

MiNe own executioner

Presented by the Mundaring Arts Centre

2008



- Cover Images :** *Spectacles of Life* by Maria Blackmore (front)
Arcadian Narcissist by Geoff Overheu (back)
- Photography :** Maria Blackmore and Si Hummerston's artworks photographed by Peter Dailey.
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MiNe own executioner 2008

MARIA BLACKMORE

OLGA CIRONIS

MARK DATODI

EVA FERNÁNDEZ

SI HUMMERSTON

NORMA MacDONALD

SIMON McARDELL

GEOFF OVERHEU

DENISE PEPPER

PERDITA PHILLIPS

DANILO PRAVICA

KAREN REYS

DAVID SMALL

KARIN WALLACE

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An annual exhibition of self portraiture
by invited Western Australian artists

Presented by the

MUNDARING ARTS CENTRE

17 October to 16 November 2008

Curated by

Peter Dailey



Human patina was the only notion which interested me as a concept for others to consider when addressing a self portrait.

Patination or “surface treatments” can be an endless pursuit for some in art; but once gained, the maintenance of a “perfect” surface, to render it static, seems a futile exercise. It would appear we have only a few options from this point on: place object in a vacuum, but even here the results would still be in a state of flux; constantly upgrade, with great expense of time and effort; or, simply learn to live with the consequences of aging.

We have all had to address scenarios which leave their markings, scars and stains upon us as individuals. Of course, events both joyous and tragic seep into our being to build an individual's own sense of visual history. Verbally, these same events, either through fact or folklore, create yet another layer of documentation. But the visual still seems the most pure and in some strange way unadulterated to me, no matter how much makeup one applies.

These kinks, creases, and tonal blemishes are the things that make us appear as we do to others, with all our nooks and crannies, foibles and phobias. Choosing to execute self portraiture is still a wonderful affirmation of living; even if the exercise proves painful.

We are not born as creatures, void of form, and we certainly don't die unscathed by human patina.

Peter Dailey, October 2008



CURATOR'S STATEMENT

What do we look to find in a self-portrait? Is it a sense of character, an emotional truth; a physical likeness? Perhaps it's something else altogether: something that plays to our desire for the unattainable, our attraction to the enigmatic, or even something connected with the urge to lose oneself in otherness. What eludes our grasp is what draws us in.

It is often the case that the most satisfying works of art are those that leave us feeling we are only at the start of a long process of interpretation. Those are the works that stay with us – infiltrating our minds and later floating to the surface of our thoughts in the random flow of our day-to-day lives.

It follows that the most compelling of self-portraits are often those in which the artist moves beyond pre-occupations with surface and sentiment to delve into a more poetic and open-ended response to the challenge of self-depiction. Think of the magic realism of Frida Kahlo or of Picasso's artist as minotaur – a mythic symbol of both creation and destruction. Think also of the awelye paintings of Emily Kame Kngwarreye offering a more abstracted vision of self-identity again: one interwoven with the fabric of land, the living things of the earth and the realm of the spirits. These works are openings into depths of experience and selfhood that we can sense and imagine, but never entirely grasp, just as we may sense yet not fully apprehend a fleeting presence in our peripheral vision.

The idea of the artist as executioner – a term that carries with it a dualistic association with both the act of creation and of destruction – offers an open field of possibility with which

to conceptualise oneself for the purposes of a self-portrait. The artists in *Mine Own Executioner* engage with both sides of this dualism and extend a range of open-ended responses to the act of envisaging the self.

Connection to place, to the natural world and history is at the heart of Norma McDonald's exploration of identity and the artist draws herself within the texture and form of the land. The tracing of networks between places, people and the abundance of life on both macro and micro scales is a thread through the work of both Maria Blackmore and Perdita Phillips, inviting a consideration of the role of the artist as compulsive wanderer and notetaker.

Some take the conventions of the feminine in portraiture as a point of departure. Eva Fernandez tackles the male artist ego with a tongue-in-cheek challenge to conventional notions of the great master; Denise Pepper considers the ironies behind the endless pursuit of physical perfection and the strictures of fashion to which we willingly subject ourselves; Olga Cironis is enticed by the liberation to be found in the act of self-execution – suggesting parallels with the concept of *le petit mort*.

