



ART GALLERY
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Education Resource

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INTRODUCTION

The *2008 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art* entitled *Handle with Care* exhibition presents a range of contemporary art practice in Australia which draws our attention to the fragility of life, our culture and, of the environment.

The exhibition includes recent works of art by twenty-two artists and artist teams, living and working in Australia. Their works draw from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and experiences that address some of the most important issues facing our world today - from threatened natural environments to socio-cultural issues which have resulted from the displacement of Indigenous and immigrant communities.

The artists diverse use of themes and media are brought together through the exhibitions focus on fragility.

Fragility of the environment, culture and life. It is hoped that the exhibition will encourage students to consider the ideas and concerns being shared by the artists in relation to their everyday lives.

WAYS TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This resource aims to provide an introduction to the exhibition, information about key works of art, as well as presenting themes and issues for students to consider as discuss. It also suggests ways of looking at contemporary art.

This resource is intended for use by teachers and students of primary and secondary schools as well as special interest groups.

The images, activities and ideas assist with pre-visit activities. Teachers are advised to adapt this resource to suit their students' needs or to intergrate areas of this resource into existing units of study.

Key terms in **bold** are defined in the Glossary on page 22.

TEACHER INFORMATION

The exhibition *Handle with Care* showcases the recent work of twenty-two artists and artist teams, living and working in Australia.

The exhibition is curated by Felicity Fenner, Senior Curator at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery and Deputy Director, Centre for Contemporary Art and Politics at the University of New South Wales, College of Fine Arts.

Key concepts

Fragility of:

- Environment
- Culture
- Life

Resource

This resource incorporates points from the Curator's catalogue essay, various writers and artist statements. It is designed to encourage students to take a closer look at selected works of art, and explore the key concepts of the exhibition.

Additional resources

Visit the Art Gallery of South Australia's website at <http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au> for artist floor talks, catalogue information, related books and website links.

Curriculum connections

The exhibition resource can be adapted for different contexts and year levels. It has been designed to intergrate the SACSA Essential Learnings, and links most directly to:

- Arts - Visual Arts: 'Arts in contexts'
- Society and Environment: 'Societies and cultures' and 'Time, continuity and change'.

Recommended pre-visit learning

Investigate questions: *What do I already know? What do I want to find out?*

Develop understandings about each of the key concepts.

Read about the artists works of art exhibited in the education resource.

Investigate artists exhibiting in the 2008 Adelaide Biennial.

Discuss how contemporary artists today may use a variety of media and art forms to communicate their ideas.

At the exhibition

While viewing individual works of art students may discuss the following with a friend:

- What was your first reaction to the work of art?
- What do you think the artist wants to communicate?
- Does the work encourage you to think about aspects of our shared environments, or connections with others in a new way?
- Is there a connection between the artists choice of media, the way they have been used, and the work of arts message?

Organising a visit

Admission to the exhibition is free. A limited number of Education Officer floor talks are available. Schools intending to visit are required to book through Education Services.

Online bookings www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/content-education or telephone 8207 7033

Enter the Art Gallery via the West Wing (round doors) and register your group upon arrival at the Information desk. Wheelchair access is available throughout the Art Gallery.

If time permits, students may like to choose a work or art for closer study.

Teachers should note that several works of art are presented as video installations. For this reason it is recommended that additional time be scheduled for viewing. The duration of the dvd's range from five to fourteen minutes.

As bag storage is limited please only bring essentials such as medications and food.

Discuss Art Gallery of South Australia expectations

- Please stay with your group.
- Walk safely around the works of art and enjoy looking without touching
- Talking is an important part of learning but please remember to use quiet voices in this public space
- Photography is not permitted inside the Art Gallery
- Pencils and clipboards are required if students are set written tasks at the time of viewing the exhibition. (A limited number of clipboards are available from the Cloak desk)

ALFREDO & ISABEL AQUILIZAN

Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan, an artist couple working together for more than a decade, are among the most active and influential artists from the Phillipines today.

The Aquilizan's recent settlement in Australia and their obligation to construct a new home - not only a physical house, but also a new kind of home-ness, or a new communal relationship with society - in this land strangers have provided them with an even more relevant opportunity and more intense energy to carry out their creative practice. Art for them is a way to adapt to a new reality, to search and construct a new identity, a process of de-identification and re-identification.

