



EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

Exhibition overview

Perfect for every occasion: photography today is one of the first exhibitions to consider what has been developing in Australian photography in the twenty-first century. It presents recent work by eighteen artists, in a context designed to invite the viewer to contemplate contemporary photo media practice.

During the 1990s, it was impossible to define a single preoccupation in photography; however the predominant focus of this era was large-scale, high resolution, colour images that verged on a pictorial documentary, containing symbolic images or allegories.

The parameters for contemporary photographic practice today clearly stretch beyond art, and encompass cinema, photojournalism and advertising.

Today, we see (perhaps as a reaction to the proliferation of photo journalism), a revival in subjective photography, whereby artists record private and public worlds in individual ways, employing photographic practice to explore the unknown or challenge existing knowledge,

We also see a resurgence of the personal photograph. Ironically in a world saturated in photo imagery, artists continue to turn their lens on the individual, aware of the risk of objectifying their subjects but wanting their work to sit comfortably alongside other photographic forms like film or advertising.

Photographers continue to seek meaning from a medium that has become readily accessible in a world of technological change and image manipulation. Perhaps it is the cries heralding photography's obsolescence that encourages artists to explore solutions enlisting both traditional and non-traditional technologies in the pursuit of new photo-based art-making practices.

In a world where anyone can post an image on universal websites like You Tube, what is the place of the artist photographer? And how does the artist differentiate their work from the multitude of everyday photo imagery that surrounds us?

The five selected artists for this Education Kit approach their image-making from vastly different perspectives and theoretical views. It may be helpful to have insight into their thinking via their own statements before evaluating their work from an analytical perspective.

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

Simon Terrill



Simon Terrill

Everything is part of itself 2006

type C photograph

3 parts 85.0 x 98.0 cm, 85.0 x 102.0 cm, 85.0 x 98.0 cm

© Simon Terrill

Artist's statement:

These images are part of a larger body of work on crowds. I am interested in the way a photograph controls distance; where a picture works in similar ways to a map as a catalogue of distances between people, and in the way a mass or crowd manifests potential form. The photographs scan from above, seeing how we fill space, and the patterns and interactions that evolve during a day of leisure.

*I spent ten hours watching 50,000 people swarming, and at the start of the day people were much more directed towards the stages – it was a more linear situation – people would walk in and go see their thing or whatever, but that linearity dissipated and it became this other sort of swarming kind of thing as the day progressed more and more, til the end. And actually one incredible thing about that need for a direction is like when the last band played, that stadium was full – I don't know how many thousand people – 30,000 people or something – and within about 5 minutes – voom – they were gone.

*This statement comes from an unpublished interview with Kirsten Rann.

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

In the boxes provided use adjectives to describe *Everything is part of itself*.

Shade the art elements graph below for *Everything is part of itself*, to show the individual importance of each of the art elements in the artwork's overall composition.

The scale: 1= low importance and 10 = high importance.

10							
9							
8							
7							
6							
5							
4							
3							
2							
1							
	Line	Tone	Shape	Colour	Form	Space	Pattern

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

Using the graph as a guide identify which is the most important **art element** used in *Everything is part of itself*?

Do you think the artist consciously chose to make that element the most important? Please circle

Yes

No

Terrill is interested in documenting crowds and their behaviour as a phenomenon. What do you think he wants us to consider when we look at these images?

What feeling/s do you get when you look at the three images together?

Given that Terrill is photographing a crowd, he cannot control his subject. What do you think he wants us to consider by using photography in this way?

Are traditional photographic skills important in the production of this work?

Please circle

Yes

No

Why?

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

Chantal Faust



Chantal Faust
Blue Svetlana 2004
type C print
40.0 x 52.0 cm
© Chantal Faust

Artist's statement:

Knowledge of the camera's aptitude for deceit is greater than ever, as is the insatiable hunger for images. The more you see, the more you know... but the less that you *look*, the more you can subscribe to the dream world offered by the photograph, a two dimensional portal that exists only in the duration of our gaze.

The images look like photographs, though they are created without the use of a lens-based camera. Instead, pictures are generated on a flatbed scanner and subsequently printed using a photographic process. This method of image capture differs from camera photography in that it has a direct, physical impact on the surface of that which it images. The scanner's glass presses up against whatever is placed before it, squeezing the subject into a pressurised moment that is then captured as a still.

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

In the boxes provided use as many adjectives as you can think of to describe *Blue Svetlana*.

Shade the art elements graph below for *Blue Svetlana*, to show the individual importance of each of the art elements in the artwork's overall composition. The scale: 1= low importance and 10 = high importance.

10							
9							
8							
7							
6							
5							
4							
3							
2							
1							
	Line	Tone	Shape	Colour	Form	Space	Pattern

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

Using the graph as a guide identify which is the most important **art element** used in *Blue Svetlana*?

