

THE EAF FILES

#1 2007

Directors Report

Melentie Pandilovski

Hi everyone! Welcome to this new—and revamped—edition of the EAF's Newsletter! We've prepared two interviews for this issue (with artist Simone Kennedy and myself). Such interviews will likely be a staple of future newsletters.

A symposium, gallery exhibitions and a public artwork in the Lion Arts Centre's courtyard, signalled the year's beginning. The symposium *IDEOLOGY of the IMAGINARY in the 21st CENTURY* explored cross issues of art, culture and new media and aimed at defining the concepts and processes that might characterize the beginning of the 21st century. We presented the two-day symposium in the Mercury Cinema in association with the 2007 Adelaide Film Festival, and with the support of the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council.

It featured German thinker, and Director of the Munich Film Festival, Andreas Ströhl, Brazilian artist and architect Tania Fraga, Melentie Pandilovski, Israeli/US artist Eddo Stern,



American phenomenologist Paul Majkut, Sydney artist, and media thinker Anna Munster, Melbourne architect and philosopher Hélène Frichot, and German/Austrian artist Friedrich Kirschner—and the father of telematic arts Roy Ascott by means of interactive video appearance. The EAF hopes to publish the Proceedings from the symposium in the near future.

In conjunction with the Symposium the EAF gallery showed Tania Fraga's *Responsive Membrane* and Lev Manovich's *Soft Cinema*. Fraga's installation included at its centre an extremely sensitive, and thus responsive, artificial organism affected by computer stimuli, and a simulation of 3D environments (for developing prototypes of the responsive organisms, and kinetic systems to move them.)

Lev Manovich's *Soft Cinema* was a continuation of his theoretical exploration of what Database Cinema means and the kinds of filmic narratives it does, and could, generate.

Building on the momentum from the symposium we will be starting a series of meetings with artists and art critics, at the EAF Bookshop, in which we can further explore issues important for contemporary art & culture.

Duke Albada developed the project *bubble wrap* specifically for the Lion Art Centre site: an innovative public art installation, working to surprise and amuse: soap bubbles pop, sway and push their way up and under passing feet, visitors near the EAF happily interacting with the installation. The installation—opened on Feb 20, and running till August 2007—was launched by Adelaide's Lord Mayor and assisted by the Adelaide

City Council, the state government through Arts SA and received support through the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.

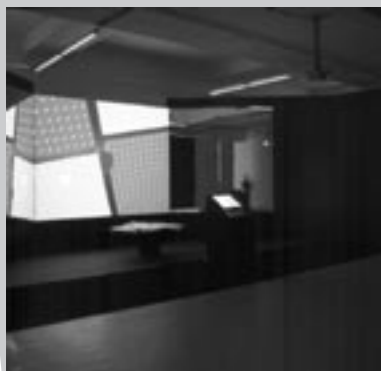
The EAF's 2007 Exhibitions Program will explore various concepts in contemporary art including Situationism and Psycho-geography; the Redefining of what is Human; Subversive Art; Novel Practices in Art/Social Space; Art and Biotechnology; and Painting.

Currently showing: James Geurts' *90 Degrees Equatorial Project* (20 April - 19 May) the catalogue was included with our last mail-out.

Next exhibition (1 June-30 June): techno-shaman Stelarc, who will present a selection of current and past work including *Prosthetic Head*, *Walking Head*, *Blender* and *Extra Ear*, and documentation of other works. Stelarc has in his past practice used medical instruments, prosthetics, robotics, virtual reality systems and the internet to explore alternate, intimate and involuntary interfaces with the body.

Check out the revamped EAF website for more.

