

# GADENS

[top ten]



**gadens**  
lawyers

We continue our support of the arts with the opening of **[top ten]** our second private exhibition of Queensland's emerging contemporary artists.



The relationship between the worlds of business and art is sometimes seen as paradoxical.

In business, we are compelled to follow rules and regulations – the law. Contemporary art, however, promotes freedom of expression and working outside the constraints of formal boundaries.

In supporting contemporary art, we are attempting to reconcile these differences by leveraging the passions and skills from our two different worlds. We are also challenging these worlds to examine and understand each other.

Gadens is pleased to present its second annual Top Ten contemporary art exhibition.

On behalf of the partners of Gadens Brisbane, I extend congratulations and thanks to Renai Grace for her curatorial guidance on this exhibition, which draws together a collection of confronting and thought provoking works from Queensland's leading artistic talent.

**Paul Spiro**

Managing Partner  
Gadens Lawyers Brisbane

In 2005, Gadens launched the Top Ten exhibition as part of its annual client party. It featured a selection of emerging artists from around Queensland. The exhibition was a great success, with Gadens acquiring a number of works from the exhibition for their collection. It also encouraged future purchases by other firms and individuals.

This year's Top Ten exhibition continues to support local art. It features a selection of works produced by urban artists whose highly individual practices are unified by their exploration into contemporary life. Their works reflect upon recent histories, interpreted memories and contemplated futures. They tackle anonymity yet reflect upon individualism.

The majority of these artists would be classified more as 'emerged' rather than emerging artists. As 'emerged' artists they have extensive exhibition histories, have received scholarships and travel grants to explore their practice overseas and their works are represented in corporate, private and public collections. Their potential was recognised early as reputable commercial art galleries have eagerly scooped them up.

The 2006 showcase provides an insight into contemporary painting, object based art, photography, video and ceramics by Scott Johnson, Sharon Green, Victoria Reichelt, Peter Alwast, Arryn Snowball, Vernon Ah Kee, Kim Demuth, Mel Robson, Alexandra Gillespie and Paul Wrigley. Each of the artists has provided an artist statement to complement their work and enhance the experience of the exhibition.

**Renai Grace**

Gadens Brisbane Art Curator

*Renai Grace is a cultural consultant with Positive Solutions and has been Gadens' Art Curator since 1998.*



Measures, 2006, DVD

[alexandra gillespie]

Alexandra Gillespie is an artist who works with installation, video projection and technology. She is interested in exploring the intersection of virtual and actual space and responding to existing sites.

In the work 'Measures', the object of the speed signs as an indicator of maximum velocity is repurposed to explore expectations, dreams, beginnings, endings and future projections onto a range of ages. Uncannily, the maximum speed sign mirrors maximum life expectancy 110.

10,20,30,40,50,60,70,80,90,100,110...

Gillespie has researched, created and exhibited video/interactive installations since 1998.

Her work has been exhibited nationally at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Institute of Modern Art – Brisbane, Queensland Sciencentre, Brisbane Powerhouse and internationally at the Chiang Mai First New Media Festival; Febiofest 2006, Prague; Artspace, Auckland; Offsite, Tokyo; Sitesight Festival Japan; and Literahaus, Copenhagen.

Gillespie holds a B.A. in Media Studies from the University of Queensland and a Masters degree in Communication Design from QUT.



**Film Noir**, 2006, Oil on canvas, 100 x 100cm

[victoria reichelt]

In order to investigate the relationship between painting and photography, Reichelt makes paintings based on photographs of objects. In these works, the act of collecting and photographing the objects is of as much importance as the final painting.

The works serve to investigate the painter's engagement with the objects and how the act of painting privileges these ordinary items. In her current series of works, she is making paintings of antique cameras and film equipment set against stark black and white backgrounds. She is painting cameras, which with the invention of photography were once perceived as a threat to the medium of painting.

The cameras, however, are antiques and have themselves been made redundant, superseded by new technologies and relegated to the realm of beautiful collector's items. In bringing together painting and photography in this way, these works explore the ongoing tension between the two media and the ever-changing balance of power between the two ways of making images.

In 2005, Reichelt was awarded a Doctorate of Visual Art from Griffith University. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. She has been shortlisted for the Geelong Art Prize and in 2001 she was awarded QCL Art Prize: Painting, Logan Art Gallery and Border Art Prize, Gold Coast City Art Gallery.

