

CREATURELY FEELINGS

TRISH ADAMS
ANDRE BRODYK
CATHERINE CLOVER
KATE JAMES
SUSIE MARCROFT
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ANIMAL PUBLICS: EMOTIONS, EMPATHY, ACTIVISM
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THIS EXHIBITION, PART OF *ANIMAL PUBLICS: EMOTIONS, EMPATHY, ACTIVISM*, THE 2015 AUSTRALASIAN ANIMAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION (AASA) CONFERENCE, EXPLORES ARTMAKING AS AN ACT OF ENCOUNTER BETWEEN HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN ANIMALS. WORKS BY SIX ARTISTS FOREGROUND THE EMPATHIC ACT OF ARTISTIC PROCESS, EXPOSING THE INTIMACY AND PROXIMITY BETWEEN ARTIST AND SUBJECT, BETWEEN HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN ANIMAL. ALL THE WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION TAKE ANIMALS AS THEIR SUBJECT, BUT IT IS THE WAY THEY EXPOSE AND DISPLAY THE PROCESS OF THEIR OWN PRODUCTION THAT SUGGESTS THE CREATIVE PROCESS AS A UNIQUE SITE FOR ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SPECIES.

LYNN MOWSON'S *FLESH LUMPS* OSCILLATE BETWEEN MEAT AND FLESH, SCULPTURE AND MODEL, ANIMAL AND ARTWORK. REJECTING THE TRANSITIONAL USE OF WAX IN SCULPTURE PRACTICE, AS A MODEL FOR A 'FINISHED' CAST OBJECT, THE *FLESH LUMPS* ARE STRANGE NEW CREATURES. THE FORMS REFERENCE ANIMAL BODIES AND FLESH, BUT THE SURFACE BEARS THE MARKS OF THE ARTIST'S HAND CREATING A TENSION BETWEEN ORGANIC AND CONSTRUCTED.

ALSO PHYSICALLY TRACING THE GESTURE OF THE ARTIST, THE WOVEN HORSEHAIR IN KATE JAMES' *ENTANGLEMENT* PHYSICALLY ENTWINES A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANIMAL AND HUMAN. REVIVING THE VICTORIAN TRADITION OF HAIRWORK AS A MOURNING RITUAL, JAMES REPLACES THE LOCKS OF LOVED ONES WITH HORSEHAIR. THE RESULTANT WREATH, RECORDING HOURS OF LABOUR AND LOVE, SPEAKS TO A HUMAN/ANIMAL RELATIONSHIP FULL OF FEELING.

ALSO DRAWING UPON MEMORY AND HISTORY IS ELIZABETH PRESA'S *NATIVITY*. THIS MINIATURE LANDSCAPE MAKES REFERENCE TO THE HISTORY OF SACRED AND SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS TO ANIMALS, SPECIFICALLY TO THE NATIVITY OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI. THE SMALL SCALE AND TACTILE

PLASTER ENCOURAGE A PROXIMITY WHICH ECHOES THE POSITION OF THE ARTIST IN MAKING THE WORK.

CATHERINE CLOVER'S INTERTEXTUAL *THE BIRDS* LITERALLY SPEAKS TO THE HISTORY OF ART AND THE ARTIST AS A SITE FOR INTER-SPECIES CONTACT. READING ALOUD FROM DAPHNE DUMAURIER 'S *THE BIRDS* (1952), CLOVER'S WORDS FILTER THROUGH THE SOUNDS OF NATURE AND MAN. IN DUMAURIER'S STORY, THE INFAMOUS BIRDS ATTEMPT TO REASSERT A DOMINATION OVER THE WORLD OF THE HUMAN, IN CLOVER'S RE-READING IT IS THE VOICE OF THE ARTIST THAT IS INTRODUCED INTO THE WORLD OF THE BIRDS.

THIS SENSE OF ART NEGOTIATING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ANIMAL AND HUMAN IS THE FOCUS OF TRISH ADAM'S *HOST*. FOCUSING ON CONTACT BETWEEN THE ARTIST'S HAND AND BEES, THE RELATIONSHIP IS BOTH MENACING AND INTIMATE, LITERALLY A CLOSE UP OF HUMAN/ANIMAL RELATIONS. PLAYING WITH SCALE AND SOUND, THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN ANIMAL, POWER AND VULNERABILITY, IS CONSTANTLY IN FLUX.

A SIMILAR CLOSE UP APPROACH UNDERPINS *ENSUITE*. ANDRE BRODYCK'S BIOART LITERALISES A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPECIES, WITH PORTRAITS OF HYBRID BODIES RENDERED IN LIVING TRANSGENIC BACTERIA. INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS AND ANIMALS AT A MICRO LEVEL, THE ARTISTIC PROCESS DRAWS ATTENTION TO THE ANIMAL (BACTERIAL) NATURE OF THE HUMAN BODY. BY 'SKETCHING' INTERSPECIES PORTRAITS AT A CELLULAR LEVEL, BRODYCK LITERALISES A VISION OF ART WHICH WORKS IN THE SPACE BETWEEN SPECIES.

