

ART.BOXX 2009

A national exhibition of works by
emerging artists with disability
Mori Gallery, 29 October – November 7 2009



AART.BOXX 2009

AART.BOXX is a national exhibition that gives emerging artists with a disability the opportunity to show their work in a professional context. Facilitated by Accessible Arts and driven by a committee of emerging arts workers, AART.BOXX presents 23 artists and artist collectives as a representative survey of the diverse practices and important new perspectives being developed by artists with a disability across Australia.

Right > David
Hanson, *Star
Fish*, window-
wire tapestry,
2008

Far right >
Art Day South,
Headcase, video
still, 2009



When used to aid categorisation within an exhibition context, the label 'emerging artist' often risks betraying the breadth of experience that artists possess. This is especially so in the case of AART.BOXX, which uses the term in reference to artists of widely varied origins and levels of development. While commonly identified as emerging, the artists in this exhibition have followed quite distinctive career paths. Some have never shown their work publicly, while others have exhibited widely. Although the majority of artists in the show have no formal training – including, for example, Luke Bayshco and Mark Hood, who have arrived at their current practice through a combination of self-teaching and the support of specialised studios – their artistic ability is evident in the quality of the work they produce. Despite its seemingly straightforward subject matter, Bayshco's work *Elephant* reveals him as an artist with a highly developed sensitivity to movement and form. At the other end of the spectrum are artists such as Scott Trevelyan, Pierre Comarmond and Linda Wilken, who have previously exhibited their work and have attended, or are currently attending, art school. These more experienced artists are able to articulate the nature and context of their practice, including to what extent – if at all – their work is informed by their disability.

While all the AART.BOXX artists live with a disability, what truly defines and unites them is their desire to create. All have identified themselves, or have been identified by people within the support structure that surrounds them, as artists. An important step in their artistic development is the opportunity

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to engage in the conceptual exchange process that occurs between artists when they exhibit their work together. AART.BOX provides artists with this opportunity as well as encouraging them to develop networks, promote their work, build confidence in their practice, forge a reputation, and be exposed to audiences to whom they might not ordinarily have access. The importance of these experiences to an emerging artist cannot be overstated.

Although each of the artists in the AART.BOX exhibition live with a disability, this fact does not entirely direct the conceptual basis of their work. Their subject matter varies widely and, where conceptual commonalities do exist, they are dealt with by artists in their own unique ways. Some engage with disability directly, such as Scott Trevelyan, whose work openly addresses his experience of living with an acquired brain injury. Other artists, like Linda Wilken, approach the subject more broadly; her animation *Mythologica*, created in collaboration with animator Kevin Comty, could be read in this context as confronting the topic of disability through a discussion of ethics in relation to advancements in biological science.

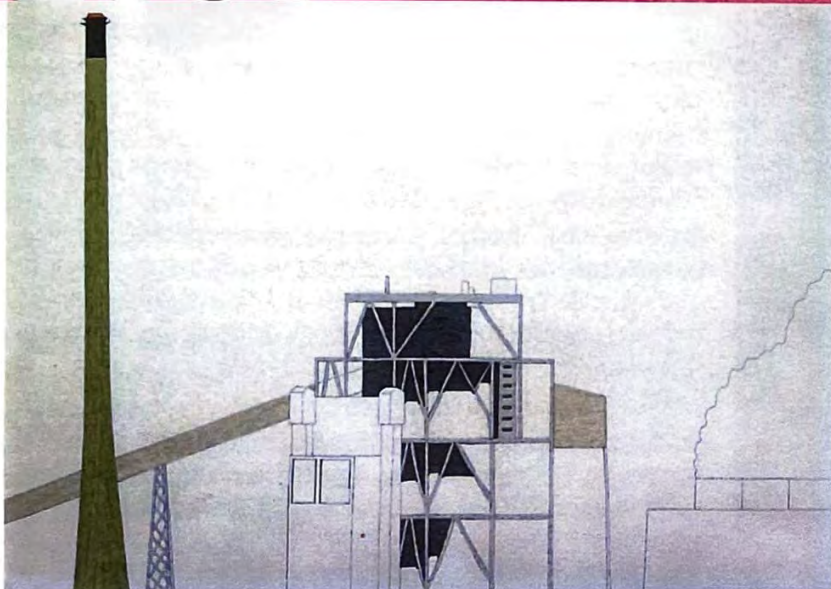
The majority of artists in the exhibition, however, do not address disability at all in their work. Greg Sindel and Bowman Yu, for example, share a fascination with popular culture. Sindel's appreciation of the storytelling traditions that lie behind the horror genre is evident in his works *Dracula* and *The Bride of Frankenstein*, which transform classical cinematic images of the macabre into cartoon-like pencil drawings. Yu's portrait series of



characters from classic 'tough guy' films has developed through a performance process that sees Yu become the characters he is depicting, acting out scenes and imitating their voices and physical gestures – a method that is mirrored in the practice of another artist in the exhibition, Graham Henkel. As artists, Sindel and Yu are linked by their love of popular culture, however their practices remain decidedly separate: where Sindel is a consumer and interpreter of this culture, Yu inhabits it. Two other artists in the exhibition, Ana Nguyen and Carla Wherby, are similarly linked by their awareness of music's role in responding to social injustice yet they communicate this awareness in different ways: Nguyen through aggressive

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Above > David Gillham, Alcoa
Anglseas Power Station, fibre
tipped pencil paper 2009

Right > Greg Sindel, Dracula,
pencil on paper, 2009

