



Academy Gallery

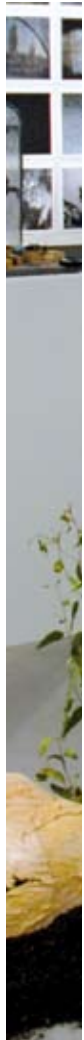
SCHOOL OF
VISUAL AND
PERFORMING ARTS
LAUNCESTON

Carbon Trading

Exhibition dates: 12 July - 9 September 2007

Exhibition curator: Zsolt Faludi

THE COMMODIFICATION OF CARE



On the walls of every office I have inhabited over the past two decades I have pinned a poster, a 1989 product of Karen Vance and Beth Gibbings' Garage Graphix. 'Sydneyiders', it screams, 'why don't you eat your garden'. No question mark, just a rude suggestion. And a bit more advice, 'Don't mow – grow', supported by some emotive science-babble: 'The lawn cultures of affluent nations use more water, fertilizers, fossil fuels, biocides & person hours than any agricultural resource of the 3rd world'.

The poster, dominated not just by the hot pink-on-green text but by the figure of a crop-haired, leather-jacketed, blue-jean wearing fem denizen of inner-Sydney Newtown or Erko, was produced for Permaculture International. In 1989 I was well aware of permaculture and its impact on carbon cycles, but it was neither permaculture nor support for the graphic designers that led me to purchase this poster – it was an abiding hatred of lawn culture. Here in this poster was a big, bold statement that supported my obliterating of our lawn under piles of mulch and vegetables, and the active defending of our street tree from the Council tree manglers, letting its 'weeping habit' and leaf droppings spell the demise of the grass verge while its height sheltered our west-facing windows from the blast of a Sydney summer. I knew we didn't need a lawn. In fact, if we didn't have a lawn, we didn't need a fuel-guzzling air conditioner or, indeed, a lawn mower. We did have tomatoes and rocket in season, the figs, olives and grapefruit were happier and the makings of pesto grew in weed-like proportions. The reward for this expression of

care, the breaking free of lawn culture, was to live in an environment of small but constant luxuries that rapidly became the norm.

Looking back, it seems that, even though its message is possibly even more relevant today, the meaning of the poster has changed. This is something to do with language, the change of emphasis from the 'getting your hands dirty' of permaculture to the 'filthy lucre' of the stock exchange and the World Bank. The very language that gives us 'carbon trading' is one that fits today's economically inscribed global society. It promotes a Cartesian dualism – us and nature rather than us in nature: you are either part of it or you stand outside it, orchestrating its activity. (Anyone for empire building?) Once you're happy to oversee the environment as an asset of human existence, you probably have very little compunction putting a dollar value on anything from the culturally derived wilderness we look on as nature (postcards, screen savers, wildlife tours, cabin-with-spa), to a dozen eggs (cage laid, barn laid, free range, vegetarian), these set out in a carton whose design eerily simulates the 'cage' variation of the egg production line.

William Leiss, in his 1978 book, *The limits to satisfaction*, predated the deep ecologists when he attempted to 'decentre' us from our contentment on our perceived needs, and recentre us within our natural system, that is, as part of a total environment. Leiss didn't get it entirely right but he does predicate the conditions that have led to the contemporary perception of need that drives the very concept of carbon trading. Inevitably, as Tony Fry writes, 'Life no longer cares for

itself, it now has to be prefigured to be possible. This is to say that "we", and all else in the biosphere, become ever more dependent upon the artificial as the built, the managed and the conserved. Increasingly, earth has been turned to system...' (Fry 1994,109) By taking nature into 'our' system, one that is human-centric, it seems that we will allay the 'problem' of being part of a natural system – at least for the moment.– and, of course, this system is one that hides its dysfunction in the discourse of trade, of dollar values, of the natural as resource rather than asset.

With carbon trading we have a process that fits neatly into all administering structures from the local environment group to globalised corporations, and taking in the finance departments of any government body in between. Even art is in its thrall, artists complicit in its systems. As Suzi Gablik (2002, 149) has observed 'In Western culture, artists normally do not train to engage with real-life problems. They learn to be competitive with their products in the market place...All of our cultural institutions are subtly and lethally influenced by this ideology based on set patterns of conventional success and its economic imperative.' (Is one image worth a hundred trees? A thousand? If it's a Whiteley...?)

The idea of 'care' that Fry (1994, 97, 109) uses is one taken from Heidegger: care as 'a sum of concern expended in order to survive'. Is the making of art in its usual frame-bound, gallery-boxed forms, simultaneously an act of care and complicit in carbon trading, the barn-laid system of environmental concern? Recently it seems that 'eco-ventions' are taking place – even

within the gallery space of this exhibition there are connections made, a first breaking down of the art-life dichotomy that had largely nullified any earlier attempts by artists to take an overt environmental stance. Here, in small whirring motors, reconstituted and raw materials, excruciating powerlessness and transcendent moments can be seen something of what Gablick has identified as a vital new vision for artists, 'a vision dedicated to a single perception: how to live appropriately in an interconnected universe'. (Gablick, 2002, 150)

In 1989 it cost \$36.00 per square metre to maintain a Sydney suburban lawn for a year. Today 156 trees will offset a year's commuting by SUV between Prospect and Inveresk. Feel better about it now? Well, that's carbon trading, a commodification of care. These numbers and their driving concepts have got very little to do with survival but, as can be seen in the rich (bio)diversity of this exhibition, may well be the motivation for artists to creatively take up the imperative for concern.