The presence of others in our corporeal selves – in our features and expressions, personalities and inner lives is a focus for several artists. The opportunity for self-reflection leads Mark Datodi to an understanding of his physical self as a permutation within a continuum of form traversing genes and time; the artist is of course an individual, yet carries within him the traces of many others in a cross-

generational process of construction that will weave a path through genealogies to follow.

For Karen Reys, the presence of another is embedded within the very fibre of the soul. Reys gives form to her experience of profound love and loss as a mother, and as viewers, we share in the most intimate expression of bond between mother and child.

Others again, including Si Hummerston, David Small and Karin Wallace are concerned with the portrayal of the self in the accumulation of experiences, memories, objects and talismans.

Sometimes ambiguity is as important as specificity. Both come into play to unsettling effect in the work of Simon McArdeell and Geoff Overheu whose self-representations are at once exacting in their felicity to form, yet deny access beyond the form itself to leave one wondering all the more.

Of course, each of us brings our own psychological influences and motivations to our engagement with works of art. As much as we might look to art for truths or a sense of connection with another, an encounter with great art brings us ultimately back to a consideration of ourselves.

Helen Carroll, October 2008

CATALOGUE ESSAY



Born in England, Maria moved to Australia in 1986. In 2002 she completed studies in Environmental Art and Design at the Midland College of TAFE. Later in 2005 Maria gained a BA in Visual Arts at Edith Cowan University in 2005 before continuing with further post graduate study. Over this time she participated in several graduate shows including *Slash* (Mundaring Arts Centre, 2002), *Converge* (Junction Gallery, Midland TAFE) and *Hybrids*, an ECU post graduate exhibition (Spectrum Project Space, 2006). Maria has also been involved in a number of group exhibitions around metropolitan Perth including *Finely Grated* (The Church Gallery, 2003); *The White Show* (The Church Gallery, 2004) and *The Space Inside* (Ellenbrook Gallery, 2006).

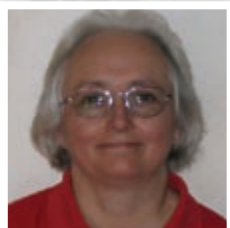


Spectacles of Life:

- 1. Monera**
- 2. Protist**
- 3. Fungi**
- 4. Plantae**
- 5. Animalia**

Glasses and their cases
Dimensions variable
\$473 each

In approaching the subject of self portrait, I had no intention of attempting to produce a likeness of my face. What I wish to reveal is my interest in that which my already enhanced vision requires to be further enhanced. Life as seen through the lense of a microscope. For this 'self portrait' I have focused on the five kingdoms of biology. My intention is to portray the intricate detail and visual beauty that may be found in life, even in organisms that may have the potential to be harmful.



MARIA BLACKMORE

Completing her tertiary studies in the visual arts at the University of Sydney, Olga then attained a Graduate Diploma in Education from Edith Cowan University. Having actively exhibited in the Eastern States before relocating to Perth in 1997, she has firmly established herself in the Western Australian visual arts scene. Olga has been a regular finalist in the Joondalup Invitation Art Award, the BankWest Art Award and Cottesloe's Sculpture by the Sea and has been the recipient of the Southwest Survey Award (Bunbury Regional Art Gallery, 1996 and 1999) and the BankWest Contemporary Art Award (2007). Her solo endeavours include *Lick* (Zitlip Gallery, Sydney, 1995), *Touch of Fluff* (First Draft Gallery, Sydney, 1996), *Under Cover* (Artplace, 2003), *Beyond Each Look* (Fremantle Arts Centre, 2007) and most recently *Handle Me Gently* (Turner Galleries, 2008). Olga has been the recipient of several other awards and prizes and her artwork is held in numerous private and public collections.

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Executioner

Oxford Dictionary: An official who carries out a sentence of death. A hired assassin.

For an executioner there is a great sense of power that represents fear, loss, revenge, absolution and in many ways authority. But authority can always be broken.

