

RECOVERING LIVES

DADANG CHRISTANTO - JULIE DOWLING
JANENNE EATON - JANET LAURENCE



ANU DRILL HALL GALLERY
7 AUGUST - 21 SEPTEMBER 2008

EDITED BY NANCY SEVER & CAROLINE TURNER

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FOREWORD

The Australian National University is fortunate to have the Drill Hall Gallery as a wonderful exhibition space that enables art to be part of the public face of the University. The co-curator of this exhibition is Nancy Sever under whose direction the Drill Hall Gallery has thrived. Art should be an integral part of the life of a university and the Drill Hall Gallery has played a major role in ensuring that this is the case, drawing its exhibition curators and intellectual inspiration from across the campus. *Recovering Lives* is the final exhibition in a project on 'Art and Human Rights' led by Dr Caroline Turner and partly funded by the Australian Research Council. The project has involved close collaboration between the Research School of Humanities and the School of Art. The key participants have determinedly broken down the barriers between art practice and research through art, showing that the two are inextricably intertwined. In developing the themes of the research and communicating the ideas generated, the exhibitions have been as important as the conferences – indeed they have worked in tandem, the one informing the other.

Art has been deeply implicated in the discourse of human rights and both the forms of art and the ideas it contains have proved a constant challenge to authorities and provoked strong reactions. Yet though they react strongly to art, people often fail to appreciate that it is as much grounded in knowledge as any other form of human action – and that engaging with art as a way of thinking about the world opens up areas of understanding. Art is a powerful means of expressing ideas that impacts as much on the body as the mind. Which may be why it is often both effective and confronting.

All art is multi-layered in its technique and in its expression and works on the minds of an audience in different ways. Curators have the privilege to introduce themes that hint at directions of interpretation and to hang works together that reveal particular meanings or emphasise aesthetic effects at a moment in time. The theme *Recovering Lives* resonates with the work of the artists in this exhibition. Recovering is also revealing. Recovering is connecting individual lives to historical processes and trying to make sense of them in the present. Julie Dowling connects her genealogy to the history of her people, the history of art, and the history of religion through portraits that are icons of memory. Janenne Eaton brings into art something that every Australian can experience if they pause along those avenues of trees that commemorate the lives of soldiers lost in war. The avenues of trees themselves become memory turned into art through time. In bringing them into her art Eaton is reflecting the original intentions of those who planted the trees, collaborating with agency from the past but giving it a distinctive presence. Janet Laurence likewise acknowledges human creativity of the past and present in the forms of glass houses that combine aesthetics and functionality—reflecting on the irony of the human capacity to recover and contain distant and lost environments and hoped for survival into the future. And finally we have Dadang Christanto, a painter, sculptor and installation artist whose performance art has moved and shocked many an audience. Like Julie Dowling he makes his own history part of all our histories and while not allowing us to forget the violence of the world hints at the possibility of recovery and provides glimpses of its beauty.

The artists in this exhibition are all using art as a way of communicating ideas and emotions. Art practice is essentially interdisciplinary and the artists bring other forms of knowledge to their work – art is informed by history, archaeology, biography, religion, landscape and architecture. The artists all share in common the ability to connect the past directly with the present, to enable the viewer to experience things from the past that are relevant to the present. The works urge the viewer to respond and take the messages on board, to see the possibility of recovery and transformation – something is happening now and we can do something about it – we can and must think about the past in the present.

HOWARD MORPHY

opposite: Janet Laurence, *Salt and ash (Landscapes and residue series)*(detail), 2007, Duraclear, oil shinkolite acrylic, ash and pigment, 100 x 170 cm. Courtesy the artist.



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PTE. A. MURDOCH

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RECOVERING LIVES

'If the twentieth century is the epoch of human rights', Professor Costas Douzinas writes in his book *The End of Human Rights*, 'their triumph is, to say the least, something of a paradox. Our age has witnessed more violations of their principles than any of the previous and less "enlightened" epochs'. 'No degree of progress', in the words of French philosopher Jacques Derrida, 'allows one to ignore that never before in absolute figures, have so many men, women and children been subjugated, starved, or exterminated on earth'.¹

The exhibition *Recovering Lives* (7 August – 21 September 2008) at the Drill Hall Gallery, The Australian National University is a collaboration between the Drill Hall Gallery and the Research School of Humanities at ANU. It is part of a long term research project based in the Research School of Humanities on the subject of 'Art and Human Rights'.

This project grew out of discussions in 2000 at the Humanities Research Centre (now part of the Research School of Humanities) between distinguished UK based human rights lawyer, Professor Christine Chinkin, then a Visiting Fellow at the HRC, and myself. It developed into a long term research project with conferences, workshops and exhibitions. This is the fourth exhibition.² Over fifty artists from twenty countries have so far participated in the exhibitions and over a hundred scholars and art specialists from many different disciplines and countries have been involved in the conferences and workshops since 2000. A significant number of students have been involved. Visitors to the exhibitions have numbered well over 5,000 thus far. This exhibition then is the product of long term research at The Australian National University, which has for many years played a leadership role in research in the Humanities in Australia.