SUSIE MARCROFT'S TABLEAUS ARE SIMULTANEOUSLY GROTESQUE AND ENDEARING, DRAWING IN AND REPULSING THE VIEWER. THE STRANGE INTERSPECIES CREATURES ARE HYBRIDS OF THE HUMAN AND ANIMAL, FLESH AND CERAMIC. THE LEVEL OF DETAIL AND FINISH INDICATE AN INTIMACY BETWEEN ARTIST AND HER

CREATURES, WHICH MOVE FROM MERE OBJECTS TO EMBODIED FORMS.

THE WORKS OF THIS EXHIBITION SUGGEST A ROLE OF THE ARTIST AND THE ART PROCESS AS ONE OF INVESTIGATING HUMAN/ ANIMAL RELATIONSHIPS. THE EXPOSURE OF THIS PROCESS PROVIDES A STIMULUS FOR EMPATHIC RESPONSES IN THE AUDIENCE, SUGGESTIVE OF BROADER POSSIBILITIES OF ARTWORKS WITHIN THE FIELD OF HUMAN ANIMAL STUDIES. EMPATHY, AS A PHYSICAL RESPONSE TO STIMULI, PRIVILEGES THE BODY AS A SITE OF ARTISTIC RESPONSE. WORKS WHICH RELY UPON THIS BODILY REACTION REAWAKEN THE 'ANIMAL' IN THE AUDIENCE.

-CAROLINE WALLACE

ARTISTS

BORN AND BROUGHT UP IN LONDON, UK, CATHERINE CLOVER CAME TO AUSTRALIA IN THE 1990S THROUGH A RESIDENCY WITH GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY IN MELBOURNE. HER PRACTICE EXPLORES COMMUNICATION THROUGH VOICE AND LANGUAGE AND THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN HEARING AND LISTENING – THE VOCAL, THE SPOKEN – AND SEEING AND READING – THE VISUAL, THE WRITTEN. USING COLLABORATION AND PERFORMANCE WITH FIELD RECORDING, DIGITAL IMAGING AND THE SPOKEN/WRITTEN WORD SHE IS CURRENTLY EXPLORING AN EXPANDED APPROACH TO LANGUAGE WITHIN SPECIES AND ACROSS SPECIES, WITH A FOCUS ON COMMON NOISY WILD URBAN BIRDS THROUGH A FRAMEWORK OF EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE – THE ORDINARY AND THE QUOTIDIAN. CATHERINE EXHIBITS BOTH NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY, AND PARTICIPATES IN INTERNATIONAL ARTS RESIDENCIES, VISITING ARTIST/LECTURER OPPORTUNITIES, AND ACADEMIC CONFERENCES. SHE TEACHES AT SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY (MA WRITING) AND RMIT UNIVERSITY (BA FINE ART) AND RECENTLY COMPLETED HER PRACTICE LED PhD (FINE ART) AT RMIT (2015).

TRISH ADAMS'S ART/SCIENCE RESEARCH AND ARTWORKS POSE QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN AND THE WAYS IN WHICH OUR UNDERSTANDING OF OURSELVES WILL BE CHANGED BY ADVANCES IN BIOTECHNOLOGY AND ECOLOGY. IN A FIRST FOR AN ARTIST, TRISH CHANGED ADULT STEM CELLS FROM HER BLOOD INTO BEATING CARDIAC CELLS *IN VITRO* IN A BIOMEDICAL LABORATORY. AS VISITING ARTIST AT THE QUEENSLAND BRAIN INSTITUTE, TRISH EXPLORED COGNITION AND NAVIGATION STRATEGIES IN THE EUROPEAN HONEYBEE. TRISH'S HONEYBEE RESEARCH, MOST RECENTLY AT THE AUSTRALIAN SYNCHROTRON, EXPLORES THE NATURE OF INTER-SPECIES PROXIMITY AND THE ECOLOGICAL ISSUES FACED BY THE ENDANGERED HONEYBEES.



ELIZABETH PRESA IS A MELBOURNE BASED VISUAL ARTIST WHOSE WORK OFTEN ENGAGES WITH PHILOSOPHY AND TRAVERSES A WIDE-RANGE OF REFERENCES FROM ANIMALS TO PSYCHOANALYSIS, LITERATURE TO FEMINISM. SHE IS THE HEAD OF THE INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTRE FOR IDEAS, IN THE FACULTY OF THE VCA+MCM, THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE.

SUSIE MARCROFT IS A VISUAL ARTS (HONOURS) GRADUATE FROM SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY. HER SCULPTURAL PROCESSES EMPLOY VISCERAL MATERIALS SUCH AS CLAY AND BEESWAX, IDEALLY SUITED TO HER SPECULATIVE FASCINATION IN THE ROLE OF 'QUANTUM' CONSCIOUSNESS AND AN IMAGINED SUBJECT-OBJECT 'MERGE' DURING THE ACT OF MAKING. HER ARTISTIC DECISION-MAKING, IN LOCATING NOVEL METAPHORS, IS PLAYFULLY INFORMED BY NON-LINEAR CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SYNCHRONICITY, AND EMOTIONAL AND PERCEPTUAL RESPONSES TO THE 'LIFEWORLD'. SUSIE'S HYBRID, FIGURATIVE SCULPTURES OF HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN ANIMALS THEN 'E-MERGE' FROM THE STUDIO IN WAYS THAT SEEK TO EMPATHETICALLY RUPTURE THE PERCEIVED BOUNDARIES BETWEEN SELF AND OTHER, AND ENCOURAGE DEEPER REFLECTION UPON HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIPS AS A FORM OF 'META-THINKING' OR SEEING 'ANEW'.