James Geurts, *90 Degrees Equatorial Project*. 2006



Tania Fraga, *Responsive Membrane*, EAF 2007. Photograph Peter Barrow



Ken Bolton, perplexed. Photograph Bianca Barling and Sarah CrowEST



Stelarc, *Extra Ear: Ear on Arm*. 2006. Photograph Nina Sellars

Melentie Pandilovski in Conversation with Ken Bolton

Ken Bolton A touchstone for you in thinking about much contemporary art seems to be Heidegger's essay on 'Technology'. You mention it regularly and it prefaces many of your judgements on the relevance or direction of current developments. What is its status, do you think?

Melentie Pandilovski Yeah. I am perplexed by that as well. I like pure philosophy, especially where there are the links with art. And it's true. I do mention Heidegger a lot. Heidegger is probably the most critical thinker on the relationship between art and technology. In 'On the Question Concerning Technology' he speaks about technology's essence. Heidegger claimed that just as the essence of 'tree' is 'not itself a tree that can be encountered among all the other 'trees', so the essence of technology is not itself something technological. What he meant to isolate was the particular understanding of being which makes technology possible.

Another important shift which he makes, and which is of importance to us, is that from Object (*Gegenstand*) to Thing (*Das Ding*). This is not merely word-play but a whole paradigm shift that takes place when the Objects of Science, Technology, and of Art for that matter, are viewed as Things. The integrity of Aristotelian substances is broken down in this way, as Dinge has encoded in it the possibility of gathering the contents of the Universe. Basically Aristotle's belief that relations to other objects are a mere accident and leave the essence of the object unchanged can no longer be applied. The relation of Things becomes crucial. For me our take on the world changes with this. In linguistics terms we move from a Synthetic to an Analytic language/state. I am not sure if any philosopher shares my opinion, but the very notion that this doctrine means that Things have different features according to where they are situated and the context in which they are placed actually proves the above point.

But mention Heidegger and you have to mention his "mentor" Husserl, who on the other hand, seems to have a much deeper involvement with the issue of consciousness, which is also one of our favourite topics—as well as being a hot item in the artworld today.

Husserl declared phenomenology to be the study of the structures of consciousness that enable it to refer to objects outside itself. He named the study of the substance of the mind "phenomenological reduction", which does not assume that something exists, a state that allows pointing the mind on its way towards real, but also to absent, or imaginary objects. For us, this creates the possibility of linking the structures of consciousness through our personal experiences in a very wide range of human activities, including those of the arts and technology.

So, yes, I do mention a lot of phenomenology, and them two (Heidegger and Husserl) are Phenomenology, as Husserl once observed.

But there is another Phenomenologist—the Prague born, Brazilian media theoretician Vilem Flusser. His writings essentially theorize on the epochal shift that humanity is undergoing in the form of a pendulum swing—from what he termed "linear thinking" (based on writing) toward a new form of multidimensional, visual thinking embodied by photography and digital culture. For Flusser, the rise of the Image (this time the technologically modulated image) is reminiscent of another age—prehistory, when it was the painting on the walls that had acquired this status.

According to Flusser, in our times these new modes and technologies of communication make possible a "telematic society", in which dialogue between people becomes the supreme value.

Flusser's original thinking on the nature of the mediated image is just beginning to be felt in the English speaking world. He mostly wrote in German and Portuguese, and translations were lacking. Andreas Strohl, one of the speakers at the EAF's Symposium *The Ideology of the Imaginary in the 21st Century*, has edited the first English-language anthology of Flusser in *Writings*.

Finally, I should also mention the London-based American Historian of Science Arthur I. Miller. Miller points to parallels between art and science. Historically, these sorts of parallels between the arts and sciences go a long way back, and can be traced in modern times in such well known cases as Picasso and Braque's coming up with the concept of Cubism, and Einstein with the concept of relativity, in around the same period. There is some evidence that the origins of cubism are not completely rooted in the arts.

In any case Miller rightly notes that the joint question of both the arts and sciences has been how to interpret the unseen world and go beyond conventional constraints of visual imagery and language to dramatically transform the concepts of visual imagery.