To be my own executioner I explore what it means to be free, have a laugh at bondage and deliver a good, hard slap to the masochist who hides amongst the shadows of our fantasies. I put myself on the block to feel the lightness of being.



Still Looking (detail)

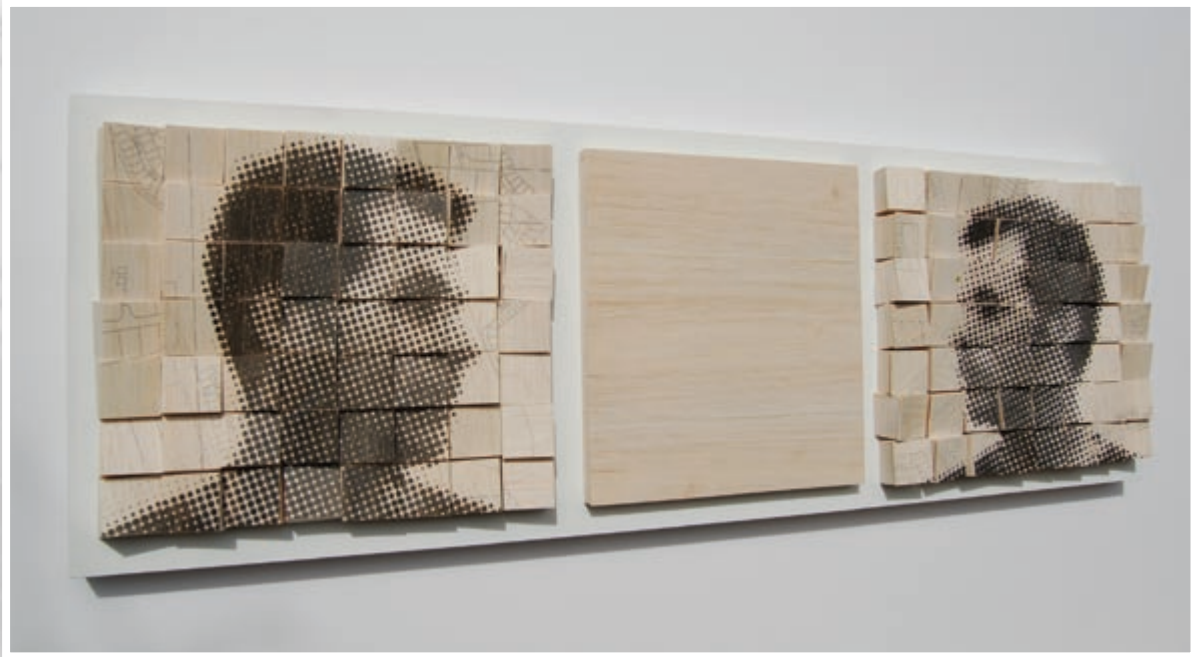
Mixed media
80 x 45 x 45cm (chair size)
\$1,250

Represented by
Turner Galleries

OLGA CIRONIS



Mark completed a BA (Fine Arts) at Curtin University before attaining his Masters Degree in Visual Arts at Edith Cowan University. He has extensive teaching experience having supervised and lectured in printmaking, fine art and drawing for TAFE and ECU campuses for several years. Mark has exhibited extensively in groups exhibitions in Perth, Melbourne, Tasmania as well as overseas and he has held a number of solo shows including *Containment* (Moore's Building, 1998) and *New Works* (Gallery East, 2003 and 2005). Mark has also worked prodigiously on commissioned projects around Western Australia; his public art can be seen in locations around the Cities of Gosnells, Melville, Stirling and Mandurah as well as at the Perth District Court, Acacia Prison and the new Murdoch Train Station.



Constructing a self portrait leads me to think about fragments of likeness between family...facial expressions, bone structure, features and gestures, body parts. Observable traces of others, who have come and gone, yet at the same time still exist and are yet to be created.

