

# Focus on ARTISTS' BOOKS IV

7 – 10 February 2008  
Artspace Mackay

## Program

### CONFERENCE – 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Artists' Books Forum

9.00am – 3.30pm Saturday & Sunday  
Mackay Entertainment Centre

#### Saturday 9 February 2008

**9.00am – 9.30am registration**

**9.30am welcome**

- Welcome to Country
- Welcome by Michael Wardell, Director, Artspace Mackay

**9.45am – 10.30am Session 1:**

**Michael Desmond – *Turning the pages back: the archaeology of the artist's book***

Today the artist's book is typically a lyrical, limited edition hand-made book, an expression of the artist's psyche and manual skills. It is usually expressionistic, though stylistically this may not at first be apparent. This was not always the case however. The artist's book as we know it today derives principally from developments in the 1970s as a distinct art format. This talk explores the genesis of the medium, the prompts that brought it into being and the lessons from that period for the present.

**Michael Desmond** is the curator at the National Portrait Gallery. He has extensive experience in the Arts industry. He worked as the Manager of the Drill Hall Gallery in Canberra and at the National Gallery of Australia as Curator of International Paintings and Sculpture. Until recently he was the Manager of Collection Development and Research at the Powerhouse Museum. Over the last two decades he was responsible for making a number of significant acquisitions and developing many exhibitions.

Michael is the author of *Imagining Space: Jacky Redgate 1980–2003*, 2005; *Leonardo da Vinci: The Codex Leicester*, 2001; *Love Hotel*, 1997; *Islands: Contemporary installation from Europe, America, Asia and Australia*, 1996 (exhibition catalogue with Kate Davidson); *1968*, 1995 (exhibition catalogue with Christine Dixon) and *European and American Paintings and Sculpture 1870-1970 in the Australian National Gallery*, 1992 (with Michael Lloyd), as well as numerous articles and reviews.

**10.30am – 11.00am morning tea**

**11.00am – 12.30pm Session 2:**

**Patrick Pound – *The Conjuror's Books: the representation of limits and the limits of representation***

Patrick Pound explores the limits of representation and the representation of those limits; a notion that hovers over every image, every text, and every book. *The Conjuror's Books* looks at a model of books that uses two representational systems (text and image) to activate the space between things and their representation.

This paper will address numerous examples from Sterne's 'Tristram Shandy' with its empty space left for the reader to paint Widow Wadman : "*To conceive this right, call for pen and ink – here's paper ready to your hand. Sit down, sir, paint her to your own mind – as like your mistress as you can – as unlike your wife as your conscience will let you 'tis all one to me – place your own fancy in it*", to a copy of Sarah Orne Jewett's 'The Country of the Pointed Firs' which has been illustrated by a reader; from Pitman's shorthand edition of 'Robinson Crusoe', to a photo album with its captions in Braille, the limits of description will be displayed in a talk full of images.

*The Conjuror's Books* addresses words and images in pursuit of things, calling into play artworks that activate the space between a thing and its representation, and addressing the notion of the artwork's *alongsideness*.

This amusing talk will cover the limits of description, and ontological shifts in register across media, from photographs to theatre.

**Patrick Pound** is a Melbourne based artist, born in New Zealand. His work is held in the collections of the NGV, the National Gallery in Canberra, Auckland Art Gallery, the Museum of New Zealand, the Christchurch City Art Gallery and many other corporate and private collections. He has held over 50 solo exhibitions and been in numerous curated shows in New Zealand, Hong Kong, China, Italy, Malaysia and so on. He is represented by GRANTPIRRIE gallery in Sydney, Hamish McKay Gallery in Wellington, NZ, and Anna Bibby Gallery in Auckland NZ. In 2002 he was featured in the Cambridge edition of *The International Who's Who of Intellectuals*. In 1995 he featured in the American Biographical Institute's book of *Five Hundred Leaders of Influence (Third Edition)*. His exhibition *Cuttings – In The Forest of Images* is currently on show at the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Melbourne. He is presently undertaking a doctorate in Art History at Melbourne University, for fun.

**David Sequeira - *The book-ness of books***

*'There are books of which the backs and front covers are by far the best parts'* (Charles Dickens).

*The book-ness of books* examines the ways in which humans interact with the physical properties of books. Books are objects and the acts of reading, collecting, arranging and making books can be understood as functions of humans wanting to become one with these objects. Connected intimately with the symbolism of the book in art history, 'The book-ness of books' highlights the unique role that books play in human experience and the ways in which these ideas are present in David's work.

**David Sequeira** is a visual artist, art/business consultant and freelance art museum educator based in Canberra.

David's work has been recognised nationally and internationally through a number of prestigious residencies and awards. These include the Australia Council studio residency in Paris; an Asialink residency in Pakistan; the University of Texas residency in Dallas; the Collex Museum of Contemporary Art Acquisitive Prize (inaugural winner); Curtin University artist in residence Perth, and the Jam Factory Glass studio artist in residence Adelaide. Important recent projects include a solo exhibition in New Delhi, India where he was born and a 10 year survey of his work at the John Curtin University Gallery, Perth.

