foodporn' has spawned not only a particular genre of commercial photography, publications and TV genre, but has also changed domestic life where the 'new kitchen' has become the glamorous hub of the contemporary home. A place for showcasing and showing-off rather than a larder for sustenance, these places feature foodstuffs that are the fetishized spawn engineered by social networking and the pandemic of reality TV. Gourley's focus on patisserie gourmanderie results in constructions made from the packaging of their showcasing; fashioned from discarded cardboards, glues, fillers, paint and platforms, these monuments to culinary excess both celebrate and parody the way fetishized productions fail to satiate either appetite or desire.

Lachlan Groves. A playful lightheartedness in the work of Lachlan Groves seems to challenge any assertions of the 'seriousness' of the role of painting. Instead, we are reminded of the liminal nature of light and the skittish capacity forms offer for reinvention. Groves creates subtle modulations of colour through carefully applied overlays of transparencies. The simplicity of compositional arrangements provide spaces where forms can dance.

Lauren Ryan. Lauren Ryan works with mementos that are both personal and found objects. Trained in the traditional crafts of jewellery making, Ryan uses precious metals and enamel to reify the emotional importance of otherwise throw-away artefacts. In this presentation of works-in-progress, Ryan breaks down the making of such works in order to arrange them in ersatz horizontal 'frames' where each component responds to and qualifies the meaning of juxtaposed forms and figures. The result is a kind of personal middens – a flat-plane taxonomy where the artist literally pulls apart the form of the work to think through connections in ways that seek out new possible relationships





Previous page: Susan Gourley, *'A Shopper's Guide to Unobtainable Happiness'*, 2015

Left: Lachlan Groves, *Untitled*, 2015

Right: Lauren Ryan, *Untitled (Souvenir series)* (detail), 2015

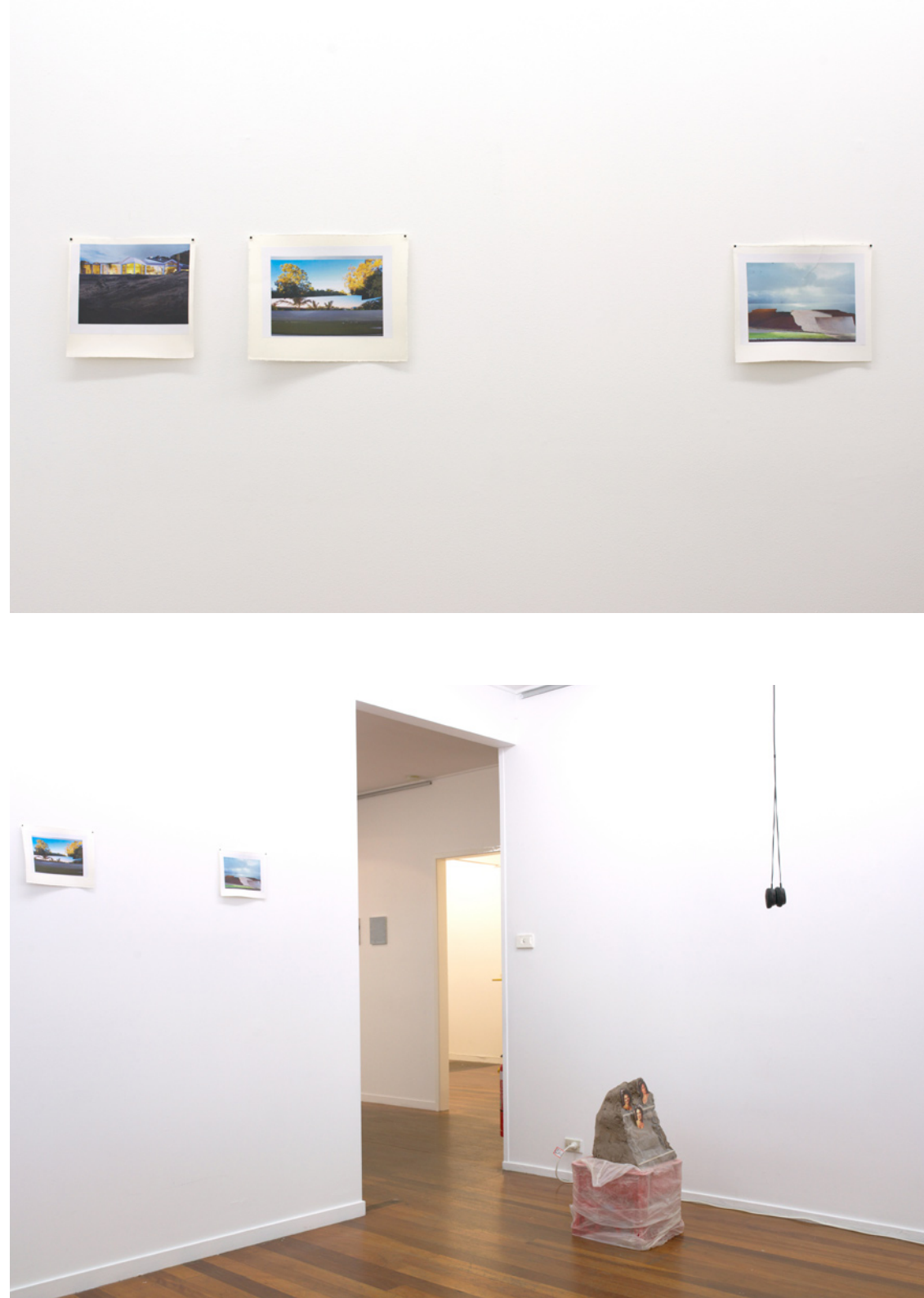
Matthew Sneesby. Sneesby's minimal paintings are humble in scale and monumental in their approach to the issues of modernism – the attention to surface and the insistence on the two-dimensional plane; the allusiveness of thinly applied veils of colour, the seductiveness of all-but-complete erasure, and the necessity of luring the eye to a game of eternally deferred 'recognition'. In these abstract works the artist remains firm in his reductive refusal to hint at forms beyond the frame itself. Instead, he offers the viewer immersion in suggestions about the processes of painting and the material seductiveness of paint itself.

