



RETROACTIVE

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Retroactivity

The Retroactive Series





Retroactivity - The Retroactive Series

In the Retroactive series, artists were introduced to one another and given an open ended opportunity to respond to each other's work through contemporary ideas and issues. The process is 'retro' in the initial reflection upon art and artists, and indeed becomes 'active' in the thinking, speaking and making process. The common visual art-making background between artists, yet at different points in their career, creates unbounded relationships where exchanges of elastic ideas can happen.

Art making in Canberra occurs with a backdrop of rolling mountains, gum trees and kangaroos, between the book-ends of national institutions and Summerhats. Conversations in Canberra are swept along in the fresh air and sparkling light of a town unlike any other. These conversations allow artists to engage in a sense of familiarity with one another. It is Canberra's intimate scale that enables artists to get to know each other, their work and in turn to paddle with big ideas.

The Retroactive exhibitions were about conversations between established artists and emerging artists. I selected the pairs of artists intuitively based on my knowledge of their work. Some artists that were paired together had not known each other previously on a personal level. The art became a vehicle for an ongoing visual dialogue between these artists; the content was through the initiative of the paired artists and their conversations that preceded the making.

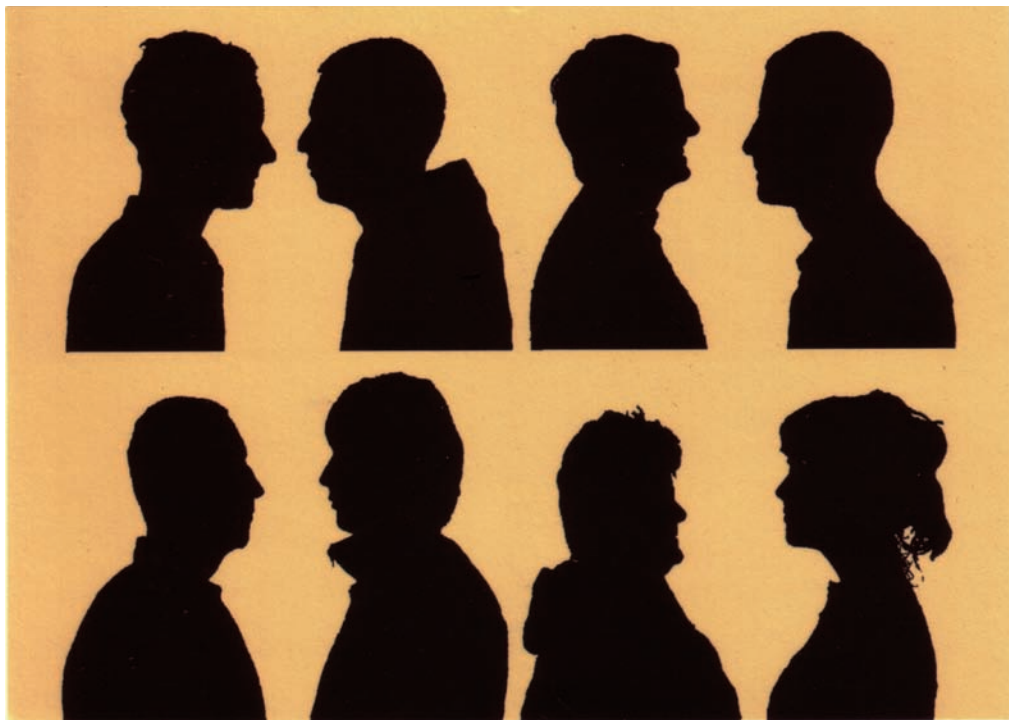
In the first Retroactive exhibition, established artists were asked to exhibit a significant piece from an early point in their career. The emerging artists were then asked to respond to this work and create a conversation piece with the established artist.

In the second exhibition, Retroactive II: emerging and established artists were paired, however they each had to find an artwork they both responded to, in effect, finding an 'absent hero'. The artists then worked collaboratively or separately to create artwork in response to this shared piece. The resulting works were displayed with a small reproduction of the inspirational artwork they were responding to.