Exploring the connections between art and human rights has been a journey of discovery, indeed a journey without maps, to borrow Graham Greene's phrase. It could not have been envisaged when we began this project over eight years ago how many challenges there would be in this new century to the regime of rights established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, as Professor Chinkin noted at our 2003 international conference.

The present time is undoubtedly one of challenge to human rights and in particular to the concept of universalism in legal frameworks of rights established since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948 in the aftermath of the devastations of the Second World War and out of concern to provide protection and justice for the world's peoples. The tragic fact is that hopes for a culturally tolerant and diverse future, a 'vision of human dignity,' as Chinkin noted in her eloquent introduction to the catalogue of the first exhibition in 2003, *Witnessing to Silence*, remain to a great extent unfulfilled in our time.³ On the contrary, as historian Dipesh Chakrabarty writes, while the concept of human rights is established in national and state constitutions and is part of international law, at the beginning of our new century significant challenges have been made to the framework of ideas underpinning such legislation and on their implementation.⁴

opposite: Janenne Eaton, *The Avenue of Honour - anatomy of a monument* (detail), 1995, rice paper, linen and photographs, 15 panels, 208 x 32 cm each. Courtesy the artist.

Dr Kevin Bales, one of the keynote speakers at our 2008 conference, in his prizewinning 1999 book *Disposable People* revealed that 200 years after abolition of the slave trade as many as twenty seven million people may be trafficked and enslaved at this time in the opening decades of the twenty first century.⁵ He points out that governments should be leading the way in the eradication of slavery: 'Every country has enacted laws banning slavery, making it a crime, and promising to wipe it out. But passing a law and enforcing it are two different things.'⁶ Nevertheless, Bales believes individuals can help 'free the slaves' and this is what his organization set out to do. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu notes: 'None of us is truly free while others remain enslaved'. Hilary Charlesworth, Professor of Law, The Australian National University, speaking as part of our project in 2001 has also pointed to the 'silences' in human rights legal frameworks and the 'spaces in between', which may not even be covered by human rights statutes and laws. Professor Charlesworth focused on those marginalised groups subject to disparities in power, including – in many societies – women, children and Indigenous peoples, who are often excluded from human rights discourse and practice.⁸ This is one of the areas where art connects with human rights, with what art historian Barbara Stafford, a speaker at our 2003 international conference, has called the 'in-betweenness'.⁹

How does art connect to human rights? Human rights, as we know, can be defined to include rights of survival, physical and cultural, as well as political rights and the right to freedom from political abuse. Issues of morality are often complex and artists can reveal these complexities and the 'spaces in between' through their work. The European Court of Human Rights has also declared that: 'Those who create, perform, distribute or exhibit works of art contribute to the exchange of ideas and opinions which is essential for a democratic society'.¹⁰ Artists may create beauty, celebrate life and help us to see our world and humanity in different ways. But artists and their images are also intimately and profoundly linked to issues of human rights and the visualisation of human wrongs. Art can be a testament and a memorial to human suffering. The work of creative artists explores ideas critical to the definition of humanity: happiness, fear, love, hate, justice, injustice and ambivalent issues where there are no stark clarities of right and wrong. Art witnessing to wrongs has been produced by the victims of human rights abuses even in the European concentration camps of the Nazis, including in the extermination camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald. Such artistic expression was of course forbidden under pain of torture and death. But those making the art nonetheless wished to record the terrible events and violations of human rights they were enduring, or even simply to respond to the human impulse to create some small expression of beauty in the midst of horror. The images which have survived are deeply moving and have been termed 'spiritual resistance'. And art can also be a means of cultural survival, of hope and of 'recovery'. As Philippines artist Santiago Bose, who was represented in our 2003 exhibition, noted:

*The artist cannot but be affected by his society. It is hard to ignore the pressing needs of the nation while making art that serves the nation's elite... We struggled to change society, which is difficult and dangerous, and we also sought to preserve communal aspects of life. I too am haunted by visions of hardship, poverty, disenfranchisement ... but between outbursts of violence and exploitation are also tenderness, selflessness and a sense of community. These will always remain unspoken and unrecognized unless we make art or music that will help to transform society. The artist takes a stand through the practice of creating art...*¹¹

Recovering Lives, the theme of this exhibition, is also the theme of an international conference to be held at the Research School of Humanities and the National Museum of Australia in August 2008. This conference will explore aspects of this concept through history, the archives, testimony, literature, art, dance and film.¹² *Recovering Lives* is indeed a concept that is allusive and multifaceted. It could mean restoring to present awareness lives overlooked or forgotten by history but still able to be recollected, and restored to memory to some degree at least. It could also mean the recognition of the worth of lives too easily taken for granted. It could certainly mean according dignity to lives dishonoured by past injustice and discrimination of any kind. And it could mean providing a memorial for lives unknown and uncounted, for which no other memorial has ever been given.

