

2014
SAWTOOTH
WRITING
PRIZE

CONGRATULATIONS

KEVIN GILLAM

WINNER OF THE
POETRY PRIZE

2014 SAWTOOTH WRITING PRIZE

POETRY PRIZE WINNER

Kevin Gillam

Poem inspired by: Tide Travellers by Edna Broad

Project Gallery, 7 March - 29 March 2014

the moon's reminder

prefer boat to ship – sounds rounder, safer –
ten of them, a scattering, at all angles,
paper boats, only paper is for stories

people in one boat, sea unfolding,
wind scuffing cheeks –
prefer boat to ship – sounds fatter, safer

caught betwixt and neaped and between,
at the whim of moon's tug,
a paper boat, only paper is for stories

letters and boats make journeys, while
the tide is the moon's reminder –
prefer boat to ship – sounds rounder, fatter

but flotsam needs to be found,
lifted, held in cupped palms,
a paper boat, only paper is for stories

so I'm building a jetty of words, line by
plank by line, out to these
paper boats, only paper is for stories –
prefer boat to ship, sounds rounder, safer

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LOIS MURPHY

WINNER OF THE
REVIEW PRIZE

2014 SAWTOOTH WRITING PRIZE

REVIEW PRIZE WINNER

Lois Murphy

Review of *Geocritical: don't just agitate – decorate* by Sue Henderson (TAS)

@Sawtooth pop-up #exhibition, 28 November - 20 December 2014

Melting into the Landscape

It could be argued that Sue Henderson wields paint and paper as if they were sculptural mediums, the 2D works she produces are so textured and embracing. She describes herself as being 'fascinated with how the material qualities of ink and paint might reflect perceptions, histories and experiences of places', and this preoccupation is beautifully articulated in the painted work currently shrouding the walls of the Sawtooth Gallery. The paintings contain such palpable life, and have such tactile depth to them, that the boxlike white space is arrestingly transformed into a surprisingly seductive, tactile vista.

'Geocritical: don't just agitate – decorate' is a wholly appropriate title for this installation, which manages to achieve both directives, fusing the idea into the work, and the work into the space, with striking effect. Rather than creating 'in your face' pieces that require the translation of an artist's statement, Henderson's installation melds her ideas skilfully with the work itself, allowing the viewer to literally sink into it. There is no discord; the walls metamorphose into the paintings, which are more like a textured, encompassing landscape than a two dimensional representation.

In the panels the contrasts between subtle and vibrant colours are suggestive of variations in climate and times of day; each work is like journeying through a landscape as the day or season flows over it, or the reach of light transforms it. Trees appear and fade, their foliage blurring into the landscape, while sudden chasms of white cut through the lushness, stark reminders of the unfathomable depths of the natural environment, its dangerous and unpredictable edges. Here is nature in its rawness, gorgeous but also remote, full of menace.

The unpredictability of nature is echoed in the production and presentation of the series of lichens; stunning individual pieces of controlled chaos, which have been pasted onto the walls in tightly regimented lines, beautifully embodying both the agitation and the decoration of the exhibition's title. Each lichen is uniform in size and shape, but each one is handpainted and contains its own unique organic mayhem, its individual life cycle through colour, allowing them to both enhance and overcome the formally structural, 'decorative' aspect of their display.

Sue Henderson's GeoCritical exhibition is sensational in a literal sense; it takes the viewer on a journey that is both visual and sensory, another aspect of her sculptural skill, in producing work of such incredible depth. The sense of place created is mesmerising. At times you feel like you are perched on a cliff face, with a landscape stretched in front of you; other panels enclose you within the stifling clutch of a jungle terrain, where the air is thick with the sensation of colour and fertility; you brush against the clammy wall of a rock path, or emerge into the entombing, subdued dimness of a cave. The alluring conversion of gallery walls into visions of natural landscapes that are both sublime and claustrophobic is masterful, a powerful blend of artistry and technical craftsmanship.

The result is an exhibition that is transformative, transporting the viewer into a symbiotic world where the combination of the agitative and the decorative is both harmonious and embracing. A world to sink into, and an installation worth experiencing.

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LUKE WREN REID

WINNER OF THE
FOLIO PRIZE

2014 SAWTOOTH WRITING PRIZE

FOLIO PRIZE WINNER

Luke Wren Reid

Review of *Sentimental Blokes* by Shannon Field (TAS)

Middle Gallery, 28 November - 20 December 2014

I was asked once by a Kung Fu teacher in my first ever class what the words Kung Fu meant. I imagined flying enchanted swords and magical punches that could shatter rock. The teacher looked at me rather wryly and said. "It means hard work".

I hate the word review, especially when it relates to art. Because art is not glamorous, it is not the sum total of what you see in a gallery, nor should it ever be considered so. Real art is hard work. It is lived work. Not a peanut in the corner of a white room with a university approved justification as to why it matters. Art is not good grades nor is it good reviews or even praise. It is the hard work of the artists pregnant with horror, chaos and great beauty birthing anew the world in which they exist.

I normally walk through galleries like some lost guest in a hotel who has chanced on some strangers wedding and in the excitement been overlooked long enough to get some free booze and a canapé. I did however stop to contemplate for sometime the installation of Shannon Field. I even skimmed through the piece of paper on the wall.

What struck me were the group of crude little men with erect wooden cocks, multicoloured legs and infantile eyeballs buried under their primitive painted skulls.