ADDRESS

2008

from the project *Another Country*, 2007-08
personal effects, Sampaguita scent
300 x 400 x 300cm

Courtesy of the artists and Jan Manton Art, Brisbane

BIOGRAPHY Alfredo Juan Aquilizan (born 1962, Ballesteros, Cagayan, Philippines) gained his MA in Fine Arts from the Norwich School of Art and Design, Anglia Polytechnic University, England. Maria Isabel Gaudinez-Aquilizan (born 1965, Manila, Philippines) has a Bachelor of Communication Arts from Assumption College, Makati City, Philippines, and a background in theatre. The artists have worked collaboratively for over a decade and their projects have been selected for many large exhibitions internationally, including the Havana Biennale (1997, 2000), the Asia-Pacific Triennial, Brisbane, and the First Asian Art Triennial, Fukuoka (both in 1999). Other major exhibitions include the Busan Biennale (2002); Venice Biennale (Zones of Urgency, 2003); Gwangju Biennale (2004); Echigo Tsumari Triennial, Japan (2006); Biennale of Sydney (2006), and Homebound, Centro Cultural Conde Duque, Madrid (2006). Their work is held in leading institutional collections around Asia. In late 2006 Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan emigrated from Los Baños, Laguna, to Brisbane, where they are represented by Jan Manton Art, Brisbane.



DADANG CHRISTANTO

Dadang Christanto is committed to exposing through his works of art society's relentless oppression of the powerless.

Christanto's art epitomises the strong element of social commentary that emerged in Indonesian art during the 1990s in response to the increasingly repressive rule of President Soeharto's New Order government. The loss of human rights in Indonesia gave rise to corruption in the business sector and led to a variety of social injustices.

Oppression, poverty and violence are some of the social problems that Christanto speaks about through his work.

For the artist it is the indelible personal recollection of the night, when he was eight years old, when an army truck came to his family's house and removed his father. Tan Ek Tjiu has never been seen again.

In the months following the so-called 'failed Communist coup' of 1965, as many as half a million Indonesians were killed.

Christanto's art urges us to remember, and through remembrance, seek reconciliation for the blood on the hands of people everywhere.

Christanto estimates that, during the twentieth century, the number of individuals who died as a result of systematic violence is equivalent to two million for each year of the century.

His art reminds us never to close our eyes or forget.

NEVER ENDING STORIES

2007-08

acrylic on used cardboard

150 x 500 x 500cm

Courtesy of the artist

BIOGRAPHY Dadang Christanto (born 1957, Tegal, Central Java, Indonesia) emigrated to Darwin in 1999. He has lived and worked in Canberra and Sydney and is currently based in Brisbane. Christanto has shown widely in major international exhibitions, including the Asia-Pacific Triennial (1993, 1999); Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (1998); Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2000); Venice Biennale (2003) and Echigo Tsumari Triennial, Japan (2006). In 2004 his permanent work of art, Heads from the North, was installed in the Sculpture Garden of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. They Give Evidence, the 2003 inaugural exhibition at the contemporary Asian Gallery, Art Gallery of New South Wales, was re-presented for exhibition there in 2005. In 2007 Christanto was artist-in-residence at the Manukau School of Visual Arts in Auckland. During 2007 he also held exhibitions in Brisbane, Canberra, Sydney and Jakarta, and staged performances in Auckland and at the Australian National University in Canberra. Christanto is represented by Jan Manton Art, Brisbane.



LORRRAINE CONNELLY- NORTHEY

Lorraine Connelly-Northey's sculptural wall pieces, each called *O'Possum Skin Cloak*, are embedded with memories.

The artist's skin cloaks are skillfully crafted from found materials, especially rusty metals and wines, sometimes embellished with feathers.

Far from being nurturing, many of these cloaks are threatening. As Judith Ryan has written:

*"The use of rusted metal and wire mesh gives the work a conceptual edge that causes the viewers to reflect upon the brutal history of dispossession, loss of language and land rights experienced by Indigenous peoples in Victoria."*¹

The sculptures in this exhibition refer to 'O'Possum Skin Cloaks', while they are traditionally known as 'Possum Skin Cloaks'. Connelly-Northey's choice of 'O'Possum' creates an unsettling formality. Connelly-Northey grew up in the homelands of the Wamba Wamba and Wadi Wadi peoples. Skin cloaks were vital to the lives of the people from south-eastern Australia for thousands of years prior to white settlement.

Worn fur side in, the skins were decorated and sometimes rubbed with ochre. The garment had many other uses such as blankets, sleeping mats and pillows. Connelly-Northey's lifesize, skeletal cloaks in the sparse forms and craggy materials celebrate the traditions of Aboriginal Australia as they force recognition of discomfoting truths.

1 - Judith Ryan, 'Lorraine Connelly-Northey: Hunter-Gatherer', 2006 Contemporary Commonwealth, NGV, 2006 pg 56.

