



(Five responses to urban anonymity)

Benjamin Creek

Genie Edson

Joe Forsyth

Roger Nelson

Drew Pettifer

Curated By Drew Pettifer

Curator's Statement

Five young emerging artists working in as many different media represent the diversity of possible responses to the urban environment. Anonymity and alienation are explored as sites of contested meaning, at once liberating and restricting. The experience of the contemporary city is defined as inherently ambivalent and ambiguous in this exhibition where practicing artists and theorists seeking to denaturalise the urban experience.

The artists each approach the question of anonymity and alienation from a unique perspective, drawing on their own experiences and understandings of these themes and their empowering and disempowering potential. Benjamin Creek's sculpture responds to Marxist understandings of alienation by using a precious commodity to create a reflective surface. Genie Edson's monochromatic paintings meld the figuration of surrealism with the imagery of fashion magazines, creating the unfamiliar familiar as these images of beautiful and famous women from the pages of Vogue and Vanity Fair are rendered unidentifiable faces in the crowd. My own photographic works depict industrial sites when they are vacant at night, frozen in the liminal spaces of unsettling familiarity and the comforting coldness of a subdued colour palette. Joe Forsythe's free radiophonic work offers a playful look at anonymity, allowing the audience to broadcast a message anonymously over a pirate radio station, whilst also prompting the participant to breach their confidentiality by identifying themselves by name. Roger Nelson's works on paper make marks with tape instead of with pen and reference the traces left by unknowable precedents on the city's streets: graffiti painted roughly over, the stains left by blue-tack and sticky tape on walls and lamp-posts, and peeled back posters on billboards. All of these works allude to the transient and the not-yet-composed nature of anonymity, a kind of being-in-action that animates the works and sets up a dialogue between them.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank: the artists for participating in this project, Roger Nelson for his curatorial assistance and help with the content of this catalogue, Benjamin Creek for designing the catalogue and assisting with the installation of the work, the gallery for allowing us to use their space, and RMIT Union Arts for their generous support.

-Drew Pettifer, Curator, December 2008

Benjamin Creek

Creek has stated that Minilith is intended as a response to Marxist understandings of alienation. This kinetic sculpture oozes crude oil, covering the inside glass pane of a miniature version of Kubrick's monolith from 2001: A Space Odyssey in a curtain of oil. The ensuing mirror-like effect obscures the inner workings of the system and reflects the audience's own image. The use of oil is also intended to function as a poignant reminder of a dwindling resource on which the late capitalist system depends so heavily and upon which each of us relies on an almost daily basis. Creek's work is a critique of the greatest paradox of industrialisation: that it brings individuals physically closer together, but leaves them socially further apart, unable to see beyond their own reflected self.

-Drew Pettifer, Curator, December 2008



Benjamin Creek,

Minilith,

Aluminium Extrusion,
Perspex, Crude Oil,
Water Pump, PVC Piping,
Adhesive Silicon,
Transformer, 3m cable,
Timer, MDF Plinth,
Steel Bolts, etc.

600 x 425 mm,

2008

Genie Edson



Iris



Desdemona



Megaera



Artemis



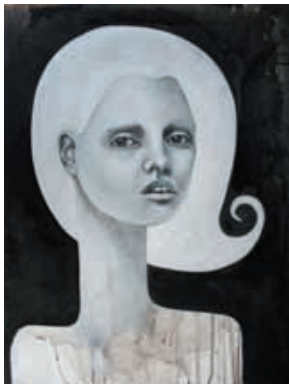
Viola



MonaLisa



MaryMagdalene



Ophelia



Orlando

Joe Forsyth

- 1 Put the Head Phones over your ears and position the microphone
- 2 eject ▲ the Casette tape and turn the tape over
- 3 Put the tape into the Casette Player and press play ►



Roger Nelson

“What you see is what you see.” - Frank Stella

These works are made without a plan for where the paper will join or where the tape will be placed - in this sense, they recall automatic drawing. They do not, however, pretend to express anything unconscious or emotional. Rather, I'm interested in making the pieces of tape, as well as the folds and joins in the paper, stand in for the marks more usually made by pencil or brush.

