

EXIT Dunedin

In November 2006 EXIT Dunedin took the task of providing every graduating artist from the School of Fine Art at Otago Polytechnic with a short review of the work displayed for their final year degree show.

EXIT Dunedin has developed in consideration of a similar project carried out in 2002 by *Static* in Liverpool England. Both of these initiatives derived through the awareness to the difficulties that art students encounter as they move from art school to life beyond college. The institution of art school serves a purpose of protecting students from the harsh realities of an artistic practice, and although this positively provides a space for creative exploration and development the work of artists in this context is incomplete as its considerations and decisions are not directly engaging with the world as a whole. In addressing this situation EXIT Dunedin has tried to impose a measure of reality upon the graduating artists by opening up their work to public examination and assessment, with the hope that this may be of benefit by allowing them to view how what they do can be re-interpreted in the public realm through the words and opinions of others.

This writing has been produced by an invited team of art professionals from the art community in Dunedin, independently from the art school. These writers were assigned a list of students to cover and were commissioned \$10 for each review written. It was encouraged that reviews be approximately 100 words and made as a swift, informed response.

To allow for a reply to the issues surrounding EXIT Dunedin a discussion forum has been set up at <http://www.exitdunedin.blogspot.com> This opportunity for response is open to all interested parties so that dialogue may continue and develop beyond the initial review process.

Alana Cocker

Despite its somewhat dated geometric patterning, Alana Cocker's hexagonal collage remains good to look at, if not essentially engaging. Taking simple aesthetic concepts such as colours, their stratification present an interesting cross-section of human categorical perception. Juxtaposing quasi-scientific textbook illustration with natural history imagery and simple graded colour schemes, these sub-headings are very deliberately kept apart from each other. The boundaries are crossed in the physical dimension of the work (the layering of the tiles at varying heights) but it would have been more interesting if this subtle bleeding into things was allowed to play out within the imagery as well.

Aaron Hawkins

Amanda Don

Getting your work to make people think and wretch at the same time is no small feat. The latter is more easily achieved (large prints of surgical procedure are a certain winner in this department), but the latter is a little more difficult. The subtle duality of the two petitions – one in favour of the human use of animal organs, one against – was only marginally let down by the apparent bias of the artist present in the difference in the wording of the two propositions. Also, the album of personal portraits on display seemed like an odd last minute attachment to put more 'art' in to balance the 'politic', but didn't really do anything.

Aaron Hawkins

Amy Robertson

Amy chose to put two prints into this exhibition, which on the face of it did not appear to be enough of a commitment to the idea of making a worthwhile contribution to this exhibition. Where the common objective was to show a body of work to provide an insight into the practice of each student, this was an ungenerous offering by Amy, presenting such a meagre offering. Hence my response is similar, the two works were fay and lonely.

Stuart Griffiths

Anne Marie Basquin

I do not know what to say about this. The work includes a lot of hand written poetry prose pieces on suicide, love, death, loss and change. I worry that the work is too turned in on itself and needs more detachment. Pain is not intrinsically interesting unless it can also reach beyond itself. Maybe I am missing the point and this impenetrability all coming from me. I worry that I because I am unfamiliar with the boundaries of contemporary printmaking that I might have missed the significance and relevance of the video installation. On the video people talked about moving, about arriving and about settling in a new place. In what way was I to read the video as printmaking?

Catheine Dale

Annemieke Ytsma

Ytsma makes jewellery but instead of gold and silver-plated, Ytsma dips her objects in paint. This is jewellery playing on its own disappearance and the disappearance of its own object only to emerge reborn from the crucible dripping with paint. While Ytsma's conspicuous intervention stretches our imagination past the shiny charm bracelet, the pretty

necklace and the gorgeous brooch, she does not take her distortions past the point of no return. These pieces are wearable jewellery. They are funky. I think she could lose the skull and crossbones, the over-referenced symbol groans with banality and anyway, she does not need those popular images to do what she is doing so well, a modest yet striking intervention that serves to reawaken one's sense.

Catherine Dale

Benjamin Smith

Harbour Project

The Otago Harbour provides not only the subject matter but also source material and an exhibition venue for Smith's *Harbour Project*. His video *Crab Houses* shows underwater footage of structures the artist has created and then placed upon the harbour floor. Materials like a suitcase, roading cone and hubcap have been made into habitats for sea creatures. What would ordinarily be rubbish now serves an environmental purpose. The second video, *Trolley Salvage*, documents the recovery of the exhibit *Countdown Trolley*. Battered and encrusted with sea creatures, this found object is rich in potential associations. The banal is rendered sensuous as a vessel of consumerism is colonised by nature. The final component is the illuminated *Harbour Table*, where a birds-eye-view of the harbour is surrounded by photographs of debris recovered from its depths. This locale is the central concern of the exhibition and served as its unifying focus. However, the primary interest of most viewers seemed to be locating their house on the map.

Ralph Body

Bridget Balneaves

another city, this time of missing children. they begin once quite black and then fade. less & less of them. they go pale. opaque, transparent and then finally they are merely the frame of a milk carton. they are small on a large grey floor. gathered and clustered. some have fallen. they are missing, like missing thoughts. missing questions. a body that once was there can sometimes never come back. he went to the dairy to get some milk and she never came back. how do you feel a memory of a whole person? what colour is it? what happens to time? do you see? have you seen? how pale do you become when you are left?

