Gooodmorning!

Spring has sprung! Thank goodness too, winter was really getting to us...

In the spirit of Spring this issue of COFAtopia is all about shedding that winter coat, taking some risks and getting out there.

Our cover story this issue features Alice Couttoupes who has been selected to exhibit in the prestigious 2012 Australian Ceramics Triennale, and was awarded an Arc @ COFA ADG (art and design grant) to get there. We then catch Edison Chen in the midst of UNSW Queer Week 2012 which is all about supporting and developing Queer community on campus. We announce the judges and prizes for this year’s Kudos Award.

Then going back out west, we check out the current Desert Equinox exhibition featuring works responding to the sun and solar energy by COFA students and staff in Broken Hill, curated by COFA Lecturer Allan Giddy. Whilst out there, we visit our recently refurbished desert studio The Green House at Fowlers Gap, 115km west of Broken Hill. We finish this all off with a jam-packed what’s on and a rant from COFA SRC International Officer Alan Fernandez on important International student issues. Oh and don’t forget to check out the upcoming Kudos Program, some great exhibitions to get to.

REMINDER! Upcoming deadlines to remember are: KUDOS AWARD entries due Wednesday 3 October, Arc @ COFA Art & Design Grants, Group Work Grants, 2013 residency applications to The Green House and 2013 Kudos exhibition proposals are due Friday 5 October, go to arc.unsw.edu.au for all the forms. Enjoy the sunshine!

Love, Arc at COFA xx
COFA BFA Hons Ceramics student Alice Couttoupes has been selected to present her work at the Australian Ceramics Triennale 2012, and was also recently awarded an Arc @ COFA Art and Design Grant to get there. Themed Subversive Clay, the exhibiton features a survey of Australian Ceramics Graduates. The exhibition is on from 21 September–1 October 2012 at the South Australian School of Art, Adelaide. I recently caught up with Alice to talk about her work, ceramics, and submersive clay...

What drew you to work in ceramics?

I had no intention of working in ceramics when I began my studies at COFA. I had always dreaded the ceramics component at high school, having to make pinch pots and coiling vessels. I began majoring in textiles and doing ceramics as an elective. I soon realised that my understanding of ceramics was very limited, and there was endless potential for working with clay as an art and design form. One artist, Juz Kitson, was particularly influential in determining my passion for ceramics. She makes collections of weird, freakish objects that fuse human organs, animal bones and organic matter. It confirmed my belief that there is a space for ceramics in the contemporary art scene — to push boundaries and shock, to make people think and reflect — and that this space needs opening up to access a wider audience.

What is the relationship between the conceptual concerns in your work around botany and colonialism and the medium of porcelain?

My work explores the intimate relationship that colonial botany played in the expansion of empire, and the desire to discover the New World and its exotic species. My sculptures mimic, in 3D, botanical illustrations or cross-sections of distinctively Australian native flowers, mounted in entomological boxes. Through this work, I’m examining the practice of botanical collection; the dissecting, classifying, ordering and cataloguing of natural specimens, and how this practice parallels ideas of knowledge and power. The process of botanical collection involves the removal of a specimen from its original or natural context and dissecting it into several separate components, stripping it of its inherent meaning. The stark white, almost bone-like quality and aesthetic of porcelain relates directly to the process of botanical collection and taxonomy, and epistemology (ideas about the creation of knowledge), as it alludes to the specimens having been stripped bare, and being given meaning once categorized or ordered according to a Western knowledge system. This practice of botanical collection and classification allows for some interesting reflections on what knowledge really is, and who that knowledge belongs to.

What will you be exhibiting in the Australian Ceramic Triennale 2012?

I’ll be taking two pieces with me, the Kangaroo Paw and the Banksia Coccinea.

The theme of the Triennale is ‘Subversive Clay’. What do you think is subversive about clay?

The theme infers that clay as an art form has the potential to challenge and contest social, cultural and political norms and issues. It also suggests that there is a need for ceramics to challenge itself! Ceramicists need to challenge and transcend the conventional artistic approaches to ceramics in order to change the perception both from within the ceramics world, the contemporary art scene, and in the face of the broader public. As a young, emerging artist, when I tell people I do ceramics they assume that I make pots, and 9 out of 10 throw in a bad joke about Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore’s well known wheel-throwing romance. The ceramics scene needs to broaden and stake its claim within the arts as a legitimate art form and vehicle for expression.

What do you think you will do after your degree?

