

*Love to have a beer with Duncan 'coz Duncan's me mate...
(Cosmopolitan "Aero Bar" remix)*¹

The asset wealth of many Melburnians is soaring. With 44.1% of them owning their homes outright, they're the most settled mob in the country. And with house prices up a staggering 91% over the past five years, their nest eggs are doing very nicely.²

It all started with a couple of cosmopolitans. Unfortunately, this wasn't the *Sex and the City* drink but actually two gals doing what Melburnians do so well—sitting at a bar chatting. Depending upon where you sit in the Williamson emerald-sea equation, Melbourne has often been defined as multicultural or cosmopolitan. If New York (and specifically for women sliding into their thirties) was symbolised by cosmopolitans, then Melbourne is symbolised by house chardonnays and a bowl of wasabi peas. And this is where *Home Loan* began...

As Kate and Larissa sat at a bar, the conversation soon turned to the abundance of DIY programs and the question of what defines suburbia today. While Larissa had a morbid fascination for (and thus justification of) the various lifestyle programs, Kate's interest lay in an accumulation of her experiences in LA (whose suburban sprawl parallels Melbourne's)³, and her recent visit to Caroline Springs, where she had seen a site fecund with possibilities—suburban warehouse displays. Talking frenetically into the wee hours of the morning, the gals thought this could be an alternative inroad for engaging with the current phenomena. Thus, *Home Loan* was born.

With the heavy weight of artistic genealogies acknowledged, the gals knew that the space occupied by suburbia—as both an imagined and lived place—was overflowing with still unarticulated ambivalences and polysemic opportunities. If suburbia had previously been symbolic of Australia's tenuous and contested national culture, then it was now coloured by the orange and lime filter of cosmopolitanism (a term just as historically and theoretically fraught). This would not be a mere drink on *Sex and the City*. No, the cosmopolitan ("world citizen") would be a space in which to address the role of suburbia in the light of global and postcolonial flows. It would be the metaphoric intoxication that articulated tensions between stagnation and unboundness; or, put simply, aspirations and lived reality.

It was then that Kate decided to see whether Delfin—the company responsible for the warehouse displays in Caroline Springs—would be interested. To Kate and Larissa's surprise, they seemed unequivocally happy to sponsor the space while allowing *Home Loan* to maintain critical and artistic autonomy. From there, it has been a process of selecting a diverse range of artists, then unsuccessfully attempting to interest broadcast TV (after all, art doesn't quite attract the same attention as lauded cultural capital such as sport and reality TV programs). Then came the process of grant writing and strategic plans in order to lure some audiences to Caroline Springs, even though it goes against the engrained parochial disposition so part of Melburnians' armchair, remote control cosmopolitanism.

On the eve of *Home Loan* opening, *The Age Good Weekend* did a feature story on a new phenomena—the quarter-acre block Australian dream has now become the quarter-acre house⁴. It is not by accident that there is a growing interest in and need to redefine the dubious notion of Australian identity and the transformations in the suburban fabric.

So welcome to *Home Loan*...

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2 Cameron Stewart, "Melbourne: Back in the southern comfort zone", *The Weekend Australian Magazine*, August 23-24, 2003, p.23.

3 Although it has been argued that LA's suburban sprawl is more like Perth's.

4 *The Age Good Weekend*, August 23-24, 2003.

WHERE FREEDOM ENDS AND ART BEGINS

Ready-made “jumping the shark” water-feature.¹

(Larissa Hjorth)

As one enters the housing community of Caroline Springs, one is beckoned by a large water-feature impersonating a lake. So too, as one navigates the woven vistas of the housing hub, one is met at the end with prefabricated warehouse displays. Beyond their architectonic skin, we are faced with rooms redolent of FREEDOM. Or at least, that kind of lifestyle freedom administered by the furniture store of that name.

Welcome to the 21st Century, where freedom ends and ready-made art—in a sea of metaphoric water-features—begins. The father of ready-made (and water-feature) art, Marcel Duchamp, argued nearly a century ago that ‘choice’ would be the only thing that determines artists of the future.² So come jump the ship for a while, enter into the intervention and “jumping the shark” (more later) Home Loan purposes...

The style of life

Norm, normality and Life Be In It

Remember Norm and the motto “Life Be In It”? Are we “In It” yet? Or has the plethora of TV lifestyle programs created a two-tiered situation: either vicarious hyperreal armchair travellers or a tornado of DIY home renovation disasters? Is this the style of life for suburbia in the 21st Century?

Devised by curators/artists Larissa Hjorth and Kate Shaw, *Home Loan* presents an interdisciplinary meditation on the role of mass media and branding in today’s contemporary lifestyle vernaculars. Rather than restricting art and art dialogue to the sanctuary of white-walled galleries, *Home Loan* is located within the Caroline Springs warehouse displays. This provides a space for extending debate and discourse: physically, geographically and ideologically. Exploring the loaded and fecund space of the suburbs within Australia’s historical, contemporary and future mythologies, *Home Loan* revises the relationship between the arts and the mortgage-belt community. *Home Loan* provides a platform for the discussion and exploration of consumer fantasies and lifestyle cultures, extending beyond the already seminal texts, artworks and practices.³

In one of the most sub-urbanised countries in the world, with more than 90% of the population living in urban areas,⁴ the Australian suburbs are both a lived place and a contested imagined space. The suburbs continue to provide a frame for transgression, regression and subversion: of identity, identification and subjectivity. With the abundance of lifestyle genres—from TV shows to the commodification of inner-city living—how are public and private spaces being reimaged and repackaged? How does this reconfigure tropes of taste, value and aesthetics? With a handful of questions and a variety of artists’ practices and ideologies, *Home Loan* aims to provide some moments, memories, mythologies and projected scenarios in the ambivalent fabric that is domesticity and suburbia at the beginning of the 21st century.

