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2000

# Aureliae: 800 works from the Otago Polytechnic School of Art

Su Ballard

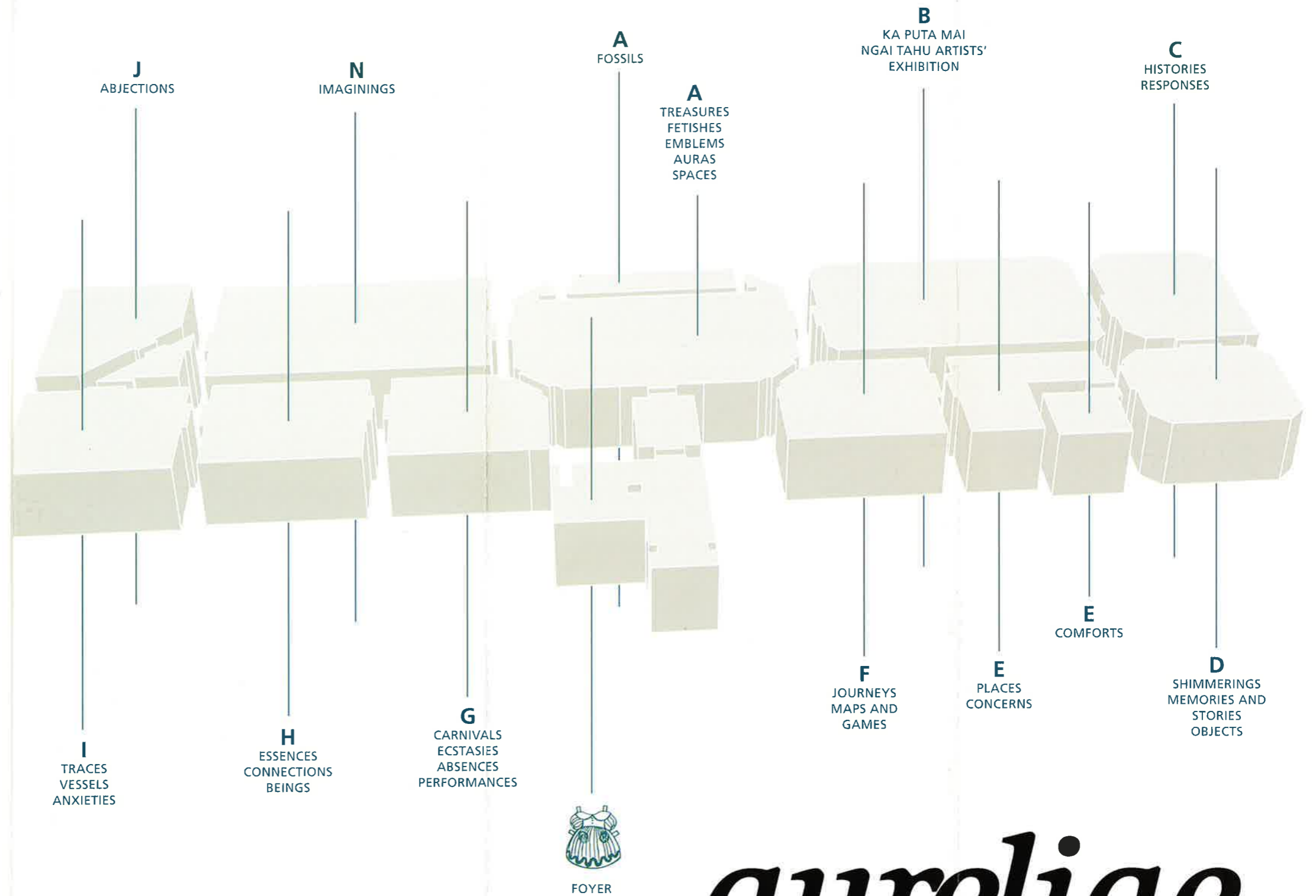
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# *aureliae*

*beings*    *connections*    *ecstasies*  
*fossils*    *histories*    *identities*  
*imaginings*    *journays*    *memories*  
*performances*    *places*    *stories*  
*vessels...*

