

WITHOUT WORDS



CATE CONSANDINE

PAUL KNIGHT

RICKY MAYNARD

TOM NICHOLSON

MIKE PARR

CAMPBELL PATTERSON

—

CURATED BY KYLA MCFARLANE

Without Words presents photo-media by artists working in both art and documentary, where that work engages with emotional affect. Curated by Dr Kyla McFarlane, *Without Words* presents a broad range of photography and video by Melbourne artists Cate Consandine, Tom Nicholson and Paul Knight, now resident in London; Tasmanian photographer Ricky Maynard; Sydney based Mike Parr and Campbell Patterson based in Auckland, New Zealand.

In her selection of work McFarlane invites us to consider how photography might convey ideas and feelings of sorrow, humiliation, pity or grief when it has abandoned its indexical relationship to the world.

This exhibition is presented in the context of the symposium, *The Affective States of International Criminal Justice*, 20–22 July 2011 at The University of Melbourne. While the symposium and exhibition are distinct entities we seek to enrich the discussion of international criminal justice and contemporary photo-media where each is concerned with understanding the impact of affective states. We thank Professor Gerry Simpson, Kenneth Bailey Professor of Law, Melbourne Law School and Director of the Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law for expanding the conversation to include contemporary photo-media.

I would like to thank the artists for participating in *Without Words*. Gratitude is also due to their representatives who have greatly assisted CCP in presenting the exhibition: Lisa Fehily, Fehily Contemporary; Geoff Newton, Neon Parc; Vikki McInnes, Sarah Scout; Michael Lett; and Rob Campbell, Ash Kilmartin and Sarah Ritson, Anna Schwartz Gallery. I thank the Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law, The University of Melbourne for valuable support towards realising *Without Words*. We are most grateful to the Besen Family Foundation for generous support to produce this catalogue, which otherwise would have not been possible. In-kind support has enabled CCP to gather and present the exhibition to great effect, and I thank International Art Services, Dulux and Sofitel Melbourne on Collins, as well as long-standing supporters, Tint Design.

It is not uncommon to feel ‘without words’ in the face of personal and public events and, dare I say, we are often without words when seeking to understand contemporary art. Therefore I thank Kyla McFarlane, Associate Curator in this her first exhibition at CCP, for finding not only the words to express the important issue of emotion and photo-media, but for realising these issues within the context of this memorable selection of work.

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International criminal justice is repeatedly called upon to respond to events that overwhelm our common sense or explode the limits of the law, unsettling the settled frameworks through which law comes to know and act upon the world. In the midst of war crimes and atrocities, trials and tribunals, treaties and resolutions, analysis and advocacy, what binds international criminal justice as a community or field? And, how are we to understand our relations with the forms of knowledge and institutional practices of international criminal justice? We should seek to reflect upon, talk about and engage with the emotional life that organises or informs or disrupts the distinctive but plural communities of international criminal justice.

Many possibilities present themselves. Under the rubric of affective life, we might think of the communities of victims and of survivors (such as the Mothers of Srebrenica), those of the international legal profession (eg. the office of the prosecutor, or the conscience of the judge, or the practice of the teacher), and those of the witnesses (eg. their memory-work and advocacy). We might also think of the institutional forms and technologies through which emotions are harnessed and expressed, or tamed and repressed: criminal trials, truth commissions, Argentinean truth trials, apologies, amnesties and pardons, as well as executions and testimonial procedures. We might also consider the affective states which are prevalent in and give shape to international criminal justice: horror and revenge, pity and consolation, anger and aggression, sadness and outrage, joy and hate amongst others. Moreover, what are the intellectual resources capable of addressing these emotions, passions and feelings of injustice? Jurisprudence, doctrine, policy, literary trope (eg. tragedy), psychology and psychoanalysis (for example, the idioms of trauma and memory), the language of the virtues (and vices), and the discourse of conscience mediated through the United Nations and advocacy groups.

—

Associate Professor Peter Rush
Programme Director, International Criminal Justice
Institute for International Law and the Humanities
Melbourne Law School

Without Words is presented in association with Melbourne Law School's IILAH and APCML symposium, *Affective States of International Criminal Justice*, 20–22 July 2011 and supported by the Australian Research Council War Crimes Project.