Kim Pieters

Bridget MacLeod

these luminous dreaming things. this woman so soft in the street. a fleeting thing and a not really there. her absence falling past. a survey of land. here the doily which somehow reeks of submission becomes beautiful and powerful. solid and lost in public space. i am here. i am not. I was a body on the black tar road amongst the weather and in absence of all others. also here. these are photographs. large matt. they are lovely. they hold like all photographs can hold...that which is momentary. the frozen moment of being.

Kim Pieters

Carolyn Cameron-Blackgrove

Birds. Single birds as in archaic museum curiosities with knives & mirrors & tiny specimen bags strangely tied to claw & beak imitating early pursuers of ornithological knowledge's. Peculiar and fuzzy individuals setting off to

obtain rare exotica and sterilize findings in dusty shelves glass portals and yet very gay & pastel, these little bird creatures upside down swung aloft - not rare at all but sparrows, finches, common garden birds slightly bemused & pinkly. The simple arrangement of natural objects, the painting light and almost childlike - illustrative. 'Simple' arrangement 'natural' object juggling these words, liking the YELLOW, whistling.

Jeanne Bernhardt

Cassandra Wilson

Generally, artistic mediums are strongest when their proponents take the capacity of them - aesthetically, politically - as a starting point rather than an end point. Why see a naturalist play when film/television tells the same tale so much more fluently? I am grossly simplifying this of course, but I think there is a certain truth to it all the same. I'm not saying that there is no place for naturalism, seen here in the form of still life, but to get it to affect its audience it has to be pretty special. Unfortunately, this is just a collection of photos of shoes and dressing tables after all. The composition of some of the prints is competent, but the meticulous 'randomness' of it presents even greater obstacles for itself. People always need photos taken of their wedding day, I suppose.

Aaron Hawkins

Christopher Schmelz

I enjoyed discovering this elaborate scam and participating in this piece of theatre. Although it was evident that this was not a real life experience, the conviction to task of the works protagonists was compelling. And with their "mobile documentation, rehash, network, premises" being plausible enough, due to their good props, signage and outfitting. This, along with the troupes respective roles, kept a useful tension with the viewers perception of what was artifice and what was real. A sense of humour was useful to fathom this absurd event, as it was literally an assault upon the senses of well being in the hands of the 'Naturalization Service'. Otherwise a willingness to only be compliant was treated with disdain and you would be duly processed and despatched! I could be prudish and say why didn't they discard the artifice and run the schools office or the likes as a real life venture in bureaucracy, this of course would not have been as much fun. But it does need to be said that the idea of this being an art performance is very doubtful, the possibility that subversion was afoot was lost in the context of the School. And although the delivery was direct with good methodology, it did not pack a punch!

Stuart Griffiths

Cora Woodhouse

Attention now to small paintings - stoness twigs leaves bark. I look longest at the evening bay with its indigo sinking pools and bottomless-ness, in this there is a sense of deep stillness. And yet overall the paint feels too primary (undeveloped) - too much pink next to too much blue - all far too bright, -flat also in its stillness, static. Small isolated moments of seeing create instances of attention - pondering this, for I liked the simplicity and choice. Just wished for more lightness, translucency.

Jeanne Bernhardt

David Good

Firstly, this 'installation' is impressive if simply taken on scale alone. The 'Silence and Violence' piece at the back was the strongest and most affecting clash of sound and image - a technique used less successfully in other areas. The documentary series was a good idea, but didn't really work - the production values didn't carry it as 'art', and the narrative didn't carry it as 'documentary'. Denying the audience any knowledge about the film's interview subjects, for example, makes it all seem a little unnecessary altogether. Also, there is no need to drown your audience in your theme - they are probably smarter than you give them credit for. The uses of *Once Were Warriors* and *The Piano*, aside from being rather dated examples of contemporary representation of New Zealand identity in cinema, are obvious almost to the point of being dull. They are clichéd cultural referents, and as such take away much of the thematic dialogue of cultural appropriation - a far more interesting, and pertinent, artistic dialogue.

Aaron Hawkins

David Dylan Thomas

David's work wore its cultural identity proudly, and it was largely quite successful. Not trying to tackle the impossible *subject* of identity in a 'national' sense - native birds, rugged mountains etc - but did manage to retain this in a less obvious manner in the framing of the work, leaving the subject to deal with authority, destruction and distraction in Castle Street. The use of music could have given it a more 'living' dimension, lessened by volume limitations I can only assume are due to the nature of the group show. Still, one of a very limited selection of engaging works in the

painting department, so perhaps this work is more of a triumph over adversity.

Aaron Hawkins

David Teata

Fusion

Teata's woodblocks have a strong initial impact while also sustaining more contemplative consideration. He has succeeded in combining clear graphic designs with a subtle layering of patterns and motifs. Traditional designs are interspersed with empirically observed patterns, such as those of woven fibre. Indeed, the underlying structure of these works recalls weaving, drawing together various aspects of Pacific cultures. The layering of this content suggests the re-emergence and reassertion of past traditions. Some traditional designs are utilised to reflect more recent experiences, such as the shield motif that is reconfigured to alternately depict a boat, bird, aeroplane and segment of a map. This clever visual punning helps demonstrate the ongoing contemporary relevance of such cultural identity.