Do you think the artist consciously chose to make that element the most important? Please circle

Yes

No

In her artist's statement Faust remarks that the camera is deceitful, do you think her preferred way of making images is truthful? Please circle

Yes

No

Why?

What is the focal point of *Blue Svetlana*?

What questions does this method of producing photographs raise when considering the future of photography?

What photographic skills and techniques would Faust need to consider before producing this image?

Is it photography?

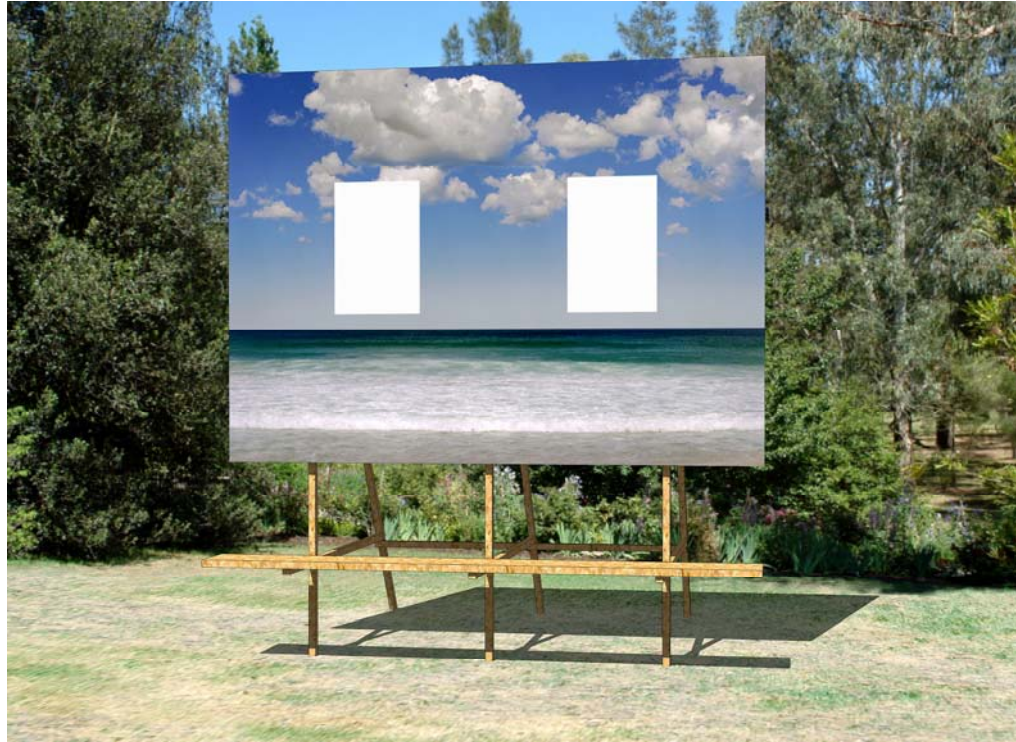
Yes

No

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

Geoff Kleem



Geoff Kleem
Untitled 2007
print, vinyl, wood
outdoor installation
290.0 x 500.0 cm (actual image)
© Geoff Kleem

Artist's statement:

Sometimes we all need a place to sit and think.

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

In the boxes provided use as many adjectives as you can think of to describe *Untitled*.

Shade the art elements graph below for *Untitled* to show the individual importance of each of the art elements in the artwork's overall composition. The scale: 1= low importance and 10 = high importance.

10							
9							
8							
7							
6							
5							
4							
3							
2							
1							
	Line	Scale	Shape	Colour	Form	Space	Pattern



EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

Using the graph as a guide identify which is the most important **art element** used in *Untitled*?

Do you think the artist consciously chose to make that element the most important? Please circle

Yes

No

Why?

What do you think and feel when you experience this work?

What other forms of photography does Kleem reference in this image?

What do you think the blank/white rectangular shapes are meant to symbolize?

What about the setting; how would this work be interpreted if it were displayed inside a gallery and not in the parkland?

Is it art?

