

NEW WORLDS

AN EXHIBITION CONCEPT
PREPARED BY ALASDAIR FOSTER
FOR HANMI MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY, SEOUL



Catherine Nelson *Ballina* 2010

INTRODUCTION

Context

This exhibition has been created especially for the Hanmi Museum of Photography, Seoul, as part of an exchange between the Museum and the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney. This bilateral project is presented within the Year of Friendship that, throughout 2011, celebrates fifty years of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and Australia.

Preamble

Paradoxically, while the Australian continent is one of the oldest landmasses on the planet and is home to the longest continuous culture on earth, it is considered by many as one of the newest of the new worlds. For the immigrants that came to the country – first from Europe, then from Asia – it

was a land of fresh hope and new possibility. It was also a land that, for many centuries, had been anticipated but not yet visited by old world explorers. Ancient cartographers hypothesised the existence of a vast southern continent that would 'balance' the known world of the northern hemisphere. In the absence of facts, their imaginations ran wild. They imagined a world of inverted nature, of strange and wonderful flora and fauna morphed and hybridised from the plants and creatures of the north. And they were not disappointed, for Australia is a land with many unique species of life from the kangaroo to the platypus.

Today Australia is a richly multicultural society with an energetic creative culture. Its photomedia artists are at ease with the old and with the new. They embrace the most contemporary digital media with the same innovative imagination as did their forebears when dreaming of what Terra Australis might be like.

In Korea too, contemporary innovation and a delight in the historical co-exist. In the world's most wired nation, the digital online experience is becoming an integral part of everyday life. Yet the new virtual worlds often draw their inspiration from the realms of the ancients.

Concept

Building on this shared sensibility for the melding of new and old in an innovative and creative way, *New Worlds* presents the work of five Australian photomedia artists. While each has a distinctive style and approach, all seek to travel beyond the known world of the real. They are explorers of the psyche; adventurers in possibility. Each artist creates not just an image but an atmosphere, a narrative, a mise-en-scene. A new world complete and coherent in all its aspects.

Each artist also draws on the past to inform their creations. Personal memories, popular myth, regal personalities and evolving ecologies are just some of the threads woven through the imaginative fabric of the picture.