Ralph Body

Elsie O'Neill

The cities that she has portrayed have a lovely sense of impermanence, in contrast to the reality of the burgeoning megalopolis. To be presented in a derelict newspaper, reinforces the folly of the quest for monumentality well. To be made apparent in such a fleeting material, these significant cultural landmarks are reduced to pure whimsy! This is not to say that Elsie has not laboured in the making of these works, as excellent skill has been shown in the handling of the individual cities landmarks, and the projection of a pregnant moment as it blows by. And even though these elements are formally quite disparate, in classical terms, the subject and its ground are mutually well supportive. To be installed as a 'scatter' is most apt, although it would have been great to see them with a bit more space so that they could appear to be more incidental as well.

The large drawing was well executed with a similar lightness of touch, grain and resolution. Because it is an optical device, which requires the viewer to move across to read it as though it were in relief, reinforced its physical presence too. So it was important that it was made relatively well also. The urban sprawl depicting 'every-mans castle' is literally the individual corollary to the scatter of cities on the floor. A similar relationship exists with the optical effect reinforcing the illusion of the ground from which these fortified positions project themselves.

Stuart Griffiths

Faith McQueen

The little familiar, the blood hand stain on the wall (there is no way out) the old chair, very tiny world on a table, sectioned & compartmentalized. The blood room, the desecration of nature - holy hill hacked in half. The hoarding of goods, the relentless TV camera voice-guy face-guy buying & selling. There is no removal. It is not a game. If we shrink it we can play though. So we are shrunk & everything is fantasy. All that is there. A friend called it tired, but I liked it. And kids liked it. Three boys talking talking talking, lifting little men soldiers bug eyed at the blood, whispering & drawing their own soulful conclusions, that moment of AHHH & excited, exiting the room, still talking, 'and, and, did you see...?'

Jeanne Bernhardt

Fiona Paine

Bigger than life-size cut-outs of Fiona inside a boxing ring (wearing pink or blue boxer shorts) & outside said ring in martini skirt and pony tail, very fifties happy hour, very P Hilton. Very dull. I found this an immature and empty work. A critique on Gender? Commodity? Or just gratuitous mouthing. None of my friends liked it either.

Jeanne Bernhardt

Fleur Kelsey

paintings, clean architectural, edges and angles of the interior, from below looking up, contained powerlessness, claustrophobic and a sense of being sick, the colours cool, cool green, cool pink, curious unease, there is not enough attention, too much attention, the composition strong but the delivery laboured, a juxtaposition of brushstroke, one dense and flat the other soft watercoloured shadings, this juxtaposition is not resolved, the shading needs refinement, more force of craft.

Kim Pieters

Gemma Ludemann

Landscape, black, white lines on black. I should have liked this but didn't, not enough. Though taken apart in its components it was there - energy & unfinished ness (I like unfinished ness) as if driving through rain at night, the everything in darkness streaky and implicated, the moving catch of lines, out of sight and what is IN sight significant in its fractured ness. But I felt contained not emancipated, too much mediation in absence of lightness. Repetitive, blurry somehow motionless.

Jeanne Bernhardt

Gemma Tweedie

let us watch the saturated abject, but so clean, so red, so shiny, so ordered, she smiles in encouragement, she still smiles, she is always encouraging, she is genuine, she imagines a whole day in an hour, once she licked the bucket, so new, so clean and she cleaned the floors, this is smart and clear and matter of fact and a bit easy perhaps, an air of thinness about it, such thin red clean buckets, a whole wall, matters of deferral, of absolving oneself from responsibility to be, of masochism, the masochistic subject, how it leaves one blank and without living, so much cleaning, matters just how they are.

Kim Pieters

Genie (Hyung Jin) Lee

this soft and dim wondrous, a rapture, a wall of white hanging bears, a wall of black blood, you take off your shoes and you are offered green tea in beautiful cups, you sit on pale grey cushions and there is a cherry tree reflected deep into the dark floor, it blossoms gold rings, 108 gold plated lies, one hundred and eight promises & those words Mom, are you happy? Mom, why does love change? Is it going to save us? Long way home, and I am in transform, despite I remain in smiling, this hardly known place offered me, a passing, a gift, one can only give thanks.

Kim Pieters

Hahna Read

Although there is a disquieting silence and sense of absence in Hahna's paintings, the casual, verging on lazy manner in which they are painted has reduced this affect. This is not to say that this is not Hahna's intention here, but I do feel that the lack of finesse in the execution of the paintings, make them a bit boorish as an experience for the viewer. Even the ordinary and everyday need a bit more focus for them to have a presence worth contemplating further, for her drawing skill would appear to be lacking in its conviction to give adequate resolution. Her painting technique is also limited, albeit economic, it still falls short of what is expected from a student graduating at this level. So in a way I did not get the object of the endeavour of this work. I am not saying that Hahna did not have any objectives when making these paintings, as the work is evidence to the fact that an investigation has occurred, I just don't think Hahna found anything on this journey for us.

Stuart Griffiths

Hannah Joynt

A Night at the Cartesian Theatre

Joynt's works depict the many selves that exist within her mind and body, depicted in the ever-changing metaphorical space where they come together to talk about the artist. Following a well-established convention, the artist uses an interior as an externalised expression of a psychological space. In most paintings this space is depicted as a strongly geometric environment. Unfortunately, in a number of works the heavily textured application of paint is discordant with the sense of recession implicit in this perspectival structure. Similarly, the rendering of the figures and non-geometric elements is frequently clumsy, although admittedly a sense of disconnection between the figures and their environment may have been intentional. The exceptions to this are *Central Heating* and *Homunculus* where the various elements work successfully in accord. In her artist's statement Joynt speaks of the different personalities of these various selves. Her paintings however contain little variance of mood, conveying instead a consistently stifled tone.

