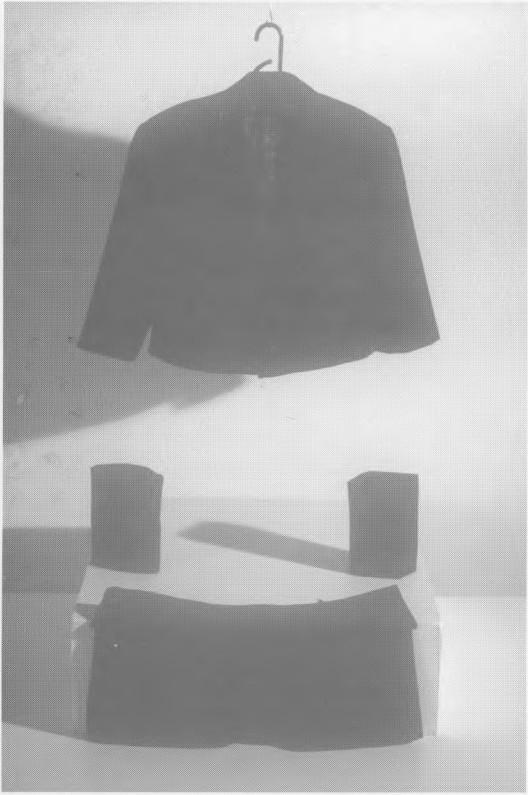


FRESH CUT **2001**

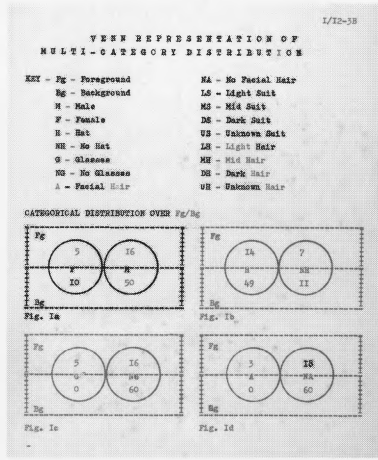
**8 FEBRUARY
- 17 MARCH**

INSTITUTE OF MODERN ART





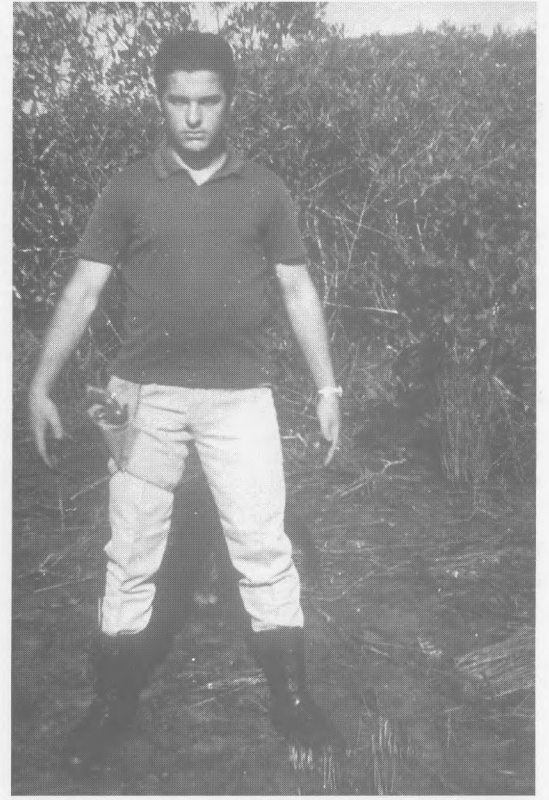
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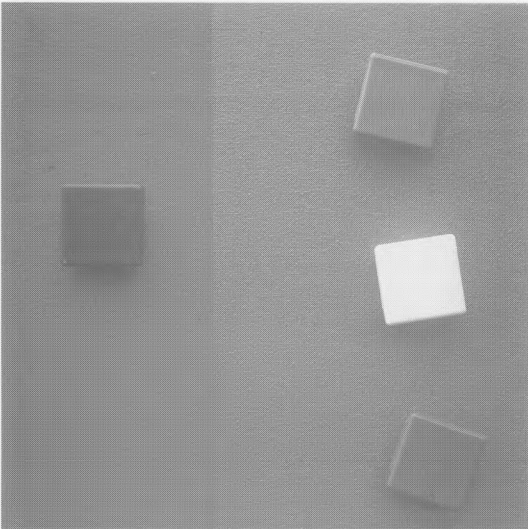
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TRANSITIONS

RUTH McDOUGALL

LET US BEGIN WITH THE IMAGE OF A YOUNG MAN with a video camera. It is 1997, somewhere in America. The young man stands in front of an ordinary middle class American house and his slow, deliberate, documentation of a white plastic shopping bag spiralling in eddies of wind seems to be at odds with its conservative surroundings. From a particular moment in the film *American Beauty*, this young man is mesmerised by softly billowing forms and absorbed by the transformation of one simple white bag.