Recovering Lives at the Drill Hall Gallery features the work of four outstanding artists: Julie Dowling, Janet Laurence, Janenne Eaton and Dadang Christanto. Dowling, a Badimaya artist, is concerned, as Anna Edmundson tells us in her sensitive essay in this catalogue, with seeking to 'recover and record the lives of her extended Aboriginal family', a family torn apart by children having been taken away as part of Government policies of removal. There is a healing aspect, however, to her art which is also concerned with archival retrieval and recording through written and oral testimony the lives of those she documents and paints. Through her portraits this family is in one sense in the process of reuniting. In a painting such as *The prodigal* she also records how a life can lose meaning through loss of spirituality and culture. Fragments of history and memory, the ghosts of the past also haunt the work of Laurence, Eaton and Christanto. Laurence's art resonates with echoes of history and the natural world. It is an evocation of memories of time and place. As Denise Salvestro suggests, her art invokes memories 'both public and private – something Laurence aspires to do through most of her work.... The meeting of the public and private domains is to her "metaphors for the world out there meeting our personal inner world of experience..."¹³ Eaton, in her work *The Avenue of Honour*, explores our responses to the theme of memorialising those killed in war, in this case an avenue of elms in Bacchus Marsh, Victoria, which is a memorial to those who served and died in the First World War. Her paintings, also included in the exhibition, refer to our present world where speed, technology and virtual time drive our lives. Christanto provides a memorial for countless millions of victims of violence over the centuries whose names have never even been recorded but his art is also a personal memorial for his own father. The artists share in common the profoundly thoughtful ways in which they make their art: an art which forces us to stop and reflect on the real issues of our world.

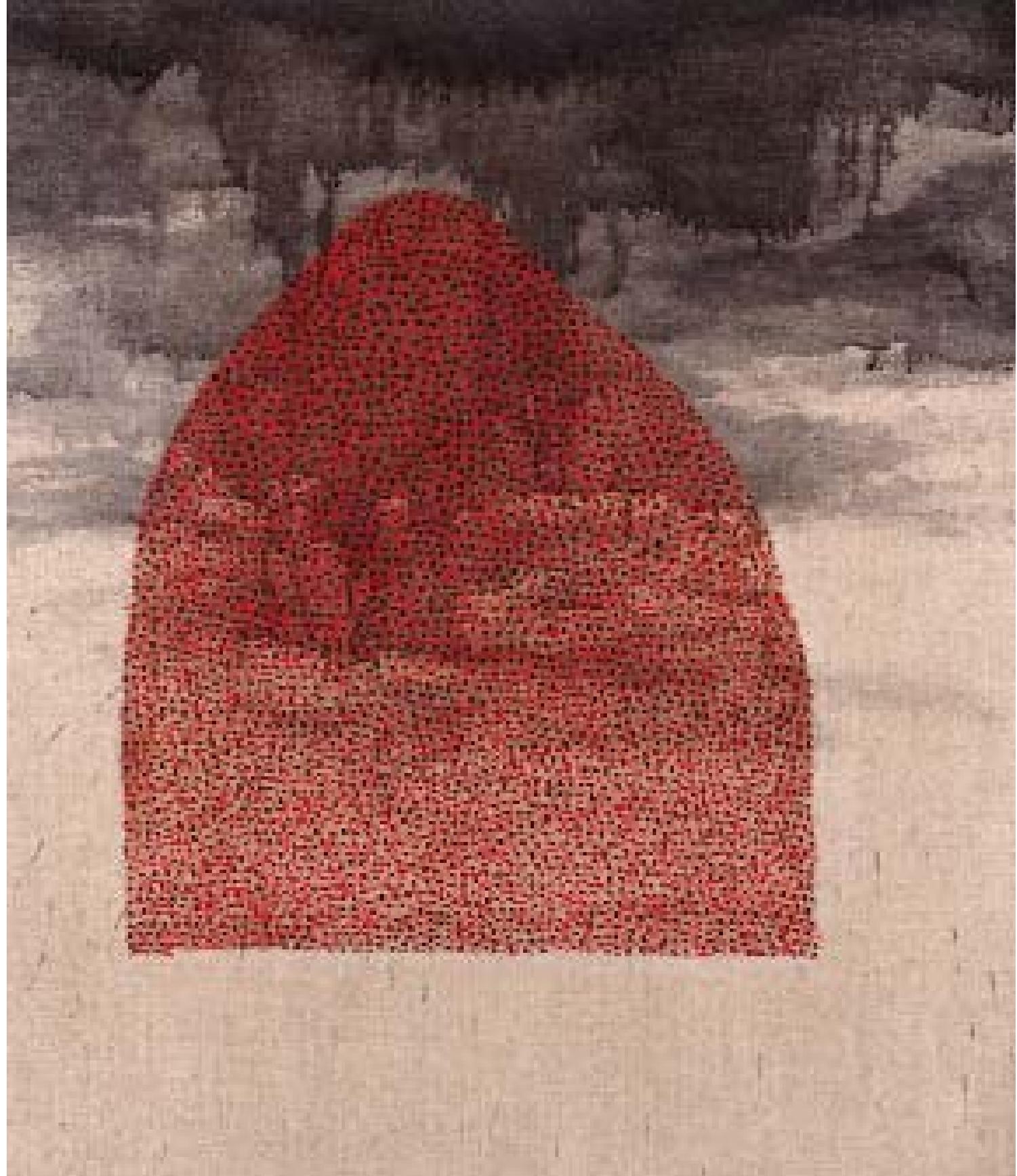
This project has been funded by the Research School of Humanities and the Drill Hall Gallery at ANU and we especially thank the Director of the Research School of Humanities, Professor Howard Morphy, as well as the Head of the Humanities Research Centre, Dr Debjani Ganguly, for their support. I extend my special personal thanks to Nancy Sever, Director of the Drill Hall Gallery, who has been a warm supporter of this project from the beginning eight years ago. I also particularly thank Anthony Oates, Exhibitions Officer and the rest of the Drill Hall Gallery team. I extend my thanks to the Freilich Foundation for the study of Tolerance and Bigotry within the Research School of Humanities and to Herbert and Valmae Freilich and to Freilich Executive Fellow Renata Grossi. Research for the project has been undertaken on two Australian Research Council grants (an ARC Discovery grant and an ARC Linkages International grant). Aspects of the

