

FROM THE EAF COUNCIL Loene Furler, Chair

As you are most likely aware, the EAF has been involved in the process of advertising and selecting a new Director since previous Director Chris Chapman's departure in August last year. This process culminated in an offer being made to highly respected UK-based artist, Mike Stubbs, in September.

Mike Stubbs is a practising artist working in performance, installation and new media and is currently Senior Research Resident at Duncan of Jordonstone College of Art at Dundee University, Scotland. Prior to this, Mike was founding member and Director of Hull Time Based Arts, a well regarded artist-led organisation which exists to pioneer new work in time-based art. He is an advisor to the Arts Council of Great Britain and works internationally as an arts consultant.

In late November, Mike visited Adelaide for a week and met with the EAF Council to negotiate the terms and conditions of his employment as well as to confirm that his relocation would be of benefit to both himself and his family, and the EAF. Mike treated the visit as a consultancy meeting with the EAF Council and the broader arts community and provided a report which outlines possible future directions, affiliations, and strategies for the immediate and longer-term future of the EAF.

Due to various offers and enticements to stay in Scotland (to himself and to his partner, Gina Czarnecki, Course Director, New Media Arts Imaging, University of Dundee, new media artist and recent recipient of the 2002 Creative Scotland Award in visual arts), Mike reluctantly withdrew his acceptance for the position of Director in February.

Mike and the EAF are interested in an on-going relationship with possible collaboration and international projects to be considered in the future.

In the meantime, Julie Lawton, Administrator, will continue as Interim Director and apply the program curated by Chris Chapman to July 2002. In addition, Julie will develop the artistic program in consultation with Council and, with the support of Michael Grimm and Ken Bolton and other assistance as required, manage the operations of the EAF until a new Director is appointed.

Council will be re-advertising for a new Director in May.

TALKING Julie Lawton

You may have noticed the lapse in TALKING and the lateness of this newsletter – the extraordinarily busy time for the EAF is the first quarter of a Festival year and this one was no exception: not only in co-ordinating our major project for 2002 (this time without a full contingent of staff) but also in providing applications for funding, evaluation reports and statistics and audits... and so on. An endless stream of paper from the paperless office of the 21st century...

Last TALKING was early November – just prior to the opening of the final exhibition for 2001 by the DAMP Collective from Melbourne and the visit by prospective Director Mike Stubbs.

Logistically, what could have been a nightmare in having 14 members of the collective in residence in the gallery working through their ideas, workshoping and gathering information via videos and public interviews – eventuated in a very cohesive, professional and smooth operation. And a great performative opening night. Ken Bolton has provided a review of the DAMP exhibition following.

The confidential negotiations re Mike Stubbs' appointment were lengthy and the EAF's inability to clarify its position within a shorter time frame was difficult. However, we muddled through and all is revealed.

When it became obvious that the appointment could not progress without a visit from Mike, the EAF approached Arts SA for assistance which they were able to provide. Arts SA were very supportive throughout negotiations which assisted the EAF considerably during this time.

It was great to meet Mike – he's a dynamo of energy and hit the ground running. He spent considerable time meeting the Adelaide arts community at a soiree held for his benefit and at other formal and informal meetings. It's unfortunate that he was eventually unable to take up the position not only for the EAF but as Adelaide lost an opportunity to have an energetic and experienced addition to its community as well as possibly an equally experienced digital media lecturer and artist in his partner, Gina.

And so we start again.

Unless the change of State Government delays matters, the EAF will know the outcome of its application to Arts SA for funds for July 02-December 03 by late April and will advertise after that time. It's obvious that the EAF, like most other contemporary art spaces around Australia, needs to be able to offer a more attractive salary package to a Director in order to get the expertise and experience required for a diverse and pivotal visual arts organisation in its early adulthood. Given that the EAF starts the first year of its 2nd Triennial funding agreement to December 2004 with the Visual Arts Craft Board this year (for the same amount as was granted in January 1997) it's unlikely that the organisation will find additional funds via this avenue. Maybe the Federal Government initiated Myer Inquiry into the Contemporary Visual Arts and Crafts (reporting deadline extended from March to May), will provide an extraordinary release of funds to this sector....?