**Victoria Reichelt** is represented by *Dianne Tanzer Gallery*, Melbourne.



**Grandfather Gaze**, 2006, Acrylic charcoal and crayon on canvas, 183 x 152 cm

[vernon ah kee]

'not an animal or a plant'  
is a declaration.

In 1901 when Australia ceased being a collection of British colonies simply sharing a land mass and became a federated country, the Aborigine, the native people of the land, was excluded from the new nation's Constitution and the many arbitrary rights of citizenship that accompanied all its new citizens. Which is not to say that the Aborigine had escaped consideration altogether, rather, the Aborigine was, as a people, relegated to a status less than human, ergo, an 'animal or a plant'. Subsequently, the Aborigine's life became one of rigid control as government property. This truly degrading and derogatory act is not surprising given the prevailing beliefs and attitudes toward the Aborigine at the time. What is surprising, or shocking, is that it was not until May 1967, that Australia, facing substantial international attention and mounting criticism,

by virtue of a national Referendum, removed the Aborigine from under the heel of quasi-slavery and 'property' and placed this othered 'thing' within the Constitution proper, albeit as wards of various forms of legislation and confinement. Nevertheless, the Aborigine was transformed from an Aboriginal 'thing' of scientific curiosity and public derision, into an Aboriginal people of romanticised curiosity and political derision.

Vernon Ah Kee was born in North Queensland and has been living in Brisbane for eleven years. With a BVA in Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art, Ah Kee undertook a year of Honours in Fine Art before beginning a Doctorate of Visual Art in 2001. His work is held in prestigious collections such as National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria and the Queensland Art Gallery.

**Vernon Ah Kee** is represented by *bellas milani gallery*, Brisbane.



**Memento**, Slipcast porcelain with original decals, 2 piece set

[mel robson]

Robson's recent work explores the relationship between utilitarian objects and personal narrative. It has evolved from an interest in the histories, stories and associations embedded in everyday objects and the ways in which these objects can evoke memory and nostalgia. Imagery from the domestic landscape – maps, letters, sewing patterns, old wallpaper, photographs, documents etc – is applied to eggshell fine porcelain vessels.

Sometimes the imagery is drawn from her own past, and sometimes it is a response to the stories of others. The vessels serve as narrative groupings referencing the tenuous and fragile ways in which we can access the past.

All pieces are very finely slip cast in porcelain and decorated with custom made decals. Each piece is fired at least three times and they range in size from as little as 3cm tall to about 12cm tall.

Robson's work is represented in the new Mater Mothers Hospital, Mater Health Services Art Collection.

**Mel Robson** is represented by *Jan Manton Art* in Brisbane.



6 foot high, 2006, Mixed Media, 183 x 27.5 x 10cm (edition of 3)

[kim demuth]

Most references and prevalent theatrical devices in Demuth's work attempt to toy with particular notions relating to the corporeal possibilities of body/mind experience.

These interests have become increasingly affiliated with concepts engaging in issues of physical modification and psychological alteration. In a sense, it is often an attempt to coalesce archetypal human traits with that of the world we now occupy, and the promises or dilemmas it has yet to deliver.

Perhaps however, it is more about exposing an interspace between points of perception – to slyly slip between metaphor and the literal, and to ultimately disclose a vacuous gap amid what we think we know, feel or understand, and that which we cannot. This is a disconcerting space from Demuth's imagination, and with

tongue firmly wedged in cheek, oscillations between serious intent and mere jest obscure, yet expand the potential of meaning.

Demuth graduated from QUT in 1999 with a BA in Visual Arts (First Class Honours). Since then he has exhibited extensively including High Light, Blindsight Gallery, Melbourne (2005), Art, Design & Craft Biennial, Brisbane City Hall (2005) Journey, The Block, QUT, Brisbane, and Temperature: Contemporary Queensland Sculpture, Museum of Brisbane (2004).

In 2005, he completed an artist residency in Barcelona, Spain awarded by the Australia Council, which resulted in an entirely new body of work. It creates a collision of mixed media in order to expose a space between the notion of two dimensional and three dimensional points of perception.

**Kim Demuth** is represented by *Jan Manton Art*, Brisbane.



Seabank, Steel and acrylic, 75.5 x 120cm

[scott johnson]

Since Johnson undertook an undergraduate degree in Fine Art at the Queensland College of Art, his work has been increasingly informed through the use of found materials of a transient nature. He attempts to intuitively reconfigure the urban debris of industry in order to address global concerns.

