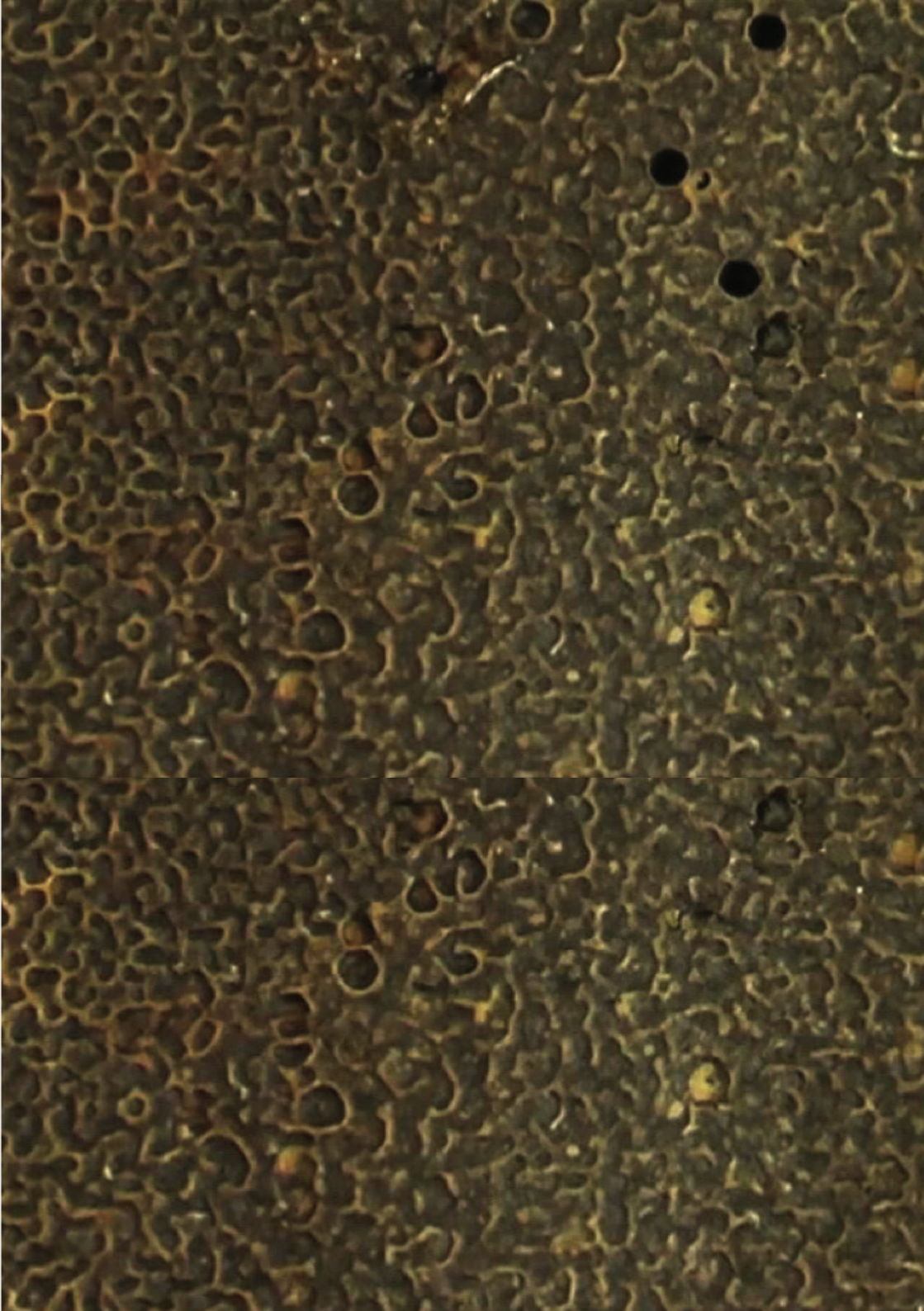


# FRAMEWORK

#3 | *the arts week issue*









# EDITORIAL

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This edition sees the Framework team celebrating the arts in all their wide-reaching and inclusive glory. In honour of Arts Week at UNSW Kensington, our wonderful writers have turned their attention to showcasing what's on offer at both main campus and COFA, as well as further afield.

Moving away from a rigid theme, Framework Edition 3 embraces a more open, fluid and adaptable approach to content. For Arts Week, check out Lydia Bradshaw's insightful profile of artist Annie Kennedy, Louise Mayhew's fascinating look at postcards in art, and of course Erin Wilson's probing Q&A with Arts Week Coordinator Sarah Weiner.

Looking beyond UNSW, you can read about two recent exhibitions as reviewed by our resident critics Frances Robinson and Mirium Grundy, and a special feature on Thai art and the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre by sometimes foreign correspondent Rebecca Gallo. Phew! Blockbuster!