larger project have been supported by the ARC's Asia-Pacific Futures Research Network. The exhibition is also part of two extensive cross-disciplinary networks at ANU: the 'Cultures of Human Rights Network' (CHuRN) and the newly formed Asian Cultural Studies Network, and has received support from scholars across the University. The artists, scholars, students and human rights specialists and practitioners who have participated in this project over the years have greatly informed and enriched our study. Of course this project owes its greatest debt to the more than fifty artists shown in the four exhibitions.

CAROLINE TURNER

- ¹ Costas Douzinas, *The End of Human Rights: Critical Legal Thought at the Turn of the Century*, Hart Publishing, Oxford, 2000, p. 2.
- ² The previous exhibitions were: *Witnessing to Silence: Art and Human Rights* at the Drill Hall Gallery and School of Art Gallery, ANU and the Canberra Contemporary Art Space in 2003 (curated by Caroline Turner, Nancy Sever, David Williams and Christine Clark), which included works by: Juan Davila, Fiona Foley, Alfredo Jaar, Guan Wei, Pat HOFFIE, William Kentridge, Nalini Malani, Luc Tuymans, Christian Boltanski, Michel Tuffery, Dadang Christanto, Nindityo Adipurnomo, Mella Jaarsma, Santiago Bose and Michael Mel; *Future Tense: Security and Human Rights* at the School of Art Gallery, Griffith University in 2005 (curated by Pat HOFFIE and Caroline Turner), which included works by: Guan Wei, Saira Wasim, Dadang Christanto, Wong Hoy Cheong, Tran Luong, Ex de Medici, Gordon Bennett and John Pule; and *Thresholds of Tolerance* at the School of Art Gallery, ANU in 2007 (curated by David Williams and Caroline Turner), which included works by: Jon Cattapan, Pat HOFFIE, Dadang Christanto, Julie Gough, Michael Mel, Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, proppaNOW (Jennifer Herd, Tony Albert, Vernan Ah Kee and Richard Bell), and the groups Culture Kitchen, Taring Padi and Gembel. The catalogues for these exhibitions can be found at website: <http://www.anu.edu.au/hrc/research/ahr.php>
Recovering Lives is curated at the Drill Hall Gallery by Nancy Sever and Caroline Turner with a complementary exhibition also called *Recovering Lives* at the School of Art Gallery, ANU (curated by Caroline Turner and David Williams). Artists in the School of Art exhibition are: Tushar Joag, William Yang, Fatima Killeen, Katsushige Nakahashi, the Burma group and a collaboration of young artists from Australia, Indonesia and East Timor who form the groups Culture Kitchen, Taring Padi and Gembel.
- ³ Christine Chinkin, 'The Language of Human Rights Law', in Caroline Turner and Nancy Sever (eds.), *Witnessing to Silence: Art and Human Rights*, Australian National University, 2003, pp. 13–15.
- ⁴ Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Museums and late Democracy', *Humanities Research*, vol IX, no 1, 2002, unpaginated, website: http://www.anu.edu.au/hrc/publications/hr/issue_1_2002/article02/htm (consulted 5 May 2008).
- ⁵ Kevin Bales, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*, University of California Press, 2000.
- ⁶ Quoted on *Free the Slaves*, website: <http://www.freetheslaves.net/> (consulted 5 May 2008).
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ Hilary Charlesworth speaking at the Humanities Research Centre, ANU, 2001.
- ⁹ Speaking at the Documenta XI conference in India May 2001 Barbara Stafford looked at re-examining 'the complex (rhetoric/aesthetic) of analogy' to develop a 'liquid third space ("in betweenness") which fosters the emergence of relations', website: <http://www.documenta.de/data/english/platform2/index.html> (consulted 6 January 2003).
- ¹⁰ Chinkin, 'The Language of Human Rights Law', p. 14. See also Caroline Turner, 'Art and Images', *Oxford Encyclopedia of Human Rights*, forthcoming.
- ¹¹ Santiago Bose, 'A savage look at Indigenous art' reprinted from Wayne Baerwaldt 'Memories of Overdevelopment', (1998), website: <http://www.cpcabrisbane.org/Kasama/2002/V16n4/Bose.htm> (consulted 20 June 2003). Bose died 2002 but was represented posthumously in the 2003 exhibition.
- ¹² Conference convened by Cassandra Pybus, Paul Arthur and Caroline Turner, Research School of Humanities, ANU and National Museum of Australia, 6–8 August 2008.
- ¹³ Denise Salvestro, Interview with Janet Laurence, website: <http://www.galeriedusseldorf.com.au/GDArtists/LaurenceJanet/JLawrence.html#interview> (*sic*) (consulted 14 July 2008).