Ralph Body

Helen Badcock

Small smudgy snapshot distortions; a thumb pressed into a face & sticking. One attaches to it, the image & in the same instance steals an essential - the strangers face & ones own, now oddly grafted together. I liked the disturbance of these prints yet it is the drawing portfolio that compels me; the unfinished-ness and yet a single chosen detail that has been worked (& worked & worked). A monstrous something and yet this intimate opening moment. People always reveal themselves if you know how to look & I liked how Badcock looked, a seeing in, which struck me as insightful. The

ugliness was kind; honest to something honourable that is deeper than surface. People are strange Gods, I thought.

Jeanne Bernhardt

Irena Kennedy

Although I could not get close to Irena's canine sculptures, they looked to be made extremely well, in terms of being quite life-like and stable. To install them in such a way created an engaging relationship between the viewer and the dogs. Being on all fours staring out of a cage was a great leveller in regards to whose terms the work was being considered from, as the traditional roles would appear to have been reversed. With the dogs being restrained, this tension did not develop to the point where the viewer would appear to be subservient though, but left them not only on the same physical level but also both captive to an unknown master. This captive moment was not lasting, as the narrative flow seemed to stop there. The three ribbons referred to a hierarchy existing too, but gave no more clues either! Even though this work was admirable for its technical aptitude, the work did not seem to be driven by another motive, as the installation on reflection would appear to be a convenient 'one liner', as it did not resonate further.

Stuart Griffiths

Jai Hall

Utopia

A desert island complete with rocks and a palm tree made of multi-coloured calico like fabric, is surrounded by a number of installations depicting narratives along the lines of *Kidnapped* joins *The Owl* and *the Pussycat*. The use of natural fibres and a large amount of wool gives the installation an environmental twist. Set outdoors, the installation soon blended with the rather damp environment - circumnavigators of the island inadvertently created what increasingly resembled a beach while the gusts of wind and rain gave a more realistic view of island life. Apparently a set for a children's book, this certainly had something of a *Woolly Valley* feel while the mix of literary references added a sense of danger and fragility to this imaginary environment.

Greg Adamson

Jane Shriffer

Power Play

The scale of Shriffer's work ensures its immediate impact on the viewer. Not only are the physical dimensions of her paintings large, but her chosen subjects, close-up portraits of dogs, are shown several times their natural size. Shriffer uses this disjunction to explore the ambivalent social and power relationships that exists between humans and dogs. There is variation in both the sentiment and style of the works. This ranges from the staunch impassivity of *Guardian* whose mass is defined through the shadows of concentric wrinkles, to the much more painterly vulnerability of *Walk the Beat*. The artist's professed concern with the 'mythological connotations surrounding the dog as a symbol' is not clearly apparent in the finished paintings, although is perhaps reflected in her palette dominated by shades of blue. This helps de-corporealise her dogs, despite their sense of physical immediacy.

Ralph Body

Janelle Hazeldine

Lovely hand made paper, lovely prints of hibiscus, lily, gentian, yellow iris and fantail and the motif of the rusty circular saw lurking in the background. In history, the geometric and the organic are often opposed. While these works attempt, if not a reconciliation, at least a conversation - man is metal and nature is rust intoned the artist's statement - the loosely conceived solution that rust is nature's attempt at recuperating its earthly life-force, held only the most tenuous links for me in relation to what I was seeing. Everything was far too nice to get me upset about the state of ecosystems. I saw technical proficiency, I saw conservationist ideals, but I did not see anything that made me think. This show was pretty much sold out.

Catherine Dale

Jeremy Clark

My first impression of this painting installation was very good. The flat monochromatic paintings hung well as a series. On closer inspection the paintings were by in large painted with a flat but pleasing and consistent technique, and showed good skills in composition. Contrary to Jeremy's wishes the works were wed to the painted 2 D picture plane, as there was no relief in the work.

Jeremy's claim that the work was portraying a virtual reality is plausible but was not a concept that sprung to mind when I viewed the work. An

earlier well known graphic artist, M C Escher, explored a lot of the territory that Jeremy is working through here, before a term such as virtual space was used. This type of play in space is generally considered the ground from which graphic work emerges still. Never the less a rigour is evident in this work, and some of the works stand up well on their own as relatively interesting explorations into the space of the picture plane. Although I found this work worthy, there was little to be found that could be considered very interesting. And that Jeremy has peaked on such a dry pinnacle at the end of a course of tertiary study would appear to be a wasted opportunity, when he could have been showing work with a more contemporary research interest.

Stuart Griffiths

Jessica East

Material Sense

East uses the differences of genetics and sensory perception between species to underline the subjective nature of human experience and question the primacy this is accorded. This is explored through two series of paired photographs. In the first the same forest environment is photographed from the perspective of five different creatures. The various ways they experience space is suggested by differing viewpoints (eg. high, low, in flight, from water). The implication is that these images are a mimicry of the creatures' optical experience, an assumption that ignores the fact the camera is designed to approximate a specifically human experience of sight. The corresponding series involve the same five species. These show the projection of a pattern symbolic of DNA (and possibly also the various ways information is encoded), onto a sphere, presumably representing the eyeball. While visually stunning, the relationship between the choice of pattern and the particular animal appears arbitrary.