Working in a range of media, David explores the notions of language and information through colour, geometry and everyday objects. A self-confessed hoarder, David collects books, vases, flower petals, leaves, orange domestic ware and plastic plates which all find their way into his practice. His interests include libraries, museums, flea markets and junk shops. David's work emerges from studies in art history, museums and education. Largely as a result of this type of art learning, he is not bound to any specific studio process. His work takes a variety of forms including painting, sculpture, sound, installation, printmaking, drawing, curatorship and performance. At the heart of each of these aspects of his work is a deep commitment to the limitless properties of colour, and the exploration of his relationship to art. He is currently a Doctoral candidate at RMIT University. The title of his project is 'Some kind of bliss: colour, geometry and the everyday'.

**12.30pm – 2.00pm lunch**

**2.00pm – 3.30pm Session 3:**

**Michael Wardell – *The Recycled Library: The Altered Book in Australian Art***

This paper is a 'work-in-progress' inviting participation in the thinking process behind the curatorial rationale for an Artspace Mackay touring exhibition, currently scheduled to open in May 2009. By investigating the genesis of the altered book and its practice in Australia, it will explore the iconic meaning of 'the book' as well the conflicting notions of destruction and creativity.

**Michael Wardell** has been Director of Artspace Mackay since September 2006. He was previously Curatorial Services Coordinator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (1998 to 2006); Director of Michael Wardell Gallery (13 Verity Street) in Melbourne (1986-1997); curator of the Australian National Gallery in Canberra (1978-1986), and curator of the Monash University Gallery in Melbourne (1976-1978).

He has curated numerous exhibitions including *Photography: The Last Ten Years*, Australian National Gallery at Australian National University 1980, *Iskustvo: Recent Soviet Paintings*, Linden Gallery & 13 Verity Street (followed by a Regional tour) 1990, *Ken Unsworth*, (with Tony Bond) Art Gallery of New South Wales 1998, and *Judith Wright: Breathe and other considerations*, Artspace Mackay 2007. He has written numerous articles and catalogue essays including the chapter, 'Ideas and Actions' in *Contemporary: Art Gallery of New South Wales Contemporary Collection*, Sydney 2006. He has lectured extensively throughout Australia.

**Forum on Altered Books:**

**Michael Desmond, Michael Wardell, Patrick Pound, David Sequeira**

**EXHIBITION OPENING (optional)**

Ron McBurnie, Dianne Fogwell & Euan McLeod

4.00pm – 6.00pm

Saturday 9 February 2008

Venue: Arthouse Gallery, Wood St, Mackay

Cost: FREE

**CONFERENCE DINNER (optional)**

7.00pm – 10.00pm

Venue: Mackay Entertainment Centre Foyer

FOR PRE-BOOKED GUESTS ONLY

Courtesy bus to city motels at 9:30pm and 10:00pm

## Sunday 10 February 2008

### MACKAY HERITAGE WALK (optional)

Accompanied by local historian Berenice Wright  
7:00am – 7:45am  
Cost: FREE

Optional breakfast and/or coffee at Jamaica Blue  
COST: \$10

### **9.00am – 10.30am Session 4:**

#### **Tim Mosely – *The Codex Event: an initiative of Tim Mosely's at Southern Cross University (SCU) fostering the making of artists' books in conjunction with papermaking***

The papermaking technique pulp printing, recently developed at SCU, lends itself to the making of paper pages for artists' books. Pulp printing specifically allows fine text and imagery to be imbedded within a sheet of paper: the text and the image is the paper. The codex events are an initiative to both explore this potential, and to foster the making of artists' books.

<b>Codex event 1</b>	2004 - an artists' books exhibition that led to the establishment of the Southern Cross University's Artists' Book Acquisitive Award.
<b>Pulp Printing</b>	Development of pulp printing, influences, Sarah Bodman's interest, potential to utilise text/words as a substrate.
<b>Codex event 2</b>	2006 - pulp printing and its potential. Seven artists working collaboratively to make 7 artists' books that have since received national and international attention.
<b>Codex event 3</b>	2006 - cardboard and artists' books. Another collaborative workshop that generated an artists' book which was subsequently selected for the 8th International Book Art festival, a touring exhibition.
<b>Codex event 4</b>	2007 - pulp printings and balloons. Twelve paper "fire" balloons representing the flight of "illegal immigrants" and the 12 detention centres set up in Australia to "deal" with the problem. The balloons were installed, re-formed into books, and exhibited regionally.
<b>Codex event 5</b> (planned )	January 2008 - text as a substrate, artists' books that incorporated text as substrate,

The tension between image and text in a book has clearly been identified in the literature of the "discipline" as one reason for the continuing interest in artists' books. This tension represents rich pickings for both visual and literary artists utilising artists' books. The Codex Events are being built up into a series of events that attract artists interested in any of three mediums associated with artists' books - paper, print and book. It is intended that the events will improve participants' professional skill base, and allow them to engage collaboratively in high quality artists' book production.