Lynne Sanderson, *Lucid Touch* 2005

KB Heidegger sees technology—I guess Technology with a capital 'T'—as a challenge or threat to our souls, doesn't he, a further, deplorable removal from the real world, an alienation from our true natures?

MP Well, it is true that Heidegger's technological determinism is almost apocalyptic in nature, but Heidegger believed that technology had infected humanity at its essence, becoming part of, and inseparable from, human consciousness. A thought shared by many phenomenologists, media thinkers, etc.

Generally, even though he notes dangerous aspects of our technological understanding of being, Heidegger does not oppose technology. He claimed "Man stands so decisively in subservience to the challenging-forth of technological enframing that he fails to see himself as the one spoken to". In that same essay he hopes to reveal the essence of technology as something which need "in no way confine us to a stultified compulsion to push on blindly with technology or, what comes to the same thing, to rebel helplessly against it". He predicts that "when we once open ourselves expressly to the essence of technology, we find ourselves unexpectedly taken into a freeing claim".

KB Have different parts of the EAF exhibition programme, in your time here, evinced different attitudes to the problematic you and Heidegger diagnose?

MP Heidegger claims that the dual nature of techne *always has embodied art*. In his thinking the challenges of technology are complemented by the bringing forth of poesis which offers an alternative way of knowing and being. Therefore art offers salvation from the darkening world of technological enframing. I think that this is an interesting twist to the idea of technologization. It also posits a significant role to the arts.

If I had to cite works of art exhibited at the EAF, that I believe bring forth a certain poesis into the technological framework, and which would therefore be interesting to Heidegger, then I would mention Chico MacMurtrie's *Inflatable Bodies*, IRWIN's *Like to Like*, Tania Fraga's *Responsive Membrane*, Oleg Kulik's *System of Coordinates*, Denis del Favero's *Deep Sleep*, Lynne Sanderson's *Lucid Touch*, Eduardo Kac's *Genesis*, Shaun Gladwell's *Tangara* and other recent videos. Really there are many artists in the programme who could be seen through this prism.

KB Is the local attitude different, do you think?

MP About 'dwelling', and the coming into being of things such as paintings, installation, trams, and global warming? No, here Heidegger doesn't seem to be

a priority! The attitude of the Adelaide art scene, as far as I can tell, is two-fold. On one hand there is great fascination with the Other, with the very possibility of dialogue with the Other, be it an historical, geographical or cultural other. On the other hand, it seems to me that things are mostly left rest there. There is not often the exchange of ideas I would like to exist, once we bring over these artists from overseas. The prevalent energy seems to always tend to take processes back into its domestic incumbent form. The memes are not passed on. Still the Object has moved on and become a Thing! Even in Adelaide.

KB So far your directorship of the EAF's exhibition program has focused a good deal on new media. Directors don't get to show exactly what they want. They must work with what is available, what they can afford, what they can make happen. How satisfying has the program been for you? Did it argue a case, make any overall survey? Where would it take you now?

MP The constraints have mostly been financial. I would have loved to show a Lei Cox retrospective exhibition, for example, but instead we showed a selection of *retrospective elements*, something of a compromise. We mostly have problems with finding money to freight artwork into Australia, so that very often we resort to showing the public moving-image components or abridged installations.

KB Well, the Lei Cox show we got was a good'un in any case. But, yes, I know there were elements of it that served only to indicate what we were missing without the large interactive environments that he'd showed elsewhere. Have you been able to run the kind of program you want so far? Has the focus been New Media, or to do with certain themes?

MP I think yes. The reasoning was that new media art in the past 15 years has in fact been the shining beacon, and yet it has been underrepresented in the art world. Lately, the major art spaces and festivals have begun to show a lot of video art, but this is already an oldish art form, and not many serious art critics are willing to regard it as 'new media'.