Dr Deborah Malor

2007

References:

Fry, Tony 1994 *Remakings: ecology/design/philosophy*, Envirobooks, Sydney

Gablick, Suzi, 2002 'Art and the big picture', in Sue Spaid *Ecovention: current art to transform ecologies*, Contemporary Arts Centre, Cincinnati

Leiss, William 1978 *The limits of satisfaction: on needs and commodities*, Marion Boyers, London





Mohd Najib, ABDULLAH SANI

Untitled
Ceramic
Dimensions variable
2007



Lorraine BIGGS

Half Ton of Carbon Emissions
Oil paint on canvas
31 x 41cm
2007



Robert BOLDKALD

Trees Don't Grow on Wood	Trees Don't Grow on Wood
Recycled cardboard	Raku clay
Dimensions variable	Dimensions variable
2007	2007



Sonja BROUGH

Sounds of Carbon Trading
CD
Dimensions variable
2007



Timothy CHATWIN

Fertile / Futile
Wool jacket, poa labillardieri, porcelain & stain
Dimensions variable
2007



Fernando do CAMPO

Untitled 1 45 x 45cm Oil on canvas 2007	Untitled 3 45 x 45cm Oil on canvas 2007
Untitled 2 45 x 45cm Clay pigments, found organic materials, found sticks and canvas 2007	Untitled 4 45 x 45cm Clay pigments, found organic materials, found sticks and canvas 2007



Simon BOURKE

On Climb – Passing Through 5000 feet

Wood blocks and acrylic paint

86 x 60cm

2002



Samuel EDDY

BX0 – MO²X

DVD

Dimensions variable

2007





David HAMILTON

Paradox

Printed signage on plastic
200 x 150cm
2007



Robert IKIN

Closed System

Mixed media
160 x 70 x 50cm
2007



Dr Graham KING

Coming Home

Clay & earth
30 x 60cm
2007



Penny MASON

Black over white over black over white

Oil on cotton
1220 x 1520cm
2007



Vincent MCGRATH

Take it all

Modelling clay, ceramic colours and canvas
20 x 16 x 5cm
2007

Confused

Ceramic colours and
canvas
20 x 16 x 6cm
2007

Correction

Ceramic colours and canvas
20 x 16 x 5cm
2007



David MARSDEN

Spread the Load

Mixed media
84 x 40 x 60cm
2007



Naomi MILLER

copia verborum

Pencil on paper
77 x 57 cm
2007





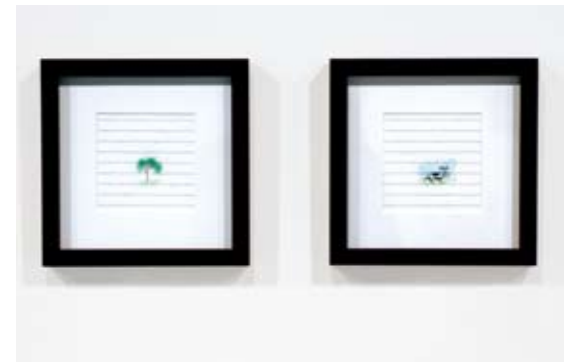
Gardie PALMER

Figures 1, 2, 3, 4
Beach wood
Dimensions variable
2007



Carly PETERS

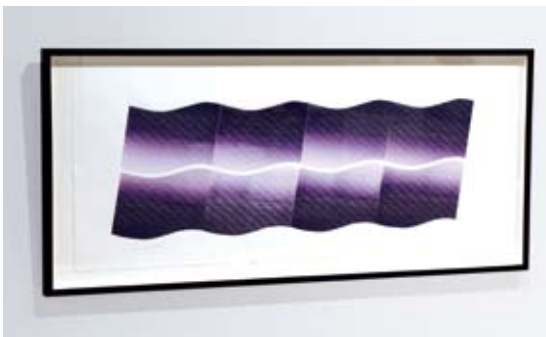
Earth Matters
Handmade paper, organic matter
Dimensions variable
2007



