

Y A L P O R E

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## TO EXPRESS:

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY TO  
THE EXHIBITION 'FOREPLAY'

Many people are motivated to express their identity through what they do, be it through feelings of care and inclusiveness that they foster in the home, or an industrial empire that they struggle day and night to build, or the self-discovery they venture plus the perceived personal limitations they strive to surpass in their art practice. After a fashion all are artists.

Humans possess a deep desire to express their thoughts and ideas and to tell their stories. It seems likely that expression of self was allied to the awakening of human consciousness. As a highly sociable species whose very survival depended upon coordinated group action, communication within the group was to be constantly tested; an imperative that resulted in a new order of expressive means. Over time, expansive social discourse facilitated the development of symbolic and sequential patterns of thought and eventually led to modern language.

Meanwhile for more than a hundred thousand years, humans arranged their lives and told their stories using an assorted means of expression. During this period many of the most likely signifiers are ones that today

we associate with the practice of visual and performing arts: indicators such as body language, gestures, the full gamut of facial expressions, touch, demonstrations, mime, body painting, representational drawing, diagrams, charts and the gradual development of distinctive vocalisations.

Contemporary artists work in an extremely pluralistic, globalised visual art field, employing traditional processes and a burgeoning array of new technologies. Yet on at least one level, contemporary artists are drawn together by the common thread of subjective expression.

Just as contemporary artists can determine their own agenda, so they alone must confront inner questions about their subjective expression and the interests and influences involved. Such introspection is part and parcel of a heuristic process of discovery that aspires to make new artworks, a process bound to acknowledge associations with certain aspects of the vast body of knowledge that is international contemporary art.

Chance can be a surprise partner in any visual art project and on occasion its intervention will redirect the project in ways unimagined at the start; for innovative art practice is a chancy business right up to the moment that the commitment is made and the artwork is exhibited. Then, all the rest has been foreplay.

**Geoff Parr**  
Winter of 2012



# SCOT COTTERELL

*Free Tattoo, 2010 (detail)*  
Installation comprising tattoo equipment,  
furniture, projection and sound elements

*A forest fire creates a cloud out from which  
rain may fall to put it out, 2012 (studio detail)*  
Made and sourced, drawn and painted  
elements

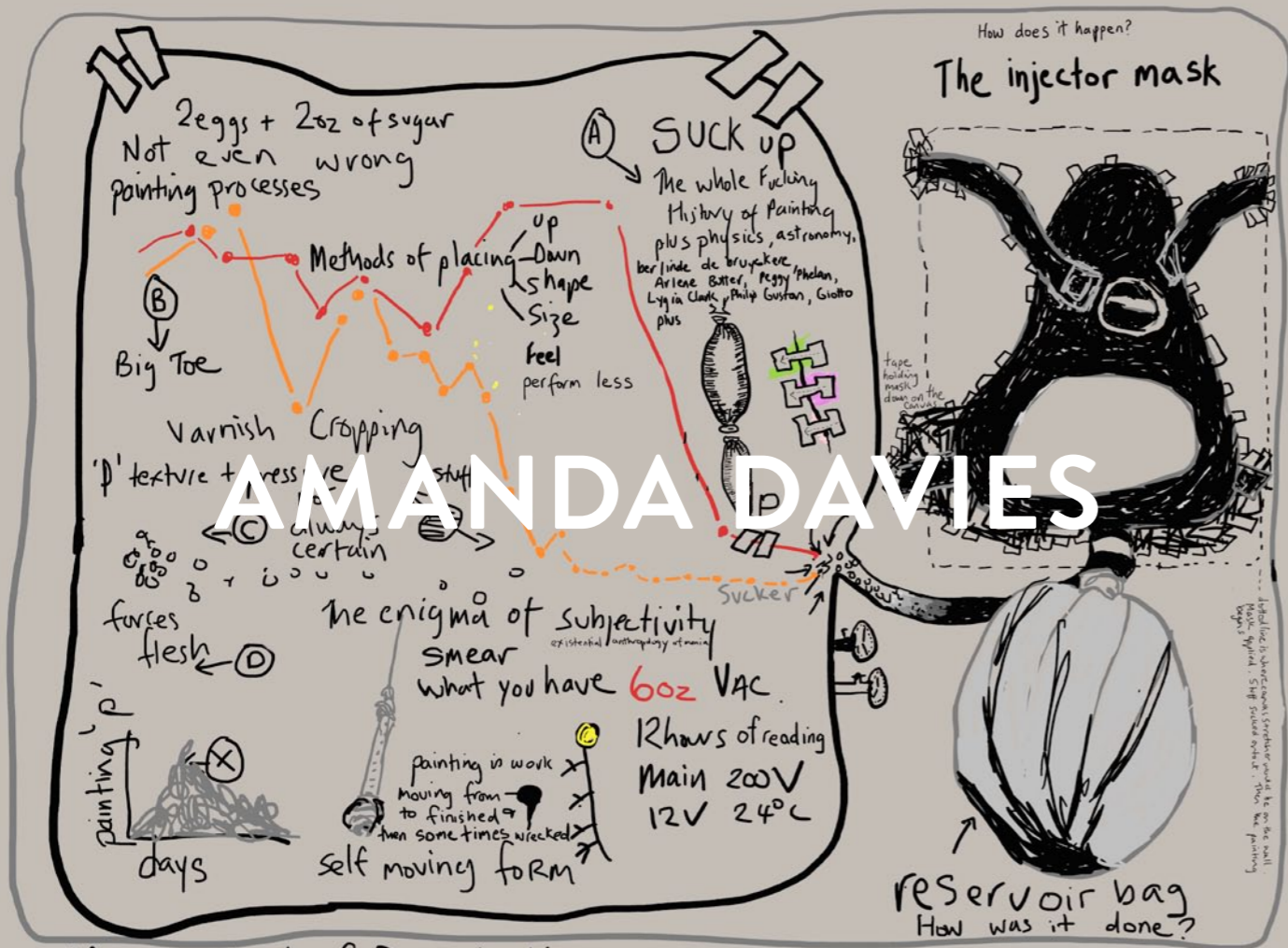
*The dubious claims of travelling salesmen,  
2011-2012. Video still, single channel video  
with stereo sound 2'20" dur. PAL DV*