O'POSSUM SKIN CLOAK

2007

fencing wire with Emu feather
110 x 125cm, Private collection

BIOGRAPHY Lorraine Connelly-Northey (Waradgerie; born 1962, Swan Hill, Victoria) is of Waradgerie descent on her mother's side and Irish descent on her father's. Her desire to reclaim the Aboriginal heritage of her mother's people has led her to rediscover her childhood environments, namely, the Mallee and Riverina, in a journey to acquire knowledge of the traditional Aboriginal lifestyle. In the last five years the artist has participated in a number of group exhibitions at Object Gallery, Sydney; Craft Victoria, Melbourne; and Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery. In 2006 Connelly-Northey's work was included in two major exhibitions at the National Gallery of Victoria: Landmarks and Contemporary Commonwealth. Her work is in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria, Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery, Flinders University Art Museum and the Art Gallery of South Australia. Connelly-Northey recently relocated from Swan Hill to Melbourne, where she is represented by Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne.



JAMES DARLING & LESLEY FORWOOD

James Darling and Lesley Forwood live on a property, Duck Island, in the Upper South-East of South Australia. The land degradation in this area is severe.

Their approach to land and water management includes the practice of gentle non-intrusive land clearing that resulted in huge mallee root piles. It inspired them to build forms which linked nature with humankind.

'Creativity and originality are basic to (our) farming. You can't leave art out of anything' state Darling and Forwood.

The sculptural works of Darling and Forwood, constructed of mallee roots, have provided some of the most memorable art from the land this country has seen. Using elements of the natural world, they direct attention to its power, beauty, productivity and wonder, as well as the very fragility of this earth.

The Didicoolum Drain extension is serious. It is a highly contentious 32km section of drain and it is the most recently completed drain in a 650km, \$78 million government drainage scheme, vehemently opposed by many Upper South East Region of South Australia. The drainage scheme directly affects the land owned by Darling and Forwood.

They believe in minimum-impact, flood-in flood-out surface water management and not deep drainage.

Troubled Water: Didicoolum Drain Extension, a life size cross section of the actual drain next to a public road, is blatantly political. The installation is successful because it is both informative and poetic. It is provocative and supports artists as agents for social change.

TROUBLED WATERS: DIDICOOLOUM DRAIN EXTENSION

South Australia, 2008

10.5 tonnes mallee roots & photographs

Courtesy of Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide

BIOGRAPHY Artists James Darling (born 1946, Melbourne) and Lesley Forwood (born 1950, Tailem Bend, South Australia) are also farmers and conservationists. Their art materials – tonnes of mallee roots – have been preserved from early clearing days on their farm, Duck Island, in south-east South Australia, where they moved in 1976. Their mallee root installations were first exhibited in *Define the Country* at Riddoch Art Gallery in 1994. Recent group exhibitions include *Chemistry*, Art in South Australia 1990–2000, Art Gallery of South Australia (2000); *Wild Nature*, Jam Factory, Adelaide (2002); *Empathy: Beyond the Horizon*, Pori Taidemuseo, Finland and Artspace, Sydney (2001–02); and *Wonderful World*, Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide (2007). Individual projects include *Triangle 1*, Centro Cultural Conde Duque, Madrid, 2002; *Planting Roots in Paris*, Australian Embassy Gallery, Paris (2002–03); *Triangle 2*, The Esplanade, Singapore, 2005; and *Circle 1 – Roots across the World*, La Défense, Paris, 2006. Darling and Forwood are associated artists of Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide.



JANET LAURENCE

Janet Laurence creates works of art in painting, sculpture, installation, photography, architectural and landscape interventions.

The major themes that have emerged in her work includes: the relationship between the museum, the natural world, and notions of preservation, the exploration of natural and urban elements; alchemy and the transformation of elements from one state to another; and the human impact. Laurence is deeply concerned with the change, and asks us to look, hear, feel, smell and look again at the natural world - its architecture, its cultural history, space and colour.

It seems that much of the desolation that has currently gripped the Australian landscape is beyond healing. Laurence explores what it might mean to heal the natural environment.

Heart Shock is a suspended large dead tree branch protruding from a wall, into the gallery space. Elongated plastic tubes that have been treated with some kind of fluid from within protrude like rain from the edges of the branches. These tubes are at once a laboratory - a prosthetic vascular system for a 'body' that has expired.

Laurence's work alerts us to the dependencies between water, life, culture and nature in our ecosystem. She reminds us that art can act as a kind of transformation point for ideas and it can provoke its audience into a renewed awareness of our environment.

HEART SHOCK

2008

branches from a tree with latex tubing and glass vials containing organic substances
Courtesy of the artist and Art One Gallery, Melbourne

BIOGRAPHY Janet Laurence (born 1947, Sydney) has held over 40 solo exhibitions around Australia and in Japan and, most recently, in London at the Bartlett School of Architecture (2007). Group exhibitions include the 9th Biennale of Sydney (1992), Australian Perspecta (1985, 1991, 1997) and the Echigo Tsumari Triennial in Japan (2003, 2006). Public commissions and architectural collaborations include Australian War Memorial, Canberra (1993); Museum of Sydney (1994, with Fiona Foley); Central Synagogue, Sydney (1999, with Jisuk Han); Sydney Olympic Park (2000); Australian War Memorial, Hyde Park, London (2003, with Tonkin Zulaikha Greer architects); CH2 Building for Melbourne City Council (2006); and Changi Airport, Singapore (2007). Laurence was awarded a Visual Arts/Craft Fund Fellowship from the Australia Council in 1992 and a Churchill Fellowship in 2006. In 2005 her work was the subject of a survey exhibition at the Australian National University's Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra, and a film by Richard Mordaunt. Laurence is represented by Arc One Gallery, Melbourne, Jan Manton Art, Brisbane, and Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth.