I'd like to extend thanks to the talented writers featured in this issue. If you are interested in contributing to Framework, why not get in touch? Email [k.britton@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:k.britton@arc.unsw.edu.au).

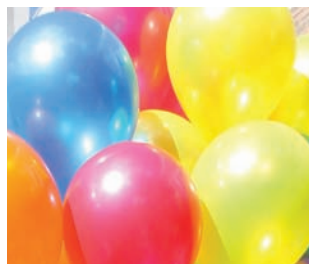
Be sure to keep an eye out for the next issue in Week 10, and don't forget to check out some of the great stuff on offer during Arts Week 2013 - from exhibitions to live music, film screenings, workshops, talks and more! Find the full schedule online at the Arc website: <http://www.arc.unsw.edu.au>

**THE  
ARTS  
WEEK  
ISSUE**



# ARTIST PROFILE

*Annie Kennedy*



## Q&A SARAH WEINER



## POST SECRET

*by Louise Mayhew*

## BANGKOK ART & CULTURE CENTRE

by

Rebecca Gallo



## REVIEW

A HEAP OF BROKEN IMAGES

BY FRANCES ROBINSON

## REVIEW

SPIN THE TABLE

BY MIRIAM GRUNDY

## FRAMEWORK

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

### EDITOR

Kate Britton

### CONTRIBUTORS

Lydia Bradshaw  
Erin Wilson  
Louise Mayhew  
Rebecca Gallo  
Frances Robinson  
Miriam Grundy

### DESIGN

Chris Vernon & Kate Britton

### THANKS

Arc@COFA

### ENQUIRIES

[cofa@arc.unsw.edu.au](mailto:cofa@arc.unsw.edu.au)  
[arc.unsw.edu.au/  
cofaframework](http://arc.unsw.edu.au/cofaframework)

### Front cover image

BANGKOK ART & CULTURAL CENTRE.  
IMAGE COURTESY OF REBECCA  
GALLO

### back cover image

GABRIELLA HIRST, ALTER ALTAR  
MNEMOSYNE #3, 2013. INSTALLATION  
VIEW OF 'A HEAP OF BROKEN  
IMAGES' (2013). COURTESY THE  
ARTIST. PHOTOGRAPH TAI SPRUYT

# Annie Kennedy

by Lydia Bradshaw

**'IT IS ABOUT ME BECOMING CONNECTED TO A NEW PLACE... TO BOTH NEW RELATIONSHIPS, TO A NEW DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT, AND ALSO TRYING TO CONNECT MYSELF TO THE HISTORY OF THE PLACE AS A WAY OF BELONGING.' – ANNIE KENNEDY**

Exhibiting this week at Kudos Gallery is COFA Masters of Fine Arts Candidate, Annie Kennedy. Her upcoming solo show, entitled *Place of Milk and Honey* coincides with UNSW Arts Week, taking place from the 27th until 31st August. Moving away from a history of participatory public art projects, *Place of Milk and Honey* demonstrates a more inward focus to the artist's own personal experience in a new domestic setting.

The works, created in response to the artist's displacement from a familiar setting in Erskineville to a new home and husband in Tempe, are about dislocation, belonging, and the absence of memory. They explore endeavours of place making, connection to history and personal affiliation with material objects. There is a sense of the domestic, a strong presence of natural materials, and an emotional mood that is both tender and a little melancholic but also full of promise.

'Making these artworks was a way of belonging in a new place and arriving in a place of peace and security,' Kennedy reveals. This is evident in the *Homebodies* series where the artist has cast a variety of household objects. These pieces, some known and others foreign to the artist have been cast in ceramic and threaded onto a suite of twelve metal bases, which operate as totem poles.

By interacting with and re-appropriating both new and familiar objects in such a fashion, this work explores what the artist finds to be the newness of relationships – the bringing together of old and

new to create something else that is distinct yet cohesive. In this way the artist seeks to familiarise herself with things that she previously had no relationship with, and were otherwise unknown or disconcerting as a result. By engaging with everyday objects in this way, Kennedy forges new meaning and ties herself to their being.

Also part of the exhibition is a series of leaves from the garden, which have been embedded with chlorophyll prints of previous inhabitants from the house. This is another means by which the artist seeks to connect herself with the history of the house. By forging a connection to these figures, Kennedy is making an effort to familiarise herself and become 'less of a stranger'.