CATE CONSANDINE
BORN SYDNEY,
1970
LIVES AND WORKS
IN MELBOURNE

Cate Consandine is an installation artist who employs action, video and film, and sculptural interventions to explore desire and the body. Since 2005 she has been a PhD candidate at Monash University, in Fine Arts. In 2002 she was a studio artist at Gertrude Contemporary, following her graduation with Honours from the Sydney College of the Arts in 2001 and BFA in Sculpture from the VCA, Melbourne in 2000. Consandine's solo and group exhibitions include *Colony*, Sarah Scout, Melbourne and *Rapid Slowness*, Faculty Gallery, Monash University, Caulfield, both in 2010; *Contemporary Australian Video*, (ICA) Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 2008; *Candy Cane*, Gertrude Contemporary and *Cold cut, eye-stalk*, Project Gallery, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, both in 2006. Cate Consandine is represented by Sarah Scout, Melbourne.

Boy #1 2010
HD video, looped, colour,
silent

Spear #1 2010
polished stainless steel pole
365 cm in length; 4.5 cm
wide, tapered to 2 mm

Ring 2010
polished stainless steel
35 cm diameter; 4.5 cm high

RIGHT
installation view
Faculty Gallery, Monash
University, Caulfield, 2010
Courtesy the artist and
Sarah Scout, Melbourne
Photograph John Brash



PAUL KNIGHT
BORN ARMIDALE,
NSW, 1976
LIVES AND WORKS
IN LONDON

Paul Knight's recent work engages with notions of intimacy, eroticism and risk. Since graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, in 2001, he has produced several significant bodies of photographic work as well as sculptures, performances and installations. For the summer of 2010, Knight was awarded the Australian Council for the Arts, Skills and Arts Development London Studio Residency. In 2009, he was awarded the William and Winifred Bowness Photography Prize, presented at Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne. In 2007, Knight received a Samstag Fellowship to attend the Glasgow School Of Art, UK, where he graduated with a MFA in 2009. In 2008, he featured in *NEW08* at Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne and, in 2007, his photography featured in the group exhibition *Australian Photography Today* at Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne. He has also been shortlisted for the Gold Coast Ulrich Schubert photographic art award, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland. In 2004, Knight was a Studio Artist at Gertrude Contemporary. Paul Knight is represented by Neon Parc, Melbourne.

Untitled 2010
folded type-C photograph
85.5 × 90.5 cm

Untitled 2010
folded type-C photograph
93.5 × 81.5 cm

Untitled 2010
folded type-C photograph
88 × 84 cm

RIGHT
Untitled 2010
folded type-C photograph
85.5 × 90.5 cm
Courtesy the artist
and Neon Parc Gallery,
Melbourne



RICKY MAYNARD
BORN
LAUNCESTON, 1953
LIVES AND WORKS
IN FLINDERS
ISLAND, TASMANIA

A descendant of the Big River and Ben Lomond people in Tasmania, Ricky Maynard is one of Australia's leading social documentary photographers. Several bodies of his work have represented his own people and Indigenous Australians from across the country, including his series *Moonbird People* 1985–8, and his widely acclaimed portraits of Wik Elders in *Returning to Places that Name Us*, 2000. Maynard's major recent body of work, *Portrait of a Distant Land* 2005–, focuses on Tasmania, featuring sites, landscapes and activities significant to his own people and their history. In 2007–8 *Portrait of a Distant Land* featured in the *Indigenous Art Triennial: Culture Warriors* at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra and in the inaugural *Photoquai Biennale* in Paris. In 2008–9, Maynard was included in the group exhibition *Half Light: Portraits from Black Australia*, at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. *Ricky Maynard: Portrait of a Distant Land*, a major touring exhibition of Maynard's work initiated by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, has toured several Australian venues since 2007. In 1994, Maynard was awarded the Mother Jones International Documentary Award and, in 2003, he received the Kate Challis RAKA Award. Ricky Maynard is represented by Fehily Contemporary, Melbourne.

from the series *Portrait of a
Distant Land* 2005

Traitor
Vansittart Island
The Healing Garden
The Spit, Babel Island
gelatin silver prints
each 67 × 77 cm framed

RIGHT
The Healing Garden 2005
gelatin silver print
67 × 77 cm framed
Courtesy the artist and
Fehily Contemporary,
Melbourne



It's pretty important you know, the land, it doesn't matter how small, it's something, just a little sacred site, that's Wybalenna. There was a massacre, there, sad things there, but we try not to go over that. Where the bad was we can always make it good.