Currently I’m completing the final subject for my Arts Major, Development Studies. I’m considering doing Honors next year, to really consolidate my practice and skills. When I finish studying I would love to be able to find a studio to continue my practice, but it’s pretty tough financing a studio equipped with a kiln. Perhaps I’ll try my luck with an Artstart grant but I’m not sure for now!
GETTING TO KNOW THE COFA SRC QUEER NON-FEMALE IDENTIFYING OFFICER: EDISON CHEN!

What made you want to get involved with Queer Pride Week 2012?

I would say it’d be mostly because of my role as one of the Queer SRC Officers and that I’m responsible for organizing events here at COFA. But also because it was an opportunity to glam up and fabulously COFA as much as I could! The campus is nice and all but it really could use a tad more queer (in everything).

What sort of events do you have planned?

We have our visibility stall on Monday, our queer art exhibition on Tuesday. On Wednesday we have a documentary screening and we’re giving the mid-week social a makeover(!). And on Friday I’m being a little self-indulgent and am hosting a sushi pigout for the queerkids just because I can :). There are a lot more events on main campus which Cofakids can attend as well.

Why do you think it is important to have a University Queer Pride Week?

There are a few reasons (and I’m not saying mine are the most correct ones). It’s important to celebrate diversity and culture, but I personally feel having a Queer Week at University is so much more than that. It’s a chance for queer students to meet other queer students who share similar interests and common experience, for them to learn and grow and affirm their queer identity, and it also provides more insight into the queer community for everyone. Overall it’ll provide a safer environment where queer people can feel more comfortable and loved! It’s also a great time to show how fabulous queer students are of course, and I think COFA (let alone UNSW) really is in need for a bit of fun and GLAM.

What has been the best thing about being the COFA SRC Queer Non-Female Identifying Officer this year?

I can’t really pinpoint a particular experience that’s been specific to the role of being COFA Queer Officer. Being a part of Arc is great, and I finally went to main campus to visit the queer collective because of the role. Being involved with the UNSW Queer Collective has really been a catalyst for a lot of great experiences and friendships I’ve had and made over the year. If I didn’t have this role initially I don’t know if I would’ve ever been motivated enough to go to Kensington for the queer collective! (But I’m so grateful I did). I guess the best thing would be opportunities the role provides for experiences and growth.

Go to UNSW Queer Week 2012 on FB for all updates and shoot Edison an email for any Queer q’s you have!

e.chen@arc.unsw.edu.au

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Want to know what happens at each of our events? Find descriptions on our UNSW Queer Week 2012 Facebook page or in our Queer Week Zine!
A major highlight in our annual calendar is the Kudos Award for emerging artists and designers studying at COFA.

Featuring a whopping $1,500 prize money from Arc @ COFA and a stack of industry donated goodies, the award has set off the careers of some of COFA’s hottest talent over the past decade. Now in its 11th year, the Kudos Award seeks to recognise innovation and excellence across all disciplines at COFA.

Each year, the Kudos Gallery Management Committee invite 3-4 industry professionals to select the winners! This year the award will be judged by: Ron + George Adams, Lucy Simpson and Nick Garner.

Ron + George are curators and Owner/Directors of artist run initiative MOP projects in Chippendale. Since its inception in 2003, MOP’s key programming rationale has been to act as a career springboard for young and emerging artists. In recent years MOP has been addressing the changing and growing nature of ARIs by also supporting mid-career artists who resist or do not have the benefit of commercial representation. MOP also produces high quality exhibition catalogues and frequently undertakes strategic partnerships, particularly with other ARIs in Sydney, to emphasise this strong likeminded network, and the potential for collaboration and cross-pollination. Earlier this year they launched a new commercial venture, Galerie pompom, to promote contemporary Australian practice. www.mop.org.au www.galeriepompom.com

Lucy Simpson is a contemporary Indigenous Australian textile designer, and creator of Gaawaa Miyay. A COFA graduate and recipient of an Artstart Grant, Lucy draws inspiration from her Yuwaalaraay heritage ushering in a new genre of Indigenous and Australian design. Her unique visual storytelling and narrative style has already seen her recognised as a designer with big things on the horizon, being named by Monument Magazine as 1 of 10 outstanding designers to watch in Architecture and Design Today, and with commendations from the Australian Design Review as one of the top 10 picks at Design Made Trade 2011. www.gaawaamiyay.com

Nick Garner is the Director and Producer of Das Platforms, and is also a COFA graduate. Das Platforms is an Australian-based media project presenting, documenting and promoting new conversations in the emerging and contemporary arts. Developing content for print and online distribution, as interviews, pictorials, critical articles, artists’ videos and documentaries, Das Platforms presents a cross-section of the most interesting and important art to a national audience via Das Superpaper, Das Cinema and Das 500. www.dasplatforms.com

What a hot panel!!!!