<p>GALLERY: I-Traces ARTIST: Carley Anderson TITLE: <i>Lasting Impression</i> DATE: 1999 MEDIUM: Etched anodised aluminium, sterling silver</p>	<p>GALLERY: N-Imaginings ARTIST: Namsook Chang TITLE: <i>Where Are You?</i> DATE: 1998 MEDIUM: Clay</p>	<p>GALLERY: FOYER ARTIST: Faith McManus TITLE: <i>Remembrance for the Kickily Rubby Suite</i> DATE: 1995 MEDIUM: woodcut</p>
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800 WORKS FROM THE SCHOOL OF ART COLLECTION  
 LOGAN PARK  
 ART GALLERY  
 7 OCTOBER >>> 10 NOVEMBER 2000

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In 18  
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## Histories: Four key moments from 130 years.

### Con Hutton Era.

David Con Hutton brought from Scotland cases of models and casts for the new drawing school in the New Street Office (later called the Stock Exchange Building.) Thus began the first School of Art in New Zealand and the most southern school of art in the world. In 1876-77 it shifted to new rooms in the Moray Place Normal School. In 1894 the Dunedin School of Art and Design affiliated with the Art Department of the South Kensington School of Science and Art in London. Bright personalities were drawn to the School including Signor G. P. Nerli. When David Con Hutton retired in 1908, he left a legacy of academic excellence. "He left an art school whose roll numbered 498 and which functioned fully each week day 9.30am to 4pm and 5.45 to 9pm; and included Saturday morning classes." (H.V. Miller, *Otago School of Art Centennial Exhibition 1870-1970*, Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 1970, p.7)

### The La Trobe Scheme.

In the 1920s and '30s new staff members were chosen from young associates of the Royal College of Art under a scheme initiated by the then Director of Technical Education, Mr W. S. La Trobe. R.N. Field, W.H. Allen, Charlton Edgar and Gordon Tovey arrived under its auspices. Field and Allen found five students on the roll and only one other staff member. Other problems they faced were low standards, poor conditions and the School's inability to offer formal qualifications. Numbers grew as these lecturers conveyed an international modernist vision in an environment of creativity and experimentation.

Toss Woollaston would write: "Dunedin in 1932 was the most artistically enlightened place in New Zealand. They were looking at artists unheard of in Christchurch - Matisse, Picasso, Cezanne...and English ones like Matthew Smith, Mark Gertler, Roger Fry and the New Zealand born Frances Hodgkins. The one quality that united all these painters was excitement." (*Sage Tea: An Autobiography*, Auckland, Sydney, London: Collins, 1980, p.231)

### Gordon Tovey.

The opening of a purpose designed building on the corner of Tennyson Street and York Place coincided with Gordon Tovey's appointment as Head of School in 1937. Among his first students were Colin McCahon, Anne Hamblett, and Doris Lusk.

Tovey saw Western civilisation as over-intellectualised and was interested in Carl Jung's ideas on the collective unconscious and Herbert Read's related concerns with the education of children in a non-academic fashion. He also developed a close relationship with Maori. (see Carol Henderson's *A Blaze of Colour: Gordon Tovey artist educator*, Christchurch: Hazard Press, 1998, p.112-113). Tovey introduced nude models to the life drawing class; insisted on the individuality of art making; and promoted the integration of art with drama, music and movement. Probably his greatest contribution was to shift the school from the development of artistic skills within traditional boundaries towards an acceptance of the personal idiosyncrasies of creative individuals; to communal projects which could accommodate the work of a diversity of students; and to the crossing of boundaries between the arts.

Rosemary Entwisle writes of this time: "no other art school in the country was held in the same regard." (*The La Trobe scheme at the Dunedin School of Art*, Dunedin: Hocken Library, University of Otago, 1989, p.14)

### Integration with the Otago Polytechnic.

By 1965 the School of Art had become the Otago Polytechnic School of Art, with F. C. W. Staub and then W. J. Reed as its Head in a new location in Cargill St. By 1967 the School was able to offer a three-year Diploma. In November 1976 Jim Tomlin was appointed as Head of School, remaining until early in the year 2000. During his tenure the School grew, enabling it to offer first a Diploma in Craft Design and Ceramics, then the qualifications of a Bachelor of Fine Arts (1993) and most recently a Master of Fine Arts (1998). The number of teaching staff has grown from around a dozen in 1980 to 40 today. Rolls have grown to 285 students plus 140 evening students. The re-location of the School to Albany St in 1984 and the building of the new Leith Block in 1996 enabled both course integration and the development of a unified identity for the School of Art.