Ralph Body

Jim Kerr

Nature in the sense articulated by the landscape tradition might be always on the verge of exhaustion as a subject for art, but happily, Kerr's land and sea scape works add a kind of moving techno light show to the scene. The imperfection of these paintings redeems them. I am talking about the exhausted brush strokes that end up as dry streaks, the vibrant use of unexpected colour painted on in unexpected blocks that go against nature's grain and in so doing produce an harmonious image – there is lilac, lime green, and yellow in those rocks at the beach. It is features like these imposed colours, the seeming haste with which the painter spied the scenes as if we too are speeding by, and the white dashes and blobs punctuating one of the paintings, that bring Kerr's works back from the brink of anonymity.

Catherine Dale

Kathryn Molloy

The multiple layers of dreary carpet and underlay rose from their carpet tiled bases like leaky building skyscrapers. The various geometrically shaped layers of carpet were loosely placed and could topple at any minute. These carpet stacks did not want to be there. Before it could escape, the largest stack, the one that reached the ceiling, had been tethered to the wall by a rope. Each layer of the three shorter stacks were trying to give themselves away, "take me, take me," but unlike chocolates or photocopied prints, no-one wanted them. Formally less pleasing, the size and height of the carpet piles distracts us from the gorgeous rhombus tiles of carpet below. These shapes are arranged within small-interconnected islands of red, yellow, and blue tones with a green island off to one side. The carpet laying was clever, an intricate balance of tones and patterns. Sculpture does not mean exclusively three dimensional objects and I would have liked to see these geometric tiled patterns cover more.

Catherine Dale

Kathryn Ostrer

black night photographs. square & shiny. very little white in the black. buildings. roads. roadsides. empty yet of light. question jim. a question of black perhaps. a fact of place in the dark. a good black. a fine black. black enough and shiny enough to be satisfying. but where shall I go. do i need to go anywhere. there is very little to say and is it enough? that is the question jim. I would like more. if I stay long enough perhaps there will be more but ..I do not want to stay. they do not compel me to stay. almost but not quite. this girl she wants more.

Kim Pieters

Kathryn Tulloch

I like this drawing/painting, it is good drawing, hazy and loose and with a fine touch of being. I approve of this drawing but again I am dissatisfied. am i asking too much? it does not seem enough for the last year of school.

it would not be enough in a real world art gallery either. though of course the real world will accept anything. it belongs to itself & who knows what the people will or will not say. something about miniature power lines. pictures on bad sticks. quite insipid colouring but there is the fine touch of line that impresses with its promise. this space could go somewhere or nowhere at all.

Kim Pieters

Kathy Kerr

North Otago Landscapes

A series of monochromatic prints depicting mostly alpine scenes of North Otago, these works are unashamedly in the manner of traditional landscape art. The repetition of views of the same general landscape echoes the artist's declared love of her environment. In her artist's statement, Kerr states that she draws her inspiration from the attributes of the North Otago landscape, its rugged beauty and the subtle variations in colour created by the changing light and weather. Although all of these prints are generally well executed, one reference in her statement did seem to echo a reservation I had with the work, which is the use of light. One artistic inspiration is said to be the tradition of the sublime and this was evident in the darkness that pervades the landscapes. Unless on a heavily overcast day these prints didn't capture the "light" I sense in North Otago. Definitely a case for forgetting the theory and sticking to the elements.

Greg Adamson

Katrina Reece

if one wanted to go back to a particular era. it would have to wear some of those high platform heels, synthetic fabric pants and swirling scarves. there would be those colourful bulbous lamps and they would suggest to you your reluctance to go there. we would go there only if it was modernized she said because we want to be new in the world today despite our histories. we want the nostalgia cleaned up. this is merely preference, there is no cleaning up here and the technique hardly riveting or gorgeous. undated.

Kim Pieters

Katsu Naguchi

Katsu has produced a series of pottles that show a good knowledge of an eastern tradition in ceramic-ware, and were it intersects with the more esoteric demands of a Western School of Fine Arts. The works subtle opaque ground have been infused with a 'spill' of colour that fulfils their function metaphorically, but not decoratively. These 'ossified solutions' provide a tension that prevents these objects from being purely utilitarian. This is also echoed in the wrap and cut of the ceramic material, which evokes a sense of 'bandaging'. A very successful conceptual tension arises here where the pottles function as containers to be held and used, is juxtaposed with their function as vessels that contain meaning, and are to be contemplated in terms of their relationship to the body. This is not to say that the work isn't simply beautiful, but it is important to give this work the credit that it has transcended a purely aesthetic rationale for its existence. The presence of the large central vessel suggests a 'source', something that has ruptured, and that the residue of an event or ritual on display.

The other installation is a similar experience, although there are more overt bodily references. It however appears to be less resolved in its entirety, which may be why it uses the theatrical devices of darkness, that in reality only hides meaning and leaves one with a sense of doubt! However, there was evidence that some of the objects could have stood alone and held their own ground.

Stuart Griffiths

Kelly MacKenzie

A row of photographs, two abandoned houses and two chairs. The central subject is a wooden chair, actually two wooden chairs, one for each abandoned house. These images are about the subjects framed but they are also concerned with what is missing from them. By missing, I do not mean what was left out of frame. The people who walked over the floor and past the floral wallpaper are missing. In every photograph, there is a hole in the floorboards and a stain on the wall. These things look like replacements since the place of which the photographer speaks is lonely and empty. The light and its shadows are much more alive than the room and its wood. Photographed at different times of the day, the difference between the morning and afternoon shadows says not so much about the subjects represented, but about the effects of the camera on the way we understand these subjects. Is their life leftover and what shall we do with it? These are superbly executed images. Yet, beware the future of rustic charm; there are already too many calendars in the world.