KB When you arrived I think we were showing Bronwyn

Platten. Our Administrator, Julie Lawton, had got us successfully through a year as acting Director. I remember we showed you some of the art we were most pleased with locally—and your response was, This is Philosophy! We don't do that anymore in Europe! Have your views changed—about European art, about Australian art?

MP Actually, I came in time to see the Tim Stirling/Warren Vance exhibition (April 2003). It seems such a long time ago now. I can hardly remember what living in Europe is like. In all honesty, I didn't say that I cannot recall saying that, which doesn't mean I didn't! Still, who knows what I meant? Probably that social commentary has become the prevalent form of art narration. Possibly as you can articulate it rather quickly, and it is highly convenient for the highly dense European Art Circuit, where artists are showing several times during a month!

In reality, I don't think that Australian art is any more or less involved with aspects of philosophy than European art is. What the difference seems to be, is that the European artists tend to have a dialogue with their contemporaries, but on a deeper level they seem always to be drawing from past artists and theorists. An indicative project you might recall was "Like to Like" by the Slovenian art collective IRWIN, where we could see that their projects basically dealt with the recreating of performances done in Europe in the fifties and sixties, with the re-codifying of the Western cannon of art—even down to recreating of the funeral of Malevich!

KB Hm, we have John Nixon, who points reproachfully to the rectitude & good intentions of early Russian modernism. And Imants Tillers—he has a lot of time for the past. The last Adelaide Biennial was one version of Australian connection to the past. A different connection from Europe's, then?

MP Not necessarily. The paradigm is the same for Europeans as for Antipodeans. But for Australia it is a mediated connection. For Europe it is a connection that many are constantly re-living. Especially as there is a certain knowledge, certain tradition (outside of the written), which is conveyed from generation to generation, and therefore the art revolution of the early twentieth century is constantly re-lived. Also, the sheer numbers of people interested in this problematic are vastly in favour of the North.

You rightly note John Nixon, and Imants Tillers. But, them aside, I would say that there are not many examples of this in Australia.

As far as Adelaide is concerned, my general feeling is that the artists are pretty relaxed about the history of modern art, as though its roots do not really affect them, or their work. Perhaps this is a hindrance, but on the other hand it opens up various new doors. We do not have to go very far, and we can say that not being rooted in the European traditions of the early 20th Century actually enabled the American artists to come up with Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art, and subsequent new isms. Perhaps we are not far from the moment when we will get a genuine Australian art movement, with far reaching consequences for the big world out there!

KB Hmm, I wonder if you've read Terry Smith's "The Provincialism Problem"? And as for Europe's close connection to the early modernist past goes, I might point out, if I were in a nationalistic mood, that the French haven't produced a major artist since Matisse or Duchamp. And they were born in the nineteenth century!

Anyway, you've taken some Australian art to Europe. What sorts of reaction did it get? Did you have to argue for it, explain on its behalf? Were you even able to, in good conscience?

MP I could not take as much as I wished. Too many financial constraints for that. I had a five day screening of Australian Video at the MuseumsQuartier in November, 2005 in Vienna. I also had two presentations about Australian new media art in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje and in the MuseumsQuartier in Vienna. I also curated Tracy Cornish and Matthew Bradley at the Attitude festival in Bitola, Macedonia (2005 and 2006/7).

Reactions were positive overall. In some areas, such as Bio-tech Arts, or installations dealing particularly with consciousness (dreams, etc.), we were clearly leading the road, so the presentations served partly to educate the European art public. As to the videos—many had this specific Australian feel to them, so that additional explanation was necessary.

I think that our potentials are great but we are not always showing that to the world. We seem to tend to show what WE think will be perceived as good. This is not always the case. There is a lot of talent that goes unnoticed. The situation somehow reminds me of Aussie Rules football. Fantastic players, but as no one else in the world plays the sport, the appreciation for it stays merely local. Nothing wrong with the local though!