IN 2009 KATE JAMES GRADUATED FROM THE MASTER OF ART PROGRAM (BY RESEARCH) AT RMIT UNIVERSITY. RECENT SOLO EXHIBITIONS INCLUDE *EXITLAND*, DAINE SINGER (2014), *THE OTHER SIDE OF DESPAIR*, DAINE SINGER (2011), *THE WORK OF WORRY IS NEVER DONE*, CRAFT VICTORIA (2010) AND *LETTING GO*, MAROONDAH ART GALLERY (2010). SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS INCLUDE *SEVENTH SKIN*, HATCH CONTEMPORARY ARTS SPACE, MELBOURNE (2014), *CITY OF HOBART 2012 ART PRIZE* (HIGHLY COMMENDED), TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, HOBART (2012), *RECONSTRUCTING THE ANIMAL*, PLIMSOLL GALLERY, HOBART (2011), *I'M OKAY, YOU'RE OKAY*, LEVEL ARI, BRISBANE (2010) AND *THE ANIMAL GAZE*, TOURING EXHIBITION UK (2009). IN 2014 SHE WAS THE RECIPIENT OF THE *YERING STATION SCULPTURE PRIZE*.

DR ANDRE BRODYK IS AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED BIO-ARTIST, RESEARCHER AND ACADEMIC. BRODYK IS ACKNOWLEDGED AS THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN ARTIST TO MAKE AND EXHIBIT GMOs AS ART (PICA 2001). THE ARTIST HAS UNDERTAKEN NUMEROUS COLLABORATIVE RESIDENCIES IN MOLECULAR BIOLOGY LABS INCLUDING (UWA), (UQ), UON) AND TRINITY COLLEGE. HIS PRACTICE-BASED CREATIVE RESEARCH IS EVIDENCED WITHIN INTERNATIONAL CURATED EXHIBITIONS IN AUSTRALIA, THE USA AND IN IRELAND. DR BRODYK HAS PUBLISHED CONFERENCE PAPERS AND JOURNAL ARTICLES ON BIOART AND EXPANDED PAINTING AND IS CITED REGULARLY IN SCHOLARLY TEXTS AND BOOKS CENTRED ON BIOART AND EXPANDED PAINTING. DR BRODYK LIVES AND WORKS IN AN AMBULATORY CONTEXT BETWEEN SYDNEY AND NEWCASTLE NSW.



DR LYNN MOWSON IS A SCULPTOR AND ANIMALS ADVOCATE. SHE WAS RECENTLY AWARDED HER PHD FOR HER PRACTICE-LED SCULPTURAL RESEARCH ENTITLED 'BEAUTIFUL LITTLE DEAD THINGS: EMPATHY, WITNESSING, TRAUMA AND ANIMALS' SUFFERING' FROM THE VCA, THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE. THE SCULPTURES CREATED THROUGH THIS RESEARCH FEATURE IN THE FORTHCOMING BOOK THE ART OF THE ANIMAL, LANTERN PRESS, AND EXHIBITION OF THE SAME NAME AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANIMALS AND SOCIETY, LA, IN OCTOBER 2015.



IMAGE CREDITS

LYNN MOWSON, *FLESH LUMP* (VARIOUS)
MICROCRYSTALLINE WAX AND PIGMENT
PHOTO: KERRY LEONARD

TRISH ADAMS, VIDEO STILL FROM *HOST*.
ORIGINAL CINEMATOGRAPHY: CARLA EVANGELISTA
& DR. PETER KRAFT.

ELIZABETH PRESA. *NATIVITY* (DETAIL)
PLASTER, PLASTIC, STONE FROM ASSISI.
PHOTO BY THE ARTIST.

SUSIE MARCROFT, *PUPPY LOVE SERIES II*
(DETAIL)
CERAMIC, OIL PAINT, BEESWAX, HESSIAN BAG, CLEAR
NAIL POLISH
PHOTO BY THE ARTIST.

ANDRE BRODYK, *THEO (SPECIMEN)* (DETAIL FROM
HYBRID INSTALLATION ENTITLED *ENSUITE*),
TRANSGENIC E.COLI PAINT, AGAR, PERSPEX,
LIGHT REFLECTIONS, THERMOPLASTIC, WATER
CONDENSATION. 35MM X 35MM APPROX.
(CHANGING)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: DR IAN GRAINGE, ADAM
GRAHAM, STEPHANIE BOER
PHOTO BY THE ARTIST.

LYNN MOWSON, *FLESH LUMP*
MICROCRYSTALLINE WAX AND PIGMENT
PHOTO: KERRY LEONARD