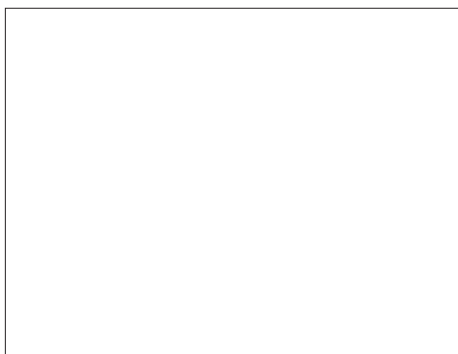
In so doing, I hope to draw attention to the small fact that what is conventionally understood to constitute an image is, most fundamentally, a series of marks made on a surface. As well as literally holding each work together, the tape provides the differentiation between figure and ground that renders a work coherent as an image.

I'm sticking together and cutting apart what art theorist Yve-Alain Bois has called: “one of the most traditional conventions of painting, a convention that lies at the base of the narrative tradition of this art, namely, the dissociation between the perceptual field (which is radically transformed when we pay attention to and try to fix one of its elements) and the pictorial field (whose elements solicit our attention).”

Posters stuck on top of each other around the city's streets, graffiti painted roughly over, the stains left by blue-tack and sticky tape on rented walls, and the welts made on flesh by too-tight clothes and too-deep sleeps: these are visual experiences I imagine my works recall. And others, from every major art movement in the last century.

I'm not interested in silencing expression: I do not believe that true silence exists any more (if ever it did). I am not a fetishist; I derive no sexual pleasure from gaffer tape or paper cuts.

-Roger Nelson, 2008.



Roger Nelson, Detail from Untitled, 100 x120cm 2008

Drew Pettifer

The seeds for this exhibition were planted when Trocadero Art Space asked me to produce a solo exhibition for the gallery earlier this year. Rather than show my own work alone I decided to gather further voices around the concept of anonymity and alienation by inviting other artists who responded to the theme to exhibit alongside me.

I took this opportunity to revisit an earlier phase of my practice where I combined architectural and landscape works with documentary photography. Since around 2004 my photographic work has been made up primarily of confessional portraiture, however I have maintained an underlying interest in spatial relations and landscapes. Much of my portraiture is as much about the space occupied by the subjects as it is about the subjects themselves. The works in this exhibition depict environments normally teeming with activity at the intervals and gaps that fall between this action, shifting the focus onto the absence of the anonymous subjects who usually occupy these sites.

-Drew Pettifer, Curator, December 2008



Drew Pettifer, Untitled (Shed),
c-type print 100 x 150 cm, 2008

1/117 Hopkins St,
Footscray

Dates:
3 Dec - 20 Dec 2008

Gallery hours:
Wed-Sat, 11am - 5pm

Opening:
Sat6th Dec 2008, 4-6pm

List Of Works

Genie Edson

1.	Iris, oil on canvas, 16 x 14",	\$280.00
2.	Desdemona, oil on canvas, 20x16",	\$280.00
3.	Megaera, oil on canvas, 18x26in",	\$280.00
4.	Artemis, oil on canvas, 18 x 26",	\$280.00
5.	Viola, oil on canvas, 22 x 20",	\$280.00
6.	MonaLisa, oil on canvas, 16x12",	\$280.00
7.	MaryMagdalene, oil on canvas, 20 x 16",	\$280.00
8.	Ophelia, oil on canvas, 24 x 18",	\$280.00
9.	Orlando, oil on canvas, 22 x 16",	\$280.00

Benjamin Creek

10.	Minilith, Mixed Media, 600 x 42.5 cm	NA
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Drew Pettifer

11.	Untitled (Cement Works), c-type print, 100 x 150 cm,	\$?
12.	Untitled (Shed), c-type print, 100 x 150 cm,	\$?
13.	Untitled (Overpass), c-type print, 100 x 150 cm,	\$?
14.	Untitled (Refinery), c-type print, 100 x 150 cm,	\$?

Roger Nelson

15.	Detail from Untitled(1), Mixed Media, 100 x120cm	\$?
16.	Detail from Untitled(2), Mixed Media, 100 x120cm	\$?
17.	Detail from Untitled(3), Mixed Media, 100 x120cm	\$?
18.	Detail from Untitled(4), Mixed Media, 100 x120cm	\$?

Joe Forsyth

19.	Untitled (Private Radio?), Mixed Media,	\$?
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