ANTHONY MANNIX

BIOGRAPHY Anthony Mannix (born 1953, Sydney) is a self-taught artist and writer. He studied anthropology at Macquarie University in 1978. In 1979 he started writing and his first drawing was made in 1980, as he experienced a psychotic episode. His art has been featured in numerous exhibitions in Australia and abroad, including Bodies of Transgression: Hedging the Edge by Self-Taught Artists, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, 1999. His work is in the Laverty Collection, Sydney, and in the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, and his writings have been broadcast on various radio programs. Publications include Vehicles (with Philip Hammial), 1985. With Hammial, he founded the Australian Collection of Outsider Art in 1984. In 2006–07 Mannix's paintings and journals featured in For Matthew & Others: Journeys with Schizophrenia at Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Penrith Regional Gallery & the Lewers Bequest, Sydney, and Bundoora Homestead Arts Centre, Melbourne. He lives and works in Blackheath in New South Wales.



BERT'S STORY

2006

ink, acrylic and varnish on paper

55.5 x 48.6 x 5cm

Courtesy of the artist

TOM MULLER

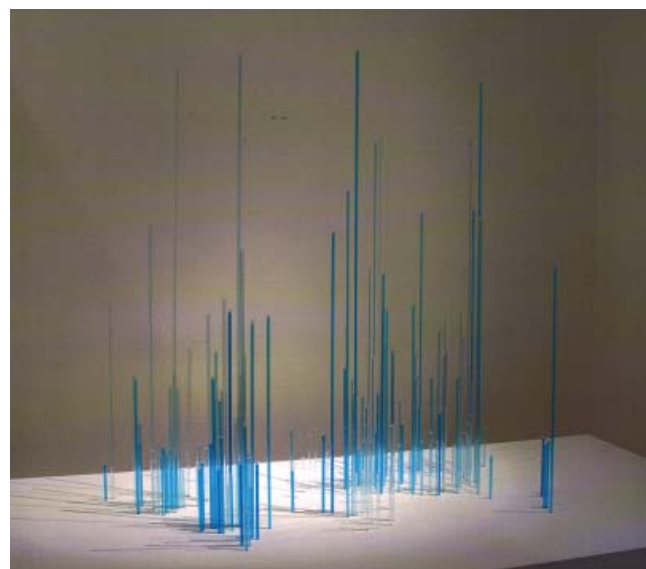
BIOGRAPHY Tom Müller (born 1975, Basel, Switzerland) gained a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from Curtin University of Technology, Perth, in 2000. He has issued 'world passports' online, posed as the concierge of a hotel and opened Supermart (2003), a supermarket for limited-edition works of art. Müller has participated in a number of group exhibitions, including Primavera, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2005; Mix tape, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 2005; Chart, John Curtin Gallery, Perth, 2006; Fremantle Print Award, Fremantle Arts Centre, 2006; and Paper, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2006. He has worked as an assistant to Ilya and Emilia Kabakov in New York and received several commissions, including the facade design for the Spectrum Building in Perth (2007). Grants include an Advanced Visual Arts Scholarship from the Italian Fondazione Antonio Ratti (2000), and New Work funding from the Australia Council for the Arts (2005, 2007). He is represented by Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth.

LIQUID EMPIRES

2008

glass, water, dye

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth



DOROTHY NAPANGARDI

BIOGRAPHY Dorothy Napangardi (Walpiri; born c.1956, Tanami Desert, Northern Territory) is one of Australia's most highly acclaimed Aboriginal artists. She paints a women's ceremonial site known as Mina Mina, the artist's custodial country near Lake Mackay in the Tanami Desert, north of Yuendumu. Her work has featured in exhibitions throughout Australia, as well as in Europe and North America. In 2001 she won the prestigious National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award and in 2002 her work was the subject of a major survey exhibition and publication produced by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney – *Dancing Up Country: The work of Dorothy Napangardi*. Her paintings are in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria and the Art Gallery of South Australia, as well as in many regional and corporate collections in Australia and the United States. Napangardi is represented by Gallery Gondwana in Sydney and Alice Springs. She is based in Alice Springs.



MINA MINA COUNTRY

2007

acrylic on linen

198 x 132cm

Courtesy Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs



BRONWYN OLIVER

Bronwyn Oliver used sculpture to explore the nature of things in the natural world by exploring the organic shapes and structures of plant and animal forms.