Gerard O'Connor *Clash* 2010

CATHERINE NELSON



First Freeze: Bourgoyen Winter 2010

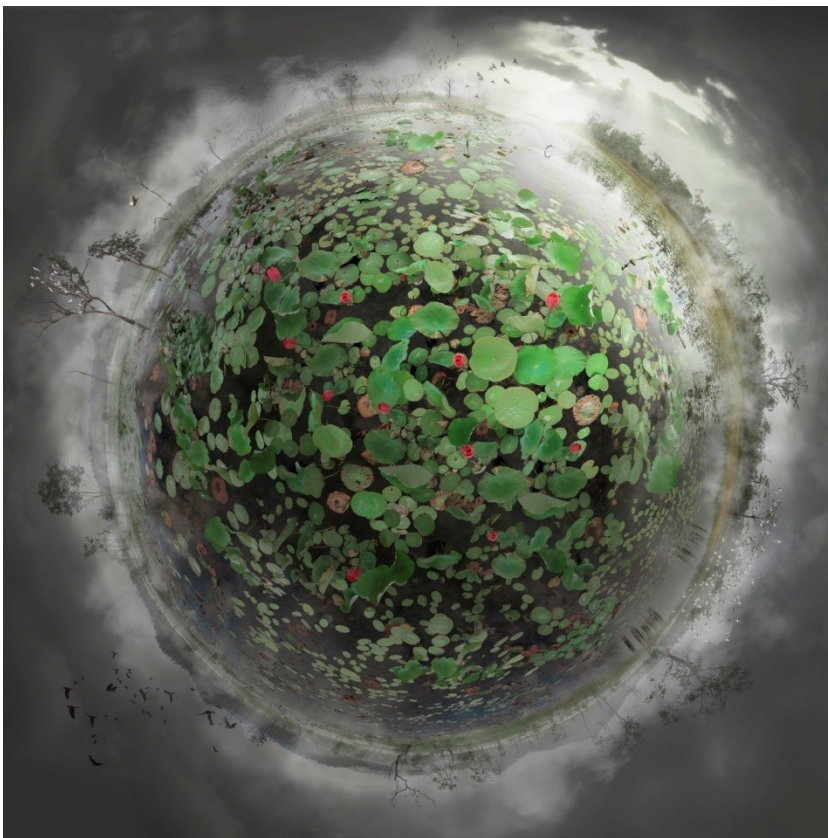
Creation

Visual poetry, nature photography and digital design come together in the transcendent landscapes of Catherine Nelson. Shot in Australia and Western Europe, each natural environment is dramatically reformed into a perfect globe floating serenely in the firmament.

The images are rich with detail and each lovingly captures the essence of place as a complex ecological story. The result is a contemporary pictorial mythology that subtly reminds the viewer of a profound truth: that it is in the flourishing variety of the local that the fate of the world resides.



Forster 2010



MareebaWet 2010

BRONEK KOZKA



The Best Years of Our Lives 2008

Suburbia

Bronek Kozka's photographs are carefully staged tableaux in which every detail from the location and set-decoration to the casting and costuming of players is meticulously pre-planned. The genesis of each image, however, is less precise. They arise from memories, but are the memories his own and did these things really happen? Perhaps some are dreams and others are stories he has heard so often that he has begun to feel they are his. The images are played out in slightly retro settings. They echo the period of his early childhood when he was just becoming conscious of the world, and the images inhabit that liminal space between conscious recollection and subconscious impression.

Set in the ubiquitous Australian suburbia, the images have a hyper-real quality. They are, as he puts it, 'over constructed'. They bring to the surface the tensions that strain beneath the apparent comfortableness of domestic life. While the images depict a single moment, they draw us into a sense of narrative; of what happened before and what will happen next. They are like stills from a movie that was never made but which is nonetheless strangely familiar.



The Best Years of Our Lives 2008



The Best Years of Our Lives 2008

GERARD O'CONNOR & MARC WASIAK



The Funeral 2010

Decline and Fall

With a raucous, irreverent grandeur, the photographs of Gerard O'Connor bring to mind the diverse traditions of William Hogarth's 18th-century moral satires, 19th-century History Painting and the 20th-century underground comix of Robert Crumb.

Working with stylist Marc Wasiak, O'Connor's cinematic images take the viewer on a helter-skelter ride through the mayhem of social, cultural and moral chaos. Their shared eye for the detailing of character and costume, and the layering of plot, transforms each tableau into a heroic melodrama with all the twists and turns, tears and laughter of a classic bodice-ripper. Whether it is a day at the beach or the din of battle; a wedding or a funeral, it is all coming unstuck in a deliciously alarming way.



The Battle 2010



The Bordello 2009

POLIXENI PAPAPETROU



The Loners 2009

Between Worlds

Polixeni Papapetrou has for many years been making photographic tableaux with her children as actors. More recently their friends have joined in. Dressing up and ‘let’s pretend’ are at the heart of these images and the performances are collaboration between the artist and her youthful actors. That said, her work remains rigorous and precise.

In her recent series, *Between Worlds*, the artist uses animal masks to create curious tableaux that are at once familiar and strange. Papapetrou sees childhood as a transitional space between infancy and the adult world. Children are between states, just as this animal–person hybrids exist in a fantastical space of the imagination between human and non-human. For many cultures, animals come to symbolise specific human qualities. We project ourselves onto other creatures and we anthropomorphise their behaviour as though it were humanly self-conscious. Consequently, her images are simultaneously impossible and interpretable; unnatural and familiar.



The Debutants 2009



The Harvesters 2009



The Wanderer 2009

ALEXIA SINCLAIR



Shah Jahan (1592–1666) 2010



Alexandra Romanov (1872-1918) 2005

A Royal Selection

Made over a period of six years, Alexia Sinclair's stylised images of royal men and women take the viewer on a journey of imagined worlds that are nonetheless based on historical truths; each image being a study of real historical figure.