Whenever I think about this image, I am caught not so much by its fragile beauty, set as it is in the midst of conventional American suburbs, but by a sense of recognition. It is an awareness of the young man's total absorption in how matter can be transformed or the sense of another being compelled to find the processes through which things can become something else.

I have had a similar response to the work of each of the artists in *Fresh Cut 2001*. This exhibition is not organised around a particular theme, style or even medium. What each of the artists share is a motivation and a fascination with a potential for transformation. They also take delight in looking and in discovering different ways of experiencing objects, materials, ideas and images. That all eleven artists have recently graduated from a focussed period of study in the visual arts explains the ease with which they handle a particular medium but not their fascination with understanding how we look and make meaning. This fascination is something that they bring with them and also what they will now take away.

In the context of *Fresh Cut*, an annual event for the IMA, what can this fascination say about my selection of artists as the graduates of the year 2000? Or what, in this contemporary moment, seems to be realised for me through their fascination? Each of these artists is looking for something that is somewhat unknown. At the beginning of the millenium they are waiting for something to begin, stahding with their eyes open, looking both backwards and forwards, always aware of the implications of their looking. These artists exhibit an acceptance and a desire to work with what exists.

Chris Handran and **Annie Hogan** are well versed in an understanding of photography's documentary tradition and the expectation that the photograph produces absolutely truthful images of its subjects. Both artists place this at the forefront of their practice; Handran drawing attention to his physical manipulation of the camera and image, whilst Hogan manipulates perspective through careful positioning of the camera. These photographs, however, are not just the artist's response to a theoretical understanding, rather, they focus on the character of Queensland's domestic architecture. The photographs are about how subjects can

be seen again, and differently. They explore how photography both informs and can be transformed by the act of looking and how for Queenslanders, something very familiar can produce a different way of looking at the world and subsequently stand out.

When looking at a painting I find it difficult not to be aware of the frame: to distinguish where this process of painting, that is so loaded, has begun and where it ends. There is also a curiosity about how the artist has positioned their work in relation to its status as painting. My delight in the works of **Gareth Donnelly**, **Lucy Griggs** and **Caroline Southwood** is the result of their working on and with this frame, or edge.

Donnelly draws our attention to the edge, forming the space of the frame out of cardboard. There is a tension in this work between the ability of the cardboard to relate to the painting as a frame and a sense of being able to open it up, unfold and lay it out. Taped on, never quite secure, I am not sure if this work has ended or if it is about to become. The borders of Griggs' and Southwood's paintings, although intact, also shift and blur. Both artists displace our understanding of the closure of the frame and Griggs provides us with a different relationship to an image's boundaries. Her paintings suggest a strong relationship with time and memory; of turning the pages of a book, of going back and reading again. Southwood, through her morphing of Brack's *Collins St, 5pm* into mathematical calculations expands our ideas of the edge through the introduction of other frames of reference.

Jose Da Silva's and **Janice Peacock's** images, forms and texts speak of alienation and the silencing of difference, however, this is not why they have been included in the exhibition. I am interested in the power of what refuses to be located within their images and texts. There is an awareness in both Da Silva's video and Peacock's installation of the chasm between something represented and the possibility of that thing exceeding meaning and the place we try to create for it. I am aware of watching myself trying to find a place to stand in front of these works, scared of both overlooking something or seeing more than I want.

There is an almost theatrical exploration of how a viewer will physically negotiate their gaze. The step backwards, the search for less disturbing objects which both artists acknowledge and echo; Jose through the playing out of sado-masochistic erotica, and Janice in her creation and recreation of scenes of unsettling action. Through this sense of discomfort Da Silva and Peacock are able to reveal the presence of something both unsayable and unspeakable. Their images/objects act as processes for uncovering that which cannot be represented but may be brought into being.