Remote control

TV and imagining suburbia

The role of TV in the growth and transformations of the psychological, emotional and physical within suburban practice and discourse is unmistakable. According to a recent study, Australians watch on average three hours of TV a day.⁵ This adds up to

seventeen years in an average lifetime: supposedly, the only things we do more are work and sleep. Theorists such as Lynn Spigel have outlined the ways in which the TV operates duplicitously to both echo and reproduce domestic rhythms—further engendering public/masculine, private/feminine distinctions—as well as being the junction between inside and outside, local and global.⁶ As Margaret Morse highlights, “inside the hollow television, the ultimate box, is a personal reliquary for fetish objects, or sacra, at the cross-roads of everyday life, the commodity world and our common culture.”⁷

In keeping with the tendency of 20th Century scopophilic (obsessive pleasure of looking) vehicles to collapse all differences (cultural, social, linguistic) and distances (geographic and psychological), TV provided a type of “social glue” in the eye of the alienation experienced through suburbia’s constructed and simultaneously “imaginary” community. As Raymond Williams notes, the etymology of TV as another form in “tele” ontology (following on from the telescope, telegraph and telephone) is demonstrated by the feigned modality of ‘liveness’ and ‘immediacy’: TV is about “the culture of distance” within “the latent culture of alienation.”⁸

It is undoubtedly the osmosis between TV’s “reality effects” and suburbia which lead many earlier Australian artists to explore and question both spaces by drawing on a Frankfurt School model of high and low culture—‘low culture’ as a type of “false consciousness”⁹, TV as an electronic liquid commodified. While early Australian colonial history had been predicated on what Tim Sowden calls “rural mythologies” grappling within “urban reality,” artists such as John Brack soon turned to the dark and uncharted terrain of the suburbs and the vertiginous degrees of alienation.¹⁰

By the time the 1970s and 1980s came around, with the icon of hypodermic consumption—Norm and his beer-pot belly button ushering the slogan “Life Be In It”—artists were beginning to tease out the ambivalences associated with the suburban shadow.¹¹ This change reflected the growth in global capitalism whereby consumption was no longer subsumed under the banner of production.¹² Like a dawning from Plato’s cave, artists began to unpick traditional demarcations between public and private, masculine and feminine, structure and ornament, in order to draw upon the antagonisms of modernity’s tug-of-war between liberalism (individualism) and socialism (collectivism). This intertextual and multivocal narrative became one where fictions (collective) and fantasies (personal) were threaded together within the pluralism of postmodernism. Ambivalence became a mode for artists to explore the intricacies of modern life, not as a set of binaries but as a dialectic spectrum of greyness.

In a recent issue of *Photofile*, Chris McAuliffe offers a revision of suburbia in relation to contemporary photographic practices, arguing that “contemporary artists now tend towards an empathetic or, at least, neutral engagement with the suburbs rather than the once prominent anti-suburban strand of Australian art.”¹³ As he posits: “Anti-suburban rhetoric points to normalcy as both the great symptom and crime of suburbia. Regimentation, repression, self-regulation are touted as the antithesis of liberty, experimentation and self-realisation. That is, the normalcy of the suburb is pitted against the more desirable abnormality of the aesthetic realm.”¹⁴ In contrast to previous Australian artists’ predominantly damning commentaries on explorations of suburbia, contemporary artistic investigation may seem Pollyanna-ish. However, I argue that the shifts in artists exploring suburbia are predicated on a term I borrow from TV rhetoric: *jumping the shark*.

I take the term “jumping the shark” from an episode of *Happy Days* in which

4 Alasdair Foster, “Suburbia Ascendant-editorial” in *Photofile*, Volume 69, August, 2003, p. 14.

5 This study, very much in the ‘media effects’ behaviourist model, neglected to actually ascertain the ‘how’ of the spectatorship and thus its heterogeneity. For example, TV’s are often ignored, visually more than orally.

6 Lynn Spigel, “The Suburban Home Companion: Television and the Neighbourhood ideal in Post-War America” in Beatriz Columina (ed.) *Sexuality and Space*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 185-217.

7 Margaret Morse, “An ontology of everyday distraction”, in Patricia Mellencamp (ed.), *The Logics of Television*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1990, p. 139.

8 Raymond Williams, “Distance” in *What I Came to Say*, London, Hutchinson Radius, 1989, p. 36.

9 Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Cultural Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (1947) in Simon During (ed.) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London, Routledge, 1993, pp. 29-43.

1 Maybe FREEDOM, maybe IKEA, maybe FOUNTAIN by R. Mutt. The exploration of art’s liminality and possible indivisibility from life has a long history in avant-garde practices from Marcel Duchamp to Fluxus, pop art and conceptual movements. But one thing remains apparent, while art may be just another commodity framed by economies of cultural capital, it is in the realm of production that the difference between art and other commodities is highlighted—much of art production/labour is saturated by volunteerism; this is both its freedom and its restraint, and thus its dialectical dilemma.

2 His most infamous ready-made being FOUNTAIN—basically a urinal rotated 90 degrees and signed.

3 Such texts as Chris McAuliffe, Chris Healy and Sarah Feber (eds.) *Beasts of Suburbia*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1994; Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1960; various art practitioners from John Brack to Howard Arkley.

Fonzie really did jump a shark. This was a pivotal episode, marking the descent of the program's relevance and novelty into a set of well-used and predictable story lines with a concomitant decline in its popularity. When a TV program jumps the shark it has reached its use-by date: from there the audiences begin to dwindle. In other words, to "jump the shark" is when a specific program within a genre becomes generic. Postmodern programs such as *The Simpsons* and *Buffy*—with their employment of hyperconsciousness and reflexivity—have jumping the shark saturating their narratives and, in this way, they (arguably) manage to avoid getting trapped in its jaws. By continuously playing with the death-drive, they circumnavigate it. Or, put simply in rudimentary psychoanalytical terms, by facing the fear of jumping the shark they practice the very logic of desire (the liquid of advertising): to never meet its object.

With Australians supposedly spending 22 billion dollars on renovations each year, jumping-the-shark or increasing standardisation (Freedom-isation) is suspended by the role of customisation.¹⁵ In the rampant fashioning of lifestyle cultures in which every space could become a simulation of a TV moment's water-feature, artists seem to be playing with jumping the shark as a mode of diverse bricolage. In this way, the *bricoleur* can pave new identities and subjectivities, addressing the growing commodity fetishism adorning both our public and private spaces.¹⁶ Following this line of argument, we are all jumping-the-shark, thus inevitably deferring our surrender to death by water-feature.

Product placement Lifestyle and consumerism

If the noughties in Australia could be characterised by one thing it would be the ascent of that former sub-genre of reality TV vaguely described as 'lifestyle program'. These do-it-yourself programs—with 'personalities' served up as burnt pop-corned soft porn—take the colonial 20th Century myth of owning one's own home a step further.

Following the *Burke's Backyard* template, programs such as *Room for Improvement*; *Ground Force*; *Location, Location*; *Changing Rooms*; and *The Block* (to name a few) flow across various TV channels. They are hard to escape, pulling like a gravitational force, with 'citizens' quickly undressing to expose their entrenched consumerism as they buy their product placement drills, and sponges for that 'old, distressed look'.