Self Portrait 2008

*Solvent transfer, screen-print
and balsawood construction*
26 x 78 x 6.5cm
\$1,850



MARK DATODI

Eva was born in 1967 in Toronto, Canada and now lives and works in Perth. She completed a Master of Arts (Creative Arts) in 2002 at Edith Cowan University and currently teaches at Curtin University and Swan TAFE. She currently works in photography and digital based media and her practice includes examination of areas which contextualise her existence in the place/space she inhabits, including exploration of her physical environment as well as cultural and gender identity. Eva has had 3 solo shows and she has been invited to exhibit in several group exhibitions nationally, including *Girls on Film* and *Mixed Tape*, both at the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

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I am particularly interested in issues dealing with gender imbalance of the great masters and their relationships and attitudes towards women. Women artists have long laboured in the shadow of their male peers through history as the focus has been placed on the male as the mythic figure of the great artist.

Since then, the “woman artist” has not simply been assimilated into the canon of “greatness” but has expanded art-making into a multiplicity of practices with new parameters and perspectives.

Picasso was always dismissive of women artists, although he had several artist-mistresses; as well as Françoise Gilot, there was Fernande Olivier and Dora Maar. For him, women were, as he famously remarked, either “goddesses or doormats.”

I am interested in the ego of the artist, particularly male artist, and how it is expressed and determines how they interact with women. Women have almost always been the muse or object of the artwork. I am interested in what it means to be a woman artist and how this representation of woman artist is different.

By appropriating the image of Picasso in his studio in a stoic and confident stance and placing myself in a similar situation, I attempt to challenge the notion of male as master and artist and play with the representations of ego of the great masters.



Eva in her studio in Maylands

Archival digital print

120 x 68cm

\$650

EVA FERNÁNDEZ



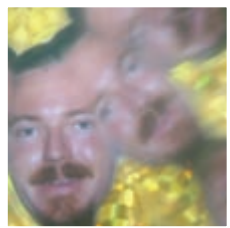


Sculptor and painter, Si Hummerston, was born in 1975 in Western Australia and currently lectures at Swan TAFE. He attended Applecross Senior High School on a Special Art Scholarship then went on to study at the Claremont School of Art. Spreading his love of art, Si has run over 50 “Artist in Residence” Workshops all around WA with participants of all ages, cultures and backgrounds.

Constructing with a broad range of materials from wood, mild steel, aluminium, copper and bronze to many reused items such as car panels and street signs, Si creates both 2D and 3D works. Vivid, bright and humorous elements entice the viewer, hoping to catch a smile or even a giggle. Car culture, skateboards, monsters and dogs appear regularly. Kinetic, interactive and mechanical elements also feature in some of the sculptural works. Commissioned artworks vary in relation to the subject matter and act to tie the significance of the site to the surrounding environment.

Fluorescent Friend (detail)

*Aluminium, Perspex,
paint and electrics
240 x 45 x 45cm
\$6,500*



SI HUMMERSTON

Placing myself within the landscape I have endeavored to tell the viewer something about my art practice and what drives me to paint Aboriginal history.

Being of a shy disposition I decided to take a photo with my face slightly turned to illustrate that part of my inner personality.

Being honest about what I saw in the mirror, as well as searching to capture my inner being was truly a challenge. My close up study for my portrait showed not only the lines on my face and the hair grey with age but that my inner spirit is strong; I am Yamaji and proud of my heritage.

With an Advanced Diploma in visual arts and the Sangora Award, Norma MacDonald has enjoyed a long and distinguished art career. Norma is a highly respected Indigenous artist whose work is recognized both nationally and internationally. She has had many highly successful solo and group exhibitions, book illustration, residencies and public and private commissions. Norma is represented in numerous collections; National Gallery of Australia Canberra ACT; Art Gallery of WA; Edith Cowan University WA; Berndt Museum of Anthropology UWA; Aboriginal Education Department WA, Curtin University; Gomboc Gallery WA; Sir James and Lady Sheila Cruthers collection; Port Hedland Hospital; WA Midland College of TAFE WA; AM International Gallery Italy; Armadale City Council; Armadale Redevelopment Authority, Fremantle City Council; Mundaring Shire Council; Belmont Shire Council; Private collections nationally and Internationally.