A history of images.  
A synthetic cumulative construction.  
A series of studies for a larger work about something else entirely.

The studio as a locus of life and death energy.  
The studio as ever-unfinished environment.  
The studio as magnet for things.  
The studio as container of failure and potential.  
The studio as mirror, reflection, projection.

Object studies of formation and synthesis.  
Ad paintings of memory, nostalgia, sales and purchase.  
Flyers and advert drawings of chance, hope, success and failure.  
Biro copy drawings of information abundance, obscure data, trivia.  
Made marks. Collected imagery. Editing. The inanimate. The time-based.  
Walls of studies. A moving image. A cyclic sound.





Graphic statement, 2012

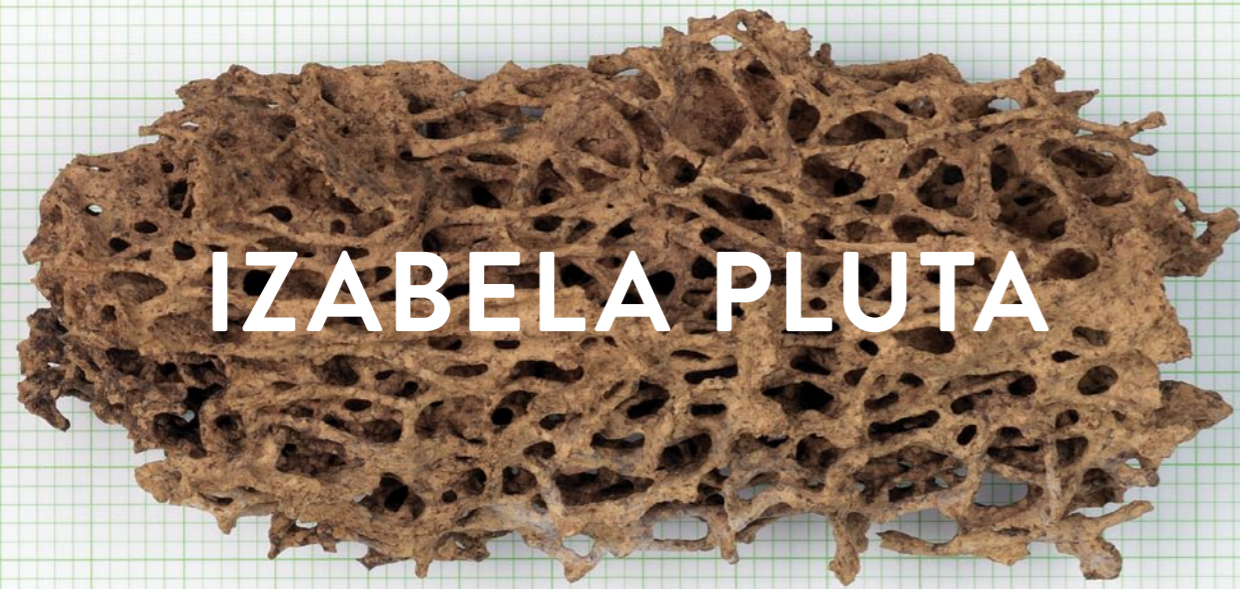
Artist in the studio, 2012  
Photography by Colin Langridge