And yet where are the social services to follow-up the home renovations gone wrong—an ultimate by-product of these programs making it all look so 'easy'? How can artists justify their prices and 'cultural capital' when Craig of *Room for Improvement* can do a Jackson Pollock copy by simply putting holes into a can and spinning it across the canvas for a mere \$200? It seems that TV has ultimately completed what it set out to do... it has not only blurred boundaries between public/private and local/global: now these programs are explicitly configuring the domestic space, warming it up for, yes, Interactive TV.¹⁷

The role of media within the imaginations and practices of suburban cultural identity is explored by many of the artists with *Home Loan*. As Alasdair Foster points out, "suburbia is a mosaic not a melting pot."¹⁸ The role of lifestyle vernaculars, and the abstraction of consumerism straddling both standardisation and customisation, is taken up most notably in the work of Kate Shaw, Ben Morieson, Kerri Klumpp, Selina Ou and Paul Quinn. Along with this exploration is the redemptive and transgressive

mapping of suburban life by Constanze Zikos, Masato Takasaka and Simone LeAmon, reconfiguring public and private modalities and performativity.

Shaw, Morieson and Ou outline moments of repetition and difference in the narratives of the everyday. Shaw's work draws from magazine discourses as a site for imaginations and performativity. Deleting the ultimate commodity of the celebrity from texts such as *NW* and *Who Weekly*, Shaw highlights the role of scopophilia and narcissism: running through these voracious vehicles, denoting specific taste and value hegemony. With the places emptied of their celebrities, they become spaces: anthropologically etched with distinctions and cultural capital.¹⁹ Drawing on the history of the logo, which started in the 19th Century as a 'personality symbol'—an interface between the consumer and local shop-keeper—Shaw highlights the fact that logo logic no longer bears any relationship to real people, let alone personalities.²⁰ As David Bowie argued, "product plus personality equals brand." The only problem is, the 'personalities' are two-dimensional Steve Martin *Lonely Guy* cardboard cut-outs.²¹

Morieson's ironic commodity fetishes play with the relationship between production and consumption. He creates a false genealogy for his commodities—highlighting not only global tendencies towards disjuncture and difference but also the role of art as a mode of consumerism. Morieson's work can be seen as a conundrum for the reality TV phenomena: the two terms are either a tautology (TV as a type of dubious reality) or an oxymoron (echoing the same proposition as Robert Allen's definition of 'soap opera' as a combination of high and low modernist categories).²² Morieson's products feign functionality in their aesthetic packaging, however their production is premised on a false ontology. Thus their role as commodities highlights the abstraction of exchange-value in today's political economy of the media.

Ou attempts to reconcile the role of production and consumption by framing the worker as the interface between these two severed worlds. Daniel Bell notes that the shift from industrialist to post-industrialist societies is marked by the shift from being defined by "what you do" (as a worker/producer) to "what you consume".²³ Ou's quasi-ethnographies show individuals occupying roles and spaces within both work and lifestyle contexts. There is a tension between the individual and what they represent as a collective or community fiction. Emerging from these contextualisations is a deeply foreboding sense of alienation and isolation. As Kate Rhodes points out in "Work it": "In making photographs that look like advertisements, the very tool of consumerism, Ou simulates images of the labour force as an increasingly hesitant serving class."²⁴

In turn, Paul Quinn's work questions the role of trust and security, harnessing the relationship between the individual and society. In an age where civil disobedience is one of the last residual modes for addressing the antagonisms between neo-liberalist and quasi-socialist tendencies, Quinn's work highlights the deep anxieties and alienation within the fabric of macro-structures such as community and society. From the centre of a mass field of injured individuals (all looking suspiciously the same apart from gender differentiation) emerges the word *mirtazapine*—a drug used for depression. Quinn's society is more than just a spectacle. Like a visual aphorism for Guy Debord's pessimism, Quinn's picture serves as a window for a freeze-frame of the death-drive. Why are we in such a hurry? Will we ever get *there*? Do we really know where *there* is? In a period marked by binary us-versus-them, terror as the other, Quinn points to the actual terror harbinger—us.

10 Tim Sowden, "Streets of Discontent: Artists and Suburbia in the 1950s" in Chris McAuliffe, Chris Healy and Sarah Feber (eds.) *Beasts of Suburbia*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1994, pp. 76-93.

11 Dominic Pettman, "Thonglines", unpublished manuscript, see www.blackjelly.com. Many thanks go to Justin Clemens for informing of this paper.

12 Chua Beng-Huat, "Consuming Asians: Ideas and Issues" in Chua Beng-Huat (ed.) *Consumption in Asia*, London, Routledge, 2000, p. 3.

13 Chris McAuliffe, "Suburbia Revisited" in *Photofile*, Volume 69, August 2003, p. 25.

14 Ibid, p. 25.

15 Quoted on *Auction Squad*, Channel 7, 7.30- 8.30pm Friday 17th August 2003.

16 Claude Levi Strauss *The Savage Mind*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1966; *Dick Hebdige Subculture: the meaning of style*, London, Methuen, 1979.

17 Beyond sounding like an oxymoron to 'media effects' behaviourists, 'Interactive TV' will ensure that you will exist and be 'active' by being a consumer and buying products. This of course will be piloted along with Parker's approved idea for gambling interactive TV cohorts.

18 Alasdair Foster, "Look Sharp" in *Photofile*, Volume 69, August 2003, p. 60.

19 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, [1979] trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1984.

20 See Naomi Klein *No Logo*, London, Flamingo, 2000. Also, see design historians and theorists Ellen Lupton and J. Abbott Miller (eds.) *Design Writing Research: Writing on Graphic Design*, New York, Kiosk, 1996

21 David Bowie, quoted in *The Fine Art of Separating People From their Money*, screened on SBS Masterpiece, 1999.

22 See Robert Allen (ed) *Channels of Discourse, Re-Assembled*, Chapel Hill, University of NC Press, 1992.

23 Daniel Bell, *The coming of Post-Industrial Society: venture in social forecasting*, New York, Basic Books, 1973.

24 Kate Rhodes, "Work it" in *Photofile*, Volume 69, August 2003, p. 47.

The works by Klumpp, Zikos, Takasaka and LeAmon circumnavigate the language of products and lifestyles in the make-up of contemporary life. Each of these artists plays with modernist propositions about formalism, teasing out the disjuncture between aesthetics and art. According to Emma Tom, Australians spend 4 billion dollars each year on their pets.²⁵ Much of Kerri Klumpp's practice has investigated the way in which individuals in modern life seek redemption from alienation through such solace as pet ownership. However, even this realm is now inundated with consumer transference: pet psychologists and plastic surgeries are new boom areas. In *Home Loan*, Klumpp explores the role of nature as a metaphor for notions of corporeality and sublimation. This is an investigation of the ways in which nature is topiaried and manicured, a site for transference in a culture where often individuals feel they have little control. Making a fake Zen garden, Klumpp massages the once distinct notions of east/west, inside/outside and local/global. As an extension of the 19th Century mini-worlds of expos and department stores, Klumpp's Zen garden operates as a microcosm of the 'global village' in which cultures are packaged and appropriated into abstracted time-space compressions.