The EAF was advised in early December that its application to the Visual Arts Craft Board for funds for Denise Kum was not successful. The organisation had to determine how to handle Denise's residency and exhibition (given that it attempts to provide a reasonable level of financial support and payment to artists) which was managed through a combination of using increased funds from the core artistic program as well as Denise rethinking her original project and determining to build the work in the gallery from locally sponsored materials.

Denise finished work as a make-up artist on a feature film just prior to Christmas and spent January on the phone to Adelaide suppliers of plastics and petrolatum. She is incredibly energetic and motivated and optimistic – which she needed to be to get this project off the ground. And she did, arriving 14th February to start the installation process. Denise secured the support of Plastic's Granulating Services (an Adelaide-based plastics recycling company) which, via the enthusiasm of Dionne Green, provided the base materials for the installation being large lumps of extruded plastic in extraordinary forms and colours. Denise also secured the support of Larry Cavallaro from another Adelaide based company, Remnant Research Australia. They talked long and hard about the intricacies of chemical manipulation as regards viscous substances. The support of these two companies was pivotal in making the installation the undoubted success that it was. Dermody Petroleum also assisted by providing petrolatum at a reduced rate for the exhibition.

The process of installation itself was hard work and many thanks are extended to the artist-volunteers who assisted Denise in the gallery – Tim Sterling, Bridget Currie, Andrew Best and Chris Flannagan. A truly mammoth effort lugging lumps of plastic, covering oneself in petrolatum, using a spatula for spreading and a hairdryer for sealing to create a dense, swampy landscape. Thanks also to Craige Andrae who provided the insightful solution of using pallets to form a boardwalk and to Chris Chapman who provided the catalogue interview with Denise and returned a few days prior to the opening which was a great support and a lot of fun.

The EAF documented the period of installation onto video (thanks to Francesca da Rimini who also assisted with project management) which was played in the Bookshop during the time of the exhibition with a view to providing some insight for visitors into the processes involved.

Denise's exhibition launch was held to coincide with 3 other galleries within the Lion Arts Centre precinct which provided a large and diverse audience for her work. Of course the inevitable occurred where, despite warnings to the contrary, visitors were convinced that the colourful swampy landscape was as hard as it appeared – and proceeded to step into it or poke it. And as they quickly discovered, it was REALLY soft...

SEEING Ken Bolton

8 NOVEMBER TO 15 DECEMBER 2001

DAMP: MORE THAN A FEELING!

The Melbourne performance group DAMP arrived in Adelaide the week before their opening and did some exploratory provocation and incitement – and constructed a kind of collective 'happy-snap' of Adelaide: playing in the gallery were videoed responses to their question, which went something like: *If you could have anything, what is it that would make you really happy?* No one got the chance to dig deep – but the answers all together were



DAMP opening night performance: cheer leaders encouraging the audience

pleasantly sentimental and charming (“I want to buy the pub off mum and dad”, “I’d like to talk to the dead”, “All the boys I want”, “A boat to go sailing”, “A souped up blue Torana”, “More buses”, “The second half of the skate ramp to be built”, “Job satisfaction”, “A pack of cigarettes that never runs out”. “A new bike”, “To join a circus”).

On opening night cheer-squad performers assisted volunteers – armed with the placards of their choice – to proclaim these wishes. Filmed, this played over subsequent weeks while around the gallery around were arranged a myriad number of these slogan placards. There were also kindred video projections (a sequence of people’s personal, privately favourite spots, for example, showed a bit of Circular Quay, a bit of the Melbourne markets and so on).

DAMP’s exhibition brought the EAF a slightly different, non-art audience, as well as our usual attendances.