—AUNTY IDA WEST 1995

TOM NICHOLSON
BORN MELBOURNE,
1973
LIVES AND WORKS
IN MELBOURNE

Tom Nicholson is an artist, Lecturer in Drawing at the Faculty of Art and Design at Monash University and formerly a member of Ocular Lab artists' run initiative in Melbourne. Nicholson's cross-media and performative practice engages with ideas of the monument and action in relation to sovereignty and the formation of individual and collective history and site. He has exhibited in both group and solo exhibitions nationally and internationally, including at The Hague, Berlin, Sienna and Santiago. He exhibited in *Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon: The 4th Auckland Triennial* and the *8th Shanghai Biennale*, both in 2010; in 2008 he was awarded second prize in the Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture and, in 2006, his work was exhibited in *Zones of Contact, 15th Biennale of Sydney*. *Printed Pages/ Bearing Images/ 1998–2008* was first presented in the group exhibition *Since we last spoke about monuments*, at Stroom den Haag, The Hague, in 2008. Tom Nicholson is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Sydney.

*Printed pages/ Bearing
images/ 1998–2008*
1998–2008
HD video, 98 minutes,
colour, silent

RIGHT
*Printed pages/ Bearing
images/ 1998–2008*
1998–2008 (still)
HD video, 98 minutes,
colour, silent
Courtesy the artist and
Anna Schwartz Gallery,
Melbourne and Sydney



MIKE PARR
BORN 1945,
SYDNEY
LIVES AND
WORKS IN
SYDNEY

Mike Parr is one of Australia's most highly regarded artists. Working across many media including performance, sculpture, printmaking and photography, he has exhibited and performed extensively both nationally and internationally since the 1970s. His performances are highly challenging and cathartic, often focusing on the artist's mental and physical endurance. In 2008, he performed *Cartesian Corpse* as part of the exhibition *The Tilted Stage*, presented jointly by Detached and the Bond Store, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 2008–9. Also in 2008, a major survey of Parr's video performance works was exhibited in *MIRROR/ARSE, as part of Revolutions—Forms That Turn, Biennale of Sydney*. In 2005–6, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, exhibited *Volte Face: Mike Parr Prints and Pre-prints 1970–2005*, a major survey of Parr's prints. A survey exhibition, *CUT YOUR THROAT AN INCH AT A TIME: A Survey of the Works of Mike Parr 1970–2005*, was also held at the Newcastle Regional Art Gallery in 2005. Mike Parr is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Sydney.

Cartesian Corpse 2009
digital video, 16:9, colour,
sound, monitor, media
player, wooden plinth
34 hours; 50 × 118 × 60 cm

RIGHT
Cartesian Corpse
performance
documentation,
21–22 November 2008
The Bond Store, Hobart
Courtesy the artist and
Anna Schwartz Gallery,
Melbourne and Sydney
Photograph Paul Green



CAMPBELL
PATTERSON
BORN
PORTSMOUTH,
ENGLAND, 1983
LIVES AND WORKS
IN AUCKLAND,
NEW ZEALAND

Campbell Patterson makes performance works of simple, domestic, often humorous actions undertaken and documented mostly in isolation by the artist, in his immediate environment or outdoors. Physical activities are combined with a playful wit in diaristic works that are often short in length and involve elements of risk or endurance. Patterson graduated from Elam School of Fine Art, Auckland University in 2006, and has exhibited regularly since. His work has recently featured in the group exhibitions *Reason and Rhyme*, Gertrude Contemporary, 2011; *Ready to Roll*, City Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand, 2010; *Unnerved: The New Zealand Project*, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2009, touring to the National Gallery of Victoria in 2011; and *The 6th Asia Pacific Triennial*, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, also in 2009. Campbell Patterson is represented by Michael Lett, Auckland, New Zealand.