Masato Takasaka takes the role of the *bricoleur* as a mediating device between formalisms inside and outside the art world. In the mosaic that is popular culture within a global epoch, Takasaka's work draws parallels between art movements such as de Stijl and appropriation within advertising, packaging and logo logic. Takasaka's practice fuses the past with the present, east with the west, forming a postcolonial cocktail with vertiginous ramifications. Utilising a billboard—the mobile symbol of static advertising—Takasaka highlights the abstraction associated with consumer politics. In a period marked by the dislocation between production and consumption, Takasaka illustrates the various genealogies that can be mapped, framed and contextualised within the global political economies of the media.

The work of Constanze Zikos plays with the meanings, values and tastes ascribed to familiar materials. The role of surface, decoration, décor and ornament are questioned, very much like the work of 19th Century Architect Gottfried Semper. As Mark Wigley notes, Semper took the age-old binary of structure and ornament (in which ornament was relegated to inferior status) and inverted this identification.²⁶ He looked towards archaeological work of the time, which unearthed the revelation that ancient Greek marble buildings had been made of that material in order to provide a canvas for the ornament. In this way, the choice of structural materials was dependent upon its function for the ornament. The modernist Bauhaus motto "form follows function" may have attempted to condemn the ornament as a Victorian, feminised device, but the ornament is, and will always be, inherent within the structure. To abolish the ornament is to reinforce its importance. It is the ornament—whether overtly apparent or not—which supplies temporality to visual economies. In other words, no text is timeless and no text exists in a vacuum. In this way, Zikos highlights the properties and mythologies within surface discourse, reminding us that taste is far from natural and timeless.

Simone LeAmon's work—drawing from motorcycle culture—demonstrates the role of objects of desire as vehicles for redemptive meaning. Referring to industrial design modes of production, LeAmon's objects become indices for conceptualising, practising and reproducing forms of performativity within contemporary culture. The various works located throughout the warehouses operate as clues to, or moments in, the inhabitant's life. In this way, the spectator continually oscillates between the modes

of tourist, traveller and anthropologist. By displacing the motorcycle and its accessories from a functional context, LeAmon's objects become further symbols of commodity fetishism—they become a language for notions of freedom, liberty, rebellion, independence and power.

*Keeping up while jumping someone else's train
Are we there yet?*

If the 1950s and 60s suburban growth was framed by the electronic glow of TV's "Keeping up with the Jones" rampant consumerism, then one could argue that our current decade is about the exact opposite. The homogeneity of Keeping-up-with-the-Jones becomes a type of jumping-the-shark loss-of-individualism. If one was about normality through convention and standardisation, the other is about normality through customisation. Thus through the redemptive modes of *bricoleur* techniques, the commodity fetish becomes personalised and familiarised: a site for identification and subjectivity. That said, one cannot depart fully from Karl Marx's critiques of capitalism as a source of alienation through the split between production and consumption, where use-value gets lost in the abstract ubiquity of exchange-value.²⁷ The rhetoric of mass culture's Keeping-up-with-the-Jones is now replaced by the jumping-the-shark's desire not to sound like a song from *The Cure* insofar as "jumping someone else's train".

Each of the artists in *Home Loan* explores the role of identity—from the politics of space to media and consumerism—within the suburban site. Using intervention as their mode of engagement, many of the artists have addressed not just the suburb as subject matter, but, more importantly, as a site. Rather than replicating the sanctuary of a white-walled gallery, this is about a type of indivisibility in which spectators become active investigators. If myths are a type of "common sense," as Roland Barthes puts it, then *Home Loan* aims to create disjuncture and dislocation of taste and value systems assumed as natural.²⁸ By questioning boundaries associated with space and taste, *Home Loan*'s intertextual qualities provide an intentional type of jumping the shark discourse. Artists and audiences can play with expectations about art's role, the pretences of cultural capital, the ambivalence surrounding indivisibility, and thus, the need to divide, categorise and validate ideologies and subjectivities.

In a period swamped by DIY programs (with little attention given to the actual disasters left in their wake) even the notion of 'do-it-yourself' has been prescribed, packaged, labelled and sold. However, maybe the genre will not necessarily become generic: rather, with each *bricoleur* jumping the shark there are plenty of different fish in the sea. That is, if our ever-increasing scopophilia has not already blinded us. Maybe Norm isn't normalcy. So "Life Be In It" can be an on-going process of deferring and sublimating the inevitable jaws at the end of the scopophilic tunnel.

²⁷ Karl Marx *Capital* (Frederick Engels ed.), Moscow, Progress Press, 1965.

²⁸ Roland Barthes *Mythologies*, New York, Noonday Press, 1972; see also "Death of the Author" in *Image Music Text*, London, Fontana, 1977, pp. 142-148.

²⁵ Emma Tom, "Total home help with spitballs" in *The Weekend Australian Review*, August 16th—17th 2003, p. 31.

²⁶ Mark Wigley, "Untitled: the housing of gender" in Beatriz Columina (ed.) *Sexuality and Space*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 327-389.

PREACHING TO THE CONVERTED

The epitaph for my generation will read, "we left no warehouse unconverted".¹

(Kate Shaw)

Suburbia has traditionally been considered more a subject for visual art than a site. Rather than placing suburbia under the microscope, the artists in *Home Loan* have physically *and* metaphorically located their practices within the suburb of Caroline Springs and have been invited to consider their relationship to a non-gallery venue, the Delfin Warehouse displays.

The stereotype of suburbia is as a place and a mind-set that is simultaneously the antithesis of culture and the embodiment of the "Australian way of life". This paradoxical relationship has led to a fascination for 20th century Australian artists with suburbia as a subject, subsequently creating a genre in its own right. The conventions of depicting suburbia as a place of conformity, alienation and kitsch started to erode with the work of artists such as Howard Arkley, Dale Hickey and Robert Rooney. This generation of artists incorporated new ideas then current in visual art that challenged the status of the art object and notions of cultural production associated with a national or international centre.