*Images.*

*01 The Inhabitants, photographic images embedded on leaves, 2013.*

*02 Piece by Piece, eggshell drawing, 2013.*

*03 A Golden Household, frames of honey and looped video, 2013.*

*04, 05 The Inhabitants, remnants and found objects, 2013.*





Q&A WITH ARTS WEEK COORDINATOR

# SARAH WEINER



BY ERIN WILSON



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**AS ONE OF THE LEADING EVENTS IN THE UNSW CALENDAR, COORDINATING ARTSWEEK'S MULTI-DISCIPLINARY, WEEKLONG AND CAMPUS WIDE PROGRAM IS NO EASY TASK. IN THIS INTERVIEW, ARTSWEEK'S 2013 COORDINATOR SARAH WEINER EXPLAINS THIS PROCESS, GIVES AN INSIGHT INTO THE SCOPE OF THE 2013 PROGRAM, AND ENGAGES IN A BEHIND-THE-SCENES DISCUSSION OF THE LOGISTICS, CHALLENGES AND REWARDS OF ORGANISING AN EVENT LIKE ARTSWEEK.**

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**THERE ARE A RANGE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EVENTS ACROSS THE UNSW CALENDAR- WHAT IS THE AIM FOR ARTSWEEK WITHIN THIS SCHEDULE, AND HOW DOES IT DIFFER FROM OTHER EVENTS?**

Artsweek is a unique cultural event that occurs annually at the UNSW Kensington and COFA campuses. It celebrates all things creative and encourages students, regardless of what they are studying, to either participate or engage with the activities, exhibitions and competitions occurring throughout the week.

Artsweek is an Arc affiliated volunteer program with a strong focus on enriching student life at UNSW. It offers students with a passion for the creative arts the opportunity to showcase their work to the university community, fostering an awareness of the creative arts on campus. As an event run by students for students, the 2013 Artsweek team have created a program that will hopefully appeal to all students at UNSW.

**YOU ARE THE COORDINATOR OF ARTWEEK 2013. WHAT DOES THIS ROLE ENTAIL AND WHAT SKILLS HAVE YOU NEEDED TO EMPLOY THE MOST? HAS IT BEEN WHAT YOU WERE EXPECTING?**

As the Artsweek Coordinator I am responsible for organising the whole event, and within this position I also double as the volunteer manager, production coordinator, exhibition coordinator and team leader. Since taking on this role I've employed my time management, organisation and communication skills, to help ensure that all projects are completed by certain deadlines.

I've absolutely loved being the Artsweek Coordinator. While it has been a real challenge, trying to juggle the responsibility with my university commitments, I have surrounded myself with a great team of volunteers as well as Arc staff who are always willing to help. This position has been everything I was expecting and more, and the lessons I have learnt along the way are invaluable. I would encourage anyone who is interested in pursuing a career in arts management to consider applying for the position of Artsweek Coordinator in 2014- it's well worth it!

**THERE ARE A MULTITUDE OF ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES AND MEDIUMS INCORPORATED THROUGHOUT THE ARTSWEEK PROGRAM, INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHY, THEATRE, MUSIC, STREET ART, SCULPTURE AND COMEDY. WHAT ARE THE GREATEST CHALLENGES OF CREATING A UNIFIED PROGRAM WITH SUCH A DIVERSE RANGE OF DISCIPLINES? DOES ARTSWEEK 2013 HAVE A THEME?**

I decided not to assign a theme to Artsweek this year. As an event that aims to celebrate ALL things creative, I didn't want to restrict who and what disciplines could be included within a program based on a particular theme. I felt that a theme would create limitations, and may deter students from getting involved. Artsweek 2013 welcomes all disciplines and mediums, and will showcase a bit of everything.

To make Artsweek more cohesive, promotional material such as posters, flyers, Artsweek tote bags and Facebook images all reflect a similar design aesthetic, created by the talented COFA Design student Thomas Bell. All Artsweek branding and signage will include

the Artsweek logo, to make clear to audiences that these events are all related to Artsweek. Also, expect certain events such as the opening launch party and Film Fest to combine a bit of art and a bit of music, to create a more festive atmosphere.

**HOW DO YOU PERSONALLY FEEL THE UNSW COMMUNITY GENERALLY VIEWS THE ARTS? WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR ARTSWEEK'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ROLE OF THE ARTS ON CAMPUS?**

Although only a small proportion of UNSW students study arts, I believe that everyone has the capacity to appreciate creative expression. Whilst studying at UNSW I have had classes at both the Kensington and COFA campuses, and while it is fair to say that the artistic culture at COFA is more developed, there are still elements of this culture at main campus that I will attempt to bring out through Artsweek. I hope that the UNSW community will gain a greater appreciation and awareness of the arts, and continue to support emerging student artists.

**TO WHAT EXTENT HAS FEEDBACK OR RESPONSES TO LAST YEAR'S PROGRAM AFFECTED THE APPROACH YOU'VE TAKEN TO PROGRAMMING THIS YEAR? WILL LAST YEAR'S PROGRAM FAVOURITES RETURN?**

When organising a major event, I think it is important to know what worked and what didn't work from the previous year, in order to make the next one bigger and better. With UNSW students being the major target audience for the event, I did speak to students about what they did and didn't enjoy from last year's program, and their responses did have an influence on some of the decisions made this year. Returning favourites include the Lenslife and Film Fest competitions, as well as the PostSecret Exhibition (located at the Whitehouse).