*Lifting My Mother for as
Long as I Can* 2011
digital video, colour, sound
5.48 mins

RIGHT
*Lifting My Mother for as
Long as I Can* 2011 (stills)
digital video, colour, sound
5.48 mins
Courtesy the artist and
Michael Lett, Auckland



Imagination alone enables us to see things in their proper perspective, to be strong enough to put that which is too close at a certain distance so that we can see and understand it without bias and prejudice, to be generous enough to bridge abysses of remoteness until we can see and understand everything that is too far away from us as though it were our own affair. This distancing of some things and bridging the abysses to others is part of the dialogue of understanding, for whose purposes direct experience establishes too close a contact and mere knowledge erects artificial barriers.

—HANNAH ARENDT¹

Once a year in March, since 2006, Campbell Patterson and his mother have enacted a modest performance at her home, *Lifting My Mother for as Long as I Can*, which the artist records on video. In front of a set of floral drapes, Patterson has walked to his waiting mother, picked her up and held her in his arms for as long as he can endure it. As the years have progressed, Patterson's times have fluctuated, ranging from a couple of minutes to a lengthy 5 minutes 48 seconds, a feat achieved in 2011, the record of which is featured in this exhibition.

Viewing this work, we see its performers suppressing the occasional, concentration-breaking laugh or casting a brief, self-conscious glance at the camera. As the seconds pass, however, a complex relationship emerges. We see Patterson shifting about, gathering his mother up after his strength has waned. We observe his mother holding herself in a pose that appears easier for her son to keep her lifted off the ground. We also witness Patterson becoming very still for seconds at a time, looking down and sometimes closing his eyes, maintaining focus. We see a young man standing quietly, cradling his mother in his arms—a moment of quietude that recalls the *Pieta* in its depiction of familial support and tenderness.

In contrast, the young adolescent boy in Cate Consandine's *Boy #1* 2010 lies quivering and alone on a bed of grass with legs and arms curled inwards to his body. Adjacent to this video are two stainless steel sculptures—a spike, emerging from the ceiling and narrowing

¹ Hannah Arendt, 'Understanding and Politics', in *Essays in Understanding: 1930–1954, Uncollected and Unpublished Works by Hannah Arendt*, ed. Jerome Kohn, Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1994, p.323.

to a sharp point just above the floor, and a ring, lying on the gallery floor. Each of these elements works upon the other to build an air of anxiety around the subject of the video. Suspension, penetration, constriction and abandonment lurk at the edges of this work, which conflates form and representation with suggestion and allusion. Singular, and dislodged from any narrative support or reprieve, Consandine's subject appears endlessly marooned.

Constriction and subjectivity are also central to Mike Parr's *Cartesian Corpse* 2009, a 34-hour video documentation of his performance at the Bond Store, Tasmania.² For this performance, the artist remained seated beneath a large, wooden, tilted stage 'for as long as possible'. Whilst his body remained hidden, his head was visible above the stage via a hole in the structure, a position that visualises the 'mind-body' split and recalls archaic and brutal methods of incarceration. As retrospective viewers of the performance video, we are released from the discomfort or connection that Parr's physical presence may have provoked in visitors to the Bond Store. But we are still confronted with the shock of his containment, his bodily isolation and required stamina.

How might we regard these subjects? Do these works encourage an empathic or emotional response? In their isolation, the individuals in these works come to stand for the subject more generally: a son and his mother. A boy. A man, enduring. Whether this endurance is played out in 'real time' over the long hours of Parr's performance, or the few minutes of Patterson's, or is the construct of Consandine's seemingly endless video loop, the durational nature of these works encourages a sense of shared experience in their viewer. As curator Anthony Bond simply expresses it in relation to Parr's *Cartesian Corpse*, 'we may speculate on what it might feel like to be Mike by wondering how we might feel ourselves'.³

In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag wrote that 'no "we" should be taken for granted when the subject is looking at other people's pain', arguing that viewers are individualised by the specificity of their relationship to the image, rather than their connection to

2 Performed from 21–22 November 2008, Parr's *Cartesian Corpse* performance was part of the exhibition *Mike Parr: The Tilted Stage*, 21 November 2008–1 March 2009, curated by Anthony Bond and held at the Bond Store, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, and Detached, Hobart. Anthony Bond co-performed with Parr, seated in the Bond Store space next to the tilted stage during *Cartesian Corpse*. His notes written during the performance are documented in *Mike Parr: The Tilted Stage*, Detached Cultural Organisation and Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, 2008.