Oliver throughout her career, used a traditional approach to her use of materials, creating works of art the way sculptors since the **Bronze age** have made objects from **fabricated** and cast metal.

The design processes, the making and completion of Oliver's works were the result of a highly developed methodology, extraordinarily focused discipline and considerable physical and mental pain.

Oliver uses lines in the form of open webs to dense masses to define cubic space. The positive and negative spaces allow us to see the outside, at the same time as being able to read the inside.

There are both **physical** and **perceived tactile** qualities too in Oliver's works. Soft as the larger forms expand, and prickly as the outer and occasional inner edges turn sharp and nasty.

Oliver is able to play on the viewer's emotions as the works are powerfully seductive. Once entered, engrossed in the detail, we are trapped within the most beautiful cages, mazes and blind alleyways.

BIOGRAPHY Bronwyn Oliver (born 1959, Inverell; died 2006, Sydney) was one of Australia's foremost contemporary sculptors. She gained a Bachelor of Education (Art) from Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education, Sydney (1980) before winning a NSW Travelling Art Scholarship and subsequently completing an MA (Sculpture) from Chelsea School of Art, London in 1983. Oliver spent the next two decades working intensively in the creation of sculptures for exhibition and commission. She was awarded the prestigious Moët & Chandon Australian Art Fellowship in 1994 and was shortlisted for the Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award (2001) and the Clemenger Contemporary Art Award (2006). She was selected for Australian Perspecta (1991), the Asia-Pacific Triennial (1993) and the inaugural Beijing Biennale (2003). Major commissioned sculptures were undertaken for the Botanic Gardens, Sydney, Queen Street Mall, Brisbane, the University of New South Wales and many corporate and private collections. The Estate of Bronwyn Oliver is represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, and Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne.

STROKE

2006
copper
52 x 260 x 9cm
Private Collection



**KATE
ROHDE**

Kate Rohde's twenty-first century **Wunderkammer** combines the zoological, the museological and the fantastical.

Rohde grew up in the Dandenongs, now the leafy outskirts of Melbourne, but once the epitome of Australian wilderness.

Like Eugene von Guérard's romantic visions of the Australian landscape Rohde's installations have a sense of synthetic romanticism. Her created Universe parodies the absurd nature of **culture**. Species are created with **faux** nature: paper cut blooms, outcrops of plastic crystals and papier-mâché **grottos**.

Rohde's encases her displays in a garishly ornate **vitrines** of cast resin flora and fauna, which attempts to improve on nature.

These exuberantly kitsch environments are far removed from the Renaissance examples of fine craftsmanship, offering little eye-foolery. Their perverse and crude luxury offers a warning against our frantic quest for control over nature.

IN MY NATURE

2007-08

polyester resin, polyurethane foam, automotive enamel paint, acrylic paint, acrylic gap filler, air dry clay, MDF, pine timber, rice paper, pastel paper, papier mâché, floral tape, aluminium armature wire, sheet aluminium, faux fur, polymer clay, masking tape, chicken wire, glitter, perspex, flock, polystyrene. 12 pieces: dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

BIOGRAPHY Kate Rohde (born 1980, Melbourne) completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) at the Victorian College of the Arts in 2001. Since then she has held several solo exhibitions and been involved in numerous group shows, including *Some kind of empire*, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne (2006) and *Strange Cargo*, Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales (2006). Her most recent exhibition was *In My Nature*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney (2007). In 2006 she was a finalist in the Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award and in 2008 she will stage a solo exhibition at the TarraWarra Museum of Art, Victoria, and undertake a residency in Japan at Tokyo Wonder Site. Her work is held in the collections of Artbank, Newcastle Region Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Victoria. Rohde lives and works in Melbourne and is represented by Kaliman Gallery, Sydney.



**KYLIE
STILLMAN**

Kylie Stillman's *Red Maple* is created by using two hundred sheets of full-scale plywood. This is a reality check for pine plantations everywhere, because it is easy to imagine - from a plywood perspective - that *Red Maple* is an 'aspirational' tree. It is a high quality timber imported from far North America, with a leaf so symmetrically lovely that Canadian travellers everywhere feel the urge to wear it stamped on their all-weather gear and to praise its elegant silhouette on flags and badges.

Full-scale plywood is the standard size formed by reconstituted wood chips and used to construct domestic interiors, housing estates and package homes.

Stillman often uses manufactured pre-existing forms that we overlook everyday to produce works of art. These include: books, reams of A4 photocopying paper, Venetian blinds and stacks of plywood.

Whether you are a graceful symbol of nature's majesty, such as the Red Maple, or a more modest plantation tree, issues of sustainability and consumption collide.

Stillman in *Red Maple* takes a three-metre high stack of plywood and prompts the viewer to reconsider the origins of the matter we use to assemble our constructed world.