**AS ARTSWEEK IS A WEEKLONG, ANNUAL EVENT, WHAT TIME FRAMES HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING WITHIN, BOTH IDEALLY AND REALISTICALLY? IS THE LAST MINUTE RUSH INEVITABLE?**

I'm a bit of a perfectionist, so I prefer to have everything organised and completed in advance. Planning for Artsweek began in April 2013, and has since been a gradual process where ideas were discussed between the Artsweek operational team and volunteers, and then completed by a particular deadline. I don't predict that the last minute rush will happen, however it is inevitable that unexpected tasks may pop up.

**AS THE UNSW KENSINGTON CAMPUS IS QUITE LARGE, HOW DO YOU APPROACH THIS LOGISTICS OF THE LOCATION? IS THERE A CENTRAL HUB FOR ARTSWEEK ACTIVITY, OR WILL WORKS AND EVENTS BE SPREAD ACROSS THE CAMPUS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE? WHY HAVE YOU TAKEN THIS APPROACH?**

I dealt with the logistics of location by considering which areas on the main campus are where most students either walk past or occupy. Events within the program have been positioned in areas of high foot traffic, to increase exposure and the chance for student engagement and interaction. Most of the events have been positioned outside, from the Outdoor Sculpture and Installation Exhibition to the Creative Tent centrally located at the Quad.

**AS WITH MANY ART EVENTS, ARTSWEEK RELIES ON THE COMMITMENT OF A TEAM OF DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS. TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE, INCLUDING YOURSELF, TO BE INVOLVED AND WHAT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES ARE GAINED FROM INVOLVEMENT IN ARTSWEEK?**

People are motivated to volunteer in order to either learn or gain something from the experience. Many of the Artsweek volunteers expressed that they hope to develop their organisational, interpersonal and communication skills, as well as make new friends, be more exposed to the Sydney arts scene, and to try something new. As Coordinator it is my responsibility to ensure that the volunteers develop new skills and to have a positive volunteering experience.



**FUNDING IS AN ONGOING ISSUE ACROSS THE ARTS. HOW IS ARTSWEEK FUNDED, AND HAVE YOU FOUND THE LEVEL OF FUNDING SUFFICIENT FOR ACHIEVING THE PROGRAM AIMS?**

Artsweek is an Arc affiliated volunteer program, and all funding provided to run the event is given by Arc and interested sponsors. As Arc is a non-profit organisation we have to work with a relatively small budget. At times this has been a major challenge as it restricts the scale of certain events that we would like to run. However, to overcome this, volunteers have had an important role in assisting with various preparations for Artsweek, specifically the design and construction of outdoor sculptures and Artsweek promotional material. Their involvement gives them the opportunity to develop new skills and a sense of community, and their support, time and effort is highly valued and appreciated.

**WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST CHALLENGING OBSTACLE YOU HAVE FACED DURING THE ORGANISATION OF ARTSWEEK, AND HOW HAVE YOU OVERCOME, OR ATTEMPTED TO OVERCOME THIS?**

The most challenging obstacle I've faced personally is trying to balance my university work and Artsweek commitments. As an honours student, juggling my thesis and Artsweek has been extremely difficult at times, but

being organised and on top of my work has definitely alleviated the stress. In terms of organization, even after extensive promoting, lecture bashing, posterage and Facebook updates, it has been surprisingly difficult to receive applications for the Outdoor Sculpture and Installation and Film Fest competitions, especially when it is acceptable to submit works that have already been made. To overcome this issue the Artsweek Team and volunteers have reached out to friends who study Film and Sculpture, with the hope that they will submit a piece of work. Lecturers have also been approached to assist with event promotion and encouraging students to get involved.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY PREDICTIONS FOR THE EXHIBITIONS OR EVENTS YOU THINK WILL BE MOST POPULAR WITH AUDIENCES? WHAT MEASURES WILL YOU USE TO DETERMINE THE SUCCESS OF ARTSWEEK?**

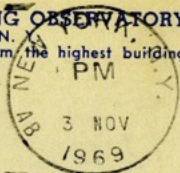
I predict that this year's Artsweek will be amazing, and that audiences will love everything about it! But more seriously, I hope that the PostSecret Exhibition will be as big of a hit this year as it was last year. I also hope new events within the Artsweek program, such as the Graffiti Wall on the Basser Steps and the Outdoor Sculpture and Installation exhibitions will be well received. Ultimately, success will not be measured by the number of people who participate in Artsweek, but by the number of people who speak positively about it.



