

planet_eaf

EXPERIMENTAL ART FOUNDATION

newsletter july-september 2002

NEW EAF DIRECTOR!



The Experimental Art Foundation is extremely pleased to announce the appointment of its new Organisational and Artistic Director, MELENTIE PANDILOVSKI.

Born in Macedonia in 1963, and studying in the Faculty of the History of Art with Archeology, Skopje, Macedonia, Melentie has been the Director of the Contemporary Art Center in Skopje for the last 4 years.

Established in 1994, CAC Skopje (formerly the Soros Centre for Contemporary Art – Macedonia) is a not-for-profit cultural centre engaged in contemporary art and multidisciplinary activities through exhibition, electronic art and multimedia projects, educational projects, conferences, festival and symposia. It serves as an information centre for recent movements in art, and as well as supporting and promoting Macedonian art, has developed a unique position within the Balkans in the area of art and technology. The Centre incorporates the CIX Gallery where Melentie curates 15-20 exhibitions annually and develops projects with like-minded organisations from Macedonia and abroad. CAC Skopje also undertakes projects around humanitarian issues including the involvement of groups of people on the margins of society.

Melentie was involved from the beginning in the establishment of the network of Soros Centres for Contemporary Art (SCCA) in the former Communist countries of South East Europe during the early 90s. This was a special time for previously outlawed art historians, curators, theoreticians and artists who were finally given the opportunity for international recognition. The establishment of SCCA was a major initiative and involved a very risky co-ordination. The leaders of the various SCCA were carefully selected for their positive attitude, ability to work in their community and knowledge of international art. The centre in Skopje was one of the biggest challenges given the economic and cultural climate at the time but exceeded all expectations with the enthusiasm and dedication provided by Melentie. In the late 90s, Melentie faced another complex goal which was to develop the centre away from Soros support, while maintaining support for artists in the region, and raising money from international sources – which he achieved with great success.

Melentie was the initiator and is Director of the Skopje Electronic Arts Fair, the first media art manifestation in the Balkans and curated SEAFair 2001 *Society and Genomic Culture* which investigated the new languages of international artists and theoreticians working in the fields of genetics and biotechnology. *"In my work I have put the stress on exploring the technologies of communication in dialogue and exchange, contributing to the ongoing dialogue on the themes of individual identity, culture and technology."* Melentie is a member of the Cultural Diversity Committee of ISEA and Co-ordinator of the Balkan Art Network, and President of the South East Europe Contemporary Art Network (SEECAN). He has built extremely valuable partnerships with artists and curators throughout the world and is the advocate for contemporary media art in the Balkans.

As some independent sources remark:

"Melentie has a great critical mind, has an excellent grasp of history, an innovative view of contemporary art, and a healthy global perspective."

"Melentie's ability to advocate for artists and art is powerful... he has a flexible and creative attitude and can motivate staff, guide production, assist freelance curators and project directors, and debate for hours with theoreticians. He is at ease with funders, builders, with architects, with television producers, and with artists of all disciplines... With his vision the Experimental Art Foundation will be nothing less than an exciting and state of the art facility which serves the community of Adelaide, alongside the national and international community of contemporary artists."

With his wife and young child, Melentie Pandilovski will relocate to Australia and take up the appointment of 8th EAF Director in early 2003.

For more information on the projects and places of Melentie, try these websites:

Contemporary Art Centre, Skopje <http://www.cac.org.mk>

CIX Gallery <http://www.scca.org.mk/webcix/indexon.htm> and http://www.cac.org.mk/Projects/CIX_Gallery/cix_gallery.asp

Balkan Art Network <http://zayac.scca.org.mk/ban/>

SEECAN <http://www.seecan.org.mk>

TALKING JULIE LAWTON

As you can imagine, the EAF is very excited to be able at last to announce the appointment of its new Director, Melentie Pandilovski. Melentie will provide a new strength and vision for the EAF and we're confident that his appointment will have far reaching influences for contemporary visual art and artists within Australia.