Leoni Schmidt and Bridie Lonie

## The School of Art: now and the future

During the late 1990s the School of Art has acquired a new maturity and a complex character.

On the one hand, there is a particular contrast between the old and the new. As the country's first public art school, we are walking towards the future with a firm eye on the past: we have conventions of the past at the very heart of the curriculum. The school is proud of its artisan culture, passing on the skills and methods of a diversity of arts, craft and scholarship practices to students. Equally, the school is a place of risk-taking and innovation where students and staff alike, are expected and encouraged to push the boundaries of their practices and to find their own voice and a personal direction.

On the other hand, the school thrives on a dynamic and ongoing debate about how to keep studio practices and theoretical activities in a productive relationship to each other. Without making things there is nothing to think and talk about, except what might have been. Without rigorous thinking tools – ways of writing and speaking about art – there is no community of dialogue to affirm, challenge and extend the artist.

The school is also outward looking and involved in its wider community through its offering of part-time classes, a vigorous artist residency programme, by working closely with art teachers and secondary school students and through partnerships with Ngai Tahu, creative industries and local businesses, community organisations and various government agencies.

The 1990s have seen a shift in students' expectations of an art school experience. Less concerned with romantic self-indulgence students are keen to plan a viable career in the arts and creative industries. While this might seem to be an inwardly focused concern, students are equally keen to make the most of their experience of the school as a community. The school is a community where students develop life-long relationships, learn how to form strategic alliances, debate what's hot and what's not in the art world and where they can count on being affirmed and challenged in equal measure.

Rob Garrett

## Curating the School of Art collection

The processes of curatorship are seemingly obvious: decisions are made in terms of the arrangement and display of a series of art works, judgements are discussed, and stories are told. But as Jennifer Fisher comments, this very process is loaded with ideology and convention. ("Trick or Treat: Naming Curatorial Ethics", in *Naming a Practice; Curatorial Strategies for the Future*, ed. Peter White, Banff Centre Press: Banff Alberta, 1996, p.208.) Aware of these debates, we approached this collection and sought to organise its effects. The exhibition is of necessity coded, firstly by its ownership and secondly by its display. We have chosen a coding for the display which we hope will generate a number of challenging intensities. These can be linked to the 17th-century French Academy's division of the arts into major subject categories or genres: history, the nude, landscape and still-life. In reference to these, we discovered many groupings in the collection: abjections, absences, anxieties, auras, beings, carnivals, comforts, concerns, connections, ecstasies, emblems, essences, fetishes, fossils, games, histories, identities, imaginings, journeys, maps, memories, objects, performances, places, responses, shimmerings, spaces, stories, traces, treasures, and vessels.

Whereas the traditional division of the Academy was hierarchical and fixed, we seek to blur conventional distinctions whilst still recognising their value as an approach to images. In conjunction with contemporary practices, all our groupings are plural, allowing for spaces between pairings. We asked questions: are maps landscape or history; traces can be seen as the results of both still-life and the nude; and can we really link fetishes with emblems? These questions helped us to construct a path that moves through the exhibition, but like any path it is designed to be wandered from: some viewers will stroll, others will seek further guidance in the form of texts, others will meander and find their own tracks through the forest. Like points on a map, or cities in a country, the groupings allowed us to energise particular objects, spaces and individuals in conversation with others. The relationships are generative rather than fixed, and to this end none are singular. You may find your own path between performances and memories, creating new stories and experiences. We hope that – like us – you can reflect on, and perhaps be transformed by, your engagements with these works.

Susan Ballard & Leoni Schmidt

Curators: Susan Ballard and Leoni Schmidt  
Curatorial Assistant: Bryony Allan  
Exhibition Technician: Nathan Thompson  
Catalogue Design: Warren Olds  
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Printing: Tablet Colour Print  
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DUNEDIN PUBLIC ART GALLERY

JACKS MITRE 10

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ELLIS FIBRE

STAFF AND STUDENTS OF THE OTAGO POLYTECHNIC IN PARTICULAR THE STAFF OF THE SCHOOL OF ART AND PROPERTY AND SERVICES

MOANA TIPA, SIMON KAAAN AND ALVA KAPA

TELECOM

AND THE HIGHER TRUST.