## EMPIRE STATE BUILDING OBSERVATORY

New York, N. Y.  
Visitors enjoying the view from the highest building  
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POST CARD

I GOT UP AT  
4.28 P.M.

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NEW YORK N.Y.  
10012

ON KAWARA  
340 EAST 13TH STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10003

~~CFAHS, Research Project  
1101 Bay Street # A  
Santa Monica, Ca. 90405~~

The Center for  
Feminist  
Art Historical  
Studies

CFAHS, Research Project  
1137 Grant Avenue  
Venice, California 90291

IF YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A FEMINIST, WOULD YOU RESPOND BY USING ONE 8 1/2 x 11" PAGE TO SHARE YOUR IDEAS ABOUT WHAT FEMINIST ART IS OR COULD BE (USE THE PAGE IN ANY WAY YOU CHOOSE AND PLEASE DON'T FOLD. WE HOPE TO INCORPORATE YOUR RESPONSE IN ITS ORIGINAL FORMAT). THIS IS A RESEARCH PROJECT WHICH WE HOPE TO PUBLISH IN THE FUTURE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND PLEASE ALSO ENCOURAGE OTHER FEMINISTS IN ART-RELATED PROFESSIONS TO CONTRIBUTE.

IN SISTERHOOD

*Ruth Iskin Lucy Lippard Arlene Raven*

RUTH ISKIN

LUCY LIPPARD

ARLENE RAVEN

# POST SECRET

by Louise Mayhew

**'POSTSECRET IS AN ONGOING COMMUNITY ART PROJECT WHERE PEOPLE MAIL IN THEIR SECRETS ANONYMOUSLY ON ONE SIDE OF A HOMEMADE POSTCARD'.**

*Online phenomenon, community project, artwork?*

The humble postcard appears and reappears throughout art history. Just a glance at my desk provides an introduction to their proliferation. To my right is a postcard reproduction of Magritte's *La Page Blanche* (1967), a gallery purchase and souvenir of a trip to Brussels. Tacked to my left is an original postcard artwork from the late 1980s, a brilliant-in-pink feminist affirmation, it reads: 'Terrorist in you' (see fig. 4 over page). Finally, in a neat pile on my desk, a stack of invite/advertisement postcards from Kudos Gallery (2013) wait patiently to be used. Quick, easy and cheap to make, postcards were a feature of many postmodern art practices. With PostSecret guiding us, the following article provides a potted history of the postcard's appearance in conceptual, community and collective art practices.

*PostSecret began in the mid-2000s with an instruction typed on a blank postcard in black and white text.*

The austerity of these very first postcards brings to mind the conceptual art practices of On Kawara. Among his most memorable projects, *I Got Up* (1968–79) and *I Got Up At* (1974–75) recorded the artist's location, the date, and the time he awoke, on the reverse side of a local tourist postcard. The hyper-repetitive works were sent to a range of art world colleagues and friends, providing

simultaneously an intimate and highly regimented insight into the artist's life. (See fig. 1 opposite).

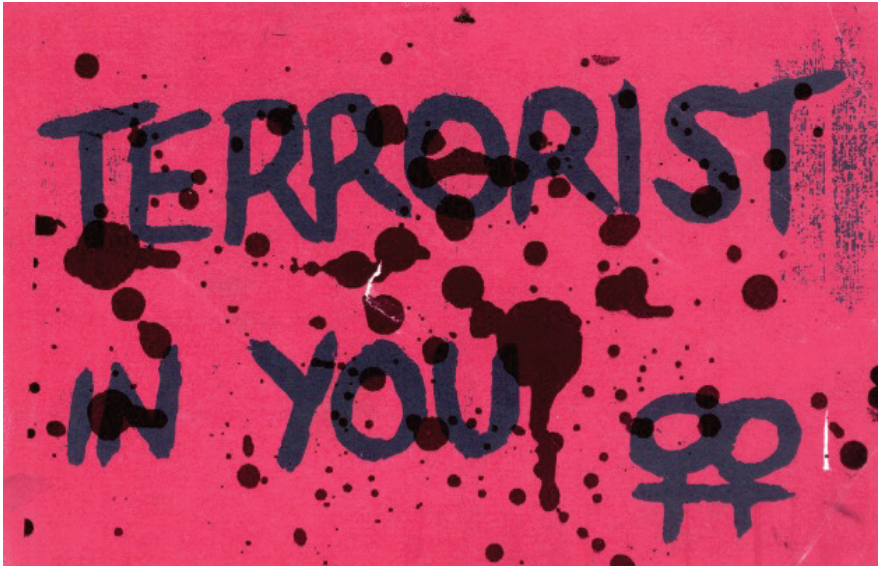
*The instructions invited the finder, for the postcards were left in public places to be found, to 'contribute a secret to a group art project'.*

Before the advent of the internet, community artist Vivienne Binns also collected postcards for the group art project, *Mothers' Memories, Others' Memories* postcard rack (1980). Working in Blacktown as an artist-in-community, Binns asked participants to research and memorialise the stories and herstories of their mothers and grandmothers. In common with PostSecret, *Mothers' Memories, Others' Memories* encouraged the act of personal reflection and communal sharing. By teaching participants vitreous enamel, a process normally used in craft and jewellery, photographs of maternal family members were turned into postcards that shimmered and glowed.