The artists in *Home Loan* have departed from the inherited ambivalence toward suburbia, instead treating it as site for valid cultural production. Rather than locate suburbia on the fringe of discourse or under the cultural studies microscope, the artists, in particular Stephen Haley, Bernadette Keys, Amanda Morgan, Blair Trethowan, Jarrad Kennedy, Darren Wardle, Natasha Johns-Messenger and Kate Just, embrace it as a physical and virtual space that both informs and forms their practices. Real and virtual, national mythologies and personal narratives, public and private, popular culture and art are explored in their works and amplified by their presentation and interaction with the Delfin Warehouse displays at Caroline Springs.

Located in Melbourne's outer suburbs, the Delfin Warehouses sit as incongruous replicas of their inner urban counterparts. It is telling that the developers have gone to great lengths to complete the surrounds, including cobblestone lane ways for that urban vibe. However, Delfin's simulation of an inner urban environment is pristine, devoid of the detritus, grime, crime and threat associated with the unpredictability of high-density living. Nearby display homes called the Armadale, Kensington and Hawthorn utilise copies of the facades of the Victorian and Edwardian houses found in these desirable and pricey suburbs. The branding of the Delfin houses is not dissimilar in intent to the nostalgic naming of these established suburbs, which referenced their WASP origins. However these faux housing styles are rather like the McDonalds "New Tastes Menu", customised to suit local tastes. Oversized houses on small land plots are referred to as McMansions in the US. The Delfin Warehouse is simply a new meal on the McMansion menu: all style and no substance, they emphasise that the virtual is becoming the accepted model for Australian home ownership and the mythologies that support it.

Owning the quarter-acre block in the 'burbs and other myths of Australian identity (ocker, bushman, larrikin) have recently collapsed into a two-dimensional space, dictated by the consumer logic of television marketers and housing developers. In discussing Melbourne's Streeton Views estate, Laurel Porcari and Peter Zellner argue that the picturesque has been supplanted by the televisual.² Examples of this phenomena are the infomercial styled television programs such as *Changing Rooms*,

The Block and *Location, Location* that accentuate the marketability of good old 'Aussie know-how' and 'do-it-yourself' clichés. This language of free-floating signs conveniently operates within the marketing strategies of housing developers and branding generally. Political, social and historical hegemonies are wiped clean and replaced with artificial-lakes and themed developments to be sold as an attainable life-style commodity. How does community evolve once the developers have left? Do they go back inside to the TV and watch a re-run of *Room for Improvement*, or do they start creating a new collective history? It is within this third dialectic that the artists in *Home Loan* situate their work.

The Delfin Warehouses at Caroline Springs have been designed by the architectural team at Delfin Lend Lease in response to "the trend toward a more urban lifestyle". This logic is continued with "special Warehouse lanes as part of our urban design strategy to develop inner suburbs within our larger communities".³ The Caroline Springs adage as a "place to live, play, work and learn" pretty much defines it as an alternative centre, disposing of the need (not only architecturally) for the original model. Whilst Delfin's urban strategy is superficial and theme-park-like at present, the future may not be as contradictory a scenario in the light of a recent example from the US. The San Fernando Valley, traditionally part of the suburban sprawl of Greater Los Angeles, has now transformed into its own municipality (some suggested names being Valley City and Camelot). If its bid is successful it will be the sixth largest metropolitan area in the US, with a local economic productivity that competes with Los Angeles itself. For an area that is over 91% residential, not only is the Valley's economic productivity surprising, but also its collective commitment to sever ties with the City of Los Angeles and its municipal agencies is indicative of its civic confidence. The US-based design group VALDES have used the term "spread" to describe aspects of this phenomena, feeling that "suburbia" and "sprawl" have become insufficient terms as by definition they imply a centre.⁴

The relatively short history of the converted warehouse space has its origins in economic and spatial necessity. In the cultural compression chamber that was the island of Manhattan in the 60s and 70s (the golden age of the American avant-garde), live-in loft type studio spaces for artists were sought after and cost effective (per square metre). During the 80s, however, with space at a premium in Manhattan, they were gentrified into trendy loft dwellings for the burgeoning Yuppie class. Somewhat behind this developmental curve, the Melbourne version of the artist live-in warehouse studio has only recently seen developer driven renovation into apartment dwellings for the well-heeled, marking a significant shift in desirable urban housing for the "world's most liveable city". The Delfin Warehouses, with their obvious dissociation from this actual lifestyle and demographic, sit as stark reminders that artistic production is constantly being exchanged with mainstream culture: once a garret, now an apartment. The works in *Home Loan* reflect this fluid exchange between the outside and inside, where the notion of a radiant cultural centre is redundant and the new exchanges that occur act more like the navigational paths of electronic circuitry.

Stephen Haley's animated video *Loop* acts like a tour for the potential homebuyer through a possible space for purchase, such as would be experienced in buying off the plan. The deployment of the tour fly-through as a cheesy marketing tactic is emphasised by the elevator version of *Girl from Ipanema* in the accompanying

¹ Noni Hazelhurst, interview with Louise Adler, Radio National, July 2003.

² Laurel Porcari and Peter Zellner "The Lucky Country: Myth, Image, and the Australian Suburb" in Peter Lang and Tam Miller (eds.), *Suburban Discipline*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1997.

³ Caroline Springs home page www.carolinesprings.com.au (date last accessed 20 August 2003).

⁴ Interview for Lab71 with VALDES, www.lab71.org/issue04/171section180/171section180.html (date last accessed 15 July 2003).

sound track. *Loop* intersects the real and the virtual when the loop ends in the final frames, feeding back through the monitor that is being watched in real space, and starting again. This loop highlights how the real is increasingly supplanted and preceded by the virtuality of the digital and the model.

Amanda Morgan's work splices together banal out-takes and unclimactic moments from *Suture*, *The Man Who Wasn't There*, *The Conversation*, *Blood Simple*, *Dead Man* and *Lost Highway*. Two large screen TVs sit in dialogue with each other with one screen operating the remote control that is channel surfing the other. Together they create another video space that upsets representational codes and acts to cumulatively reframe its narrative, offering a multiplicity of sometimes-conflicting readings. They also mimic Morgan's process of exchanging meanings between art and popular culture. Her process, firstly borrowing these videos from the Arthouse section of Blockbuster Video, then editing in Final Cut Pro and After Effects, reflects this exchange of values and methods. The (remote) controller has no control over the perception of what is being formed in the present.