EXPERIMENTAL ART FOUNDATION

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The EAF is assisted by the Australian Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body, and by the South Australian Government through Arts SA. The EAF is also supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments. The EAF is a member of Contemporary Arts Organisations of Australia <www.caos.org.au>



Simone Kennedy, *Home Alone With Mr Nobody I*. Photograph Mick Bradley

INTERVIEW WITH SIMONE KENNEDY

Ken Bolton *Simone, your last exhibition—White Weld at Greenaway Gallery in late 2006—was stunning...*

...that was the show of institutional interiors: a series of large-format paintings—of details of these interiors (corners, entrances to stairwells etcetera) that might have been old hospitals, railway stations, rather penal orphanages, schools perhaps. I think your catalogue statement identified them as stations or schools.

Simone Kennedy I'm glad you liked them. Specifically, the interiors were of the London Underground and of my primary school in East London. I took photographs of these places back in 1992 the last time I visited the UK. Going back to these places meant I was able to explore the actual physicality of these sites that were so familiar to me as a child. When I was younger I always felt really important traveling on the Underground—it fascinated me: I loved the buzz of the place which was at times overwhelming and other times completely still. My school had a similar presence to it. That whole time in reality was treacherous and dark but for the most part I was quite happy. I believe I am by nature a positive person. I remember running across the concrete playground, arms outstretched, believing anything could happen, that it was a place of magic.

KB Those paintings seemed at first—I mean from a distance—almost photo-realist, though very different in intent and affect, one soon realized. As I remember, a number were paired mirror-images of each other, one image reversing the other, symmetrically joined, like rorschach blots.

We'll talk about them more later. What I wanted to ask first was, What continuities have existed through your work to date? I remember an exhibition of mutant, dodo-ish animals, on neutral grounds in rather day-glo colours; a flip-book animation of a child-in-egg, that hatched and walked as it grew. It seemed to joke about Muybridge and those illustrations of evolution in which the walking chimp gradually straightens and grows, becoming ape-like, then neanderthal, homosapiens, and, finally, bland metrosexual. I know that for a good while you've been immersed in Balthus, Paula Rego, Klossowski.

Are there connections between these bodies of your work? They look very different.

SK All the works are strongly connected in that they are deeply personal, relating mostly to my childhood which is a continuing theme. The flip-book drawings are from a dream and illustrate a child being born of a brain. The child then grows and develops as it walks etc. It refers to a type of cyclic conditioning, of patterns repeated. It illustrates the thin line of action versus consequence, attributable in this case to absence.

I admire Rego for the complex violence in her work and especially for her animal paintings from the eighties. I look at these works and want more every time, they are addictive, so human, I relate to every detail.

KB Yet your own work is fairly deliberate, even 'cool,' in style—though you've moved through a few styles. Rego always seems to me sort of muscularly expressive (without being exactly expressionist).

SK Yes, she has these interesting blurred borders of technique that she appropriates for each body of work. The animal paintings were executed quickly; the line is spontaneous, managing successfully to convey all of those raw emotions in what seems like a direct exchange of ideas. Her pastel works on canvas, portraying women with the fundamental characteristics of the dog are more ambiguous and have a strong psychological edge. Her ideas are almost geometric on the positioning of the body, they are quite sculptural.

As to my own work—well, while I don't generally make formal studies, prior to painting I tend to draw on the canvas and sketch separately the proportions of the work. Most of the time it is deliberate, as there is often a narrative to each section, that is to say every element of the work is 'symbolized', made symbolic or emblematic, meaning deepened and condensed. It becomes a process of transferring meaning to the work. I associate the motifs so as to work a story and formulate ideas for a long time before they are finally executed.

KB Which works are we talking about here?

SK The painting *Blue Moon* is a good example of how I like to work. The *Underground* series was different in as much as colour was the symbolic underpinning, specifically yellow and black.