GALLERY: FOYE  
ARTIST: Ali B  
TITLE: *The Ra*  
DATE: 1999  
MEDIUM: Forge





## Mapping a collection

A collection is never fixed, and any identifiable collection is greater than the sum of its parts. As Susan Stewart comments: "while we can 'see' the entire collection, we cannot possibly 'see' each of its elements." (*On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1984, p.152). The Otago Polytechnic School of Art collection database lists 836 items, but this is not a complete record. There are other works that have perhaps fallen through cracks, while some works listed in the database may even dispute their own inclusion. Susan Pearce makes the suggestion that "perhaps the real point is that a collection is not a collection until someone thinks of it in those terms." ("The Urge to Collect" in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan Pearce, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p.158)

The Otago Polytechnic School of Art collection and the processes that lead to its exhibition, have enabled a number of discourses to happen around a large grouping of works. Together the works have found themselves to be a collection. Placed alongside each other they help trace a history of art making in the School of Art, while on a wider level they represent an asset held by the Polytechnic. The identity of the collection helps us recognise the formation of the identity of the School of Art.

Like many collections this one is founded on its repetition of key elements or sameness-in-difference; one work might echo another but it will not repeat it.

"the collection is a form of art as play, a form involving the reframing of objects within a world of attention and manipulation of context. Like other forms of art, its function is not the restoration of context or origin, but rather the creation of a new context, a context standing in a metaphorical, rather than a contiguous relation to the world of everyday life." (Stewart p.151-2)

The School of Art collection makes up the majority of this exhibition, supplemented by loaned works and performances, works that as yet have evaded the structures of a collection, and that consistently stand outside the format of the collectible. The School of Art collection needs these works to accompany it and to help it tell its stories. It is through this bringing together of parts that we begin to 'see' the collection for the first time.

Susan Ballard

GALLERY: G-Performances  
ARTIST: Lauren Kidd  
TITLE: All down hill from here  
DATE: 1997  
MEDIUM: Gelatin silver print

GALLERY: C-Histories  
ARTIST: James Kilgour  
TITLE: Art Room, Dunedin School of Art  
DATE: 1991  
MEDIUM: Oil on canvas  
CREDIT: reproduced with permission of the Hocken Library.

GALLERY: I-Traces  
ARTIST: Simon Richardson  
TITLE: Drawing  
DATE: 1996  
MEDIUM: Pencil, watercolour, paper

GALLERY: P-Journeys  
ARTIST: Peter Fitzpatrick  
TITLE: Latitude 79' 5 mins south/11 miles (detail)  
DATE: 1996  
MEDIUM: C-type print



**T**HEORY IS A WORD PEOPLE LOVE TO HATE. BUT WHENEVER PEOPLE DEVELOP THEIR IDEAS THEY ARE BOTH THINKING AND MAKING. THEORY IS AS MANIFEST IN VISUAL AND TACTILE MATERIALS AS IT IS IN WORDS; BUT SHARING THAT KNOWLEDGE TENDS TO NEED AT LEAST SOME WORDS. WORKING WITH ART THEORY IN AN ART SCHOOL IS ENORMOUSLY EXCITING, BECAUSE THE RESULTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP OCCUR IN WAYS THAT SHIFT BETWEEN THE LANGUAGES OF MAKING AND VERBAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGES. OFTEN THEY PERFORM IN PARALLEL; WE ENCOURAGE THIS PRACTICE, BECAUSE IT REFUSES TO GIVE EITHER PRECEDENCE AND ACKNOWLEDGES INTERACTION.

SO I REMEMBER RICH WORD IMAGERY SLIDING BETWEEN TRANSPARENCIES OF RED AND BLUE CELLOPHAN; ELONGATED DOLLS STRUNG ON PIECES OF STRING, AWKWARDLY FITTING INTO A SHELLACKED BODY; A SEMINAR WHERE GLASS BEADS MADE IN RED CROSS CAMPS WERE REUNITED WITH THEIR STORIES; TEXTILES WHICH ARTICULATE THE COMPLEXITIES OF RELATIONSHIPS WHILE INVOKING WARMTH AND SHELTER; THE LIP OF A CERAMIC VESSEL SPILLING UNCONTAINABLE NARRATIVES...

