

crosseXions

30 July – 27 August, The Cross Art Projects;
30 July – 7 August, Alaska Projects

THE CROSS
ART PROJECTS 



MAAP
MEDIA BANK

ALASKA

crosseXions

Artists: James Barth, Clark Beaumont, Katina Davidson, Dana Lawrie, Julie-Anne Milinski, Clare Poppi, Merri Randell, Leena Riethmuller, Camille Serisier, Lynden Stone, Shayna Wells

crosseXions is about the power of intimacy. The project puts paid to the Lie of internal creativity and the myth of the ultra-individual heroic male genius. Art springs not from the space within, but from the space between—the ebb and flow of interactions, the mess and melange of scattered partial objects and subjects, the flux of the interpersonal. This intimacy, forged through our co-operative investment, is far far away from violence, and from experiences of loss and trauma, alienation and abuse, poison and exploitation that the artists and their artworks reflect upon and recover from.

Shayna Wells has been visiting Lake Ainsworth for many years as a personal retreat for the calming effects that places of pristine natural beauty offer. Taking her friends to this place and photographing them in the lake's tea tree-stained waters has generated a series of primordial portraits where the lake may be seen to represent a site of interdependence—the source of fresh water from which all creatures must drink, predators and prey alike, and the mirror surface of self-perception where the dialogue of self and other is played out and identity unfolds. The moment of intense encounter persists, repeated and reflected in the cyanotype prints washed in lake waters and dried in the sun as passages of light and time, in drawings built up and scored into, in video and performance.

Dana Lawrie also juxtaposes the body within a relational field, where a dissected cadaverous portrait of her body parts is shrouded with a veil of flora painted in botanical inks that readily fade. Hovering over a world of objects or a design universe is a sea of sensuality—'real' objects are withdrawn from access. The artist's body or her identity, cannot be appropriated completely—her foot is not her nor her body her, her hands are not her, her gaze is not her, her gestures are not her—and the carving up is a reductivist logic that infinitely approaches but never reaches its subject (the self-portrait).

There is a deepening and disruptive rift between the causality of human productions and the ecologies of Nature. James Barth's exercises in self-portraiture are phantasmic introjections. The virtual realm offers denaturalising pathways to design and determine other appearances where essentialist notions of gender and sexuality dissolve into a reality founded in contradiction. The partial wounded subject is weak, offering co-existence with as many other relational partial objects as possible.

Merri Randell affects a similar phantasm within the natural environment of subtropical rainforest. Randell generates objects or zones within the forest with virtual behaviours - breathing, pulsing, squirting or bulging - on small video feedback loops within larger static image projections. These 'things' have a loop form, like a Möbius strip - a non-orientable surface without inside or outside, center or edge, up and down, yet a very specific shape. In this reality there is no dotted line saying 'Cut Here' - subdividing the landscape, butchering reality, becomes impossible.

In late capitalist culture, saturated in spam and scam, there is a constant bombardment of product advertisement for healing the disruptive rifts of a segmented, privatised and hyper mediated reality. Lynden Stone's *Sacred Gaia Healing* project gathers the detritus of spam media like a Pacific Gyre, attempting to break down the impenetrable toxic waste upon which the whole world is choking. Her highly entertaining efforts at regurgitation offer a colonic cleansing for all media channeling.

Within and behind the outrageous fakery of Angelica Leight's and Runceley Chaser's dodgy antics, there can be felt a joyful collaboration between the artist and her partner. The artist collaboration Clark Beaumont expresses the dark side of the interpersonal. The two figures floating next to one another in a pool of water, filmed from above, gradually drift away from each other. Each body floats alone, as if unaware of the other. It is as though each individual is trying to reach a de-sensitised state in order to de-stress—the premise and offer of flotation therapy—blind to their own self-absorption. Caught in a feed-back loop of alienation, intimacy is elusive, connection asymptotic.

Jewellery lays special claim to intimacy, worn against the body for often sentimental reasons. Clare Poppi has ethically sourced raw material in order to make and remake a piece of jewellery for selected participants. The participants describe a concept or context for the work, and once made and handed over, are able to wear it for a few days only, before it is returned and re-melted into the next piece. The artist physically creates and recycles, while the participants emotionally create and recycle their life experience for symbolic value.

Leena Riethmuller has recorded the voices of participants describing the experience of a positive feeling. Something so commonplace becoming precious and revealing the sometimes tenuous hold we have on our emotional wellbeing. Rejecting object and image, the work's intimacy offers no outside position. Riethmuller declares the death of cynicism and exposes the cynic as a hypocrite: she thinks that she is free of illusion, and in the very thinking of this, she is deluded. There is only testimony in memory's offer.

Julie-Anne Milinski has created the obverse setting. As opposed to the ephemeral experiences of a shifting and fissured emotional world, she forges objects from materials that will obscenely outlast their makers. Products like PVC that continue to off-gas into our private homes, have been remedied by the integration of plants as atmospheric cleaning agents within elaborate sculpture-cum-furniture constructions. Everything 'natural', 'human', and 'synthetic' is reduced to use value in designer chains of capitalist equivalence.

Katina Davidson's family were forced, under The Act, to live on firstly Deebing Creek and later Purga Aboriginal Missions. Her artwork is a memorial to the Deebing Creek site which is currently proposed for commercial development, and to the Purga Mission site, demonstrating a continuous relationship to country and place. The vital effort of cultural and familial connection, violated and fragmented by the colonial project and capitalist imperatives, remains the central mechanism not only for Aboriginal communities but for all social sustainability.

Camille Serisier's work reflects on her recent personal experience of pregnancy. She draws inspiration from the ancient statuettes of the Venus of Willendorf and a recent theory speculating that the figurines may have been made by women to measure the progression of their pregnancies. Her comical, surreal and naively theatrical work expresses both a bountiful energy of fecundity and a morbid monstrosity of the female form which conceives,

grows and gives birth to another being. Within the confrontation of this experience is both end game and origin of self and other, the ultimate ecology of human understanding.

Employing an eco-feminist ethics of care, the *crosseXions* project has been a deliberate investment in process and relationship, in collaborations and peer review, participation and interaction. The artwork outcomes are evidence of long and deep engagements and also the means for forging interpersonal spaces of trust and sincere rapport, in an effort to make our sector more sustainable.

Beth Jackson, curator.

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Details

Opening speaker Suhanya Raffel, Director m+ Museum, Hong Kong at The Cross Art Projects, with curator Beth Jackson and artists. Saturday 30 July 2016 at 3pm. Performance work by Shayna Wells at Alaska Projects, at 4pm.

Dates: 30 July to 27 August 2016, The Cross Art Projects; 30 July to 7 August, Alaska Projects, Kings Cross Carpark (level 2)