KB *Blue Moon* is like a weird odalisque that turns out to be... the minotaur, or something spooky. And its looking at you is the great trick. There's the sexual, pubic seeming hair motif on the right, led into by the red patterns that begin to seem also comic-book style liquid gism, as they move right. When was this from?

SK I started work on *Blue Moon* in 2005 and finished April 2006.

KB When you say this is an example of how you work, you mean that the symbolism has been very deliberately condensed and combined? How intuitive is it? A process of lots of sketching? And is there much theoretical research involved—for particular bodies of work, I mean? (I mean, I guess you are curious enough to be reading and thinking most of the time when you can, a little Lacan here, a little Irigaray there?) What was behind *these* works?

SK Interesting question. Yes, I would say the symbolism is condensed and combined—that's a nice way of putting it. *Blue Moon* is a self portrait—and is quite condensed, although it could be more so. There has to be some spatial relativity in the composition.

KB "Relativity"? I know you don't mean E=MC Squared. Do you mean 'give and take'? uncertainty? flexibility? or a sense of relation between parts, or between image and overall composition?

SK I mean between the image and the overall composition—a sense of proportion between parts is important and this, of course, is ultimately determined by the allegory, every aspect is symbolic.

KB Got it.

SK I'm quite obsessed with symmetry, so often there will be sketching (on the canvas) to get it to the point where it feels comfortable. Change occurs naturally through the narrative, though at some point the work is given over to an unexplainable set of rules.

There is always a kind of 'life' that occurs later in the work, and perhaps this is the intuitive stage, but I bring a lot of different things to an individual piece.

KB This occurs as you're doing them: you mean that the work begins to exceed or grow away from its originally intended destination or statement? At what stage, technically, does this happen? I ask because, again, the paintings seem very deliberate, or deliberated.

SK Technically the work is 'open' until it has ended. I try to resolve as much as possible before I paint, and this is a very structured way to work and to a certain extent for me this is a natural way. Then again, my background is in Illustration and design, so it is logical I would utilize the training I have in this area. Everything feeds into everything. With the *Underground* series I had very firm ideas of what I needed to establish through colour. With those particular works the black was the challenge.

In the past I have over-deliberated on some paintings and as a consequence the main idea is lost, only to 'loom', in essence, and return to other works stronger and more defined.

On occasions ideas have happened in a single hit and this is always special: they invariably convey a sense of assuredness, of a natural trajectory.

As to research: well, something I've read, listened to and been inspired by, or something I've seen, will instigate deeper thoughts that in turn will be transferred. I treasure this aspect of the process. You see, the narrative is the 'experience', for me this is the intellect: it's about emotion that's crammed full of experience. It's always there, available, a constant, simply waiting to be utilized and reinvented for the very human purpose of communicating. I have a real need to communicate, it's a drive and a responsibility that I both love and hate.

I tend to source books on other artists most of the time, but Cixous interests me, and that whole idea of deconstruction, as does Husserl and his thinking on phenomenology. I always need more time to read but producing the idea generally dominates.

With every painting I complete I see a part of myself that would not exist otherwise. It is there, something more, something deeper. I see this in the work of Bourgeois, particularly *She Fox*, the black marble sculpture that so violently speaks of absence and fear. This is without question her seminal work on the mother but then, there came those spiders...

KB I find it interesting that you say you are concerned with 'communicating'. To me your works carry a fair amount of emotional and psychic charge but are also rather hermetic, unyielding—at the same time as they intrigue and so invite decipherment. To me it might be less that they are *about* the personal (or about what is personal for you) than that they derive impetus and strength from that area. I'd have thought that, in a sense, what they finally offer (via a knotted-formula, or dense symbolic condensation, say) is offered not so much as autobiographical than as generalisable proposition: on alienation, on notions of self and other. They seem impersonal and objective. Those *White Weld* paintings particularly. Not expressionist, not messily confessional, but rather clinically curious and sharp about the only subject you have full access to. Which is 'you', of course.