Entry to the Kudos Award is FREE and open to all currently enrolled COFA students who are Arc members - Arc membership is also free! if you haven’t already joined - hurry up!!

You can enter up to 2 works created within the last year. Approximately 45 works will be selected for exhibition and judging at Kudos Gallery 16-20 Oct.

As well as the $1,500 Award money for first prize, we have a stack of prizes for the judges to present to their highly commended picks: $500 materials from Matisse Derivan, 12-month joint subscription to Artist Profile and Art Almanac 2013 Performance Space membership, Pictorial spread in DasSuperpaper issue 26 and more TBA.

The deadline for entries is 4pm Wed 3 October 2012.

Entry forms available in the Common Room, Kudos Gallery on online at www.arc.unsw.edu.au/cofa

Awards will be announced on the opening night, 5-7pm Tuesday 16 October.
WHAT’S ON WHAT’S ON WHAT’S ON WHAT’S ON WHAT’S ON

See page 7 for full QUEER WEEK program

TUE 11 SEPTEMBER
@COFA
11am-12pm
SOCCER

Freemant Foundation Travelling Art Scholarship continues to 15 September Kudos Gallery
6 Napier St. Paddington
6-8 pm
COFA Talks
Internships: Slave Labour or essential experience?
Kim Sneyd-Vangers, Kate Coleman, Anna Lutkajtis
EG02, E Block COFA

@UNS W
11am
Speech Acts and Social Identity
LAW 101

WED 12 SEPTEMBER
@COFA
12-4 pm
Zine Fair!
COFA Common Room
3-4 pm
Stich n’ Bitch
Bring your needles and your gossip
Common Room

4-7 pm
QUEER MID WEEK SOCIAL
COFA Queer Collective are taking over the social, expect rainbows and milkshakes and a Britney Common Room

@UNS W
12-2 pm
Women’s Collective Meeting
Womens Room, Blockhouse

12-2 pm
Disability Awareness Week
Free BBQ and Paralympian speakers
Commerce Courtyard

MON 17 SEPTEMBER
@UNSW
12-1 pm
Mindfulness Meditation
G027 Quadrangle Building 2-4 pm
Queer Collective meeting
Room 9.20, Level 9, Chemical Science

TUE 18 SEPTEMBER
@COFA
9-9.45 am
R.O.C.K.E.T & SRC present FREE Student Breakfast!
COFA Common Room,
12-1 pm Meditation.
F408, Level 4, F Block.

@UNS W
2.30-3.30 pm
Sketch Club
COFA Courtyard
(behind the Roundhouse)

FRI 14 SEPTEMBER
@COFA
12-2pm
Wheelchair Basketball
Roundhouse

5-7 pm
PSC Social: Sip a Vodka Squash With Josh
The White House

THU 13 SEPTEMBER
@COFA
9-9.45 am
RO C.K.E.T & SRC present FREE Student Breakfast!
COFA Common Room,
12-1 pm Meditation.
F408, Level 4, F Block.

@UNS W
2.30-3.30 pm
Stitch n’ Bitch
Common Room

4-5pm
HOT TIPS
Kind Of gallery

MON 24 SEPTEMBER
@UNSW
12-1 pm
Mindfulness Meditation
G027 Quadrangle Building 2-4 pm
Queer Collective meeting
Room 9.20, Level 9, Chemical Science

TUE 25 SEPTEMBER
@COFA
1pm
Film screening: Arthouse Films EG02, COFA
2-4 pm
Queer Collective meeting
Room 9.20, Level 9, Chemical Science

MON 1 OCTOBER
PUBLIC HOLIDAY!!

TUE 2 OCTOBER
@COFA
11am-12pm
SOCCE R, Moore Park

5-7 pm
Exhibition opening

This Place has No Horizon
Adam Gibson continues to 29 September
Kudos Gallery
6 Napier St. Paddington
6-8 pm
COFA Talks
EG02, E Block COFA.

WED 3 OCTOBER
@COFA
1pm
Film screening: Arthouse Films
EG02, COFA

4pm DEADLINE FOR KUDOS AWARD ENTRIES!!!

4-5pm
HOT TIPS
Sebastian Goldspink - ALASKA
COFA Common Room, Level 1 E Block

5-6 pm
MID WEEK SOCIAL
COFA Common Room, Level 1 E Block

@UNS W
12-2 pm
Women’s Collective Meeting
Womens Room, Blockhouse

THU 27 SEPTEMBER
@COFA
9-9.45 am
ROCKET Collective and COFA SRC present
The Thursday Blender Bender!
Free liquid breakfasts
COFA Common Room, Level 1 E Block.