In Retroactive III: emerging and established artists were connected once more, however this time they were asked to find common ground in the form of a location, or place. This sense of place could be conceptual or actual. The artists initially worked from this place to create the resulting artworks, both collaborative and individual.

From initial conversations, big ideas grew and mentorship has continued beyond the individual exhibitions. The results are stimulating and open ended, revealing material and conceptual links that cross five decades of Australian art making.

Julian Laffan,
Curator of the Retroactive Series
2010



RETROACTIVE I

22 September - 2 October 2005

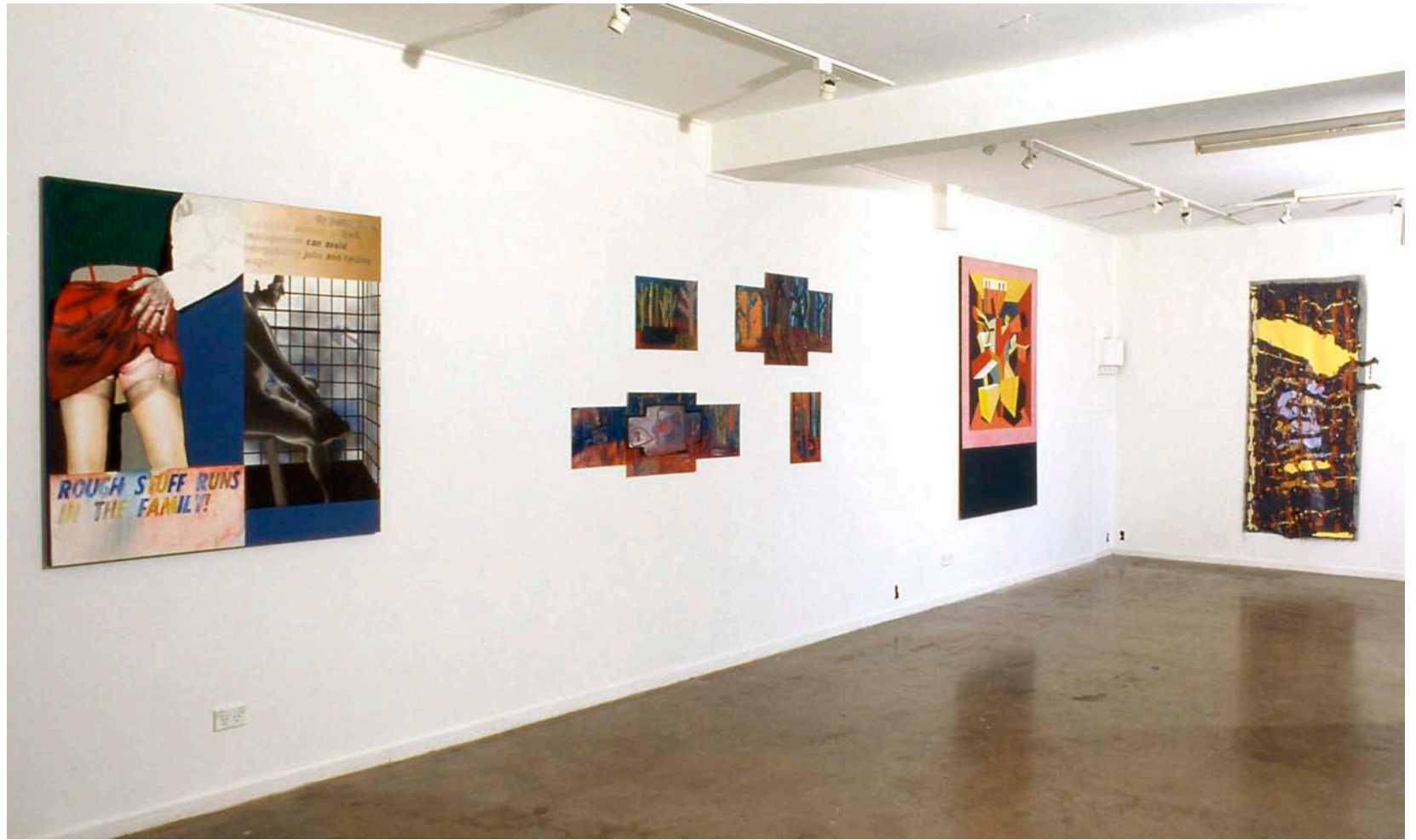
Vivienne Binns with Karena Keys

Robert Boynes with Trevelyan Clay

Steven Holland with Bernie Slater

Patsy Payne with Julian Laffan







Vivienne Binns, *Interior Constructions*, 1967, acrylic, oil and enamel on masonite