Untitled XII, 2012 (detail)  
Oil on linen, 50 x 50cm  
From the series 'Shit'  
Photography by David Martin

The process of gathering, reflecting, building, trashing experiences in the process of making a painting is not smooth, it's slow, it's sometimes shit, it's sometimes okay and it's dirty work. Aside from the technical aspect of painting, the process for making my paintings involves a conversation developed through pose and performance. As I work through the picture: I set up, dismantle or discard props and literally move through and into the picture space, I start building on what the picture could be. I am interested in body language, particularly that of unease and feeling unwell, as a medium of expression.

Prior to commencing a picture my subject matter is predetermined, however the way it is represented develops over time — the picture arising from intimacy with the layering colour and texture. Once the painting is finished I often remain uncertain about its meaning and ask myself, 'what is it that I have been trying to say?' and 'how does this make me feel?'





# IZABELA PLUTA

*Termite nest*, 2011  
Chromogenic print, 66 x 66 cm

*House [on the frontier]*, 2012  
Latex-based ink-jet print, 270 x 420 cm  
(Installation shot, Gippsland Art Gallery)

*Reservoir collection*, 2011-2012  
Found items (detail): teeth

All images courtesy the artist, Dianne  
Tanzer Gallery & Projects, Melbourne and  
Galerie Pompom, Sydney.

My practice examines the various ways that place is manifested or experienced. Often works have comprised of photographs, found ephemera, drawings and prints, and photo-murals to explore my interest in serendipitous encounters, the effects of time and how the photographic image operates as a vehicle for witnessing various states of ruin.

This work presents ideas that are central to methods which extend the image from its flat surface and engage in new possibilities for exploring the image as the form of an idea thereby taking on extended material forms. The catalyst for this work is centred on the reservoir as a place where anything can be collected and stored — more commonly referring to an artificial lake. If the reservoir bursts, the spillage may lead to a condition of ruin. It is within this metaphoric space that I attempt to visually explore the psychological resonances implicit in these spaces and objects.

Izabela Pluta is represented by Dianne Tanzer Gallery & Projects, Melbourne and Galerie Pompom, Sydney.







# MICHAEL SCHLITZ

*Sound Islands, 2012 (detail)*  
Handprinted woodcut on kozo  
From the series 'Gravity and light'

*Cloud Exchange, 2010*  
Handprinted woodcut on kozo

*Tiny Secret, 2005*  
Handprinted woodcut on kozo

Photography by Simon Cuthbert

Since 2005 I have been using negative space to make visible the figurative subject of the work by cutting everything but the subject off the block. At the same time I wanted to reflect the outside space within the figure to hint at the interconnectivity of things. The *Gravity and light* images were started in 2011 through simple line drawings involving repetition, reduction and a chance to leave the figurative aspect of my practice behind for a while as I explored the simplicity of line. I have always been interested in restricting the tools and processes I use to simplify and 'complicate' the process of image making.

In every translation there is a loss of some kind, but perhaps something is also gained, through that loss new ideas are generated visually. Unlike other forms of art, in printmaking usually the first translation of a subject is not the final work. An image is drawn, the block is cut and then it is printed. Amongst all this there is the problem of image reversal. In the west we read from left to right, this affects the way we read and 'see' a visual image. In *Gravity and light* I chose to put the drawings away and work from memory. In the hope that the finished print would reflect something closer to the original idea within each drawing...



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# LUCIA USMIANI

*Monkeypod wood pineapple bowl, 2012*  
Found object  
From the series 'Dreaming of Paradise'

*Plasticine Paradise Postcard, 2012*  
Found Monkeypod wood bowl, modelling clay  
From the series 'Dreaming of Paradise'

*Original postcard 'At a Hawaiian Luau'*  
Photo by United Air Lines

I spend a lot of time in places where people leave behind their unwanted goods. I buy things that capture my interest, possibly because they remind me of something that interested me in the past. They are usually domestic and often, either handmade or a component of them is handmade. They usually doesn't cost very much. As I notice that they surface regularly in these dumping grounds, I begin accumulating them and they become a collection.

On their own, these objects have an insight into the previous owners, artefacts of lived experience. Through accumulation, they gradually build a narrative that extends beyond the object itself and the individual who once owned them. This narrative is social, but it is also mine.

The work in this exhibition represents an accumulation of discarded souvenirs from tropical island holidays. *Dreaming of Paradise*, refers to a romantic longing for an idyllic place of dreamlike perfection.



## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Scot Cotterell was born in Victoria, Australia in 1979. Cotterell's work is inter-disciplinary and concerned with responses to technology and media. His work uses sound, video, image and object to create environments that reflect upon cultural phenomena. Scot's exhibition history includes; *Shotgun*, CAST Gallery, (2011); *Medium Frequency*, DF Arte Contemporaneo, Spain, (2009); *The Fall*, MONA FOMA Festival, Salamanca Arts Centre, (2009); */Encoding\_Experience\_*, Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania (2008); and *Your Call is Important To Us*, The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (2008). Scot has curated exhibitions for CAST, Inflight ARI, Academy Gallery and Boiler Room: National Improvisation Laboratory. Cotterell is a former chair of Inflight Artist Run Initiative and lectures in Electronic Media at the University of Tasmania.

Scot is represented by Bett Gallery, Hobart.

Amanda Davies is a Premaydena-based artist whose practice focuses on painting. Amanda's work explores feelings of unease, sickness. She studied at the Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania (BFA Hons, 2003). She was a founding member of the ARI Inflight and an artist at Letitia Street Studios in Hobart. She was awarded the *Rosamond McCulloch Studio Residency* in Paris and in 2007 was commissioned to create new work for the Royal Hobart Hospital. She has participated in a number of solo and group exhibitions including *The world in painting*, an Asialink/Heidi Museum of Modern Art touring exhibition (2008); *The Portia Geach Memorial Award* (2009); *Prometheus Visual Art Award, Merrimac* (2011); *The City of Hobart Art Award* (2011) and *Shotgun* a CAST and Detached partnership (2011). Collections include the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Devonport Regional Gallery, La Trobe Collection, Wollongong City Gallery, Artbank and private collections.

Amanda is represented by Bett Gallery, Hobart.

Izabela Pluta is a Sydney-based, Polish-born artist who has exhibited widely in Australia. She has undertaken artist residencies at *The Art and Design Research Institute, The University of Ulster* in Belfast (2011); *Cowwarr Art Space*, Gippsland (2011); *The Cité Internationale des Arts*, Paris (2008); *The Australia Council for the Arts Studio*, Barcelona (2006); *Red Gate Gallery*, Beijing (2005); and *International Art Space Kellerberrin (IASKA)*, Western Australia (2004).

Pluta was awarded a *Qantas Foundation Encouragement of Australian Contemporary Art Award* in 2009, and has received numerous grants including an *Australia Council for the Arts New Work (Established) Grant* (2011); an *Australia Council for the Arts New Work (Emerging) Grant* (2008); *The Ian Potter Cultural Trust Grant* (2008); and *The Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship for Emerging Artists* (2007). Pluta completed her undergraduate studies in Fine Art at The University of Newcastle (2002) and has an MFA (Research) from The College of Fine Art, UNSW Sydney (2009).

She was a co-director of the artist collective Rocketart in Newcastle (2003-2005). Pluta lectures in photography at The College of Fine Arts, The University of New South Wales and The National Art School, Sydney.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Michael Schlitz came to Tasmania in 1996 to undertake a Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours having completed a Bachelor of Creative Arts at the University of Southern Queensland. Subsequently he went on to complete a Master of Fine Arts at the Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania. Since the early 1990s, Schlitz has lectured in printmaking and drawing in various Australian art schools. He has had numerous solo exhibitions in Queensland, Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania and has exhibited internationally.

In 2001, he was awarded an Asialink residency and worked at the Nagasawa Art Park on Awaji Island in Japan and began studies into traditional forms of woodblock printing. Schlitz has been the recipient of several prizes, most recently the *Rick Amor Print Prize*. His most recent exhibition was held at Bett Gallery, Hobart, 2012.

Michael is represented by Bett Gallery, Hobart.

Lucia Usmiani was born in Adelaide, South Australia, and has been living and working in Hobart, Tasmania, since 1990. She was awarded a PhD in Fine Art from the University of Tasmania, Tasmanian School of Art, in 2006.

Usmiani has been included in significant group exhibitions in Tasmania and interstate and her work is held in various private and public collections both nationally and internationally, including the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and Artbank. She is represented by Despard Gallery, Hobart, where she had her first solo exhibition in 2007.

Usmiani's interests lie mainly in the overlooked and mundane aspects of daily living with an abiding interest in vernacular craft practices and popular culture.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The exhibition curators and the Plimsoll Gallery Committee gratefully thank the participating artists; Scot Cotterell, Amanda Davies, Izabela Pluta, Michael Schlitz and Lucia Usmiani for their generosity, enthusiasm and commitment to this project. Many thanks also to Sarah Foley for her design expertise.

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