12-1 pm
Meditation.
F 408, Level 4, F Block

@UNS W
1-3.30 pm
COFA at Kenso Art-y Movies
Roundhouse Hauser/ Wurth Room

THU 4 OCTOBER
@COFA
12-2 pm
Film screening: Arthouse Films
EG02, COFA

1-2 pm
YOGA
E101, Level 1 E Block

MON 1 OCTOBER
PUBLIC HOLIDAY!!

TUE 2 OCTOBER
@COFA
11am-12pm
SOCCE R, Moore Park

5-7 pm
Exhibition opening

PLAY: Squiggle Collective continues to 6 October
Kudos Gallery
6 Napier St. Paddington

6-8 pm
COFA Talks
EG02, E Block COFA.

WED 3 OCTOBER
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Film screening: Arthouse Films
EG02, COFA

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EG02, E Block COFA.
A group of COFA students and staff, led by Allan Giddy, lecturer in the School of Art and Director of COFA’s Environmental Research Initiative for Art (ERIA), recently travelled 16hrs west of Sydney to Broken Hill to meet up with some local and international artists and install an exhibition through the desert city. Desert Equinox showcases 21 solar powered artworks intended for evening viewing, encouraging people to navigate the city in search of installations.

Whilst being about taking art outside for a general audience and using solar energy to do that, the exhibition also offered the opportunity for artists to engage with one another as they met with the challenges of installing work in Australia’s arid zone. Allan says artists were selected for the show based on perceived ability to adapt and improvise work, both to and for a remote community. The whole event aimed to serve as a mechanism for the exchange of ideas within what became a ‘group performance’. The act of making and working providing the impetus for interaction, both between the individual artists involved and with the broader Broken Hill community.

Taking the idea of ‘group performance’ into their works, two performance pieces by COFA students were presented at the iconic Palace Hotel to open the exhibition. An interactive installation, “Dinner in the Desert” (top left) by Penelope Benton and Alex Clapham was a response and offering to both the desert and The Palace Hotel’s epic landscape fantasy murals by Gordon Waye. The lavish feast, drawn from the local landscape facilitated a sort of sharing of royalty, as guests took turns to take part of the performance.

This was followed by MFA candidate Adam Gibson’s performance “The Sunset Park”. Presented as an hour-long show, a story was told as a musical “song cycle” combined with a sound scape and video projection. Investigating themes of isolation and violence played out on the backdrop of the huge, largely empty, expanse of Australia, Adam’s work revealed a darkness, a shadow-land of forgotten places and people behind the bright Australian sun. We are soon to see more work by Adam at Kudos Gallery in a solo exhibition that opens on 25 September.

PhD candidate Hamish Dunlop’s “The Broken Pack” (mid-left) was installed in The Olive Grove beside the South Broken Hill overpass. This piece appears as an inverted silhouette as a pack of dogs and wolves built from LED-lit 2L plastic milk bottles are perched on an old train carriage in the grove. They are quite spectacular, especially as they appeared howling at the full-moon on opening night. Also in the Olive Grove is Allan Giddy’s “Home”. Intended to communicate tension between presence and absence, substantiality and insubstantiality, preservation and loss, the work is a series of rectangle light-boxes, placed precisely to imply the existence of a house at night. The light box dimensions and relative positions exactly replicate a house formerly existing in pre-potato famine Ireland. The boxes turn on and off independently throughout the night, from afar it’s as though lights are turning on and off inside a house, once down in the Grove, you realise there is no house, just a series of boxes suspended in the air.

COFA student Edward Horne and Peruvian artist Sergio Abugattas Tenaud collaborated with COFA student volunteers and local kids from the Broken Hill Youth College to create what they called a “hybrid habitat” in their work “Positive Subtraction” (bottom left). Making mudbricks from dirt on site, they built a maze-like construction that slightly resembled a free-standing house, inside-out. Ed says “the process is a central part of this project; we are constructing from what we take or borrow from the ground, as opposed to destroying or polluting as a result of the interaction with it, and letting the sun act as a catalyst; in other words an alternative outcome or future”.

Desert Equinox also includes works by Alexandra Byrne, Atanas Djonov, Bonita Ely, Volker Kuchelmeister, Eva Müller, Tool Room, Martin Sims, Helen Sturgess, Kathy Yeh, plus a film festival NIGHT-SUN-DAY (right) curated by Eva Müller and Atanas Djonov.