opposite: Dadang Christanto, *Gathering* (panel 9), 2008, acrylic on Belgian linen, nine panels, 102 x 83 cm each. Courtesy the artist.



HIDDEN LIVES AND MEMORIES

*My ancestors talk to me in dangling myths.
Each word a riddle, each dream heirless.
On sunny days I bury words.
They put out roots and coil around forgotten syntax.
Next spring a full blown anecdote will sprout.¹*

The aim of this exhibition is to explore ways of recovering hidden and forgotten lives through visual art. It brings together visual autobiography and the academic interest in theories of deferred or hidden meaning. Two of the artists in this exhibition, Julie Dowling and Dadang Christanto, approach their work from the perspective of personal alienation and loss. Julie Dowling's paintings explore her experiences and identity, and create a sense of belonging while living at the margins of the wider community. Dadang Christanto's self-expression is a means of conveying the complexities of suffering and repressed memories. The other two artists, Janet Laurence and Janenne Eaton, explore hidden lives and memories from the position of external observers. Janet Laurence's glasshouse series takes as its subject a specialised form of architecture that enables us to transcend the normal limitations of nature. Janenne Eaton focuses on the 'memorial avenues' in which there is a tree to commemorate each soldier who fell in Australia's wars of the 20th century.

By their nature, traumatic memories are difficult to articulate in words alone. Non-verbal expression can facilitate the organisation of memory and hence the creation of a coherent narrative². The very act of creating images assists in overcoming painful emotions and memories. At the personal level, visual art can express the ambiguous or contradictory feelings and perceptions that invariably surround distressing events. At the broader level, counter-images and counter-narratives help resist society's efforts to air-brush its record of alienating and dispossessing segments of its own people. With distance, history becomes myth, so it is essential that a counter-history be laid down.

Julie Dowling is one of Australia's leading contemporary indigenous artists. She has attained national and international standing and her works are included in more than 200 public and private collections in Australia, the United States, England, Germany and Switzerland.

Drawing on the oral history of her people and using the European tradition of portraiture, Dowling depicts family and community members painted from life or old photos and set in the context of the painful and shameful history that was inflicted on them: Mary Dowling, who was taken away from her mother and placed in an orphanage where she was trained as a washer woman; great grandmother Mary Oliver, who delivered her babies in the bush using traditional birthing techniques; great aunt May, who was grudgingly accepted as a white woman and never spoke of her early life as a quarter-caste on the east coast of Australia. Some of the works are based on old family photos, others are what the artist calls 'a stylised fantasy of what my elders must have looked like.'³

Julie Dowling blends European and Aboriginal styles, Catholic iconography and indigenous vernacular, to tell the story of her family and her people in a way that can be read even by viewers with a monocultural frame of reference. These are lives of rejection and abuse; generations blighted by dispossession, racism and social alienation; pain and suffering writ large on their sad, haunting faces. Dowling's art is intended to 'strengthen identity, culture and connections to country.'⁴

Dadang Christanto is a leading contemporary artist born in Indonesia and resident in Australia since 1999. He studied art at Yogyakarta where he worked with other artists and community groups across the visual and performing arts.

In 1965, for reasons still unknown to the family, Dadang's father disappeared without trace, presumably murdered along with many others in the purges that were happening at the time. For the eight year old Dadang it was a deeply traumatic event that formed his world view. He refers to the memory of his father's abduction as a darkness that he must carry in his head⁵. It became a major source of his artistic inspiration⁶.