SK Absolutely. I think you're right. The work stems from a history of abandonment—that's where it gets its strength, from the felt absence of others. I expect I'm working through a kind of psychosis associated with absence. It's still about control—but then again if it wasn't controlled it would become destructive. Perhaps that is why there are hermetic and objective qualities in the work, put there rather as a sense of salvation.

KB Yes. I didn't mean to suggest that there was no heat in your work either. Not that you would mind, perhaps, but that wasn't what I meant at all. The mother—probably that should be treated as a category, capitalized and given scare quotes. The 'Mother' is a theme linking different sequences of your works?

SK The 'Mother' appears in *The Young Girls* series—and every one of the beads sewn into the brain element of *The Absent Mother* series is the 'Mother'; the same applies to the 'absence' in the *White Weld* series. The 'Mother' is inextricably linked to everything I work on. It's at a subconscious level. I play and manipulate a scene to expel a whole manner of truths.

KB "Expelled" for you maybe. Do you then think, *Well, that's one way of looking at it?* Or, perhaps, *So that's what I think!?* And then 'move on'—which may just be a circling of the problem, looking for another angle?

For the viewer they don't necessarily come across as 'expelled', so much, but as 'focused on'—very, very sharply: hence the works' much-remarked intensity.

SK I like the idea of transferring life into work, that the work ultimately has to carry force and that it's able to convey this across to the viewer.

I recently made a study on paper for a painting and the whole image fell into place. It is such a direct symptom of what I have experienced and in that sense it is pure.

It is not always clear to me what it is I am saying in the work and I do think I circle the same issues. Sometimes that is very much a conscious decision. I have certainly had a great deal of confusion in my life over the years which in turn has made me a complicated person and I realize there is no single answer for any given situation, that just simply doesn't exist.

Ultimately what's important is what I am able to give out: whatever it is matters, because it gets me closer to myself. In truth I have



Simone Kennedy, *White Weld*. 2006. Photograph Mick Bradley

lived by myself for all my life: my mother has been absent to me emotionally and psychologically and I have never got along well with my step father, so consequently I am a product of then and now, a sum of parts lived.

Visualizing and executing these thoughts reveal subtleties of my existence that would otherwise be lost. Perhaps this isn't important in a broad sense but I believe everything is significant. It is important to have an opinion.

KB The yellow in those *White Weld* or 'Underground' paintings is at first simply 'attractive'. But pretty immediately it registers as more interestingly ambiguous: a slightly jaundiced, distempered amniotic—listless, inattentive, baleful, unkind. The areas depicted by the paintings are institutional and suggest maintenance of *minimums* of civil care, of civil use, and conventions of use, a roughly democratic sharing—people keeping to the left, say, behaviour being kept 'discreet' or considerate. And they suggest rules, an unseen authority (the government, the railway, the hospital, the school, the welfare system). This is Society filling in for the Absent Mother, yes?

The Mother is not the class of mothers, and is not your own mother? Is it the mother as a force, and a source of affection and care and succour and security?—and a source of *threat* as possible withholder of these things?

SK I find it difficult to look at yellow for too long; it starts to dissolve in front of you. It's almost impossible to keep a hold of and, within the paintings, its long-held associations with cowardice pose as a likely metaphor for absence and The 'Mother'.

Consequently I generally adulterate yellow with blue violet as this prepares me (psychologically) to initiate working the concept. Essentially this is to permeate the image with emotions that I

experienced as a child, putting a face to fear I think. Yellow is connected to the deeper confusion felt, leading to question the 'Mother' (my mother) and, in a broader sense, 'Mothering'.

KB The black you spoke of as difficult. How did it function in these paintings? To the degree that the paintings are monochromatic (or duo-chromatic: dark modelling on a yellow ground—or is it *within* a yellow 'atmosphere') then the black might read as incident within a yellow state or existence, or as structure within a yellow inchoateness?