THE DELIGHT WHEN CONCEPT AND ARTWORK INTERLOCK SEAMLESSLY  
THE DELIGHT WHEN NEW WAYS OF THINKING ALLOW NEW WAYS OF WORKING  
WHEN THEORY AND PRACTICE MEET AS ARGUING FRIENDS.

BRIDIE LONIE

**I** PREPARE TO WEAVE, TO CONSTRUCT A SURFACE, AN IMAGE, A NEW OBJECT. THE SKETCH IS ROUGHED OUT - COLOURS PLANNED, STRUCTURE CONSIDERED, THREADS CHOSEN. SHORTHAND FORMS OF NOTATION ARE ACCEPTABLE, I THINK THE TERRITORY IS FAMILIAR.

THE THREAD RUNS BETWEEN MY FINGERS, SLIGHT TENSION HELD EVENLY, TURNING THE FRAME, MEASURING: BACK AND FORTH, BACK AND FORTH MANY TIMES MEASURING THE WARP LENGTH ESTABLISHING THE PARAMETERS OF THE CLOTH, A FOUNDATION OR OUTLINE OF WHAT WILL BE.

PARALLEL, ORDERED THREADS, THE PURITY OF A WARP IS INCREDIBLY SATISFYING, IF ONLY THIS WAS ENOUGH, KNOWING THE NECESSITY OF WEFT - THE INTERSECTING, CONNECTING ELEMENT, THE BACK AND FORTH OF CLOSED SPACE.

THE MIND MUST CONCENTRATE, OBSERVING, THINKING FORWARD, ANTICIPATING, AND YET ALSO QUIETING THE ANXIOUS MESSAGES AND RESTLESSNESS. IMAGES, COLOURS AND SYMBOLS ARE LAYERED, SPEAKING OF MY HISTORY AND MEMORY, LOCATING AND INTER-LINKING ME WITH OTHER HISTORIES. THROUGH THE WORK I ATTEMPT TO THINK MY POSITION, THE JOURNEYING ACROSS THE CONTESTED GROUND OF COLONISED TERRITORY, EXPLORING THE MULTITUDE OF VIEWPOINTS WHICH COEXISTENCE BRINGS.

KELLY THOMPSON

(EXTRACT FROM A JOINT PAPER WITH BRIDIE LONIE TITLED "ARTICULATING PROCESS", 1998)

A LOVE AFFAIR

**I** MOVE WITHIN YOUR SPACES  
LIGHTLY TOUCHING THE SURFACES OF YOU  
I INTERACT WITH PARTS OF YOU  
PASSAGES THAT ALLOW ME TO  
MINGLE AND IMMERSE MY BODY WITHIN YOU  
LONGING TO SATISFY NEEDS AND DESIRES TH  
ME FORWARDS  
I TASTE AND SENSE YOUR AROMAS  
YOU TEMPT ME  
I AM DRAWN IN  
SEDUCED, COMPLICIT IN THE GAME  
YOU CONSUME ME  
I LOSE MYSELF IN YOU  
(ALMOST)  
I EXPOSE VULNERABILITIES THAT WISH TO RI  
HIDDEN  
INVASIONS INTO THE PRIVATE  
YOU EXPLOIT MY DESIRES  
YOU PLEAD WITH MY INDIVIDUALITY  
(SILENTLY)  
I KNOW THIS YET I KEEP GOING  
WE HAVE A RELATIONSHIP  
BUILT UP DAY AFTER DAY  
I CONTINUE TRAVELLING YOUR SURFACES  
PILING UP THE BODIES, TEXTS AND MEMORIE  
EVERYDAY  
I AM ALONE WITH YOU GIVING TAKING  
MOVING IN SILENCE