Through his painting, drawing, performance, sculpture and installation he explores the nexus between power and violence, speaking eloquently and empathetically for the victims of political oppression, social injustice, and persecution because of religious beliefs or ethnicity. His work is a criticism of systemic, state sponsored violence, wherever it occurs, and challenges the silence, voluntary or enforced, of all those who stand by as onlookers. It fills a historical void created by an almost total lack of non-official visual or documentary evidence of such events. It continues to demonstrate the subversive power of art and its ability to generate public awareness of that which some governments are trying to suppress.

His paintings in this exhibition are powerful representations of traumatic memories that transcend national boundaries. As David Bell states, 'perceptions of the past, and especially the traumatic past, play a pivotal role in shaping many different aspects of contemporary global politics'⁷.

Janet Laurence is best known for her site-specific installations placed in several iconic public spaces in Australia. She is one of Australia's leading contemporary artists.

Laurence's installations explore ideas of memory, perception and the environment through a juxtaposition of materials and images. She selects her materials according to the insights they bring to a particular project and over the years these have included glass, perspex, minerals, ash, wax, fur, photos, poetry texts and plants. Combining organic elements with architectural materials, she creates a meeting point between the natural and built environments. The natural process of change, especially alchemical transformation, is a recurring theme in her work, along with history and memory. Thus, the glasshouse becomes 'an almost shamanic site of invocation where... endangered species can take on an imaginary existence'⁸.

In choosing the subject of glasshouses and regeneration for this exhibition, the artist has drawn together her profound concern for the environment and her deep understanding and appreciation of architecture.

In so doing she has reached far back into history. The practice of growing plants in environmentally controlled spaces has existed since Roman times, when vegetables were cultivated under frames glazed with thin, oiled cloth. The design of glasshouses developed rapidly during the 17th century in Europe as technology produced better glass and construction techniques improved. The largest, the glasshouse at the Palace of Versailles, was 150 meters long and 14 meters high. Even larger glasshouses were built in the 19th century, most notably the conservatory at Kew Gardens and the Crystal Palace in London.

Glasshouses bear witness to the destruction and despoilation of the flora of one part of the world so that it can be studied, classified and cultivated under totally artificial conditions in another part of the world. The work in this exhibition impels us to reflect on the intensive care and support that our fragile environment needs in order to survive. If we choose to ignore this situation, glasshouses will become the repositories of the history and memories of a natural order that we have irremediably violated.

Leading contemporary artist Janenne Eaton has been exhibiting for three decades. She holds a degree in Prehistory and Art History from the Australian National University and a Masters in fine arts from RMIT. She is head of painting at the Victorian College of the Arts. This academic and teaching background places her in a unique position to interpret Australia's colonial and twentieth century past through the visual arts.

The subject of one series of works in this exhibition is the 'avenues of honour', the rows of carefully planted trees on either side of the road that one suddenly and unexpectedly encounters along rural highways in Victoria and New South Wales. Humans have always altered their natural environment to suit their economic needs as well as to express themselves through aesthetic statements. The vocabulary of Eaton's works speaks of this imposition of the patterns of man upon those of the landscape. Memorial avenues bring together land and history, the two wellsprings from which a nation draws those elements that give it continuity from generation to generation. As Janine Haddow describes it, the natural landscape becomes the cultural landscape, a repository of memory and meaning⁹. It becomes a part of the iconography of nationhood.

These are not memorials to great generals or great battles or great armies. Through them the common man becomes visible and for the brief moment it takes us to drive along these avenues the common man occupies centre stage in the historical narrative. Hence they are characterised by an egalitarianism so beloved of Australians. They do not differentiate between military ranks. They are labelled not by order of rank but in alphabetical order. Each soldier from the district in which the memorial drive has been planted is commemorated by a tree and a plaque bearing his name. They are a populist response to the ultimate sacrifice paid by a community's youth.

In time, when, inevitably, the highways are enlarged and relocated these avenues will be marginalised. The power of the symbol will diminish. Less frequently tended, less frequently visited, they will eventually become decommissioned memorials, destined to be lost to history along with the names of those whom they commemorate.

The works in this exhibition, like Picasso's *Guernica*, 'allow us to move back and forth between imagination and reason, thought and sensibility, memory and understanding, without imposing one faculty upon another'¹⁰. They demonstrate how visual art can be a catalyst for enhanced intra-societal interaction and exchange, thus expanding the degree of understanding amongst a society's component elements. They show how the power of art resides in its capacity to play a role in the processes of social change and to be a tool for advancing social justice. And they show how its role in identity formation and in the re-stating of identity through remembering ultimately makes it a vehicle for empowerment.