Susan QUINN

CH₄
Mixed media on paper
23 x 23cm
2007

O₂
Mixed media on paper
23 x 23cm
2007



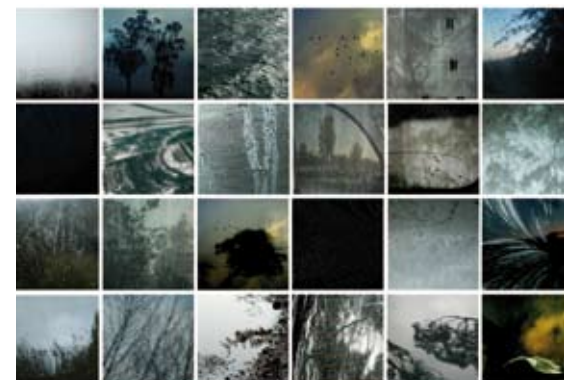
Dallas RICHARDSON

Gaia's Sigh
Lino cut
161 x 68cm
2007



Amelia ROWE

Exchange
Recycled art, plaster, lighting, soil, & tree
Dimensions variable
2007



Troy RUFFELS

Winter Screen Images 1 - 24
C-Type prints on archive paper
55 x 55cm (each)
2007

Courtesy of the artist and Bett Gallery, Hobart.



CARBON DIOXIDE POLLUTE



Robert SHEEHY

Fruit Motor

Mixed media
50 x 50 x 20cm
2007



Adrian STABB

Carbon Synk
Mixed media
Dimensions variable
2007

Convector Fan

Mixed media
50 x 50 x 20cm
2007

Impulse Motor

Mixed media
50 x 50 x 20cm
2007

Marcus TATTON

Incendiary Balls
King William pine, wire, polystyrene
50cm (3 spheres each)
2007







Siew Har **TEO**

Untitled

Mixed media
38 x 29 x 7.5cm
2007



Ev **WILLIAMS**

Reconstitution

Ceramic
50 x 50cm
2007



Judith **WOODS**

Façade

Unfired clay
21 x 27 x 3cm
2007

Façade

Unfired clay
18 x 33 x 3cm
2007

Façade

Unfired clay
23 x 41 x 3cm
2007

Façade

Unfired clay
25 x 43 x 3cm
2007



Janine **WRIGHT**

Harness

Bronze and photographs
40 x 30 x 15cm
2007



CARBONTRADING A PERMITTIPOLITIE



In the end it's not what we say, but what we do, that creates change.

at+m integrated marketing are proud sponsors of the Academy Gallery and the Carbon Trading Exhibition. The issues explored throughout this exhibition reflect some of the topics we address through our own Environmental Policy and provide an avenue for our third Policy area of promoting Community Awareness and Education.

We are the only dual ISO Certified business of its type in Australia and our printing unit, SprintaPrint, is Tasmania's only ISO 14001:2004 Certified printer and one of eight nationally. Our Environmental Policy covers three main areas:

- 1) Products, technology and processes;
- 2) Resource Management and
- 3) Community Awareness and Education.

Through the implementation of a robust and extensive Environmental Management System (EMS) we have the proof, ability and conviction to produce the most environmentally responsible printing available. To represent this commitment we have trademarked the brand rethink® to be used on all printing produced under our EMS.

rethink® represents our quest for cleaner quality and produces work without compromise in quality, at no extra cost and with as little environmental impact as possible.

We look forward to a continued and collaborative involvement with the Academy Gallery - now and well into the future.

The logo for 'rethink' features the word in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters 're' are in a dark green color, while 'think' is in a grey color. A small green square is positioned above the letter 'i'. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the word.

ISO 14001:2004 EMS is an International Standard for Environmental Management Systems. It ensures risk minimisation, ongoing improvement and best practices. The ISO 14001:2004 Certification is externally audited against International criteria by Sai Global.

Academy Gallery

INVERMAY ROAD
INVERESK
LAUNCESTON 7250
AUSTRALIA

T: +61 3 6324 4450
F: +61 3 6324 4463

www.acadarts.utas.edu.au

GALLERY HOURS:
MONDAY - FRIDAY
9AM - 5PM
Free Admission
The gallery is closed on
weekends and public holidays



ACADEMY OF THE ARTS
SCHOOL OF VISUAL AND
PERFORMING ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

Catalogue published by
the University of Tasmania,
School of Visual and Performing Arts.

All rights reserved. Copyright the author, artists and the
University of Tasmania, School of Visual and Performing
Arts. Except as permitted under the Copyright Act,
no part of this publication may be reproduced by any
process, electronic or otherwise, without the permission
in writing from the publisher and the author. Neither
may information be stored electronically in any form
whatsoever without permission.

All opinions expressed in the material contained in this
publication are those of the author and not necessarily
those of the publisher.

The University of Tasmania's exhibitions program receives
generous assistance from the Minister for the Arts,
through Arts Tasmania.

Catalogue ISBN 978 1 86295 409 0

Edition x 1000

Staff

Malcom Bywaters, Director

Deborah Sciulli, Administrative Officer

Damien Quilliam, University Collection Officer

Georgie Parker, Academy Gallery Volunteer Club President

Catalogue photography: Dr Troy Ruffels

2007 SPONSORS

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS



GOLD STAR PARTNERS



MEDIA PARTNERS



rethink
Printed using the Rethink™ Environmental Management System developed
by at+m integrated marketing to create environmentally responsible
processes for print and production. Rethink™ Certificate No. 29719