Natasha Johns-Messenger's works also upsets readings of what is presented and what is actual. Johns-Messenger invites the viewer to participate in perceptual paradox, in work that often situates the viewer as subject and spectacle. *Small Architecture* locates architectural figurines in the Warehouse to alter the viewer's perception of scale in the surrounding environment. The photographs that read as figures in landscapes are contrasted with the inclusion of the actual figurines in the space in which they were photographed; a space-ship is actually a gas jet, a city square is an arm of a chair and a sunny park is a window sill. In a more theatrical light these "little people" are like escapees from the developer's models for Caroline Springs, contemplating their environment and perhaps planning a micro-revolt.

Bernadette Keys lends humanity to a subject matter that could be bleak or misrepresented. *No Trace* (2002) was a photographic sound installation in which Keys worked closely with the people whose lives had been affected by the murder of a close family member. Departing from documentary, Keys depicts an abstracted version of the world that contains the blurred emotions and eroded barriers of a collapsed public and private space. *Almost Living* was prompted by a recent infanticide at Caroline Springs, and explores this tragedy in terms of the latent emotional atmosphere that occupies domestic space.

Darren Wardle, Blair Trethowan, Jarrad Kennedy and Kate Just draw on personal histories and utilise imagery of the popular, hand-made, functional and domestic in their work. Their work openly admits that deep in the closet of many a groovy inner city artist is a suburban childhood. Personal histories not only inform their subject matter, but also their modes of practice and relationship to the art object.

Darren Wardle's *Enter Sandman* is a decorative montage of imagery drawn from suburban culture. *Enter Sandman* references the Metallica song, the Holden Panel van and its association with dreaming and fantasy. As a bedroom fit-out for the Warehouse, it plays with associations of the male space within the traditionally female domain of the domestic interior. Wardle's bedroom is a teenage car hoon fantasy complete with blue light mimicking the streetcars. The wall-affect-like 80s wallpaper used in the montage is strangely reminiscent of Jackson Pollock's *Lavender Mist* (1953). Wardle creates a head-on collision between art and suburban culture and public and private space.

Blair Trethowan and Kate Just re-connect with their subject matter through the physical activity of making stuff. For Just this is a cornfield from her hometown in the US and for Trethowan it is his mother's paintings of a scene remembered from her childhood. Both artists re-consider the conventions for the production of the art object.

Painting by mum, frame by me by Trethowan alludes to the actual frame he has made for his mother's paintings and the metaphorical cultural framework that surrounds the reception of an artwork. Getting to hang out with his mum and see what she would come up with for the work is a sincere gesture by Trethowan to reconnect with what a work of art can achieve not what it is *supposed* to achieve within the rhetoric of art history.

Kate Just uses everyday materials and domestic processes in her practice. *Fertile Ground* is a re-working of *The Pickin' Patch*, a knitted cornfield that adds a surreal twist to "new growth" both in housing developments such as Caroline Springs and as a family priority. As a remembered site it highlights the farmland that once was Caroline Springs. As a non-indigenous species of plant it is also a reminder of the colonisation of Australia.

Jarrad Kennedy's *Bananaz* also draws upon childhood memories in relation to the reception of an artwork. Kennedy remembers skaters using Ron Roberston-Swann's *Vault* (1980) as the perfect launching pad for a variety of tricks. The marks left by the skateboards, and the sculpture's function in the skaters' performance, gave it a new dimension beyond its original intent. Kennedy's simulacrum of *Vault* could at once be playground equipment, a shelter or public sculpture. Using the yellow fencing from the renovation site of the NGV International, *Bananaz* recalls Dale Hickey's use of suburban fence paling in *Untitled* (1968) and results in the same kind of "deliberate hybrid"⁵—this time traversing time as well as art genres and conventions.

The imploding hierarchies explored in *Home Loan* situate contemporary suburbia as neither a stereotypical subject, nor a site for the replication of culture, but rather a site for production in its own right. Whether *Home Loan* is preaching to the converted or will develop new faithful, remains to be seen, what can be said with certainty is that the themes explored by these artists are very much indicative of what we are living now; lifestyle bring it on.

⁵ Chris McAuliffe, *Art and Suburbia, Sydney, Craftsman House*, 1996, p.81.

Gleaning

(Katrina Logan)

Graffiti on the front of a vacant house in inner city Melbourne reads “homeless?: here’s a home”. It encapsulates the simple philosophy of the urban squatter—hat space should not remain empty—and the ethos of the first warehouse inhabitants.

Like *gleaning*, the subject of Agnès Varda’s documentary¹, recycling disused space in the city in the 20th century was a quasi-anarchist act of ‘resistance and appropriation’², as much a driving force for the conversion of warehouses to residential/studio space as their spatial and aesthetic potential. Whilst the warehouse met the needs of artists, musicians and performers whose work required space, the geopolitics of occupying otherwise wasted space allowed practicality, creativity and philosophy of life to merge.

The Delfin Warehouse—the image

From rent-free space, to rented space, to owner-occupied warehouse space, to developer-converted warehouse space and now to developer-*built* warehouse space, the warehouse has reached its fifth incarnation as the Delfin Warehouse. In each developer-driven incarnation the warehouse is reinvented and stylised according to market trends, endlessly providing the the consumer with ‘reassurance through imitation’.³

With its focus on the interior, the artist-converted warehouse offers little potential for the developer in terms of exterior imitation. While its homes-on-offer rivals—the Australian homestead, the Italian villa, for example—have their roots clearly in imitation of identifiable architectural styles, the Delfin Warehouse is the creation of a new type—a type based largely on image.

This image is about associations with snappy designer products such as Apple and the VW *Beetle*. It is also about inner city living—the media release reads ‘Warehouse designs to suit the trend towards a more urban lifestyle’. It is about providing the style and pace of Prahran or Richmond, albeit on the very fringe of suburbia with views of abandoned farmland. If the ‘pepper which gives bite to the Australian humour is irony’,⁴ then the Delfin Warehouse must be one of the funniest contributions to the Australian city yet.

Twin cities—Caroline Springs and Melbourne

The location map on the Caroline Springs Web site depicts Caroline Springs and Melbourne as centres of equal size. Rather than being an outer suburb, Caroline Springs appears as an autonomous twin city linked to inner Melbourne by a freeway, whilst the interim suburbs, Footscray, Essendon, Altona are floating names—amorphous, incidental. Caroline Springs is not about affordability *in proximity* to Melbourne but an *alternative* to Melbourne—indeed, a superior alternative. The promo material reads “Town Centre—A Rival to Southbank”.