NANCY SEVER

- ¹ Diana der Hovanessian, 'Learning an Ancestral Tongue' in M.J. Fischer, *Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1986, p. 5.
- ² Lily Casura, *Making Art from War. Art Therapy as a Treatment for Combat Veterans*, American Art Therapy Association, Reston Virginia, 2008, cited on website: <http://www.healingcombattrauma.com/2008/05>
- ³ Artist's statement, *Nyorn series*, courtesy of Brigitte Brown Gallery, Melbourne, June 2008.
- ⁴ Carol Dowling, 'To arise from sorrow', catalogue essay, April 2008.
- ⁵ Cited in Alison Gray, 'Dadang Christanto: a calling to account', *Realtime*, no. 56, Aug-Sep 2003, unpaginated.
- ⁶ Interview with Carla Bianpoen. *The Jakarta Post*. 1 July 2007.
- ⁷ David Bell (ed.), *Memory, trauma and world politics*, Macmillan, London, 2006, p. 29.
- ⁸ Sally Couacaud, 'Janet Laurence. The Glasshouse Effect', catalogue essay, September 2005.
- ⁹ Janine Haddow, 'Avenues of honour in Victoria', Honours thesis, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, 1987, p. 56.
- ¹⁰ Roland Bleiker, *The aesthetic turn in international political theory*, Millennium, London, 2001, pp. 519-20.



Janenne Eaton, *Untitled*, 2008, enamel on canvas, 75 x 150 cm. Courtesy the artist and Helen Maxwell Gallery.



DADANG CHRISTANTO: MEASURING THE TEARS

Dadang Christanto's art is about recovering lives in the context of universal human suffering and violence and that is how it has been interpreted by audiences on many continents who have been moved by his works. But it is also about an intensely personal journey to recover a life – that of his own father.

His father's exact fate is unknown but it was shared by hundreds of thousands, perhaps as many as two million Indonesians, slaughtered in the 'killing times' of November 1965 – March 1966 as suspected Communists, although Dadang's father, who ran a small business, was never a member of the Communist party.¹ Nor is it only their graves that are unknown: the identities of most of the victims remain unrecorded; the perpetrators have never been identified, let alone brought to justice; and it is not even possible 'to arrive at a fair judgment of what drove the killings and who should be responsible', according to Indonesian historian Hermawan Sulistyono in his study 'The Forgotten Years.'² Dadang himself speaks of this 'horrifying and disturbing event in the history of Indonesia', which 'carries permanent wounds in our heart and memory ... it is fresh in our memory because it holds bitterness so very deep, so dark in the history of the Indonesian nation as the blood and tears of its victims were never measured ...'³ Dadang's father, Tan Ek Tjioe, was taken away by night by one of the murder teams, while Dadang, then eight years old, and his siblings slept. It has thus become his personal mission to ensure that the years are not forgotten, the blood and tears of these and other victims of violence are measured and their lives recorded through the medium of his art.

It is a mission that has led to Dadang's being hailed internationally as 'the artist of conscience' in the many exhibitions in which he has shown in many countries. In 1993 his installation in the first Asia-Pacific Triennial at the Queensland Art Gallery greatly affected audiences in Brisbane. Dadang was still living in Indonesia at the time and had of necessity to be imprecise about the actual subject of his work which referred to human rights violations in Indonesia and in East Timor. It was entitled *For those: Who have been killed, Who are poor, Who are suffering, Who are oppressed, Who are voiceless, Who are powerless, Who are burdened, Who are victims of violence, Who are victims of a dupe*. The Brisbane audiences did not in fact tend to connect the installation with events in Indonesia: the floor beneath the art work was covered day after day with offerings of flowers and letters reflecting the grief of the viewers over personal sorrows, massacres in the former Yugoslavia and tragedies nearer home, including the recent death in Brisbane in police custody of a young Aboriginal dancer, Daniel Yok.

Dadang's great sculptural installation *Mereka Memberi Kesaksian/They give evidence* (a component subsequently bought by the Art Gallery of NSW) had the same affect on Japanese audiences in 1996. They also spontaneously left flowers and poems about universal suffering. This installation was a group of larger than life size sculptures, terracotta figures standing in formal lines holding in their outstretched arms bundles that suggest the bodies of victims, perhaps children. In New York in 1996 his work for the *Traditions/Tensions* exhibition at the Asia Society, consisting of a pyramid of terracotta heads, again suggested to audiences the concept of universal victims but also the Cambodian genocide of 1975–79 and other tragic genocides in the world's history. But its symbolism also referred directly to the Indonesian

opposite: Dadang Christanto, *Gathering* (panel 1), 2008, acrylic on Belgian linen, nine panels, 102 x 83 cm each. Courtesy the artist.

massacres of 1965–1966, evoking the memory of the severed heads which Hermawan Sulistyono saw 'floating in the Bengawan River almost on a daily basis' during the Killing Times.⁴

Two other monumental works used larger than life size figures: *1001 Manusia Tanah/Earth (Soil) people* (1996) and *Api di Bulan Mei 1998/Fire in May 1998*. In the first, displayed at Ancol Marina Beach in Jakarta in 1996, the figures represent displaced human beings, eloquently expressing communal grief at the loss of their farming lands to development. The 1000 male and female figures (the artist himself is the thousand and first) simply stand in the sea, arms dangling helplessly at their sides, facing the beach, confronting the beachgoers, amusement park visitors and fishermen with the symbolism of human beings displaced in the interests of development. His most emotionally searing work may have been his installation and performance for the third Asia-Pacific Triennial in 1999, *Api di Bulan Mei 1998/Fire in May 1998* which treated tragic events in Indonesia and also East Timor in 1998 and where the *papier mâché* figures were burned as part of the performance.

