

REMEMBERS
TOMORROW

HOW
YESTERDAY

Education Resource

Foreword

How Yesterday Remembers Tomorrow presents a fascinating insight into the conceptual and artistic development of early career artists, highlighting how an artist's practice develops over time through sustained research, experimentation and refinement. Featuring photography, drawing, digital video and installation works by six Australian artists and collaborative groups, the exhibition provides a stimulating commentary on an array of current social and political issues, shedding light on the concerns of young artists today.

Artspace and Museums & Galleries NSW (M&G NSW) have collaborated to develop and tour this dynamic project to seven regional galleries across New South Wales and Queensland. As organisations that value community engagement, education and life long learning, we encourage schools to take advantage of this Education Resource as an informative aid to decode the artworks and themes featured in *How Yesterday Remembers Tomorrow*, and to promote further interest in all forms of contemporary artistic expression.

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THE VISUAL ARTS AND CRAFT STRATEGY

How Yesterday Remembers Tomorrow

CURATOR:
Mark Feary

ARTISTS:
Lauren Brincat
Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro
Todd McMillan
Ms&Mr
Tony Schwensen
Sam Smith

How Yesterday Remembers Tomorrow casts a selective gaze upon a number of artists who have been recipients of the Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship. Through inviting some of the previous recipients of the scholarship to present an earlier work alongside one of their most current works the exhibition attempts to reflect upon how an art practice shifts and changes over time. Such developments may involve the adoption of new media and the integration of new research interests to address evolving concerns. Within this constantly shifting process many other elements might be abandoned and forsaken as other ideas and directions gain traction. The framework of this project is to present how the relegation and culmination of creative tendencies might manifest within the relationship between two works from different periods within an artist's oeuvre.

There is a logical and well-established museological tradition of displaying an artist's oeuvre through a chronological approach. Through this arrangement, the progressions and divergences within an artist's practice are rendered quite explicit, so that the audience almost need not take cognisance of anything other than the works directly to the right and left of any given work. A survey of this nature is developed incrementally through a logical, if perhaps, unimaginative process of displaying everything in the order it was produced. *How Yesterday Remembers Tomorrow* departs from this model by situating just two works in relation to one another to allow the relationship between the works to meander and be more abstractly considered. It is infrequent for younger artists to be afforded the opportunity to look back upon one of their earlier, possibly less resolved works, indeed for that to be considered of importance, and positioned as such, with regard to the future development of their practice. The early works within this project are, in many cases, part of the projects for which the scholarship was awarded, representative of these practices at that moment at which they would thereafter dramatically shift. These early works represent the before in advance of the after, or alternatively, the yesterday that precedes tomorrow.

Mark Feary, 2012

Questions: How Yesterday Remembers Tomorrow

Many of the artists in this exhibition are peers and friends. By looking at the work what connections can you draw between the artists? How do you think they influence each other?

Think about the genre of self-portraiture. Which works in this exhibition function in a similar manner to a self-portrait?

How is the shift from 'analogue' to 'digital' that has taken place over the past ten years evident in the works in this exhibition? Which artists do you think it has influenced the most? How is this expressed through their work?



It's a Long Way to the Top, 2009
still from single-channel performance video
courtesy of the artist and
Anna Schwartz Gallery,
Melbourne & Sydney

Though primarily working in performance, Brincat does not confine herself to prescribed methods of production and her practice spans a variety of mediums including video and sculpture. Informed by the conceptual performers of the 1970s, Brincat's performance works are best described as 'actions', most often enacted in solitude and presented as video documentation. Addressing a wide variety of subject matter, her work is consistently intuitive, personal, playful and provocative.

Lauren Brincat was the 2009 Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship recipient. <laurenbrincat.com>

Questions: Lauren Brincat

Australian band AC/DC released the hit song *It's a long way to the top (if you want to rock 'n' roll)* in 1976; the song's lyrics describe the less than glamorous side of making it in the music industry. How does Brincat's *It's a long way to the top* (2009) illustrate this sentiment?

Brincat describes herself as a 'painter who doesn't paint'. How is painting referenced in *It's a long way to the top*?

'The quick and the dead' is a cultural idiom that has been used in many different contexts including music and cinema. What does this phrase mean to you and what do you think it means to the artist?

Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro



The Cordial Home Project, 2003
C-type LED print
set of six photos
photography: Liz Ham
courtesy of the artists and
Gallery Barry Keldoulis,
Sydney

Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro explore the space between creation and consumption, questioning the layers that disguise the simple economics that underscore our increasingly complex lives. Their site-specific investigations of certain places are also investigations into the perception of the way things shift. Their art material is often found on site, recycled and reused in works that ponder the material and immaterial value of everyday objects. The artists' explorations into formality, materiality, accumulation and transition manifest in works that relate closely either to the site in which they are presented or from whence they derive.

Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro were the 2003 Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship recipients. <claireandsean.com>

Questions: Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro

For *The Cordial Home Project* (2003) Healy and Cordeiro acquired the structural materials of a typical suburban home in exchange for removing them from the land that they occupied. What are the social and economic commentaries underlying this project?

How does the gallery-based installation (seen in images 5 and 6) of *The Cordial Home Project* add to the history of sculpture? What historical art movements and ideas does the work evoke?

1st draft (2009) is an abstract illustration of a mushroom cloud created using pushpins and cork drawing boards. What is a mushroom cloud and how is it created? Why do you think the artists chose to represent it in this way?

How do the everyday materials used to create *1st draft* connect it to *The Cordial Home Project*?

Oh Captain, my Captain (dead albatross)
2005
C-type photograph
courtesy of the artist and
Sarah Cottier Gallery,
Sydney



McMillan's photographic and video works address the futility of the individual in the face of nature. His carefully produced images and actions feature the artist as a solitary figure confronting situations that investigate the limitations of human emotions and physical ability.

Todd McMillan was the 2006 Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship recipient.

Questions: Todd McMillan

Oh Captain, my Captain (dead albatross) (2005) utilises a double metaphor: the first is Walt Whitman's extended metaphor poem 'Oh Captain! My Captain!' (1865), concerning the death of American President Abraham Lincoln, and the second is the inclusion of the albatross, which is a common metaphor for the psychological burden of humans. What is McMillan saying by combining these two references? How is this reinforced by the formal composition of the image?

Metaphor, poetry and romanticism are reoccurring themes in McMillan's work. English romantic painter JMW Turner (1775-1851) is known as 'the painter of light' how is his legacy referenced in McMillan's *after the deluge* (2010)?

Look closely at how *after the deluge* is constructed. How has the artist manipulated technology to create this object?



First House (The Optimist), 1984/2009
image of restored drawing, acrylic,
ink and pencil on
school issued paper
courtesy of the artists

Ms&Mr attempt to reconcile their past, present and future in a working method they have deemed 'retroactive collaboration'. The artists draw on a vast personal archive of home movies, kept journals, school exercise books and memories. Together their collaborative efforts reconstruct and imagine events that unite them across space and time.

Ms& Mr were the 2005 Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship recipients.
<msandmr.net>

Questions: Ms&Mr

Take a close look at the dates of the Ms&Mr works in this exhibition. What do these dates tell you about the artwork and the creation of the work?

Identify the figures in *Frame Drag 1988/2009/2024*, (2009-ongoing). How do the characters represent the dates in the title of the work?

Look closely at *First House (The Optimist)* (1984/ 2009) and *First House (The Pessimist)* (1968/ 2009). Whose point of view, Ms or Mr, do these works suggest? What clues are present to support your claim?



Hamburger Boygroup, 2000
still from VHS-C transferred to DVD
courtesy of the artist and
Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney;
and KalimanRawlins Gallery,
Melbourne

Paralleling political correctness and everyday experiences with artistic and cultural orthodoxies, Schwensen's interdisciplinary art practice examines the underside of cultural life, specifically the intersection of artistic values and economies of production and distribution.

Tony Schwensen was the 1998 Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship recipient.

Questions: Tony Schwensen

In the work *Hamburger Boygroup* (2000) Schwensen is seen dancing to the song 'keep on movin' (1999) by British boy-band Five. How is this work critical of the pop-culture phenomenon it references?

Schwensen's performances are often endurance driven and durational. How are these elements conveyed in the works in this exhibition?

Since 2008 Schwensen has lived and worked in Boston, USA. *Attempting to approach fanaticism - Red Sox* (2010) is part of a series of four works in which Schwensen wears the cap of different Boston based sports teams. Think about the sports teams in your local area: how do these teams and their fans influence the cultural identity of your community?



Video Camera [HDW-F900/3],
2007
plywood, pine, acrylic
installation view,
GRANTPIRRIE, Sydney
courtesy of the artist

At once an artistic critique of cinema and an exposure of the technology behind video imagery, Smith's practice integrates sculptural forms and moving image. He is interested in the capacity of film and video installation to distort our sense of time and space through the manipulation of filmic narratives.

Sam Smith was the 2007 Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship recipient. <samsmith.net.au>

Questions: Sam Smith

The work *Video Camera [HDW-F900/3]* (2007) features an oversized replica of a cinema quality digital camera. How has digital technology changed the ability of independent artists and filmmakers to produce moving image works?

What processes of movie making do the video camera sculpture and accompanying video explore?

What shift has taken place in Smith's artistic practice from *Video Camera [HDW-F900/3]* to *Camera Man* (2011)? What stages of the movie making process is he exploring in each of these works?