Sarah Poulgrain. Sarah Poulgrain has a special genius for creating artworks that do not seem to have a family home. Like orphans or nomads, they appeal to our sense of wanting to give them shelter and to feed them with a sense of being cared for. Though outwardly de-skilled in appearance, the artistry of Poulgrain's work comes through her decisions about just exactly where to leave well alone; about where and when to let the materials do their own 'speaking'. In this work a big fat slab of clay sits weightily on the floor. From 'behind', odd little cut-outs of queenly heads have been incomprehensibly sticky-taped to the lump. A sound-work is connected to this inert mass of earth-ness. Like so many of Poulgrain's work, the precise meaning is elusive. The artist plays with a sense of seduction that draws both the delicate and the obtuse into its ambit, and calls into question any assertions of grandeur, decisiveness and authority. In their place, she reinstates the necessity for play, provisionality and so opens the way of new possibilities for making connections with the stuff of life.

Cosima Scales. The icy-cool detachment of Cosima Scales' landscapes comes in part from the fact that they have been kidnapped from their former role as sales-pitch imagery for Real Estate advertisements. Scales selects, readjusts and reinterprets with a keen eye for relationships and for the kind of elusive suggestiveness that lies well beyond the in-your-face commercialism of glossy brochures. The origins of these works lies at the other end of the spectrum from the subject matter of sublime landscape painting, and yet in a paradoxical about-face, Scales' still, quiet landscape excerpts seem just as haunted, equally as evocative and engaging as the most sturm und drang of romantic landscapes.

Top: Cosima Scales, *Dream Home I, II & III*, 2015

Bottom: *Everything is Connected*, 2015





Left: Lauren Ryan, *Untitled (Souvenir series)* (detail), 2015

Right: Marisa Georgiou, *Futilities (studies for a shrine)* (detail), 2015



Marisa Georgiou. A mirror, a fan, a pot-plant and some video-captures of the wilderness: a pot-pourrie of second-order landscape sits in a corner of a gallery in an elegy that is as poetic as it is parodic. The beauty in this work comes from a range of different genera and species – the moulded surfaces of palm fronds are as richly patinated as the carefully worked surfaces of paintings; the reflective persistence of an everyday mirror mimics the limpid clarity of a pool; the energetic green growth of a potted plant is gently shifted by the small current of air conjured up by the blades of a tiny fan. This is a landscape where all aspects are connected; one where mimesis and the artificial are integral as the elements of 'nature', where air and earth and wind and water are as important as natural and cultural and social productivity.



Top: Marisa Georgiou, *Futilities (studies for a shrine)* (detail), 2015

Bottom: Marisa Georgiou, *Futilities (studies for a shrine)* (detail), 2015

Next page: *Everything is Connected*, 2015

X





Left: Domenica Hoare, *Gerry*, 2015

Right: Kristian Fracchia, *Untitled*, 2015

Next page: Sarah Poulgrain, *Pride and Prejudice: BBC 1995* (installation detail), 2015



the *hold*

A R T S P A C E