SK The black was the challenge. It's difficult to explain and not easy to classify but could be as simple as producing a presence through absence (through yellow into black or vice versa). For me yellow and black could easily be one and the same (psychologically), in many ways it has become a state of being working with that colour (yellow).

Development in what I really want to achieve. It will continue to be elusive because as I change there is always more to say, always more understanding. I can only know myself so much today and tomorrow. I despise that limitation—and I know there is fear, fear of seeing. I got close to that with the last series and I stopped myself and started writing instead. It was interesting... to have that break. It was necessary, but at every turn I need to take things further and I'm always excited by that.

KB Simone, how does your art fit within a map of recent Adelaide art, do you think? (Maybe you don't think about this in any case.)

SK The painting and producing of the early foetal forms—with the follow on of *Lifeline* and *The Young Girls* series—were all obsessive, highly motivated periods with not much concern for what was currently being shown. It was always going to be just what it was, the whole subjective trip, its purpose to bring a sense of truth to the viewer. Upon reflection it just ended up being cryptic (to the viewer I think).

There are some interesting artists here. But I just assume everyone is driven to do their own thing regardless.

KB Are there artists locally whose work is at all comparable? Not the installation crowd, perhaps—but Sarah CrowEST, Anna Platten? Nic Folland works a heavy symbol or metaphor sometimes

SK Well I identify more with the work of Nicolas Folland, (the chandelier at Paul [Greenaway]'s stayed with me for quite a while) than I do of either Sarah or Anna's. Others I like, not all of them South Australians, are Adam Cullen, Sally Smart and Bronwyn Platten as well as the late Bronwyn Oliver, and Richard Grayson's text paintings—and Juan Davilla (a definite favourite).

But I don't compare myself with anyone. Most of the time I feel a form of alienation but it's not something I put a microscope to (unless I'm painting) and at this point in time there are no answers to this reality which is why it is crucial to invent another. This is naturally redemptive for me.

Generally speaking, though, I feel drawn towards artists such as Bacon, Bourgeois, Larry Clark, Beuys, including most of those Brit artists from the 90's, especially Gillian Wearing. I saw a catalogue just recently of the work of Greg Geraghty at Greenaway Gallery which I thought was very interesting in a DADA sense, Sally Smart has that too I think.

KB Did you come through the Adelaide TAFE art school—or UniSA? Not Adelaide Central School, or were you from interstate or self-taught?

SK When I first arrived in Adelaide, from the UK, I wasn't aware of TAFE, instead I studied Design at the SACAE (formerly South Australian College of Advanced Education), Underdale.

KB That's the Art School, sure enough!

SK In the eighties there was hardly a computer in sight and it was very hands on, designing book covers, choosing fonts and working with Gouache. The design studios overlooked the art rooms on the ground floor and I often felt that things were more interesting 'downstairs'. Upon reflection I didn't fit in with the design culture and I guess that was the beginning of a serious shift.

In answer to your question though, I don't feel as if I belong to any sector. My education in England having been very much a hit and miss affair—I barely attended my senior school in the UK—I decided to go back to study at Uni SA. Being at the University was important for me at that time. It was grounding and I rediscovered artists like Bourgeois, Magritte, Gillian Wearing, Bellmer, Balthus and Rachel Whiteread. Halfway through the course I 'realized' *The Absent Mother*; and I met a few people who were special and understood the complexities of what I wanted to do and where I wanted to head.

But—How does it fit in with recent Adelaide art?

KB Another time, another place for answering that, I think. But the paintings in the *White Weld* series—done from projections, or more freely composed?

SK Actually both, although I never use projections just black and white enlargements which I then transfer to the canvas using a graphite tracing paper. Prior to this procedure I include or omit various things from the composition. It is yet another deliberation but a very stimulating one, shuffling elements, formulating ideas. I find it contributes in a very direct sense exactly what I want to put across to the viewer.

More info www.simonekennedy.com