3 Anthony Bond, notes on *Cartesian Corpse* recorded during his co-performance with Parr, in *Mike Parr: The Tilted Stage*, Detached Cultural Organisation and Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, 2008, np.

a collective, generalised response.⁴ In his *Portrait of a Distant Land* series, Ricky Maynard, of the Big River and Ben Lomond people, (and based on Flinders Island in Bass Strait) has been documenting, as curator Keith Munro describes it, 'song lines, key historical events, massacre sites, petroglyphs and hidden, important meeting places, sacred sites and practices of Tasmanian Aboriginal people.'⁵ The photographs are often accompanied by quotes from significant members of his community, describing the significance of such sites. Marcia Langton has said of Maynard's landscape images that 'they seize the emotional territory. His works are not maudlin or dark, but they manage to signify a mood of contemplation, of 'being there', that draws the eye and the mind. While some think his landscape works depict serenity, it takes just a minute of reflection to understand what lies beneath these beautiful images.'⁶

Maynard takes seriously the power of the photograph as document and, significantly, as presence. His photographs assert a history otherwise withheld or mis-told. Yet the landscape he depicts is silent on the events that took place upon its ground, especially to those outside that history. How, then, might viewers be seized by the 'emotional territory' of these landscapes that Langton describes? Perhaps it might be sought through what might be described as an ethical empathy, one that takes account of the specificity of both the viewer and the photographic subjects with which they engage.

In 1998, Tom Nicholson began collecting print media pictures of people bearing images of others. Eventually, his collection was made into a work, *Printed pages/ Bearing images/ 1998–2008* 1998–2008, a 98-minute silent video that moves from photograph to photograph. Due to the slow dissolve Nicholson has employed, however, the photographs are rarely revealed as single images. Nicholson describes this logic as 'images proliferating images; an insistent but shifting relation between the image and animation; and the confusion, merging and/or conflict between the faces that bear and the faces that are borne, between culprit and victim.'⁷

How do emotion, empathy and ethics figure here? How do we reconcile them? Nicholson brings the specificity of grief, of political fight, of anger, despair, uprising and joy into the long-play merge of image piled upon image. The experiential distance between mothers with missing sons, religious devotionals bearing icons, ecstatic

4 Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2003, p.7.

5 Keith Munro, *Ricky Maynard: Portrait of a Distant Land*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2008, p.17.

6 Marcia Langton, 'We are Here: Memory, Presence and Landscape in Tasmania', in *Ricky Maynard: Portrait of a Distant Land*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2008, p.47.

7 Tom Nicholson, artist's statement, www.tomn.net/

nicholsontextonprintedpagesbearingimages19982008.htm. Accessed 19 May 2011.

crowds and Steve Jobs holding aloft a laptop is broken down, made ambiguous. Nicholson pulls the represented into a confusion of 'us and them' such that our imaginative 'bridging [of] the abysses' towards understanding is repeatedly called upon and dislodged.

The subjects in Paul Knight's *Untitled* photographs are also entwined, but in an intensely intimate way. They are photographed together as couples in bed, embracing between the sheets. Knight has folded the photographs and sewn small areas to hold them in place. This brings his subjects closer together whilst also slicing them across the body, so they are both violated and brought into a closer embrace. In one photograph, the face of a woman, her right eye open, is folded into that of her male lover's, whose left eye is closed. Their arms are entangled, and the fold is such that it takes a moment to realise that this is a photograph of two subjects, not one. The fold and its effects—the crease, the merging of bodies and subjectivities—afford the subjects a strangely public privacy. Are these photographs, turned in upon themselves, depictions of love? We don't know. In front of them, we are pulled towards this human intimacy whilst being reminded we are entirely outside of it.

—

Kyla McFarlane
CCP Associate Curator

ccp.

centre for
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photography

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Curated by Kyla McFarlane

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