Karena Keys, *Corrine*, 2005, acrylic and oil on wire mesh



Robert Boynes, *Rough Stuff Runs in the Family*, 1974, acrylic on linen

Trevelyan Clay, *Dolphin Sex*, 2005, oil on canvas board



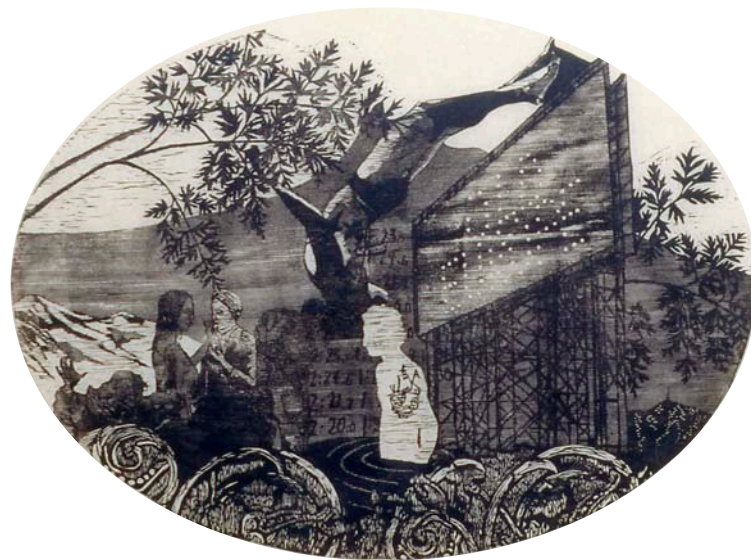
Steven Holland, *ps pseudonym*, 1991, agar agar jelly, latex snake and range pole



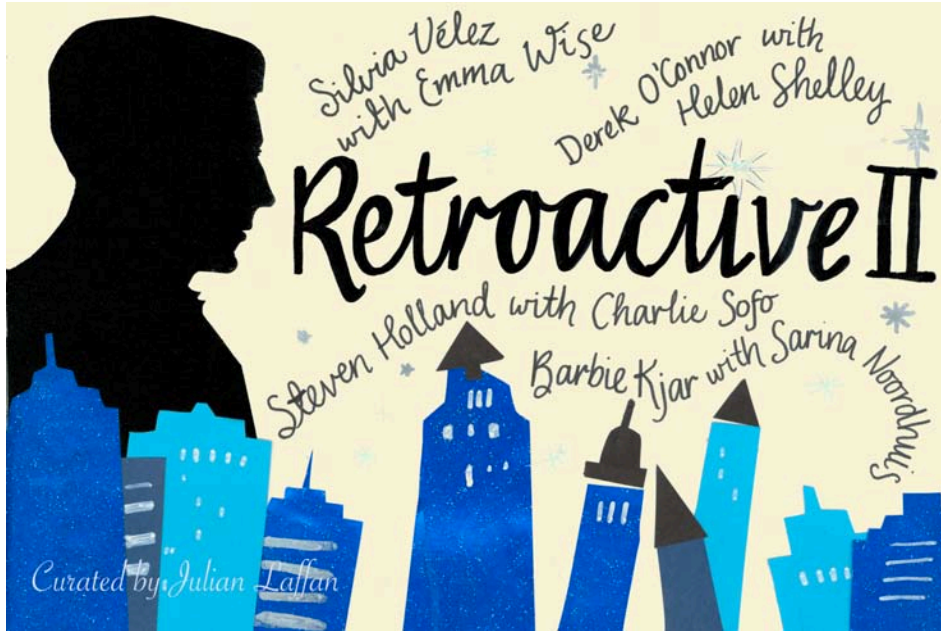
Bernie Slater, *Sweet Dreams are Made of This*, 2005, mixed media