WITH ALL TRAVEL  
THERE ALWAYS COMES A TIME  
EXCESS  
ALWAYS TOO MUCH  
I PANIC  
NEEDING TO GET AWAY  
I FEEL SATURATED, EXHAUSTED  
LOST FROM MYSELF  
HASTILY MOVING TOWARDS THE EXIT  
MY TROLLEY SPILLING BODIES IN MY WAKE  
I AM DESPERATE TO ESCAPE YOUR CLUTCHES  
I RUN  
I LOOK BACK  
YOU REMAIN  
I WILL BE BACK  
YOU WILL BE THERE WAITING

I ALWAYS PACK (IN) TOO MUCH WHEN I TRAV  
DO YOU EVER STICK TO YOUR SHOPPING LIST

CATHY HELPS

MY DIVINE WORLD DESCENDS FROM A DISTANCE, A VISION FOR I AM CHOSEN HIS DANTESQUE DESCENT AN ARCHING, GLEANING, METEORIC ANGEL CLOTHES ABLAZE, LIQUID ON LUMINOUS SKIN ILLUMINATING STARRY SPACE

ON MY FLESH A PARCHMENT HE WRITES REPENT AND I DO A THOUSAND TIMES OF A PASSION TOO PURPLE TOO POWERFUL ON HIS FLESH, I FIND TOUCHING, SOFTLY AS I KNOW DIG THEM MY HANDS IN THE DARK RED PASSION AND POSSESSION AND MY FACE TO HIS WE MEET WITH THIS HARD HAND TRACING ME FIERY FINGER WRITES US INTO TEMPTATION

I CAUGHT HER AS SHE FELL OUT OF LOVE UNDER A DIRTYING SKY HIDING IN CLOUDS OF SENTIMENT CALLED I LOVE YOU SHE HARDLY SLEEPS LIES DOWN HER PRAYER ON A WAFER OF DANGEROUS COMMUNION

IN A VAMPIRE DARKNESS THE SPACE YOU FILL IS ME YOU HOLY THING YOUR HEART STILL BEATING BE STILL MINE!

FLOWS THE BOLD VERMILION INDULGED AT ALTER RAIL

YOUR FLESH WAFER THIN, WAFER WHITE RENEWED IN MY MOUTH, ANGELS FALLEN AS BLACKEST BIRDS

VOLTAGED OUT OF LIGHT VAULT CLOSING ON THE GOLDEN THREAD RUNS OUT LIKE ROSARY

HIDES THE ROSE BETWEEN HER LEGS FINGERING THE DEW BEADS WHERE THE PLEASURE GROWS

DESIRE THAT PIERCES THE HANDS AND FEET NO LOVER IMMARCKED BY BLOOD DROPS OF MERCY THAT REVIVE THE BURNING, BLUSHING BODY IT IS LIGHT HEADED THIS FLUID ON MY SKIN AND SHIFTING LINES I AM NOT WHAT I WAS.

ANITA KING

STANDING, FEET BRACED THIGH DEEP IN THE FLOW; I CAST MY NET. IT DRIFTS, AND THEN JOINS WITH THE CURRENT. WAIT. I DRAW THE NET BACK. TANGLED IN ITS MESH ARE WORDS, SENTENCES, IMAGES, THOUGHTS. I COLLECT THEM AND CAREFULLY EXAMINE EACH, DECIDING THEIR USEFULNESS, SELECTING SOME AND DISCARDING OTHERS. I ATTEMPT AN ARRANGEMENT.

COLLECTION AS A VERB, AN ACT OF BRINGING THINGS TOGETHER, AN ACCUMULATION. I THINK OF MY MAKING COLLECTING AS AN ARCHIVAL ACT. I COLLECT, ARCHIVE, A THING NOT BECAUSE I HAVE A USE FOR IT TODAY, BUT BECAUSE A USE FOR IT MAY BECOME APPARENT IN THE FUTURE. THE THINGS CONSTRUCTING THE COLLECTION LOOK TOWARDS SOME POTENTIAL USEFULNESS, SOME NOT YET PRESENT MOMENT OF USE. IT IS AN INFORMED COLLECTION OF NOT-KNOWINGS.

I AM CONSTANTLY REARRANGING FRAGMENTS, MAKING PATTERNS, FINDING RELATIONSHIPS. MARKS MADE FOURTEEN MONTHS AGO NOW CONNECT TWO RECENT ALTOGETHER INDEPENDENT ELEMENTS. THE VOICES ARE DIFFERENT BUT THE TONAL SHIFT SEEMS TO WORK. THE COLOURS BOUNCE RATHER THAN BLEND. IT'S WRITING WITH SCISSORS, NEEDLE AND THREAD.