Exhibition continues to 23 Sept
NEED SOME SPACE?

Fowlers Gap Research Station is located approx 115km north of Broken Hill in the Parish of Hume, County Mootwingee and occupies an area of 38,888 hectares - yep - that’s a lot of space!

Whilst run through UNSW, there are currently 16 universities sending students there from a number of different faculties to research a variety of aspects of the land, as well as COFA’s Imaging the land Research institute (ILIRI) Field Trips taking students out there every year. Last year, Artist Profile magazine supported 13 Australian artists to visit the station for a 14 day arts laboratory, engaging with the arid landscape following drought breaking rains. From this two-week trip came exhibition ‘Not the Way Home’, which is still touring nationally until next year. This place, Fowlers Gap, is a massive expanse of space supporting a hive of activity, yet when you get there, you can feel like the only person on Earth - amazing.

The Green House is a free outback artist residency program for COFA students at Fowlers Gap supported by Arc@COFA, with the intention of encouraging extracurricular practice and research. The Green House studio is approx. 1km from the homestead, meaning you have a sense of isolation but are not too far from other people if you need something or want to hook up for dinner.

Late last year The Green House underwent renovation. What was once a literal self-sustaining green house with solar power, self-composting loo, and pretty basic facilities, is now the most luxurious accommodations on the station. A fancy new kitchen has been installed, 3 bedrooms to sleep 4, and the bathroom has been plumbed up to the mains with a flushing toilet and endless hot-water (the hot is endless, not the water - it’s still the desert).

This land is a magical and spiritual place that lends itself to a number of responses, interpretations and mediums. You could be one of the 20 students, Arc@COFA subsidise to stay at The Green House next year! We also offer Arc members the opportunity to stay at the Ochre House, which is extremely remote: 15km from other people and only accessible via 4wheel-drive.

We are currently taking applications for 2013, with deadline on Friday 5 October. All COFA students who are Arc members are welcome to apply - Arc membership is free. More information and application forms for The Green House are downloadable here www.arc.unsw.edu.au/cofa
Arc presents

HOT TIPS

Come and join Artist Run Initiative and Commercial Gallery directors who will be there to answer all your questions and give priceless advice...

Wednesday 4pm
Fortnightly from Wk 5
COFA Common Room
Level 1 E Block

15th Aug
MOP Projects co-director and founder George Adams

29th Aug
Amelia Wallin, Firstdraft Gallery

19th Sep
Kind of Gallery director

3rd Oct
ALASKA director Sebastian Goldspink

Arc @ COFA

ART & DESIGN GRANTS

help your creative ideas grow...

UP TO $500 FOR...

• field trips
• opening night expenses
• transport / travel costs
• exhibition invites / event flyers
• materials, framing, printing costs
• catering for events
• equipment hire
• document artwork
• registration fees for conferences
• ANYTHING CREATIVE & EXTRACURRICULAR
  (ie. not part of your studies)

DEADLINE FRIDAY 5 OCTOBER 2012

appln forms at arc.unsw.edu.au/cofa or from Arc Office @ COFA, E105
This year COFAtopia is giving over its naughty back page to the COFA Student Representative Council (SRC). The SRC @COFA are a bunch of students who represent YOU! They are there to campaign for your needs to the larger university body as well as make sure your student voice is heard when it comes to national affairs.

In this issue we hear from SRC @ COFA International Officer Alan Fernandez. If you want to get involved in the conversation, friend them on FB at COFA Src.

Hi my name is Alan Fernandez and as the International Officer one of my main objectives has been to unite the local students with the International community. Because, funnily enough, even though UNSW is one of the universities with a big diversity it is very rare to see local students mingling around with international students especially with people who are on the exchange or study abroad programs.

Apart from that, a big issue that affects everyone at COFA is the redevelopment which only makes students feel like running away from the noise after each class, so this has made creating a community for International students difficult.

One of the main comments I always come across from exchange or study abroad students is that they came to Australia to meet different people with different backgrounds but mainly they want to meet Aussie students which by the end of their experience they end up saying “I met people from all over the world but very few Australians”.

Food for thought....
Bye for now,
Alan
GROUP WORK GRANT

UP TO $500

DUE WK 11 5 OCT

START A NEW COLLECTIVE!

A RADIO STATION!
A READING GROUP!
A MAGAZINE!
AN ARTIST RUN INITIATIVE!

For inspiration & application forms check out our clubs and collectives page at arc.unsw.edu.au/cofa