Patsy Payne, *Murmur*, 1994, woodcut on Iwaki



Julian Laffan, *Intersecting Systems #3*, 2005, woodcut on Iwaki



RETROACTIVE II

2 - 12 November 2006

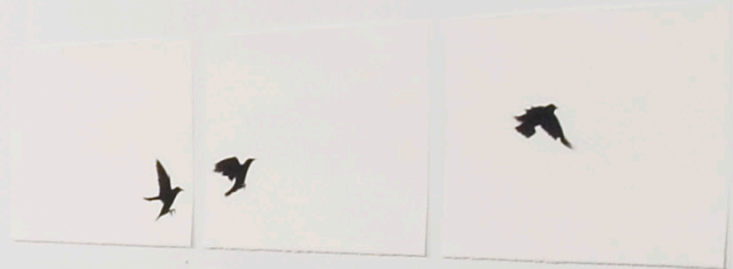
Steven Holland with Charlie Sofo

Barbie Kjar with Sarina Nordhuis

Derek O'Connor with Helen Shelley

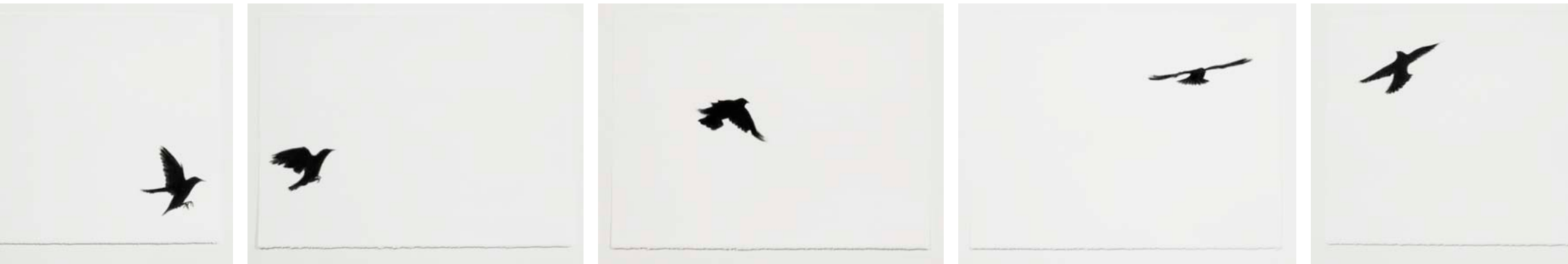
Silvia Velez with Emma Wise







Steven Holland with Charlie Sofo, *The Act of Free Choice/The Act of No Choice*, 2006, mixed media
Responding to *Double Figure from a House Post*, Lake Sentani Region, West Papua, 17th Century