RED MAPLE

2007

plywood

300 x 240 x 120cm

Courtesy of Utopia Art ,Sydney

BIOGRAPHY Kylie Stillman (born 1975, Mordialloc, Victoria), received a Bachelor of Arts (Honours, Fine Art) in 1999 from the Royal Melbourne of Technology and since 1998 has exhibited her work in numerous artist-run and non-profit spaces around Melbourne, including Span Gallery, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces and the Centre for Contemporary Photography. Group exhibitions include *Uncanny: The Unnaturally Strange*, Artspace, New Zealand (2005); *Melbourne Art Fair* (2004, 2006); and *Snap Freeze: Still Life Now*, TarraWarra Museum of Art, Victoria (2007). In 2006 Stillman was awarded the Australia Council studio residency in Milan and in 2007 the City of Melbourne studio residency at Arts House Meat Market, Melbourne, which she undertook with the assistance of a Development grant from Arts Victoria. Her work is held in the collections of Artbank, the State Library of Queensland (Australian Library of Art), Fisher Library (University of Sydney Art Collection) and the State Library of Victoria. Stillman is represented by Utopia Art Sydney.



HOSSEIN VALAMANESH

Hossein Valamanesh is an artist who dares to dream of a future united by cultural and religious respect. He has lived in Adelaide since 1974. Yet his work is profoundly informed by the poetry, art, literature, landscape and inhabitants of his native Iran.

Leave your shoes here prompts a sense of wonder, evokes the magic of theatre, creating an ambiguous space that resonates with the power of history, culture, and religious tradition.

Valamanesh in this installation, through the offset placement of a block of traditional Persian carpets, produces his own culturally specific space within the Gallery's 'white cube'. A grid of columns hovers above them, some of which are illuminated from within, casting jewel-like pricks of light onto the ground.

The practice of removing one's shoes before entering a place of worship is common in many religions with the notable exception of Christianity and modern Judaism. Worshippers in both ancient Greece and Rome were commonly required to remove their shoes before entering the temple.

Removing shoes is also a widespread habit in homes across much of Asia, Africa and Europe, in part a hygienic practice, but in places such as Japan and parts of the Middle East, it has become a cultural ritual.

Valamanesh is more interested in the power of the human spirit to rise above the rigid boundaries of religion or politics. This installation provides a quiet space for the contemplation of modern life, an opportunity to reflect on life's majesty and mystery.

LEAVE YOUR SHOES HERE

2008

voile, felt, steel, lights, Persian carpets

750 x 1050 x 400cm

Courtesy Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide

BIOGRAPHY Hossein Valamanesh (born 1949, Iran) studied fine art in Tehran before immigrating to Australia in 1973, graduating from the South Australian School of Art in 1977. He has exhibited widely in Australia and in Germany, Poland and Japan, among other countries. Public art commissions include An Gorta Mor, a memorial to the Great Irish Famine at Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney (1999) and 14 Pieces on North Terrace, Adelaide, both in collaboration with Angela Valamanesh. He was awarded an Australia Council Fellowship 1998 and in 2000 was the Asialink artist-in-residence at the National College of Arts in Lahore. His work is included in most Australian state gallery collections and was the subject of a major survey exhibition held at the Art Gallery of South Australia in 2001; a survey of his more recent work was held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney in 2002. Valamanesh lives and works in Adelaide. He is represented by Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide and GRANTPIRRIE, Sydney.



SUZANN VICTOR

Suzann Victor is a **subversive**, one of a group of artists examining the contemporary condition of Asia.

One of the central themes of Victor's work is the importance of the Singapore experience in the formulating her thinking.

Ideas of a post-colonial impact, the relevance of heritage to a contemporary generation, and notions of the changing status of women, all contribute to her complex artistic language.

Since 2000, Victor has used ready-made chandeliers in her works, each stained an in authentic red and turned into swinging pendulums that make light drawings in mid-air.

Victor's practice embraces technology and engineering to enable her to further her **conceptual** aims.

The **kinetic installation** consists of four hundred acrylic tubes filled with blue water and two swinging chandeliers controlled by timers. The tubes are suspended in mid-air and create a floating bamboo forest. Each presents a human being, thus suggesting the fragility of humankind. As they swing, a strong tension is created between the viewer and the moving objects.

The viewer is overwhelmed by the sensitive beauty at first, then lost in the swing of fire and colour, like electricity moving through the body.