**Tim Mosely** trained as a printmaker in Sydney under the Brazilian printmaker Roberto De Lamonica. From his initial training, he had an interest in papermaking and artists books. Completing an MA in 1996, his art practice now integrates all these mediums under the name Silverwattle Press. With over 25 years of professional experience and an output of over 50 unique and editioned artists' books, Tim maintains a lucid perspective on the book as a potent element within the vocabularies of visual language. Represented in prominent Australian and international artists book collections Tim's substantial expertise in printmaking and papermaking, combined with bookbinding training, has allowed him to work with many diverse forms of the book.

**Doug Spowart – *A picture is worth 10,000 words: the photographer and the artists' book***

Digital technology is blending disciplines that once were quite separate. While photographs have populated the artists' book space for some time, they were usually images generated by artists whose principal discipline was something else – printmaker, painter, designer or poet. Now photographers whose past practice curiously has embraced story telling in the form of exhibitions, photo-essays and wedding albums, are beginning to find their way and recognition in the artists' book genre. This paper will discuss the enabling digital technology, referencing the photo image in artists' book history, and salient issues of the photographer's own practice.

**Doug Spowart** is a photographer who has made artists' books since the late 1980's. The National Library of Australia as well as State and regional artists' book collections has collected his work. His current academic studies, a (PhD) at James Cook University, are centred on questions of digital technology, artists' books, and the landscape.

**10.30am – 11.00am morning tea**

**11.00am – 12.30pm session 5:**

**Marian Macken - *Beyond simulacrum: Artists' books as architectural models***

Conventional documentation of architecture omits many aspects of the process of designing, building and inhabiting architecture. Alternative representational strategies and techniques are needed to explore spatialities that evade description through conventional documentation. Artists' books offer an alternative, complementary representation to be explored as new means of investigating architecture in three dimensional form.

The model is the conventional three-dimensional form of making manifest architectural concepts. However, this can also be seen to be a form of static objectification. By broadening the definition of the model, other works that usually lie outside the realm of architectural representation may be included. Artists' books offer qualities not present within the model; the episodic and temporal qualities of architecture may reside within the space of the book, due to these characteristics.

This paper investigates the book, not as a unique object of auratic power, but rather as a full-scale model. In this way, the book is seen to be exploratory, propositional and generative.

This adds another possible role to artists' books, as this is, according to Johanna Drucker, an area that needs 'description, investigation, and critical attention before its specificity will emerge'.

This investigation will examine the characteristics of the book, in reference to this role as architectural model. These include: the openable codex format offering the element of interiority, and hence, its opposite exteriority, that is, containment and exposure; the page as a site, and the book as 'a sequence of spaces'; the movement inherent within the book, that is, opening the book, and the turning of pages, as a performance, placing the book in time; the narrative, sequential qualities of the book, its temporality.

By exploring artists' books as an alternative representation and documentation of architecture, the notion of the diagram within architecture may be examined. A set of structures and techniques that arise from the act of bookmaking may be established, and can be used in a similar way as the parti diagram within architecture. This new architectural representation could provide a new set of 'diagrams'. The model then becomes both a representation of ideas, and an idea in itself. With a different, hybrid representation, a new perspective of visual communication is possible, stimulating architectural discourse, giving a presence to aspects of architecture that are under-visualised.

**Marian Macken** is an artist, designer and architect currently living in Sydney, and completing her Master of Architecture (Research thesis) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). She has worked as a lecturer and tutor at The Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building UTS, The Departments of Landscape Architecture and Industrial Design, Faculty of the

Constructed Environment RMIT University, and The Schools of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Faculty of the Built Environment, UNSW.

### **Victoria Cooper – *Evoking place within the page***

This paper examines how the artists' book can be integral to the development and presentation of site-specific work and concepts. Within this pliable medium the artist has free license to compose a narrative from the creative work, perceptions, conceptions and serendipitous experiences arising from the artistic engagement with 'place'. Reference to a recent project for Mildura Art Gallery and Palimpsest 06 will illustrate the concepts presented in the paper.

**Victoria Cooper** has photography practice of 16 years which has included artists' book production over the last 10 years. Her work explores the narrative through the image and more recently, in image and text. Victoria's PhD research work at James Cook University makes connections with scientific and mythical themes, and the historical and contemporary Australian narrative in water.

**12.30pm – 2.00pm lunch**

### **2.00pm – 3.30pm: Artists' Talks**

5 x speakers @ 15 minutes each + discussion/questions

- Glen Skien
- Clyde McGill
- Dianne Fogwell
- Caren Florance
- Julie Barratt

**Monday 11 February 2008**

**SPECIAL ARTSPACE OPEN DAY**

Artspace Mackay open to delegates and public 10.00am to 3.00pm.