The EAF is very grateful for the support shown for the organisation during this lengthy appointment process – from the funding authorities who provided continual support for the EAF's aim to find the right person for this pivotal appointment and from the artists and audience with whom the EAF engages. It has definitely not been easy and we thank you for your patience and confidence in our approach. I am certain the delay of finding the right Director – for the organisation and for the local and national visual arts community – will definitely reap rewards.

Since the last *planet_eaf* the *Myer Report of the Contemporary Visual Arts and Craft Inquiry* has been published and consists of 20 recommendations to the Federal Government. All the recommendations are crucial to the development and future sustainability of the sector and I would urge all those involved and associated with contemporary visual arts to lend their support to the recommendations and voice this support to Government. The Report is available online <www.dcita.gov.au> or by request from Julia Postle at the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts to julia.postle@dcita.gov.au. It is an extremely comprehensive study over 400 pages. **Lend your support by signing the petitions** – to State and Federal Governments requesting that they adopt the recommendations of the Inquiry – **available in the Dark Horsey Bookshop!**

Briefly the recommendations are for support of \$15 million per annum to the sector and for legal and administrative changes. Many of the recommendations which require additional Commonwealth funds are structured so as to also require the input of State Government funding (examples provided at Recommendation 1 and 6).

Recommendations Summary

- 1 \$2 million per annum devolved from the Commonwealth to the Australia Council to fund programs that directly support individual artists and craft practitioners; that from these additional funds, the Australia Council devolve up to \$100,000 per annum to each State and Territory on the condition that they match this support within a new co-badged program.
- 2 Changes to taxation, unemployment benefit eligibility, Newstart criteria, awareness raising of superannuation, OH&S and insurance issues.
- 3 Changes which will better protect the copyright entitlements of visual artists and craft practitioners.
- 4 Changes to copyright and intellectual property issues for Indigenous artists and craft practitioners.
- 5 Changes to royalty and resale of work arrangements.
- 6 Through the Aust Co and the States and Territories increase funding for contemporary arts organisations by \$2 million pa to provide recurrent increased support additional to current agreements; the Commonwealth commit an initial \$1 million pa and the Commonwealth and the States and Territories agree that the Commonwealth commit a supplementary amount of \$0.25 million pa if the States and Territories commit \$0.75 million pa; that the Commonwealth, State and Territory funding agencies agree to allocate some of this funding for a limited number of contemporary arts organisations for:
 - a development of sustainable business practices;
 - b development of major sponsorship opportunities;
 - c leadership roles nationally and developmental international roles, particularly with regard to:
 - national and regional responsibilities;
 - public access and audience development;
 - development of ideas/intellectual discourse through forums and conferences;
 - mentoring and development of opportunities for artist-run initiatives;
 - international opportunities;
 - contemporary visual arts publishing;
 - developments in art and technology including sound, performance, and other 'hybrid' forms of visual arts practice.
- 7 \$2 million per annum Increased funding to craft and design organisations along the same lines as Recommendation 6.
- 8 Increased funding towards the professional development of art and craft centre staff for the development and promotion of Indigenous arts and craft.
- 9 Increased support for artist-run-initiatives.
- 10 Increased support for national artist service membership organisations.
- 11 Fundi□
contemporary art and craft. (\$2 million per annum)
- 12 Increased funding to provide professional development for visual arts and craft curators and managers.
- 13 Increased funding for the National Exhibitions Touring Scheme.
- 14 Amendment of the guidelines to the Visions of Australia program to increase the inclusion of non-commercial exhibitions of contemporary works.
- 15 Funding towards three major touring exhibitions of the work of contemporary visual artists and craft practitioners.
- 16 Increased funding towards major contemporary visual arts and craft events. (\$2 million per annum)
- 17 Increased funding towards contemporary arts and craft publications and writing projects.
- 18 Increased funding to support special projects that support and develop the contemporary visual arts and craft sector.
- 19 Better collaborative and coordinated funding arrangements between State and Commonwealth Government agencies.
- 20 Initiatives to encourage philanthropy through tax incentives, donations programs, etc.

Obviously the major impact on the EAF as an organisation is Recommendations 6 (and indirectly Recommendation 1) and the EAF Council will be working with Melentie to maximise possible opportunities.