The instructional format of PostSecret also recalls a very different request-via-postcard. As founders of The Center for Feminist Art Historical Studies (Ruth Iskin and Arlene Raven) and a pivotal figure in America's nascent feminist art scene (Lucy Lippard), the trio were intent on researching, developing and defining "feminist art". Throwing the question out to friends and colleagues, the postcards were sent to women around







to an international exchange of cumulatively created artworks that bypassed the gallery system. (Forgive me a little detour: members of the NYCSDSV also donned shark fin swimming caps to partake in synchronised swimming at public pools! Image Bank had a member called Mr Peanut, who dressed up as an oversized peanut and ran for local election. I highly recommend looking them up.) Such alternative art practices remind us that artists have long eluded the gallery system in favour of self-created communities.

Generating five publications, ongoing international tours and a website visitor count of over 600 million, PostSecret is possibly the world's most successful and beloved community art project. Secrets of lies, fears and guilty consciences are gently placed beside requests, revelations and celebrations. Shifting out of the role of artist and beyond the role of curator, PostSecret's founder Frank Warren has become a caretaker.

***Secrets from fellow UNSW students will be on display at the PostSecret Exhibition in the Whitehouse during Artsweek (Week 5).***

AS

BANGKOK ART AND CULTURE CENTRE

มหาวิทยาลัย  
ราชภัฏ  
กรุงเทพ  
ศูนย์  
ศิลปวัฒนธรรม

ศูนย์บริการ  
การเงิน  
02-612 51

# BANGKOK ART AND CULTURE CENTRE

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By Rebecca Gallo







THAILAND IS SAID TO BE PRODUCING SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTING CONTEMPORARY ART IN ASIA, DUE TO ITS FREEDOM FROM THE GOVERNMENT OPPRESSION AND CENSORSHIP THAT TROUBLE MANY OF ITS NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, IS THE COVERT INFLUENCE A CULTURALLY CONSERVATIVE, ROYALIST NATION POTENTIALLY AS PROBLEMATIC AND STIFLING AS OVERT CENSORSHIP? CURRENTLY SHOWING AT BANGKOK ART AND CULTURE CENTRE (BACC), WATER OF LIFE: THE 2ND WHITE ELEPHANT ART AWARD SEEMS TO EMBODY A CONSERVATISM AND ECONOMIC RATIONALISM THAT IS AT ODDS WITH THE CENTRE'S MODERN, DEMOCRATIC ARCHITECTURE AND THE COUNTRY'S PURPORTED FREEDOM.

Water of Life is the second instalment of the White Elephant Art Award, conceived and funded by one of the country's largest companies, Thai Beverage Public Company Limited (ThaiBev). A swathe of large-scale, hyper- or photo-real genre paintings, alongside a few sculptural and print-based works, comprises the exhibition of finalists. The uniformity of scale, style and subject across the works is striking - although the award is centred on a theme, the sameness of the selected finalists suggests a single-minded and strangely unanimous judging panel, traditionalism among contemporary Thai artists, or both. Even in Australia's perennial crowd-pleaser the Archibald Prize for portraiture, which is generally panned by critics for its conservatism and populism, there is at least a range of styles, scale and media represented. Although this can result in a sense of incoherent tokenism, the opposite approach results in an exhibition of eerie similitude and blandness.

Sixty-plus works are hung across two expansive exhibition spaces with high ceilings, polished floorboards, muted natural light and curved walls. In spite of the well-proportioned spaces, the hang feels cramped, with most works measuring in excess of 2 square metres. Recurring themes of the pastoral idyll, family values and romanticism of simpler times reveal strong literal and allegorical responses to the theme. The Grand Prize-winning work, *Water, Life, Nature* by Chatchawan Wannapho is a pointillist-style matrix of green that, from a distance, describes the mottled mossy surface of a shaded creek. It is one of the more abstract works on show, and one of a minority that does not contain human figures.

The value of the winning honour is overshadowed by the inexplicable volume of awards, noted with wall plaques beside more than a third of the finalists' works, that also indicate their absorption into the ThaiBev collection. Amongst them are Somchai Kongwun's *I'm Home* and Chairat Sangthong's *Power of Life*, two disarmingly similar works in subject, composition and style. In both paintings, a strong elderly man is depicted leaning towards and instructing a child. The surfaces of both muted, hyper-real paintings is covered in a fine cross-hatching that unifies the composition and homogenises competing textures. I did a double take upon realising that these two adjacent works were by different artists.