As It Is
Oil on linen
35 x 100cm
\$2,000

Represented by Gomboc Gallery and Sculpture Park

NORMA MacDONALD



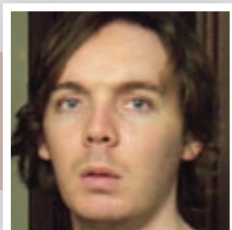
Although born in Melbourne, Simon has lived in Perth since moving to Western Australia at a young age in 1989. Initially studying Art and Design at Midland TAFE, Simon furthered his art education with an Advanced Diploma in Environment Art and Design at Swan TAFE and a BA (Visual Art) with honours at Curtin University. His group exhibitions to date include *Figured Out!* (The Church Gallery, 2004), *Making A Mark* (Mundaring Arts Centre, 2004), *Transition* (Tangent Gallery, Curtin University, 2005), *9 x 5 x 3* (The Junction Gallery, Swan TAFE, 2006) and *MatterREALITY 2* (Moores Building, 2006). Simon's most recent endeavours include his contribution to *Field Day II* which was held in Ballidu in late September 2008.



Frame by Frame

Oil and acrylic on board
25 x 15cm panel size
\$1,800

For me the creation of a self portrait seemed akin to the fabrication of myth – a mythology of one's self. I have presented myself here in tableau form, perhaps they could also be seen as vignettes, at once clinical and formally observed, yet reliably invested with the necessary atmosphere of mystique and veneration.



SIMON McARDELL

Geoff is a sculptural artist who currently practices in both Perth and Melbourne. Initially studying Fine Arts at Perth's Central TAFE he attained a BA (Visual Arts) through Curtin University and then the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne. His professional experience includes 25 years as a farmer, a lecturer in Fine Arts and installation co-ordinator for the Inside Australia project at Lake Ballard. Geoff has participated in several group exhibitions including *Boundless* (AGWA, 2002), *Hatched* (PICA, 2004) and most recently *Closet Circus* (Bunbury Regional Art Gallery, 2008). He has been a finalist in Sculpture by the Sea (Cottesloe, 2006), the Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award (Melbourne, 2006) and an ABN_AMRO Emerging Artist Award in 2006 and 2007. Geoff has held a number of solo exhibitions with a further two shows planned in Perth and Sydney in 2009.

Arcadian Narcissist (detail)
Plastic, steel and mixed media
167 x 25cm
\$9,000



GEOFF OVERHEU



In this work, I am experimenting with the use of glass outside of its traditional craft context, creating a sculpture that I hope is visually strong and expands the possibilities for glass in contemporary art. By creating underwear in the seemingly inappropriate medium of glass, I intend to capture the restrictive and often uncomfortable positions we can place ourselves in for fashion.

My personal statement in creating the sculpture from my own undergarment is now open to the public space but is to contest ideas behind the beauty myth in which we see both men and women endlessly pursuing the unattainable dream of physical perfection.

The processes is used to reproduce the delicate lace patterns while retaining the garment's shape as if just worn are technically challenging. I pack the undergarments with clay to create a framework around them and flick wet plaster directly on to it, encasing the entire piece. Frit glass is applied in layers into the reproduction of the garment's surface in the dried plaster mould.



Control Briefs (detail)
Glass cast pate de verre
35 x 90 x 50cm
\$1,200

Denise is a born and bred Western Australian. A student of Swan TAFE's Environmental Art and Design course, she went on to complete a BA (Visual Arts) at Edith Cowan University, where she was also an Artist in Residence in the following year. Denise has received numerous awards and prizes for her artwork, including the 2006 ECU Visual Arts Head of School, and Graduating student's Sculpture Award and a 2007 Vincent Award from the City of Vincent. Denise has been a finalist in the Ranamok Australian and New Zealand Art Prize (2006) and a participant in numerous group exhibitions over the past few years including *Flair 2006* (Ausglass exhibition, Perth), *Synectics: A Fusion of Opposites* (Mundaring Arts Centre, 2006) and *Hatched* (PICA, 2007). In addition to a number of private commissions she has worked as a sculpture technician and art teacher.