As mentioned in the previous *planet_eaf*, Arts SA is also conducting a Review into the funding of contemporary visual arts in Adelaide but the details of this review or who will be undertaking it are yet to be announced. This Review will take into account the findings from the Myer Inquiry.

In the meantime the EAF has presented an active program of events which are reviewed below by three separate voices, Bridget Currie, Ken Bolton and Teri Hoskin.

SEEING 1 BRIDGET CURRIE

1-31 August

d>ART02 presented by dLux Media Arts, Sydney curated by Leah Grycewicz

MARI VELONAKI	Throw (Aust 2002)
SOPHIA LERNER	The Glass Bell (Aust 2002)
MATHIAS ANTLFINGER & UTE HOERNER	L'apres-midi d'un avatar (Germany 2001)
DEBRA PETROVICH	Uncle Bill (Aust 2000)
DANIELLE KARALUS	Shocked (Aust 2001)

A strange sonic environment, a pool, a mixture of sound and light – son et lumiere, and fun at the games arcade. As a whole, d>ART formed a weirdly intrusive loud and busy exhibition, sound-scapes and moving projections vied for attention as you walked through the space. But engage with one piece for a while and the others seem to pass away. Immersed in the alternate reality of each work, one silently became absorbed by playing, listening, watching.

L'apres-midi d'un avatar was (not in the afternoon) like listening to friends talking or maybe a movie of friends talking and walking along. A conversation overheard, a stroll of two digitally animated humans musing on parrot's speech, Communist East Germany, the Beatles choice of Yogi and other things. A circular narrative in a moon-like landscape, hypnotic in a way only filmic things can be.

The Glass Bell was the work most resembling a traditional installation (if such a thing exists) or perhaps using the conventions of installation. Images of natural patterns faded in and out of projection onto white gauze hangings, a stack of logs, orange leaves, grass, snow, clouds seen from a plane. All of these things recognisable as not from here, and at the same time familiar, snow, I have never seen snow. Flowing water streamed down a large plate of glass, a screen for video projection. You could touch the water and there were towels to dry your hands. These images were contemplative and quiet but the sound of the piece was cold, sad and disturbing – at times approaching a piercing pitch, whispered snatches of dialogue in different voices, occasionally sobbing.

d>ART 02 incorporated installation and digital media. *Uncle Bill* and *Shocked* were presented on computer rather than as installations. The sensation of an interactive game increased markedly in these works. Both works gave an insight into a very private world and involvement in the stories and fates of the characters.

The Royal Adelaide Show offered lots of less sophisticated throws. *Throw* was a game, hit the figures with the leather balls as they pass over the screen. Kind of hard and easy at the same time. Some visitors to the gallery really got into this, you could hear the thumps in the next room. I found it difficult to want to hit them, these strange figures dressed in pseudo-futuristic gear. As with all of the work in d>ART I found it involving and slightly disturbing.

SEEING 2 KEN BOLTON

12 September–12 October

RICHARD GRAYSON: A DIARY, A HISTORY, A WALK UP THE HILL

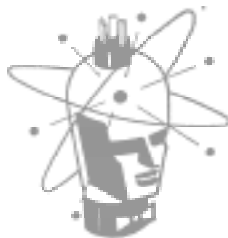
Richard Grayson was in residence at the EAF 9-20 September and gave a talk about his work on Wednesday 18 September at Nexus Cabaret Space.

The return of our former Director to the EAF (also the Artistic Director of Sydney's most recent Biennale) was a characteristically casual yet canny set, a trio of video installations. These were variations on the idea of narrative. Taking them in the order of their naming – which was also the sequence the viewer met in the gallery space – one met first the spinning of a narrative of association, anomie and sustained reflexive thinking: a brain left in New York, to look at the blank wall, the mysterious corner of the studio, never examined close up, and the thoughts these give rise to and thence to voyage out: a journal of typical NY activity, gallery trips, the capsule biographies of people he meets, etc. Endlessly proliferating, in principle, and its principle is its point – a story with the sound of its own making. Voice over does the telling, a video of still details, stared at sightlessly and forgotten, anchors or tethers the voice – or fails to do so.