Catherine Dale

Kirsten Ferguson

drawing on prints. this is printmaking. difficult faces on difficult bodies. there is some washed cloth blood. a little overworked. not quite told in form. one is a bit worried by the clumsy presentation. there is some power because of the anguish. each face cynical, impassive, removed. all men. all idiots and then heard no more. evil is negative good. evil changes with the dress.

Kim Pieters

Koren Taylor

The serial banality of these photographs gave this installation a filmic quality, as I moved from one image to another. These domestic interiors where made apparent by regular portals of light that broke the dark interiors at regular intervals. The grain of the photographs and their subtle hues created a seductive intrigue that offered me glimpses of intimate and private interior spaces, and only barely hinting at a bodily presence. Although this is a quality production, its repetitive composition offered little relief and the intrigue was fleeting and an empty feeling was left from what promised to be a richer experience. I would not say the installation was vacuous but because of the slickness of the presentation and composition, a homogenising effect was produced that dulled the thought that there was more to see. As serial cameo portraits the works do stand up on their own. But this empty feeling does well up again upon closer inspection, and even though the detail did draw me in, an empty feeling still prevailed upon closer inspection.

Stuart Griffiths

Kristy Palleson

boxes, forts, masonic ovens. horses in beds. a lot of beds. one enters these towns, this one town through looking back. through a fort. it is the child's town. appreciation after all for the soft sweet of home. for the care of children. realizing the qualities of a past that once made one sick. breakage. forging. once there was too much sleeping. if this was the space that was left what is the space that one goes toward? endeavour. a lot of work. all these small and many things. a reevaluation infused with a wistful, kind, reminiscence.

Kim Pieters

Lisa Perniskie

The Perfect Race

Set in a darkened room, five waxen forms surround a metre long wax sculpture of a frog. Initially, the amphibian appears simply larger than life but closer inspection reveals this is not actually the case. Not only is the creature two legged, its elongated limbs are missing a finger, or toe. This apparent mutation links the central figure with the sculptures that surround it. Mostly installed behind the eerie glow of a dimly lit lamp, these various forms; one resembling incubating, unknown creatures, another a decomposing landscape and, hanging from the ceiling, a pulsating series of globular bulbs that appear to exist somewhere between birth, life and death, are metaphorical gestures to the figure they encircle. Next in the series, a glass case, suggestive of a museum collection, contains a mixture of human and amphibian limbs. These anatomically "correct" forms, however, appear to be consigned to history. Last, a strange larva-like centipede making its way toward the centre, completes the series and cleverly gives the installation as a whole an organic, cyclical dynamism. Exhibited in darkness, lit only by the light of the sculptures themselves, this installation perfectly displays the toxic nature of life in our present environment.

Greg Adamson

Mary Brady

Blogging on her Bernina, Brady writes the stories of her life and the lives around her. The idea behind her show was "location," which I did not quite get until I stopped thinking of location as a place. There is much skill in the way she writes, rather than prints, her words and numerals with a sewing machine. The scrolls of muslin-like fabric hang as so many banners but here their proclamations are intimate. These include diary entries dated and populated with people's names and various events. These include disappointments, exhaustion, anxiety and celebration. I heard a viewer asking about commissions and realized how perfectly these works remind me of the traditional tapestry and cross-stitch that commemorates a celebration, such as the birth of a child, with names, dates and decoration. Brady is re-making and re-marking this historic art with so many new elements, it is barely recognizable, and yet the spirit of attention to detail, to the lives and life around us, remains.

Catherine Dale

Matthew Gillies

Initially hard to get past the obviousness of the gimmick, but its strongest features are far more oblique and difficult than the surveillance culture cliché. I always feel a bit cheated when artists go to such great lengths to make you all so aware of the detailed process of their work - and this is an involved process indeed. But, if you spent enough time with it, your own efforts begin to mirror these. Amid a literally never ending bureaucratic nightmare, with only apathetic humanity to help you, it creates an almost crippling existentialism, stirring up an alienation that is truly dehumanising. The only (minor) glitches in this highly ordered scheme were occasional lapses in the 'acting' of those involved, and such a heavy-handed reliance on the system of US Immigration. America sucks. We get it already.

Aaron Hawkins

Megan Phillips

In "Life or Something Like It," Phillips keeps us guessing. Were these huge C-type prints in their chunky white circular frames the finalists in an advertising industry award or a new way of presenting the portrait? The photographs are slick, the subjects everyday items for the flat-white drinking, mobile phone using good-looking 20 to 30 something market. I thought Vodaphone versus telecom, Strictly Coffee versus Starbucks, and pondered on the question of our age: should men moisturise? These works are ambiguous. These pictures and their modular-like frames were technically and visually polished and professional, depicting the ubiquitous acts and objects of some very beautiful people. Lying beneath these visual clues, is anything more at stake? Are these works separating out all the shit in the world or putting more of it in? And if this is a taxonomy of ethics, what to put where? Mobiles, flat whites and flash cars over here and spoons, spectacles, apples and human faces over there? This tends to occlude the ideological stakes that lie beneath its visual cues.