DENISE PEPPER

I approached this work thinking about the recurrence of maps in my life – how I always seem to find these abandoned objects in my travels – and how both new routes and recurrent paths cycled through persistence and decay. Moreover a peculiar habit that I have always had is the drawing of networks. Like an unconscious shorthand, it is the finger tracing paths in the life-world.



**Drawing, From the Beginning
(portrait as a network outside of the self)
(detail)**

Cut out world map
320 x 180 cm
\$3,300

Perdita has mixed her time between a childhood in Perth and travels through Australia and overseas. At first she tried science, and then tried to combine art and science careers, working in environmental management in a diamond mine. Finally she decided to make art about science. Other recurring themes include conversations with the nonhuman world, mapping and place and investigating ways of re-sensitising ourselves to surrounding environments. Current interests in sound and walking were combined in her curation of the international *strange strolls sound art* walking project (2005), the *Vade mecum* residency (PICA, 2006) and participation in a walking art residency (Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada, 2007). Perdy has a MA (Fine Arts) from Goldsmiths College, University of London where for 2 years she mapped everywhere she went, and a PhD in Visual Arts from Edith Cowan University for the *fieldwork/fieldwalking* project based in the Kimberley. She has had 14 solo shows in Australia and Europe and numerous group shows including *Chart* (John Curtin Art Gallery, 2006) and *The System of Nature* (Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, 2007). Perdy is currently the Australia Council's Artist in Residence at SymbioticA, University of Western Australia undertaking a project about bowerbirds. Her work can be seen at www.perditaphillips.com

PERDITA PHILLIPS





During the creation of my art I usually go through several unusual stages. They can be simple and complicated. The easiest way to describe them is with a note written by 18th century writer Avigdor Pawsner:

If you are looking for hell, ask the artist where it is; if you can't find the artist, you're already in hell.

Artist's Dream

*Oil on canvas
130 x 100cm
\$4,500*

*Represented by
Gunyulgup Galleries*

Danilo graduated from the Fine Art Teaching Academy in Split, Yugoslavia in 1973 and an active exhibiting career in Europe soon followed. He has continued to exhibit overseas since moving to Perth in 1997, where he now lives and works. Danilo was the Artist in Residence at the Claremont School of Arts in 1997 and he has since been the recipient of several art prizes. He has held several solo exhibitions in Western Australia and has participated in numerous art awards. In 2007 Danilo celebrated his 50th solo exhibition at Perth's Central TAFE Art Gallery. His work has been purchased privately around the world and he is represented in several public collections in Australia and abroad.



DANILO PRAVICA

If I didn't believe in God then right now I could be standing on the edge of a cliff. So I believe.

We both feel blessed that Isabella was apart of our lives. Thank you Isabella Frangipanni Wilson for the gift of life; a second chance.

Karen gained a Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Healing Arts from Curtin University in 2004, having already completed a Bachelor of Arts at Curtin and a Diploma of Aboriginal Visual Arts at Swan TAFE in Midland. In addition to a solo exhibition *Where Is My Place of Belonging* (Gomboc Gallery, 2004) she has been a regular participant in the NAIDOC Week Art Exhibition in Armadale and was selected to exhibit in the Shell Fremantle Art Award (Fremantle Arts Centre, 2003). Belonging to the traditional people of Fraser Island in Queensland, Karen has been involved in the revival of her traditional Badjala language through her extensive research of the language and the publication of *Gandjau Wangai* (Hungry Snake), a story book and CD-ROM aimed at fostering literacy in early childhood to mid primary children. Since 2004, Karen has worked as Associate Lecturer at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University.