GRANT THOMPSON

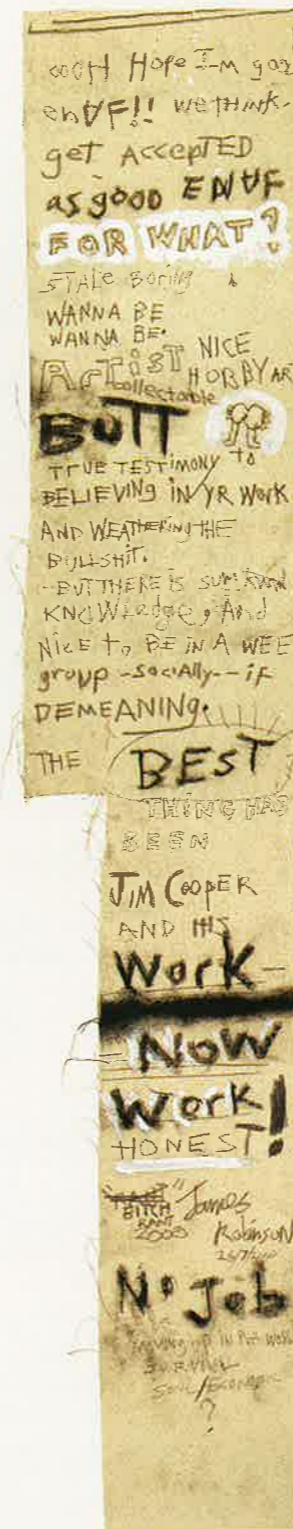
GALLERY: D-Shimmerings  
ARTIST: E-Comferts  
ARTIST: Donna Nezel  
TITLE: Emma Sanson  
MEDIUM: Kinship  
DATE: 1994  
MEDIUM: mixed media  
STRUCTURE: the series  
DATE: 1997  
MEDIUM: Kinship  
ARTIST: Kinship  
TITLE: Kinship  
DATE: 1994  
MEDIUM: Kinship  
ARTIST: Kinship  
TITLE: Kinship  
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ARTIST: E-Comferts  
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TITLE: Kinship  
DATE: 1994  
MEDIUM: Kinship  
ARTIST: Kinship  
TITLE: Kinship  
DATE: 1994

GALLERY: I-Vessels  
ARTIST: Anya Balm  
TITLE: Anya Balm  
DATE: 1998  
MEDIUM: 3 knollens knitting cups  
ARTIST: D-Shimmerings  
TITLE: D-Shimmerings  
DATE: 1994  
MEDIUM: D-Shimmerings  
TITLE: D-Shimmerings  
DATE: 1994  
MEDIUM: D-Shimmerings  
TITLE: D-Shimmerings  
DATE: 1994



JAMES ROBINSON  
BITCH RANT  
2000  
CHARCOAL AND  
PAINT ON CANVAS



Another request. I replace the receiver and retreat to reflecting.

I select and reject on demand. Show work, show process. Creativity presented in the dark, reduced to light through glass and film.

From the body of my work I have **ripped** fragments, cut from the coherence of the whole, laid out, side by side. From the **pattern** that constitutes the whole, from a thousand repetitive strokes, the uncounted of obsession, some **shreds** are torn.

A macro lens invades

skins of thinking, skins of ephemeral ideas. **Red bleeds.**

Simulacra form; suddenly dissolve - the flesh of creativity mapped.

Minute detail scrutinized by seemingly interested strangers masked by the stiffness of the black. In the dark, close-up they peruse, doze, judge in a few minutes twenty years of feeling, thinking, touching, building.

A life flashed on, flashed off in the dark. A brief reflection stripped of materiality incompatible with

the long hours of making, with the structures of **thinking**, with the skins of ephemeral ideas; with wound and bound surfaces, **skins** of protective binding;

Forms for contemplation stripped of their corporeality.

Textures, structures and space **dissolved**

into emulsion alone, glimpsed in the dark.

Art making, the objects and ideas of art liquefied into narrative for constant retelling.

Lyn Plummer