Catherine Dale

Melissa Findlay

there was an incident with a willing & happy child. he acted out with his father the swooshing of the air machine. washed his hands. was half FULL & engaged and learnt something. How to be in a public bathroom. he was very happy could understand the large illustrations & his dad smiled too. this is the way of the world. inside and public. round about. it is a curious and interesting thought this halfway world of public/private but is it art? does it 'look' good enough. it caused me again to ponder Again the lack of depth in much of the art in the graduate show.

Kim Pieters

Natasha Davey

A series of quasi-cartoon images of food and cakes seems a little baffling from a graduating artist. Maybe I'm missing something here, but these works failed as still life, but didn't do anything remotely interesting enough for them to work as anything other than mediocre figurative drawings. The splattered effect of the work could go a long way to destabilizing the naturalist mode, if that was indeed the intention. The artistic interrogation of food in society is very much a field that warrants further critical approaches, and it is heartening to see the formative stages of this perhaps appearing in Natasha's work.

Aaron Hawkins

Nicola Hansby

On the Verge

Working on an intimate scale, Hansby explores 'the psychological occurrence' when a single human is in the company of a lone animal. This psychological concern may explain the lack of interaction between the two in many of these images which appear more like juxtapositions than engagements. In art such pairings often have an ecological agenda, decrying humankind's destructive attitude to nature. Hansby however seems more concerned with exploring the human subconscious. Casting human 'rationality' aside, her characters appear much like animals themselves as they seemingly commune with nature. Despite the vivid palette employed, these works possess a restrained tone. Her translucent veils of colour create an ambiguous environment for these uncertain relationships.

Ralph Body

Rochelle Liggins

Moments of occlusion. What is beautiful? the pulled back, revealed then the unrevealed. One idea & wanting to move deeper, go further. There was beauty, intricacy, I thought the painting accomplished but there was still this feeling of What? And So? Was wall paper too obvious? The trap of isolating beauty & freezing it? A repetition of itself perhaps. The tones moving like memory.

Jeanne Bernhardt

Renee Croawell

Spandrel

Croawell's photographs work best as a series, producing a cumulative experience for the viewer. The artist is concerned with exploring the 'unintentional beauty between the cultures of New Zealand and Japan' with a focus upon 'sameness rather than difference'. This is achieved through the use of recurring motifs, such as receding boards, blossoming branches and the corners of buildings, the geographic location of which is frequently ambiguous. Her images are presented in a consistently square format and seem to have consciously avoided conventional compositions, pictorialism or aestheticising. Croawell frequently employs heavy tonal contrast, which while visually striking also causes the loss of subtlety and detail. Her figurative works share many of these same concerns. Their subjects are often cropped or shown looking away. This absence of direct engagement makes them figure studies rather than portraits.

Ralph Body

Rosemary Harray

The beautifully wrought skeleton of the church says "let all who wish to enter here be welcome." There was no way this church could stop anyone from entering. The difference between the sculpture and the outside world dissolved since the wall-less structure obstructed nothing and the air, the grass, the plants, sky, path, and tree branches, were simultaneously inside and outside the church. This is a public work for a public park. The path over which the church stood was inspired planning. If you walk through the church, you are also walking the path, not to salvation but into a building of art. The church is less a container than a conduit. This sculpture is also a building and while the puns and metaphors are fun, they should not detract from the technical feat of building the structure. It says as much about a church of the Christian religion as it does a poem from one of the Romantics; it stands as a homage to God or Nature.

Catherine Dale

Rosemary Ireland

This was an interesting and well composed *room* of work, which sadly seemed to dilute the jewellery work both physically and aesthetically. The effects were simple but striking – the single lens reflection in particular – but took too much away from what was intricate and quite engaging jewellery. Tackling such broad abstractions of the abject nature of anatomy is a tall order for such a small 'canvas', and while it perhaps made for a strong starting point, the aesthetic seemed a little too perfect and well-formed to go along with this interrogation. In short, the work was good, and deserved a more confident and less distracting presentation.

Aaron Hawkins

Ryoko Tabuchi

Walking in the Landscape, Feeding Myself...

Tabuchi's works feature crisp lines bisecting a tonally modulated ground as their central formal concern. In her monoprints, the window like grid has the effect of anchoring the sensuous fluidity of the inked panels. The heavily textured, emulsive effect of these simultaneously achieves an intense sense of surface and an oceanic depth. Similar concerns are explored in the more successful of her two large charcoal drawings. Here the artist draws attention to the visual and psychological influence of empty space in a landscape, making the invisible physically apparent through a series of overdrawn boxes. Particularly engaging are the two works that employ both mediums. Their two carefully balanced halves work as subtle continuations of each other with clear horizontals and verticals underlying the softness of her charcoal drawings.

Ralph Body

Selena McKay

Vanished: a homage to a selection of New Zealand birds

Selena McKay's *Vanished* consists of a series of large colourful acrylic paintings on metal that pay homage to the extinct native birds of New Zealand. Each painting depicts in figurative outline a particular extinct species, such as the Huia, against a vivid simplified landscape. The theme

of the series, however, is manifest in the impression of a skull-like figure hidden beneath the surface of each painting. The significance of this motif is suggested by a quotation from the artist's statement: 'when a rose dies, beauty does not die because it's not really in the rose.' The skulls, in this sense, suggest that it is we who lose, or die in part, when a species becomes extinct. This is an interesting conceit with regards to ecology but a very difficult one to pull off in such a minimal figurative style. While certainly a bold effort, sadly the full weight of the concept these scenes are supposed to convey, that is, the quotation upon which they are based, appears more indicative of the beauty lacking in the paintings than that lost to extinction.