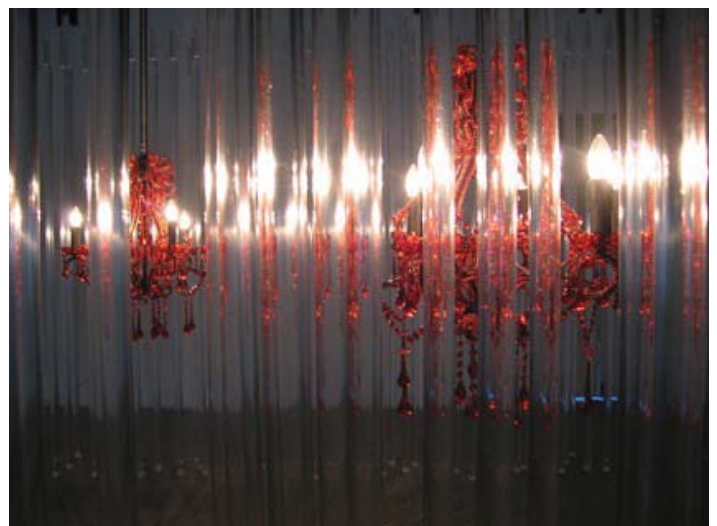
As a work of art, it touches us through its fragility, tension and anxiety.

CONTOURS OF A RICH MANOEUVRE

2008

pendulums, acrylic tubes, monofilament, water, chandeliers, control unit, tint
200 x 400 x 180cm (approx)
Courtesy of the artist

BIOGRAPHY Suzann Victor (born 1959, Singapore) lives and works in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. A recipient of numerous grants and scholarships, Victor graduated from the University of Western Sydney with both a Bachelor and Master of Arts (First Class Honours), after gaining an Associate Diploma of Fine Arts from the LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts in Singapore. Exhibitions include the 1996 Asia-Pacific Triennial; 1997 Havana Biennial; Asian Traffic (Sydney, Shanghai and Hong Kong), 2005; High Tide: New Currents in Art from Australia and New Zealand (Warsaw and Vilnius), 2006; the 2006 Gwangju Biennale and Thermocone of Art, 2007 (Karlsruhe, Germany). In 2001 Victor represented Singapore at the Venice Biennale. She has been commissioned to create site-specific works of art for high-profile locations in Australia and abroad, including World Square, Sydney, and Changi Airport, Singapore.



GUAN WEI

Guan Wei's podgy naked-pink figures have been the centre of this artistic practice since the 1980's.

Wei's figures with open mouths and animated gestures are drawn into a strong upwind that sends them heavenwards.

Suddenly becoming airborne, they **ascend** with divine intervention, indicated by a hand emerging from the clouds. The figures seem powerless to stop themselves from following those who are already on their way.

Traditional Chinese landscape painting represents the idealised relationship between man and nature and is an expression of harmony and balance. In painting mountains and waterways artists attempt to recreate the workings of the **cosmos**. Life breath or **qi**, the animating force within nature, is what painters seek to capture through the movement of the brush. It is this age-old ideal of living that has growing appeal in the world where natural disasters are increasing as a result of human-induced climate change.

BIOGRAPHY Guan Wei (born 1957, Beijing, China) began painting in 1978 and graduated in fine arts from Beijing Capital University in 1986. He first came to Australia as artist-in-residence at the Tasmanian School of Art in 1989, before emigrating in 1990. Subsequent residencies in Australia included the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, where his work featured in *Mao Goes Pop: China post-1989* (1992). Major group exhibitions since include *Australian Perspecta* (1995), *In and Out* (1998), *Asia-Pacific Triennial* (1999), and *Terra Alterius: Land of Another* (2004). In 2006 Guan Wei's work was the subject of solo exhibitions at the Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, Adelaide, and the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney. The same year a monograph on the artist written by Dinah Dysart, Natalie King and Hou Hanru was published by Craftsman House. Guan Wei lives and works between Sydney and Beijing and is represented in Australia by Arc One Gallery, Melbourne.



TRANSCENDING LIMITS

2007-08

acrylic on 24 canvas panels (total size 267 x 677cm) with site specific wall painting and mixed media installation
Courtesy of Arc One Gallery, Melbourne