This game of curatorial "snap" or "spot the difference" was repeated throughout the exhibition. Traditional landscapes are contrasted with bright modern clothing and refuse; children are lost in moments of quietude, gazing at their mirrored watery reflections. These scenes are almost unerringly presented in rich realist tableaux of sharp focus and intense detail. The power of these techniques is inevitably dulled when the same "trick" is slavishly exhibited side by side by several different artists.

With its mission to be a "centre of cultural diversity for a sustainable social development", it is surprising to see such a conservative show at the BACC. Through its welcoming architecture - the building features a wide central atrium where pop-up cafes, shops and restaurants rub comfortable shoulders with the main gallery spaces - it seems to successfully embody this vision. An elevated walkway links it directly to a network of paths feeding the local train station and surrounding shopping malls. It is not the rarefied, cathedral-quiet space of the elitist modern art institute. It feels democratic. Enconced in the exhibition space, I think back to the portrait artists in the BACC atrium who'll sketch your likeness for the equivalent of \$7, and wonder if the finalists in *Water of Life* approached their entries with the same goods-for-money approach.

The elephant in the room here is not in the award's name, nor in its subliminal conjuring of ThaiBev's biggest money-spinner, Chang (Thai for 'elephant') Beer. It is in the underlying relationship between art and money. It is in the seeming willingness of so many skilled artists to sublimate personal artistic vision in the quest for recognition and financial remuneration; in the mindless repetition this creates, and in the mind-numbing effect of uniformity.

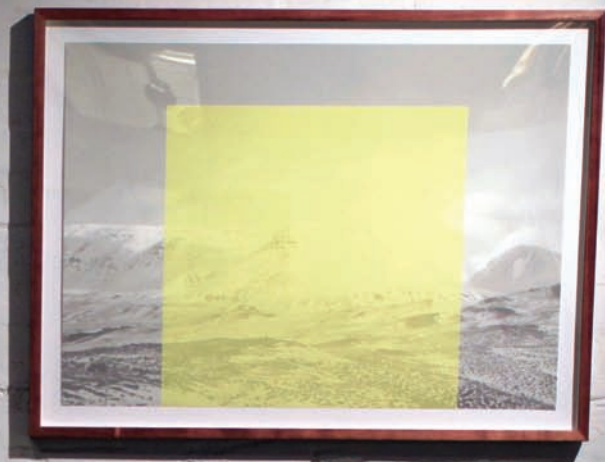
Happily not a reflection of the breadth and complexity of Thai art being produced today, the 2nd White Elephant Art Award does provide an insight into the impact of financial and cultural conservatism. The question as to whether it is financial or cultural concerns - or a combination of the two - that has produced the results presented in *Water of Life* remains unanswered. But it certainly seems that censorship and oppression are not the only barriers to creativity and inspiration.

# A HEAP OF BROKEN IMAGES

WORDS by *Frances Robinson*







**ART PROPER IS A NEW CURATORIAL COLLECTIVE FOUNDED BY ANNIKA KRISTENSEN AND SAMANTHA WILLIAMS. TOGETHER, THEY RECENTLY PRESENTED THEIR FIRST GROUP EXHIBITION A HEAP OF BROKEN IMAGES. A STRONG, YET UNASSUMING, CURATORIAL PREMISE COMPRISING DYSTOPIAN THEMES AND FRAGMENTED LANDSCAPES WAS FITTINGLY PRESENTED IN THE DILAPIDATED WAREHOUSE SPACE THAT WAS (SADLY, NO LONGER) ASSEMBLAGE GALLERY, IN CHIPPENDALE.**

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A heap of broken images takes its title from T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and acts as a bit of a disclaimer for the show. Conceptually, each of the eleven young Australian artists represented deal with elements of cultural wasteland, evoked from Eliot's multifaceted poem. With a few core artists informing the initial premise of the show, Kristensen and Williams allowed the exhibition to come about in an organic way that included sourcing artists who were quite literally making artworks from waste, referencing barren and impenetrable landscapes or broken contemporary realities.

In conversation with Kristensen, she explains that it was not the intent of the exhibition to have a heavy didactic theme, rather an encompassing 'feeling'. Strong geometric visuals across sculptural works, referencing mountainous terrain, are reflected in the silent, haunting landscapes of video works by Kate McMillan and Bridget Walker. Contextually, *The Waste Land* was chosen as a theme to fit the space: a forgotten warehouse overlooking the Chippendale complex upgrade – a never-ending building site full of fragmentary detritus in a contemporary society.