Hope, Faith and Love

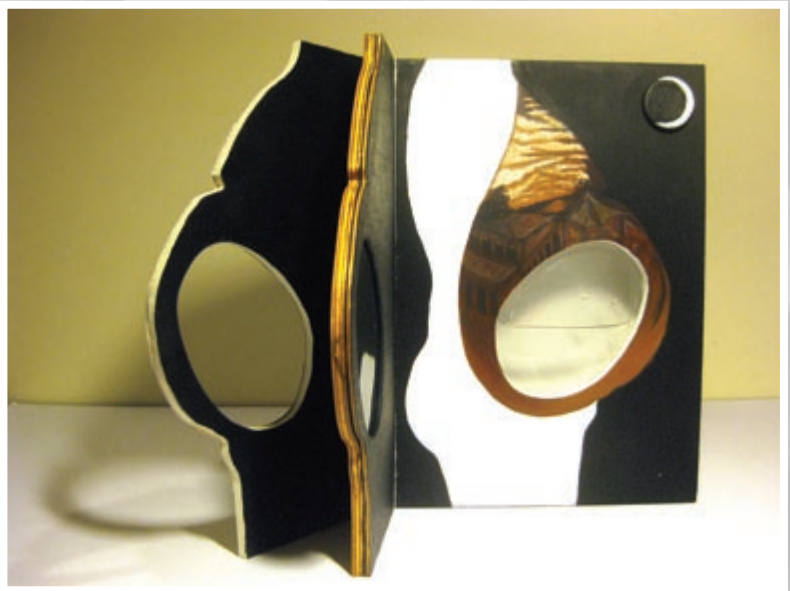
Part A: Tree

Rivergum timber

Collaborative Work with Les MacDonald

39 x 21 x 22cm

\$780



Hope, Faith and Love

Part B: Journal

Mixed media on plywood

Collaborative Work with Sue Reys

3 panels, each 30 x 21 x 9cm

\$1,800

KAREN REYS





Seaside (detail)

Oil and acrylic on board
83 x 62cm
\$1,500

Represented by
Emerge Art Space

I don't usually have faces or figures in my paintings, but I have had three attempts at this self portrait over, approximately, twenty years. So with an invitation to be in MOE this year, what better opportunity for a fourth.

They have all been very similar compositions, same figure (with the palette covering the face) but with different landscape settings.

Born in Sydney, David studied Commercial Art at Randwick Technical College in New South Wales before moving to Perth in 1992. A succession of group exhibitions and art awards soon followed, which has seen David work acquired into a number of private and public collections, including those of the Royal Perth Hospital, BankWest, the Shire of Mundaring, the City of Stirling and the Town of Vincent. Graduating from Swan TAFE's Environmental Art and Design course in 2007, David was selected for *New Works New Faces* (Perth Galleries and Gallery East, 2008) as well as the group show *Corpus: body* (Mundaring Arts Centre, 2008). David held his first solo exhibition *Lie of the Land* at Emerge Art Space in September 2008.



DAVID SMALL

Self Portrait at No.44 (detail)

Ply, concrete, lead and other media

167 x 20 x 26.5cm

\$1,600



Over a life-time we ‘wear’ many descriptions of our ‘selves’, some acutely observant, others hopefully less accurate. Is a ‘self’ portrait a sum of these observations? Whilst dwelling on this I decided to create a patina of these phrases onto the exterior of a house-like structure. Home is where I spend the greater portion of my time so the choice seemed appropriate and gave me the opportunity to present an interior that is more enigmatic – the ‘self’ that is often hidden from view.

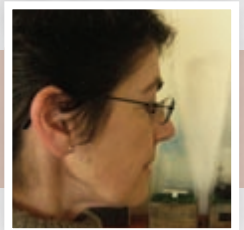
“What shall I be?”

“You will be Betwixt-and-Between,” Solomon said, and certainly he was a wise old fellow, for that is exactly how it turned out.

James Barrie

Karin was born in Subiaco, Western Australia in 1951. She completed an Advanced Diploma of Environmental Art & Design at Swan TAFE, Midland in 2005 and a second year of a BA (Visual Arts) at Edith Cowan University in 2006. Karin has since participated in a number of group and invitational exhibitions, the most recent being Increment, an exhibition of work by lecturers and graduates of Swan TAFE’s Applied Environmental Art course, supported by the Ellenbrook Cultural Foundation. In 1996 Karin was the recipient of the Hills Gazette Award for Works on Paper. Her artwork is represented in the Swan TAFE Collection, Midland as well as in various private collections.

KARIN WALLACE





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