Amanda Pound's installed scenes also sit in this territory of discomfort by drawing on dreams and nightmares as the ultimate state of the transformation of matter. Constructed from quite familiar objects and fragmented body parts of children's toys, the installation provides the uncomfortable sensation of her work's potential reality. There is an unnerving sense that this confused collection of objects, images and sounds is perhaps closer to reality than dream. Pound creates a looking glass able to show us ourselves from the other side.

Irreverence is the first word I think of in response to **Jewel MacKenzie's** work. Working against the grain, MacKenzie discovers in the skilled construction of her pin-striped suits a play on power, particularly in relation to the use of the stripe in Modernism. In MacKenzie's hands textiles are capable of chameleon like shifts from female to male, craft to art and from whimsy to politics.

The process of trying to disrupt one's gaze or perspective is central to the work of both **Georgie Berkman** and **Simone Hine**. Both artists are interested in relationships of power between the person looking and the subject of their gaze. Berkman and Hine are also very aware of the objectification that often occurs, particularly when the subject is female. But this is not didactic work. Watching Hine's performance and walking through Berkman's installations these readings or associations with the work are activated rather than experienced. They seem to occur in the body as a physical remembrance as I am overcome by Hine's staccato like spasms, or the pulsation of Berkman's eyes. I have a sense of my perceiving body, moving or being moved through time, space and textures. These works seem to be about how we can continue to find new ways of looking at objects, materials and images that acknowledge the eye's physical understanding of texture, light and movement.

Thinking through my responses to the work in *Fresh Cut 2001*, it is a relief to sense that the artists are a lot more confident in their relationship to the way that mediums, materials and ideas have been used historically. In becoming less fearful about the meanings that may come with an object, material or image these artists have gained more of a sense of delight in how these may change, mutate and re-form.

GEORGINA BERKMAN b. 1970 Brisbane
Centre Stage (detail), 2000. Dyed cloth and paint,
290 x 283 x 270 cm. Photo: Damien Krell

JOSE DA SILVA b. 1979 Athens, Greece
Acorda, Coracao (Father, Rio De Janeiro, 1968), 2000.
Lambdaprint, 50 x 75 cm.

GARETH DONNELLY b. 1980 Brisbane
Untitled, 2000. Acrylic and objects on canvas,
20 x 20 cm

LUCY GRIGGS b. 1976 Sydney
From the 'Do bee' series, 2000. Acrylic on canvas,
55 x 43 cm

CHRIS HANDRAN b. 1977 Brisbane
Untitled from the Twilight series, 2000. Digital print,
120 x 80 cm

SIMONE HINE b. 1978 Brisbane
Composition 37 (detail), 2000. Computer generated
image, dimensions variable

ANNIE HOGAN b. 1965 Perth
Untitled from the Frostings series, 2000. Type C print,
87 x 87 cm

JEWEL MACKENZIE b. Papakura, New Zealand
Corporate Culture (Downsizing jacket), 2000. Pin-striped
suiting, mens size. Photo: Cassandra Schultz

JANICE PEACOCK b. 1955 Mareeba, North Qld
Between Scenes (detail), 2000. Head dresses and text,
dimensions variable

AMANDA POUND b. 1980 Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Installed Scene (detail), 2001. Mixed media, dimensions
variable

CAROLINE SOUTHWOOD b. 1975 Werribee, Victoria
After Collins St, 5pm B (detail), 2000. Ink, card, clipseal
bags, drawing pins gesso on canvas, 163 x 43.7 cm



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THANKS TO THE STAFF AT QLD UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY, QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF ART (MORNING-
SIDE & GOLD COAST CAMPUSES), UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH-
ERN QUEENSLAND & SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY FOR
THEIR HELP WITH THIS EXHIBITION.

THE IMA RECEIVES FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE
QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT THROUGH ARTS QUEENSLAND,
MAJOR SPONSOR, AND FROM THE VISUAL ARTS/CRAFT
FUND OF THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL, THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT'S ARTS FUNDING & ADVISORY BODY.

THE IMA SUPPORTS RECONCILIATION.

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GEORGINA
BERKMAN¹¹

JOSE
DA SILVA⁷

GARETH
DONNELLY⁴

LUCY
GRIGGS¹

CHRIS
HANDRAN⁹

SIMONE
HINE⁸

ANNIE
HOGAN¹⁰

JEWEL
MacKENZIE²

JANICE
PEACOCK⁵

AMANDA
POUND⁶

CAROLINE
SOUTHWOOD³

CURATED BY
RUTH McDOUGALL