Wall texts were consciously excluded from the exhibition. Instead, a section of Eliot's poem was carefully curated for each work and posted under the correlating image in the catalogue. By reinterpreting the text and pairing it with each artwork, Kristensen and Williams conceptually challenge their visitors, rather than being overly didactic or illustrative, hoping to provoke parallel emotions about each individual work and its

relation to the poem. Some artworks displayed an uncanny likeness to the mysterious words, yet others felt as obscure as the poem itself. Either way, the experience of a non-informative text influencing an artwork dealing with dystopian ideals proved to be an intuitive accompaniment.

'All of the works are visually linked. Really, we just wanted to create a visually beautiful show', says Kristensen of *A heap of broken images*. Perhaps the seamless inclusion of the lyrical and poetic T.S. Eliot assisted with this. Visually, as a whole, the artworks had a sense of rawness about them that arose from the recycled and reclaimed materials used. The soft colour palette that was present in each of the works kept things peaceful, and the 'Wasteland' undertone that, although at times, sadly reflected our contemporary society, was understated and did not vie for attention. But, quietly, it was there.



01 Nadia Odlum, *Portal Two*, 2012 and Sarah Mosca, *Experiment AEA (Varmahlid)*, 2010. Installation view of 'A heap of broken images' (2013). Courtesy the artist. Photograph Tai Spruyt  
 02 Installation view of 'A heap of broken images' (2013). Courtesy the artists. Photograph Tai Spruyt  
 03 Katie Murray, *untitled*, 2013. Installation view of 'A heap of broken images' (2013). Courtesy the artist. Photograph Tai Spruyt



# Spin the Table

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WORDS by *Miriam Grundy*

**SPIN THE TABLE IS FITTING TITLE FOR WHAT THE COFA STUDENTS WERE TASKED WITH IN PRODUCING THEIR WORKS FOR THIS CLASS EXHIBITION. THEIR ASSIGNMENT WAS TO EXPLORE PROPAGANDA AND CERAMICS FOR THE TABLE WITH REFERENCE TO THE AGITPROP CERAMICS OF THE BOLSHIEVIK REVOLUTION.**

The school of Agitprop, a mix of agitation and propaganda, describes the various forms of artistic expression in this period that all had an explicitly political message.

While we are in the midst of an election, it is fair to say that even at its most vitriolic, it's probably not on par with any kind of Soviet revolution. So how to translate provocation and objectives of the Agitprop artists in the era of indifference?

Most of the works sided with function as the primary design principal, with the intended message being part of or in addition to the object. Some of the messages or meanings were more apparent than others, with the usual repertoire of first world problems such as body image, addiction to social media, idealised female anatomy and anti-depressants being topics that were questioned.

While all legitimate causes worth examining, they felt a little un-compelling when phrased in light of what had the potential to be examined in today's socio-political climate and in the context of the Agitprop movement. But, as stated in the

catalogue, the goal of the artists was to move away from the 'orthodox functionality' that is presumed in ceramics towards an exploration of form and meaning. In this regard, the works were successful.

Meet your meat by Min Shin Song presents itself as a classic white-china dinner service consisting of different sized plates and domes. Illustrated in great detail on each dome are different animals that are commonly found on the dinner plate. The cow has a certain supermarket logo for a tail and the pig could indeed fly; a comment on the factory farmed meat that is consumed without consideration.

Tweet your Feed by Larissa Silva consisted of a series of serving and side platters all sized and shaped in proportion to smart devices and tablets, illustrated with social media icons and interfaces. Playing on the idea of 'share' plates and the food-narcissism that is performed on social media Tweet your Feed is a relevant concept executed well, possessing also a great deal of commercial potential.



The most striking work of the exhibition and the most resolved in terms of form and meaning was *Constructing Madness* by Emilie Ristevski. The numerous stacks of bulbous, unique vessels explored notions of everyday madness that is otherwise called modern society. This beautiful assembly possessed form, fragility and presence. The vessels could be configured be both decorative and serviceable, described as 'familiar yet ambiguous forms.'

COFA senior lecturer, Roderick Bamford opened the exhibition by stating 'the ubiquity of objects of everyday life is often overlooked, but there was a period in history where they were powerful'. It is precisely this ubiquity that grants ceramics the agency to sneak in under the guise of objects of everyday life.

Bamford explains that the ceramic students of COFA are encouraged to explore aspects of design, art and digital media practice with relevance to ceramics:

*Spin the Table* explores both the contributions artists make to design and relationships between consumption and propaganda. Importantly, this cross-disciplinary approach to ceramics introduces the power of design thinking and it's 'instrumentality' as an important and creative driver of ideas.

This emphasis on design thinking, filtered through an aesthetic sensibility and driven by conceptual discussion has produced a showcase of the relevance and possibilities of contemporary ceramics.