Greg Adamson

Stephen Godman

'Pop' The Weapon of Mass Distraction

The central concept of this group of works is a witty and insightful inditement on aspects of contemporary culture. Godman explores the role popular culture plays in glamorising militarism and desensitising the public, especially children, to the suffering of war and violence. Such sculptural works as his *wine-gum grenades* and *JB-47* (made from jellybeans) literalise the idea of warfare being 'sugar-coated', while recalling the plethora of plastic weapons for sale in toy stores. The accompanying photographs appropriate film stills from war movies, reflecting the way such violence is commonly presented as entertainment. Areas of these have been pixelated, perhaps to reinforce their nature as constructions or to make them resemble the confectionary constructions. Sinister as much of this material is, it would have been still more powerful had some acknowledgement been made of the consequences of war. This would have helped counterbalance the works' admittedly black humour.

Ralph Body

Stephen Hudson

On first inspection the tableau vivant's and collages seemed to be clichés and quite trite, and on their own they are. But when the video is viewed, these works that appear to be made with a modicum of skill, make sense as working material and did not need to be tarted up for the exhibition. The grain of the animation and its dark ambience set the scene for 'murky goings on', that were skilfully brought to life. Although the narrative was not clear the work held my attention due to the quality of animation, and its in your face content. It was a pity this outcome was not given more status in this exhibition, as it warranted a bigger presence, and more resolution, possibly a sound track to top it off!

Stuart Griffiths

Sue Marshall

Video - three men shaving, conversation -methodology of shaving, fathers , though I couldn't hear properly (sound too low?) and people in the room yabbering away. In the hallway photographs of male mythic beauty-gangster, superman, so ordinary guys doing ordinary male ritual contrasted to heroic masculinity. Ho hum. Still I liked the photos - very beautiful with deep sensual blues and mysterious smokey edges, dim male beauties, and the other roughened accessible attract of the faces shaving. But yes somewhat obvious & not very stimulating really the postures of phantasy sexual gender & real men/ women. Yes, there was sincerity in the work and the technique more than proficient in fact lush & gorgeous, but the investigation not challenging enough I thought.

Jeanne Bernhardt

Sue Novell

A room of water falling walls, blue echoing mountains - only the faintest lines and then darker lines and colour and intricate pencilled creatures - singular forms like mysterious serious systems - small in one corner then cascading from extraordinary heights - entrances me. A dancing room not white or still though a sense of whiteness continues - a moving unhurried lightness - and thought of haiku, cosmology - cosmic accidental beginnings & progressions, as though laws are made by light & snow. I sat on the floor & looked through the drawings, the rhythmic press and attention, the 'all-things' garden, held present by a calligraphic language/landscape that incorporates the window and the view outside the window - red roofs & green ordered plants under gray wet cloud. The precision of this adjustment for I'd entered a poem. I will write a haiku for Sue I decide

In the slanting mark
The moving garden
And colour

Beauty IS joy I thought, bowed, leaving the room.

Jeanne Bernhardt

Tina Watt

The artist's statement spoke of memory, childhood nostalgia and narrative. How could this subject, grown weary under the weight of so many gallery outings (and a lack of freshness applied to the idea), bear to show itself all over again? This is an ambiguous show. Was this art or art therapy? I knew there was something more to this show but I am not sure I really found it: something inchoate waiting for clarity, a thought waiting for an image? I do not mean in the circle of salt-dough gingerbread men, with their various wounds and amputations that entranced children as they walked in. I am referring to the "Blue Period" works, twelve or more works of animals, a cat, a rabbit, a tiger and to the large work divided into many images including the famous skeleton with the cigarette, a child with her shadow alone and afraid, and a trapped possum. Lined up like so many options for the nursery wallpaper, I was not sure if these were memories or presentiments.

Catherine Dale

Valarie Knight

from the series Patience

Knight's five visceral videos are drawn from her series *Patience*. This title is a play on 'patients' and the works seem to be concerned with interrogating medical and scientific attitudes towards the human body. *Medical Hands* links together scenes of surgery, with ample footage of blood and flesh being cut. What are actually life-giving procedures appear more like a form of destructive torture. Blood is absent in *Melting Moments* where a pair of hands is shown massaging a heart. It recalls much Catholic imagery, and suggests a more sacrosanct attitude to the body, associating the heart with spirituality and the soul. The computer-generated workings of the body shown in *TV Clips* suggest a similar meeting of science and the sublime. In *Cleaning* a particularly visceral close-up of face painting is made to look like a form of surgery, the wet paint recalling flayed flesh. Biology and art also appear linked in *Breathing*, where the illuminated interior of the windpipe forms an expanding and contracting colour field. At times it resembles one of Georgia O'Keeffe's flower paintings.

Ralph Body

Wendy Ogden

The pinafore is such a loaded commodity, as a discussion of labour and gender equity in particular, so to use it as the central focus of any art work forces the artist into dialogue with a very established canon of cultural theory. What makes this work *work*, then, is its laconic approach to this dialogue - it is at once aware of its implications and chooses not to labour them, to excuse the pun. The regimented order and care that come with the pinafore package are nicely undermined by the chaos of their physical arrangement, and the gorgeous cycle of dialogue that captures beautifully the trance like comfort, and futility, of being in the company of an aging matriarch. At first, such a simple piece, but it is confident enough in itself to let it grow slowly, rather than attack you with politic.

Aaron Hawkins