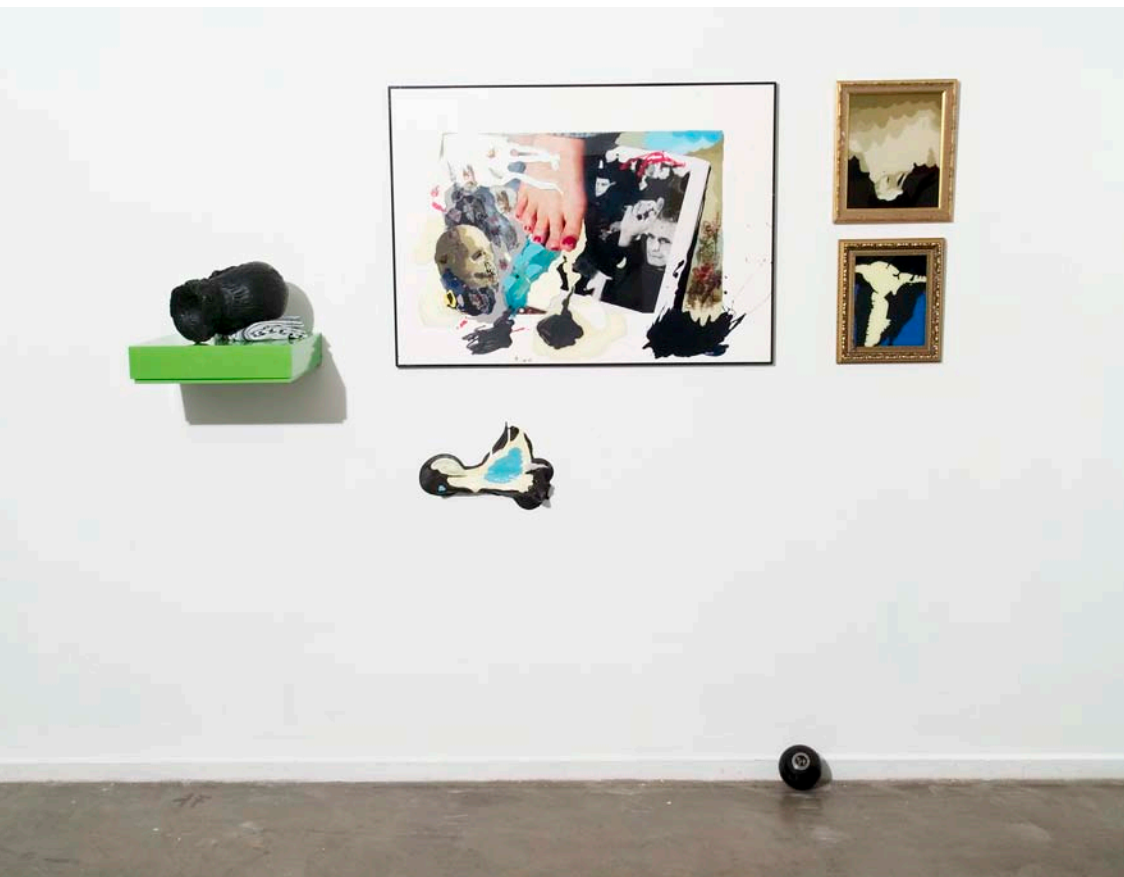
Sarina Nordhuis, *Augury Series 1-5*, 2006, lamp black on BFK paper

Barbie Kjar, *Chatterboxes*, 2006, etching on Somerset



Responding to Francesco Clemente's *Five Senses*, 1990, gouache on paper





Derek O'Connor with Helen Shelley, *Everything but the Girl*, 2006, mixed media
Responding to Arthur Streeton's *Spirit of the Drought*, 1895, oil on canvas.



Silvia Velez, *Shielded 2-7*, 2006, photographs on water-colour paper



Responding to Yukinori Yanagi's *World Flag Ant Farm*, 1990, ants, coloured sand, Perspex boxes and tubing



Emma Wise, *State of Mind*, 2006, paper sphere



RETROACTIVE III

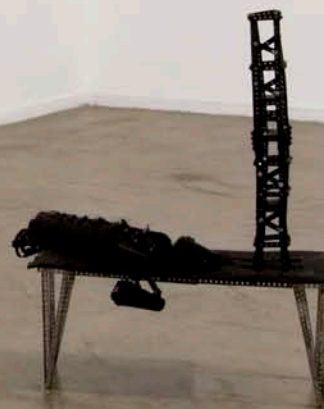
28 August - 7 September 2008

Micky Allan with Margaret Goninon

David Jensz with Jay Kochel

Ex De Medici with Emily O'Brien

G.W. Bot with Julian Laffan







Ex De Medici, *Mayhem*, 2008, digital print



Emily O'Brien, *Piece*, 2008, bullets, flocking and enamel paint



David Jenz,
Black Aureole, 2008,
rubber, tyre tubes, steel,
compressed air



Jay Kochel, *Tintin takes a trip*, 2008, rubber, steel



Micky Allan with Margaret Goninon, *Night #1 - 10*, 2008, pastel, colour pencil, transfer, glitter, stickers and acrylic

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Contact julianlaffan@gmail.com

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