His work brings together the history of collage, assemblage, readymade and the found object, while questioning the blurred boundaries between life and high art. A close personal connection to Brisbane's industrial landscape and a love of the characteristic warmth of worn materials has visually informed this period of his work. Increasingly, he is starting to work in more slick materials to explore further ways of addressing the subject of the globalisation and movement of human cultures.

Johnson was shortlisted for the Thiess Art Prize in 2004 and the National Art Bank Contemporary Art Prize in 2003.

**Scott Johnson** is represented by *George Petelin Gallery*, Gold Coast.



Snowball's practice revolves around suggestions of the mysterious and the sublime within everyday experience. While often having a representational basis, his paintings are also involved with abstraction.

In this work, the deep storm clouds and the stencilled plywood panels are odd companions playing against each other and yet somehow fitting. There is no obvious narrative; this artwork holds its secrets. *A corridor for you my love (Not There—Here)* is about both disjuncture and yearning.

Snowball graduated in 2002 with First Class Honours in Visual Art from Queensland College of Art, Griffith University. He is currently completing a Masters of Fine Art.

His work is held in public collections such as Artbank, Sydney; Griffith University, QUT in Brisbane and Hawkesbury One Collection, Sydney.

**Arryn Snowball** is represented by *Esa Jaske Gallery*, Sydney.

[arryn snowball]

**A corridor for you my love (Not There—Here)**, 2006,  
Oil on canvas, acrylic spray  
on ply, 2 central canvases  
214 x 81cm, 2 plywood  
panels 20 x 120cm



Never Ending, Cibachrome photograph, 100 x 100cm

[sharon green]

Green is interested in the historical construction of feminine identity and sexuality. She is intrigued by how identities are shaped and controlled by the environments and societies we inhabit. More specifically, her research explores the idea of the fallen woman and Baroque attitudes.

Green is interested in the dichotomies present in Baroque concerns such as religion and eroticism, sacred and profane and allegory and realism. She is intrigued by the oscillation that exists between excess and decay. Investigations of rites of passage, fetish and liturgical rituals are integral concerns in her work.

Green has exhibited in Australia and overseas at Galeria Esther Montoriol, Barcelona, Spain; Metro 5 Gallery, Melbourne; The Hutchins Art Prize, Hobart and Photo Technica Gallery, Sydney.

Green's work is represented in public collections such as Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne; Gold Coast City Art Gallery and private and corporate collections in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Hong Kong and New Zealand.

**Sharon Green** is represented by *Metro 5 Gallery*, Melbourne and *Jan Manton Art*, Brisbane.



Three Men, Oil on canvas, 200 x 140cm

[peter alwast]

Alwast's work focuses on the in-between place of representation in painting. The works attempt to define the painted mark in the context of reproducible technology. Alwast's work fuses figuration and abstraction, mimicking the processing of visual information.

Furthermore, the work has a dual emphasis on graphic inscription that references visual static and an exaggerated painterly quality that brings our attention to the materiality of paint.

Alwast has completed a Master of Fine Arts from Parsons School of Design, New School University, New York and has been awarded a number of prizes and scholarships including Freedman Travelling Grant, Oscar Kolin Fellowship, Parsons School of Design, New York; and Anne & Gordon Samstag International Visual Art Scholarship, Australia. His work is represented in Wesley Hospital Collection, Brisbane; New School University, New York; and ArtBank, Sydney.

**Peter Alwast** is represented by *George Petelin Gallery*, Gold Coast.



This, 2005, Acrylic on rayon, 150 x 200cm

The nebula paintings, along with plugging into the kind of Turnerian cosmic sublime that was fodder for airbrush art throughout the sixties and seventies, are painting the ontological joke of painting nothing.

Deep space images meticulously copied, immanent with the layered psychological artifact of repeated error and correction its pure transcendence into the oceanic oneness of the cosmic the desire for oneness with the viewer, with all things, and nothing. The painting never resolves at the surface and the insistent blur resists the image settling on the object. The painting is neither here nor there.

In 2004, Wrigley received the prestigious John McCaughey Memorial Art Prize by National Gallery of Victoria. His work has been exhibited in individual and group exhibition in Australia and New Zealand such as Australian Culture Now, ACMI & NGV, Melbourne; Post Contemporary Painting, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane and UnAustralian, Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland.

He is represented in public collections such as National Gallery of Victoria, Artbank and various private collections in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Hobart, Auckland, Granada and London.

**Paul Wrigley** is represented by *GBK*, Sydney.





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