The Delfin Warehouse—the reality

The juxtaposition of scale, surface, amenity—the domestic and the industrial—forged when a space is used for a purpose for which it was not originally intended, is perhaps one of the most distinctive qualities of the warehouse conversion. While most warehouses had high ceilings to suit their original purpose, this did not necessarily translate into a double-height space when converted for domestic use. However, the double-height space in the Delfin Warehouse seems to be the feature that distinguishes it from its suburban house counterparts. The spin about ‘flexibility’ and ‘self-styling’ seem only to translate into rooms without doors and the absence of certain walls, suggesting that the Delfin warehouse was devised more through a process of *subtraction* from the standard three-bedroom suburban house than *addition* to the interior of a shell. And why not the bathtub located theatrically in the dining room?

Keeping the price down

Through these devices alluding to flexibility and choice, the developer is able to cut costs, whilst not diverging too far from the familiar. The largest of the Delfin Warehouses occupies a lot size that is approximately half the standard suburban block of 300m². So too, the compressed second floor (with 2.3m ceiling heights), the pared-back facades, the straight double height walls, the doing away with front garden and the single roof utilise the lot size more efficiently than other housing models at Caroline Springs. The use of materials is also reduced with substantial cost-savings to the developer. In this respect, if no other, this housing model could be seen as a step in the right direction in terms of environmental impact.

Transformation—back to the suburban home

The question remains then: are the new ‘sharp edges’ of Delfin Warehouses sustainable, or will they soften with the adornment of suburban trinkets? Do quirkiness, a trash-aesthetic and grotesquerie—qualities celebrated in the Australian cinema in the 1990s—represent an outmoded suburban experience, or will the clean white surfaces of the Delfin Warehouses be personalised in the vein of the familiar suburban—as Wardle’s *Enter Sandman* suggests? It remains to be seen whether in the 21st century, the pressures of maintaining the image will prohibit the expression of the individual, until the inhabitants function in a simulacrum of magazine images; like the stilted figures in Jacques Tati’s *Mon Oncle*,⁵ self-conscious and never quite comfortable with their orchestrated settings.

Transformation—coming full circle

Is it tenable that these spaces might in future be inhabited by artists? That in the search for affordable space, with all warehouses in the city converted to residential, artists may find themselves moving to the periphery to work? Or perhaps they might rent a Delfin Warehouse in Caroline Springs as studio space. It seems absurd until you consider the price—the equivalent of a \$600,000 warehouse in Fitzroy can be snapped up for \$250,000 in Caroline Springs. If suburbia is a rich cultural site, as Ferber, Healy and McAuliffe posit,⁶ then perhaps the Delfin Warehouse will find its next incarnation as artists’ studio—indeed becoming the consummate base for work ‘au plein air’.

1 *The Gleaners and I*, Dir. Agnès Varda, 2000.

2 Jake Wilson, “Trash And Treasure: The Gleaners And I.” *Senses of Cinema*, 23, 2002. www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/02/23/gleaners.html (date last accessed 25 August 2003).

3 Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*. Trans. Weaver, W. London, Picador, 1986, p.57.

4 *White Fella’s Dreaming*, Dir. George Miller, AFFC, 1996.

5 *Mon Oncle*, Jacques Tati, 1958.

6 Sarah Ferber, Chris Healy and Chris McAuliffe (eds.), *Beasts of Suburbia: Reinterpreting Cultures in Australian Suburbs*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1994.

(Edward Colless)

We no longer buy products. We no longer buy commodities. Today, we buy lifestyles. Lifestyles are options, much like options in the share market. Lifestyles are the rights to acquire and possess that which we do not actually, physically, want to acquire or possess. We buy the right to buy commodities that we have no desire to actually buy; and we do this in order to sell on at a profit that right to buy. The commodity, as it survives in the common speech of cultural theory today, is an anachronistic fantasy of the new economy. Nobody wants it. It is a quaint, sentimental concept. It is an embarrassment. It is similar to the gold reserves that, in the older economy of production, allegedly guaranteed a state's paper currency; and which of course could only do so if there was no possibility of actually cashing that paper in. Gold only supports an economy if it cannot be exchanged for its real value. The commodity, in similar terms, is the inert and hidden guarantor of value for the free circulation of lifestyle options. But it survives like an old god in an atheistic society on an impossible exchange. Strictly speaking, we get nothing for our investment in life. We can only buy into the fantasy of a possible exchange: an exchange that we would like to believe produces life.

Take home improvement. Look at one of the spectacular sources for this quaint fantasy of a productive life. Take almost any run-down industrial area of any inner urban environment or port or waterfront over the past thirty years, where the shipping companies or manufacturers have either gone bust or moved to bigger, more efficient facilities out of town. It's an old, embarrassing story. Artists, musicians, designers and dancers move into the derelict warehouses, either squatting or paying super cheap rent. They restore services and value-add to the building fabric, often in ad hoc and creative ways, and generate a community that attracts small street-front business: cafes, indie fashion retailers, and bookshops. As it erases the working class texture of the environment, this emerging middle class bohemian ambience captures the attention of property developers who buy up the warehouses, kick out the bohos, subdivide the space and convert the former studios into apartments at extravagant prices for DINK stockbrokers or advertising execs.

Needless to say, the top-end consumers in this scenario are inevitably characterised as parasites: like the idle landed nobility of the ancient régime, with callous greed they reap in for their own consumption all the produce of that workforce of bohos that precede them. We think of this as parasitical behaviour because we want to believe in production as a source of reality, as its origin. Anything else is imaginary, is ideological and false: culture lacking its impossible relation to the real, whether that be historical (social, urban, class, community) or natural (environmental, biological, psychological). As the creative producers of this revived urban space, those artists who get kicked out are positioned close to the real value of space, to its origin in human transformative labour. They are the peasants of urban renewal. The salt of the earth. Unlike the advertising execs, their investment is real and it is meaningful.

Or so we would like to believe. But what happens when we short-circuit this social food chain of successive capitalisation and profit, and induce the lifestyle without the productive relations with history or nature that are supposed to sustain it? What if, as at Caroline Springs, we build a warehouse conversion designed from the ground up, a phony warehouse already converted into studio apartments, sited on open land so we don't need to demolish anything? This would be nonsense. A conversion of

nothing into nothing. It would be ahistorical and unnatural. This would almost be a folly, like an eighteenth century fantasy construction of a classical ruin in a British aristocrat's garden. Or rather, it would be more than a folly, since it would not be a representation of another building (even a generic ruin) which has a meaningful if playful, ironic and parodic relation to a cultural tradition. This sort of warehouse conversion would instead be the equivalent of the synthetic life being currently configured in research labs in Texas, manufactured DNA chains which can be customised to specific biotechnical purposes. Designer life.