The ingenious second stage of the exhibition, 'A History', has no voice over. And so the visual is all. Well, not all, but it is riveting. Grayson takes the books left by others in the Australia Council's New York Studio, together with those brought by him, and lines them up on the floor, standing, in a sequence that attempts to run connections between them (based on titles, association, contrast, 'connection' of any kind). The camera moves inches above the floor towards each lurid, evocative, romantic, problematic or studious title and image until – bump! – the book is knocked down. Automatically the camera focus homes in on the next book a foot or so away. And, inexorably, moves toward it. As a history or document it is amusingly suggestive. Whose books are they? What do they indicate? About whom? (What were the readers expecting? What kind of self-improvement, knowledge or entertainment did they expect? What did they find? Did they read them, finally? Why are they abandoned?) Is it a fictional mind they portray or a collective mind, the 'art' world's? The film is oddly monumental and mock-sombre, sort of noir-ish – and stirring.

'A Walk Up The Hill' uses hand held camera on a walk through Australian bush. A kind of narrative in itself – counterposed with the puffing Grayson narrator, rabbiting on, effortfully yet garrulously, and delivering another narrative – of the classical, ancient, Mediterranean – a description of imagined utopias. Of course these were extensions, projections, idealizations of known, actual landscapes. Do they fit Australia (itself at various times an imagined antipodean utopia)?

Three narratives and three 'worlds': the first is colloquial, discursive, the second made of the (melo)drama of monumentally projected book covers, the third a divided one of Australian bush and interposed commentary.



SEEING 3 TERI HOSKIN

8, 15, 22, 29 August

THE MODERN NONSENSE Talks Program

The Modern Nonsense was the title of this years crop of EAF forums supported by the Independent Arts Foundation (SA). Run on the previously successful model devised by Ken Bolton, the forums held at Nexus Cabaret Space were well attended with generally enthusiastic audience response.

The series focussed its first two sessions on the work of 'newbie' artists, its third on the work of John Barbour and the fourth and final with a few thoughts and ideas from those who like to think and write

about things 'experimental'. The artists spoke to their work via slides, video and chat.

In week one, Michael Kutschbach led the audience through his painting, manufacturing process – an “*accumulating of marks in hopes that they generate a language of their own*”. Sam Small spoke well of her installation practise which seeks to “*infiltrate and interrupt spaces*”. Sam asked most of the questions during the series.

Week two gave us Bridget Currie who quietly spoke to her mute, moot work. Her processes are tactile and her materials ordinary – old bath towels razor etched with the traces of decorative patterns. Matthew Bradley surprised everyone when he talked about his childhood (something rarely publicly heard in the visual arts) which all made sense in light of his Deleuzian nomadic status in the world and the imperative to push himself to greater and greater heights. James Strickland is one half of the Modern Love Collective - he makes video concerned with cinematic desire and the “artifice of failure”, funny, sad, slow, and occasionally very tender in their portrayal of kitsch romantic film moments:- the girl, the car, the love.

Session three saw John Barbour perform an (im)possible linear narrative to approach the development of his practise - from the painting of the dunce in the corner to the delicate and fragile strength of the most recent 'joy' works. In retrospect Barbour's influence amongst some of the previous speakers becomes clear, the way “the smallest thing can command one's presence”, particularly in Bridget Currie's etched towels and Sam Small's too-high interiors.

The final forum posed the interminable question 'What's Experimental Now?' and in the tradition (yes!) of experimentalism none of the speakers had any answers. Teri Hoskin presented a meandering paper that touched on writing, small beauties and constant states of emergency; Michael Newall considered something called 'The Standard Theory' and the possibility of apocalyptic quark collisions and Russell Smith pondered upon the grounds of judgement (a reappraisal?) and the impossible 'now' of 'experiment'. Watch out for 2003 series currently under construction!

EXPERIMENTAL ART FOUNDATION

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Gallery & Bookshop hours: Tuesday-Friday 11-5, Saturday 2-5

29 YEARS OF CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ARTS!

The EAF is supported by the Commonwealth Government through the Visual Arts Craft Board of the Australia Council and the South Australian Government through Arts SA, and is a member organisation of Contemporary Arts Organisations Australia.



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