He had invoked the wickedness and sincerity of anglo men marching in circles stitching together a collage of patriotism and homesickness; with some long lost sense of purpose, of escape. I saw the words man and convict, violence, Tasmania. I have seen these men, I see them every day, babies who have built bodies around some post colonial wound. Hidden.

I am very much a product of my Tasmanian heritage, the displacement, the anger and the isolation. I wondered if the naïve eyes poking out of these primordial skulls were as much a metaphor for the power of unrealised immature men to cause suffering. As it was for the convicts hiding from a brutal past. We never escape the carapace of injustice until we ourselves are put on trial. The sentence is the Kung Fu, the hard work undergone by the artist.

Never resolved until babe is cut from it's false history and made to grow into a product of inclusion in it's future.

I don't endeavour to comment on the good or bad of the work. If I liked it or not. But I like contemplation, and these strange devils made me think.

2014 SAWTOOTH WRITING PRIZE

FOLIO PRIZE WINNER

Luke Wren Reid

Poem inspired by the 2014 RACT Insurance Tasmanian Portraiture Prize

Front & Middle Gallery , 31 October - 22 November 2014

I don't go to enough exhibitions
When I do its usually just for the free drinks

I wander aimlessly and stare at things
Trying to avoid eye contact with people

Who stand between me and the bar

I feel bad for the artists
Mingling

Having to speak to people
And explain the unexplainable

I have done it myself
Exhibited, I left the opening

And cried

Because I just wanted to be left alone
But artists exhibit that's what they do

Sometimes people even buy things
Sometimes people care

But mostly they just amble past
Staring

Wishing they were a musician
This is the terminal condition
Artists have ears in their eyes that listen
To the songs hung like voices of innocent children

On white walls
To be picked apart or ignored

So mostly I go to galleries
For the free drinks
And wander like a drunk uncle
At a zoo

2014 SAWTOOTH WRITING PRIZE

FOLIO PRIZE WINNER

Luke Wren Reid

Poem inspired by *Sentimental Blokes* by Shannon Field (TAS)
Middle Gallery, 28 November - 20 December 2014

Statues

These tortured wooden statues
With baby blue eyes

Were not born
They were carved from the cunt

Bound to it
By the purple yoke

In remembrance
We choke the cord between our legs

Though it never breaks
We stand like carved statues
With baby blue eyes

And wait like convicts in bondage
Bound to cruelty
Until all pleasure is guilty

The original boat people toiling in camps
Waiting for the father to see us

It was purple yoke, the umbilical noose
The furious violent cable
The ever extending Colonial erection

That brought us
Here

Our dreamtime serpent has but one colour
Though it lies breathing in our bloodlines

The arterial coil
The knot in the guts of every colonial man
Forever rusts

Until we honour
The sacred connection to the Medean mother
We are toiling in a foreign womb
Not yet born

Surrogate children without skill to love her
Wounded men
Building bodies like barges

Tortured wooden statues
With baby blue eyes

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Luke Wren Reid

Poem inspired by *Sentimental Blokes* by Shannon Field (TAS)

Middle Gallery , 28 November - 20 December 2014

Rock paper scissors wood

The primordial wand
What would deliver life
Between broken fingers drowned

In rivers of misery
The desolation of the holy

Cocks cut like knives
Shrouded with pleasure
So many innocent eyes
Blinded with terror

The purple yoke, the balls and chain
A chromosome, a letter in difference
Written in slavery
Carved into modern human existence
Erased from history

Xx two fallen crucifixes
X and a why have we burned our women
As witches

Why have we enslaved, tortured and trafficked
The sum total of our very existence
Like poor currency, loose change
Though the profit befits us

Millions of unwritten apologies
Can't buy back the cruelty of indifference
Every finger that searches without invitation
Is a digit on an insurmountable scale of damnation

In Australia weekly two by two we count them
But there are not enough fingers on all the hands
That exist or have ever existed
That can account for the horrors these dollars
From willing fingers
Have inflicted

The many bloody roads to hell
Are paved with blind eyes turning
The railings quiver with excitement
While the red lights like devils eyes are ever lit
And burning

Rock, paper, scissors, wood
Is always played with a fist
let them be raised for once
in protest
not violence

2014 SAWTOOTH WRITING PRIZE

FOLIO PRIZE WINNER

Luke Wren Reid

Poem inspired by the 2014 Artistic Program

You can't get sick on Saturday Sawtooth

To appreciate art is to appreciate death
When you stand before it you are paying homage
the life that was saved
In its creation

Which is why I can't come to your exhibition today
I am a million broken pieces
Still, without a meaning

Clumsily yet lovingly repeating
Word by word
Tile by tile
A reconstruction, a renovation

I wondered if the most beautiful artworks
Are mandalas broken into thousands of shards
Reunited by the loving repetition of small
insignificant movements
By pairs of hands that keep falling in love
Every time they meet
As if it were the first time

My hands are in an abusive relationship
With one another
There have been instances of domestic violence of
late
There has been talk of a separation
But dividing up the house has been a nightmare

Surrender to the repetition, the chaos
Sailing or drowning, you can be precious cargo
Or an ocean of mystery filled with artefacts and
undiscovered species

When I write I'm not digging for skeletons
I'm panning for the gold in my veins
If you want the rare and beautiful gems

You need to be the mountain
And climb over yourself, scale the heights, plant
some flags on your peaks
Be the first to get there
Take a mental picture

If there is an avalanche on the way down
Admire it for its power
You might be buried for a while