**KEN
YONETANI**



SWEET BARRIER REEF

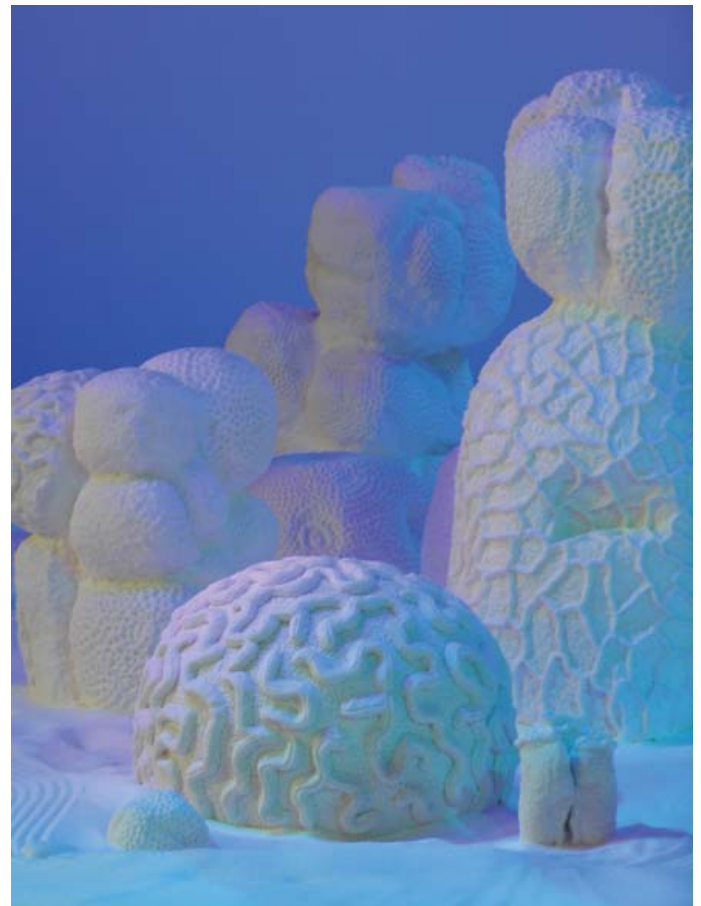
2008

white sugar, icing sugar, vegetable gum,
polystyrene foam and ceramics.

160 x 1200 x 600cm (approx)

Courtesy of the artist

BIOGRAPHY Ken Yonetani (born 1971, Tokyo, Japan) received a Bachelor of Economics in Japan and worked in the Foreign Exchange Market in Tokyo for three years. Subsequent to this, between the years 2000 and 2003, he was an assistant to pottery master Toshio Kinjo, the oldest son of Jiro Kinjo, National Living Treasure of Japan. He completed his MA at the Australian National University (ANU) School of Art in 2005. Yonetani has held numerous solo and group exhibitions including in 2005 at Artspace, Sydney; West Space, Melbourne; and Government House, Sydney; in 2004 in Gallery 4A, Sydney; and in CSIRO Discovery, Canberra, in 2003. Awards include a New Work Grant from the Australia Council for the Arts; a NAVA Marketing Grant; the Gunnery Studio Residency from the NSW Ministry for the Arts; an Arts ACT Quick Response Grant; an ANU Material Award; a Pat Corrigan Artist's Grant; and a Japan Foundation Grant. He lives and works in the Blue Mountains in New South Wales.



GLOSSARY

Ascend: To go or move upward

Bronze age: A period of human culture between the Stone Age and the Iron Age, characterized by the use of weapons and implements made of bronze

Cosmos: Harmony and order as distinct from chaos

Culture: The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought

Fabricated: To make or create

Grottos: An artificial structure or excavation made to resemble a cave or cavern

Perceived: To become aware of directly through any of the senses, especially sight or hearing

Physical: Having substance or material existence; perceptible to the senses

Qi: The circulating life energy that in Chinese philosophy is thought to be inherent in all things; in traditional Chinese medicine the balance of negative and positive forms in the body is believed to be essential for good health

Subversive: A radical supporter of political or social revolution

Tactile: Perceptible to the sense of touch; tangible

Vitrine: *A glass cabinet or case for displaying specimens or art objects*

Wunderkammer: Cabinets of curiosities. They included specimens we would now categorise as belonging to natural history (sometimes faked), geology, ethnography, archaeology, religious or historical relics, works of art, including cabinet paintings, and antiquities

FURTHER READING & WEBSITES

The Bookshop at the Art Gallery of South Australia has an exhibition catalogue for sale, which is an excellent resource. All artists have examples of works illustrated and are supported with critical commentaries.

Also available are postcards and a wide range of related text materials.

Vodcast

Look out for vodcasts from artsit exhibition floor talks will be made available online on the Education page of the Art Gallery website. Artists included will be: Hossein Valamanesh, Kate Rohdes and Suzann Victor.

Useful websites

Art Gallery of South Australia

www.artgallery.sa.gov.au

Go to the 'Online resources' link from the Education page and scroll for the previous education resource on the Hossein Valamanesh: A Survey exhibition from 2001.

2008 Adelaide Festival

www.adelaidefestival.com.au/program/visualarts.aspx

Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies

www.sustainability.ceres.org.au

Eco'tude

www.powerhousemuseum.com/ecotude

Planet Ark

www.planetark.com.au

Water - Learn it! Live it!

http://citywestwater.com.au/education/water_learn_it_live_it.htm

Australian sustainable schools initiative

www.environment.gov.au/education/aussi/index.html

Water Watch Australia

www.waterwatch.org.au

Acknowledgements

This Education Resource incorporates sections of text from the catalogue, written by Felicity Fenner, Curator of the 2008 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Handle with Care, with excerpts from contributing writers and artists.