The artworks are created in the computer by combining hundreds of photographic layers all of which were photographed by the artist herself. In preparing the work, she travelled the world to find the landscapes and architectural backdrops used in the images, each of which relates to the reign of the character depicted. The model's hair, makeup, costume and body-painting are all inspired by the period and fashions of the character, reinterpreted into a contemporary visual style. Precious historical treasures such as royal jewels (now held in museums, many of which originally belonged to the monarch represented) are also incorporated into the portrait during postproduction. The final stage of the process is to blend the elements into a whole using computer illustration, a process that is also employed to create the highly polished and elaborate hairstyles that epitomise each character's style.



Isabella of Spain (1451 – 1504) 2007



Pope Alexander VI (1431–1503) 2010



Marie Antoinette (1755-1793) 2005



Marquis de Sade (1740–1814) 2010



Elizabeth I (1533-1603) 2007

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



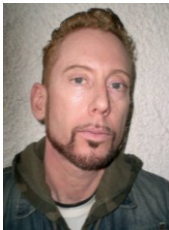
Catherine Nelson (b: 1970)

Catherine Nelson trained as a painter and has a background in digital postproduction. Before moving back into the field of fine art she worked on many acclaimed films including *Moulin Rouge*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *300* and *Australia*.



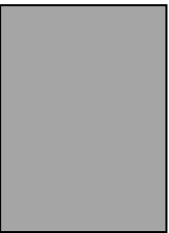
Bronek Kozka (b: 1970)

Bronek Kozka is an award-winning artist and academic based at RMIT, Melbourne. He has shown widely in Australia and also in China, France, Italy and USA. His work was featured in *Hasselblad Masters Vol. 1* [2008].



Gerard O'Connor (b: 1963)

Before becoming a successful commercial and art photographer, Gerard O'Connor dabbled as a go-go dancer, night club owner and fashion designer. Exhibiting not only in Australia, but in Singapore, Japan and Hong Kong, his work has won him a number of awards and occasionally ignited controversy.



Marc Wasiak (b: XXXX)

Awaiting text



Polixeni Papapetrou (b: 1960)

Polixeni Papapetrou is one of Australia's leading photomedia artists. She has recently presented highly successful exhibitions in China, France, Greece, Japan, The Netherlands, Slovakia and USA. She has already established her name in Seoul with previous bodies of work, but this will be the Korean premiere for *Between Worlds*.



Alexia Sinclair (b: 1976)

Alexia Sinclair is an award winning Australian Fine Art photographer and digital artist. Her work has toured Australia, featured on national television and has been shown at major festivals in China and France. Alexia lives and works in Sydney and also undertakes projects in New Zealand and New York.

HANMI MUSEUM

THE PHOTOGRAPHY MUSEUM, SEOUL



General Background

Established in 2004, the Museum of Photography, Seoul is the first photographic museum in Korea. It is administered by the Hanmi Foundation, a charitable cultural body established by the Hanmi Pharmaceutical Company. The mission of the Hanmi Foundation is to promote and popularise culture and arts with a focus on photomedia which it recognises is one of the most important art forms of the 21st century.

The museum realises its mission through exhibitions, support of artists, educational programs and publications, as well as building a network with other organisations which engage in the development of photography. The Museum seeks to discover artists with talent and provide them with opportunities to realise their full potential.

People

ACP Director, Alasdair Foster is working with Hanmi Museum President, Ms Youngsook Song and the Museums Curators Mr Bong-Lim Choi and Ms Sunyoung Kim to realise the exhibition of Australian photomedia art in Seoul and a reciprocal exhibition of Korean photomedia art in Sydney during 2011.



*President
(Chief Director)
Youngsook Song*



*Curator
Bong-Lim Choi*



*Curator
Youngshin Kim*

Location

The Museum of Photography is located directly opposite the Olympic Park in the Hanmi Tower at 45 Bangi-dong, Songpa-gu, Seoul 138-724

Timing

The exhibition will be presented 27 August to 26 September 2011 to coincide with KIAF11 (the Korean International Art Fair – 22-26 September).

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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