14 FEBRUARY TO 6 APRIL 2002

DENISE KUM

Denise Kum’s untitled installation, the EAF’s Festival-period show, was one of our most successful: genuinely interesting to a great many artists, and popular with the public as spectacle, experience and as occasion for thought and imagination. Attendances were correspondingly high, with a great deal of word-of-mouth approval from visitors to the gallery.

Kum is a (UK-based) New Zealand artist, her practice involving the use of high-technology synthetic materials and substances (oils, commercial lubricants and polymers) to explore modes of display and cultural meaning. Kum’s project was designed to raise important issues around concepts of waste, utility and the development of synthetic materials; the range of cultural meanings attached to specific materials and processes; the meanings of methods of display, decor and design; the metaphoric capacities of bacteriality and virulence, mutation and toxicity.

The installation read as a shape-shifting landscape: it simulated both a kind of industrial wasteland of pollutant debris and mutant, viral growth and was also shrilly pretty, in part resembling a contemplative Japanese Garden – leading the viewer to admire wistfully the lily-pad shapes of pink and blue and white that had previously caused a shudder. A walkway ran in serpentine fashion through this landscape of vaseline, wax, hand-cleaner and organic hard plastic shapes. An artificial paradise, utopian in its cutely pretty colours it was also a sci-fi dystopia – an ecological accident, barren, poisonous, hostile.

In a small booklet published by the EAF for the occasion of the exhibition Kum, interviewed by Chris Chapman (who, as our previous Director, had programmed the show), discussed the nature of her work.

Denise Kum’s time here was also a residency – besides working intensively with a number of younger artists in setting up the installation Kum stayed a week beyond the exhibition’s opening in residence at the University of South Australia where she was much engaged with Honours and Postgraduate students, discussing their work and ideas and giving a talks on her own practice. Denise also gave an artist’s talk at the EAF on Monday 6th March.

Denise Kum’s exhibition was generously sponsored by Plastic’s Granulating Services and Remnant Research Australia, with the SA School of Art assisting her residency in Adelaide.



Denise Kum (installation detail): Astroturf rest area

NEXT

The gallery is now 10 years old and the EAF is going to take time out to do some maintenance work – specifically to resurface the floor which is shedding paint at an alarming rate. The EAF will be engaging contractors to apply a new surface which should alleviate the need for annual upkeep and give the gallery a new lease of life.

The next exhibition opens 6pm 2 May, with Melbourne based artist Jude Walton exhibiting a multimedia installation developed as part of an artist-in-residency at the School of Architecture, RMIT, Melbourne. The residency provided an opportunity to develop concepts that encourage new understandings of optic and haptic perception in the making of interdisciplinary art. Working with projected and screen-based moving images, the exhibition examines aspects of perception and their changing aesthetic, social and cultural potential.

Jude will also be giving a talk about this and previous works at the EAF at 6pm Tuesday 7th May.

The following exhibition is by New Zealand born, Sydney-based Ruth Watson who will be installing in the gallery and opening 6pm 20 June. This will be the final exhibition in the program curated by former EAF Director, Chris Chapman.

As enclosed with this mailout, the EAF's 2001 Annual General Meeting will be held upstairs at the EAF, 6.30pm Tuesday 30th April. All welcome!

STOP PRESS

The EAF is very pleased to announce that it will be able to resume its very popular and engaging talks program in the second half of 2002 through the generous sponsorship of the Independent Arts Foundation (SA). **Stay tuned for details.....**

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SA Youth Arts Board 8361 9777 or sayab@sayab.org.au
Deadline 5pm 26 April

2002 GEELONG CONTEMPORARY ART PRIZE

Acquisitive prize of \$25,000
Details and Application Form ph 03 5229 3645
Deadline for entries: 1 August

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SNIFF SNIFF AAAH!

Isn't it great to smell the fresh air!
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we're smoke-free

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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.