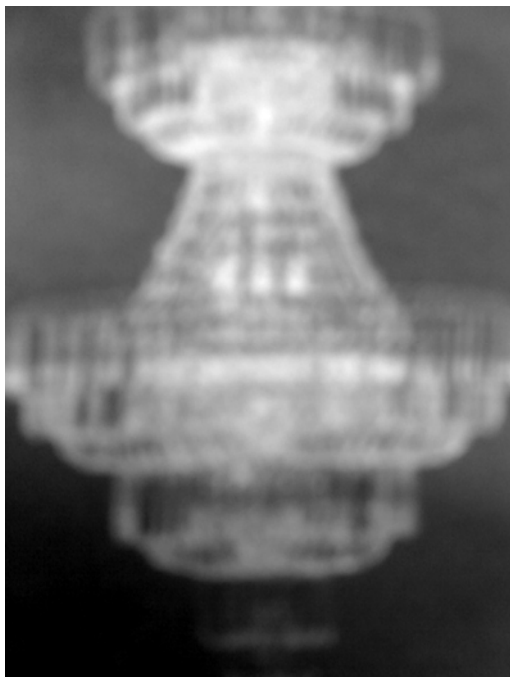
Yes

No

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

Patrick Pound



Patrick Pound

Soft real estate model (detail) 2006
mobile telephone photograph, Giclée print on rag paper
21.0 x 28.0 cm (image), 29.0 x 36.0 cm (sheet)
Courtesy Patrick Pound, GRANTPIRRIE Gallery Sydney
© Patrick Pound

Artist's statement:

In these photographs the world is seen as if it were a vast, yet intricate, model. While each photograph seems to be of reality this is something of a ruse. Each photograph is in fact a tiny detail taken from the daily newspapers.

The hundreds of photographs that make up *Soft real estate model* are in a sense also cuttings from daily newspapers. They are fragments from the constant flood of photographs; little documents or pieces of evidence blown out of all proportion. In them, the world is posed as a puzzle. Viewers, like the collector, assume that if only we could bring all the pieces together we could compile the complete picture, an exact copy of the world, 1:1, like Borges' famous fictional map that was the same dimensions as the land it represented.

This is a world view from the confines of the home, images of the world that have literally been delivered to our doors.

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

In the boxes provided use as many descriptive words as you can think of to describe *Soft real estate model*.

Shade the art elements graph below for *Soft real estate model*, to show the individual importance of each of the art elements in the artwork's overall composition.

The scale: 1= low importance and 10 = high importance.

10							
9							
8							
7							
6							
5							
4							
3							
2							
1							
	Line	Tone	Shape	Colour	Form	Space	Pattern

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

Using the graph as a guide identify which is the most important **art element** used in *Soft real estate model*?

Do you think the artist consciously chose to make that element the most important? Please circle

Yes

No

Pound does not create **his** view of the world but a reconstructed view made from pieces of the world puzzle delivered to his door. What do you think he wants us to consider?

What comments might Pound be making about photography given his images are made using a mobile phone, are low resolution and out of focus?

Could Pound's form of photography be considered anti-photography?

Yes

No

Given that Pound is photographing images made by someone else, does this raise questions of appropriation? Explain

Are photographic skills important in the development of these images?

Yes

No

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

Justene Williams



Justene Williams

Red foto 2005

DVD still

video transferred to DVD

duration: 3 mins. 30 secs.

Courtesy the artist and Mori Gallery, Sydney

© Justene Williams

Artist's statement:

The 'foto' works evolved from a need to re-evaluate, recycle and reinterpret images I had made previously, and whilst looking back at these works I realised what a lot of photographs I had brought into the world. The questions were then and remain: how do I continue to make images in a world saturated with them?

In both *Green foto* and *Blue foto* I became the photograph. I transformed myself into a three dimensional embodiment of the two dimensional photograph – attempting to re-animate the photographic 'still'.

Red foto, in which I wear the photographic suit and robotically document the photographic character, comes closer to this aim. In one respect I am in the photograph, while giving myself another ticket on the ride of the image making merry-go-round.

Blue foto, *Green foto* and *Red foto* are video that pump up the volume on the silence of photography.

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

In the boxes provided use as many adjectives as you can think of to describe *Red foto*.

Shade the art elements graph below for *Red foto* to show the individual importance of each of the art elements in the artwork's overall composition. The scale: 1= low importance and 10 = high importance.

10							
9							
8							
7							
6							
5							
4							
3							
2							
1							
	Line	Tone	Shape	Colour	Form	Space	Pattern

EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

What do you think is the meaning of the video *Red foto*?

Williams has recycled her old photographs making them into a costume for her video *Red foto*. What is she attempting to say about making images when she is making more photographs of herself wearing these images?

Given that this work is a video, is the intention of the artist to comment on photography or is it about something else? Explain.

Comment on Williams' statement "*Blue foto, Green foto and Red foto* are videos that pump up the volume on the silence of photography". What does she mean by the silence of photography?

Is it art?

Yes

No

Why?



EDUCATION KIT

Perfect for every occasion: photography today

Topics for further research

Crowd theory:

- Gustave Le Bon *The Crowd* 1895
- Sigmund Freud, *Mass Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* , 1921
- Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, 1962

Extension tasks

- *Compare and contrast Everything is part of itself* 2006 by Simon Terrill with *The garden of earthly delights* c.1504 by Hieronymus Bosch.
- Choose any two works listed in this education kit and do a compare and contrast analysis.

Note: Artists' statements courtesy of the artists
© Heide Museum of Modern Art, the artists and the author.