What a brilliantly scandalous idea! To exploit in purely stylistic terms, and with no need for any organic relation to its milieu, the aesthetics and economics of inner urban recycling. To mimic those processes of re-investment in the industrial wastelands of the urban environment, but without any material basis to the act and hence without any mediation. To annihilate the meaning and function of the very thing this building strives to resemble. And is this not the very promise of culture now, as art disappears into décor and ambience? Can we not say, thankfully and joyously, that such an annihilating creation would signal the end of representation? To be sure, representation (and its correlative concepts: the imaginary, ideology, mediation) is today the embarrassing commodity-form of cultural theory; a quaint concept that cultural theory has stuck by out of sentimental attachment. Lifestyles do not represent anything, any more than does the synthetic life that stains a Petri dish. A life that represents nothing is a weightless life of superabundance.

CONTRIBUTORS BIOGRAPHIES

Edward Colless is Head of Art History and Theory at the Victorian College of the Arts. He is the author of *The Error of my Ways* (1995) and has worked as a film-maker, theatre director and publishes regularly in the arts press.

Jarrad Kennedy is a graduate of Victorian College of the Arts. He has had solo exhibitions at TCB and CLUBS project inc., and group exhibitions at BUS Gallery, West Space, Citylights and Axiom Gallery.

Bernadette Keys holds Honours in media and photography from RMIT and has exhibited in Melbourne, New York and Berlin since 1999. Her most recent solo exhibition was at Bright Gallery.

Kerri Klumpp is a graduate of Victorian College of the Arts and is a studio artist at Gertrude Contemporary Artist Spaces. Klumpp has exhibited at Bus, TCB, Penthouse and Pavement and Linden and included in the ANZ prize 2000 and the Keith and Elisabeth Murdoch Traveling Fellowship 2001.

Stephen Haley is an artist and writer, currently lecturing at VCA in Art History and is completing a PhD on the Mirror at University of Melbourne/VCA. He is represented by Nellie Castan Gallery in Melbourne and Michael Carr Gallery in Sydney. In 1999 he won the Deacon, Graham and James/Arts 21 Award and has work in various institutional and private collections.

Larissa Hjorth is a curator, artist and lecturer currently lecturing in Art History and Theory at Victorian College of the Arts. Hjorth has been practicing interdisciplinary art for over twelve years including solo exhibitions *Nosegay: non popular sound princess* (smell cinema) at CCP (Melbourne) and EAF (Adelaide) and has been in over sixty group exhibitions including *Sukima* at Command N (Tokyo) and candy factory collaboration at 2001 Yokohama Triennale.

Katrina Logan is a Melbourne-based architect who runs her own architecture practice, and is the founder of the design company *Full Tank*. She is also currently undertaking a Post-graduate Diploma in Cinema Studies at La Trobe University.

Natasha Johns-Messenger is an artist and lecturer who has taught at RMIT and is currently employed in the Sculpture Department at Victorian College of the Arts. Having completed a Masters by Research in Fine Art at RMIT University in 2000, Johns-Messenger has exhibited widely nationally and internationally including Tokyo and New York.

Kate Just was born in Connecticut, USA and has been living permanently in Australia since 1996. She holds a Bachelor of Science (Filmmaking) from Boston University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting) from VCA. She has exhibited her work in a number of art spaces in Melbourne including Penthouse and Pavement, Linden, City Square, 200 Gertrude Street, Bus and West Space.

Simone LeAmon is a visual artist and partner in n+1 equals interdisciplinary studio, Melbourne. Having graduated from Victorian College of the Arts in 1992, LeAmon is currently completing a Masters in Industrial Design at RMIT University. LeAmon has exhibited in many solo and group exhibitions in Australia in venues such as Gertrude Contemporary Artist Spaces, and recently the Australian Embassy in Tokyo.

Amanda Morgan is an artist who works primarily with electronic media and has been presented in America and Hong Kong as well as in print and on television. In 2002 she completed a Master of Fine Art at Victorian College of the Arts. Her thesis work—titled *Signal*—explored 1970s video artists' notions of the ephemeral nature of film and transmission failure.

Ben Morieson is a Melbourne based artist who has exhibited and created on-site works and installations that seek to engage an uninitiated audience. Morieson has exhibited in galleries and on-site, interstate and overseas. His most recent work was in a shop front in Fitzroy.

Selina Ou is a recent Victorian College of the Arts graduate. In 2003, she was awarded the City of Hobart Art Prize. Ou has held solo exhibitions at Uplands Gallery, Linden Gallery, TCB Artist Run Space and West Space. Recent group exhibitions include *Icy Immortality*, Gertrude Street Contemporary Art Spaces and *Love at First Sight*, Centre of Contemporary Photography (2002).

Paul Quinn is a Melbourne based artist who has been involved in youth work, theatre television and education. His work has been included in over 40 solo and group exhibitions throughout

Australia. Quinn has worked with the management committees of several artist run-initiatives notably as co-ordinator of Stripp. Since 1996, Quinn has been a teacher in Visual Art and is currently Co-ordinator of Visual Art and New Media at Swinburne University of Technology in Prahran.

Masato Takasaka completed a Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours) in Drawing at the Victorian College of the Arts in 1999 and is currently a studio artist at Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces. Selected solo exhibitions include 1st Floor, Penthouse & Pavement, TCB, CLUBSproject inc., South London Gallery, and First Draft.

Blair Trethowan graduated from Victorian College of the Arts in 1998. Trethowan has exhibited at Museum of Contemporary Art, The Australian Centre of Photography, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces and at Foxy Productions, New York. His work has appeared in *Like*, *Arttext* and street press magazines.

Kate Shaw is a Melbourne based curator and has a Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours) from RMIT and a Graduate Diploma of Museum Studies from Deakin University. She has curated a number of exhibitions in Melbourne at Platform, Gertrude Contemporary Artist Spaces, NGV and was Projects Officer for the Melbourne Biennial *Signs of Life*. Shaw has exhibited in over 30 solo and group exhibitions.

Darren Wardle is a Melbourne based artist who has exhibited extensively in Australia and recently participated in the major survey show, 'Painting as Paradox', held at Artists Space gallery in NYC. His work has been included in prominent texts, such as Chris Mc Auliffe's *Art and Suburbia*, and was featured in *Flash Art's* 2002 painting issue, Focus Painting One. Wardle is represented by Nellie Castan Gallery Melbourne, Michael Carr Sydney and is aligned with Stux Gallery NYC.

Constanze Zikos was born in Greece and lives and works in Melbourne and is represented by Tolarno galleries. He has widely exhibited both nationally and internationally and is in major public and private collections. A retrospective exhibition of his work *anathematic* is currently on show at M.U.M.A, Monash University (Clayton campus).