Dadang Christanto has been a human rights activist since his early years at the College of Art Yogyakarta. He has worked with organisations committed to social justice and with the Bengkel Theatre founded by poet and activist W.S. Rendra who was imprisoned for many years. Dadang was associated in the 1980s with the Indonesian new art movement, young artists who challenged the existing art and political establishments. Being a human rights activist was dangerous in Indonesia under the Soeharto regime as was his own personal history. Dadang himself did not publicly reveal this personal history until after the fall of Soeharto and until he moved to Australia in 1999.

In the performance which he gave during the exhibition *Witnessing to Silence* in 2003 and in two different versions in 2004 and 2005, *Litsus*, Dadang recalled the silence surrounding the killings and the stigma in Indonesia attached to the families of those who disappeared. They could never publicly speak of the dead and of the complicity of a whole community in that suppression of memory. In the performance the audience must either stand by or participate in violence by throwing missiles at Dadang and, in the first performance of this work in 2003, at his young son Tukgunung Tan Aren, who was then the same age, eight years old, as Dadang when his father disappeared. The two sat silently, their heads bowed. In the second part of this performance as part of the 'Art and Human Rights' project 2005, *Searching displaces bones*, the audience witnessed a shrouded body slowly unwrapped as in an archaeological excavation and subjected to forensic examination by a young girl, Kilau Setinggi Timur, who represents the new generation searching for the past but also another generation of possible victims. The work was inspired, the artist has said, by seeing the bodies carried out from the excavations at Srebrenica in the former Yugoslavia but as well by the thought that one day his father's body may also be found.

In 1999 Dadang began his ongoing *Count Project*. He has explained that he had begun the work in December 1999, when the world was preparing to celebrate the onset of a new millennium. He felt with reason 'worried about what has happened in the twentieth century. In the past century there have been massacres everywhere, bloodshed everywhere. Violence just to make people suffer'. And the fact was that



Dadang Christanto, *Head in between mountains*, 2008, acrylic on Belgian linen, 137 x 167 cm. Courtesy the artist.



Dadang Christanto, *Pile*, 2008, acrylic on Belgian linen, 137 x 167 cm. Courtesy the artist.

'we have always failed to stop violence, instead we have more violence.' He had accordingly been 'counting the victims of violence' in the project. 'The images of different sized heads or even the small dots in my drawings represent the victims.'⁵

This vision of remembering and of a memorial for victims of suffering was expressed in *Hujan Merah/Red Rain*, displayed at the School of Art Gallery at The Australian National University in 2003, as part of the exhibition *Witnessing to Silence* and subsequently bought by the National Gallery of Australia. *Red Rain* was allusive, a universal memorial, intended to make people think about their own humanity. There were 1965 drawings of faces mounted on the ceiling of the gallery, in obvious reference to the dreadful year of the killings. The faces were sketched on Chinese joss paper, the medium used in Buddhist ceremonies for commemoration of the spirits of the dead who in this case, as Alison Gray observes, 'are still with us because they have never been allowed a memorial nor been written into history books'.⁶ They were sealed with plastic, symbolising official identity cards, required by the state to authenticate personal identity. But personal identity is not an issue in death. Each head, as curator Hendro Wiyanto described, 'was presented with a line of red thread originating from a dot or stroke of black ... "the red", in Dadang's words, "are wounds, the black is obscurity, the history that is obscure, the evidence that is black..."' Perhaps the most direct and poignant expression of the head as the site of memory is his installation *Heads from the North*, of sixty six heads of patinated bronze, floating in the ornamental lake in the grounds of the National Gallery of Australia. The faces of the heads are those of his father and mother. The heads were also the most potent symbol in his poignant painting commemorating the victims of the 2004 tsunami. In the series *Kepala dan Emas/Heads and Trees* his paintings depict the trees as weeping, mourning the dead and the violence committed under their branches, the raindrops on the leaves representing their tears. 'The trees remain tortured', Dadang told Christine Clark, 'as they stand silently where the humans were tortured and killed ...'⁸ The tree, as Astri Wright explains, has been from 'historical times to the present ... a motif of central importance in Indonesian art! It is 'a symbol of transition, its roots firmly and deeply planted in the ground and its branches reaching into the sky, supporting birds, common symbols of the soul in its ascent upwards! And the tree is 'closely connected with the symbolism of the mountain ...'⁹

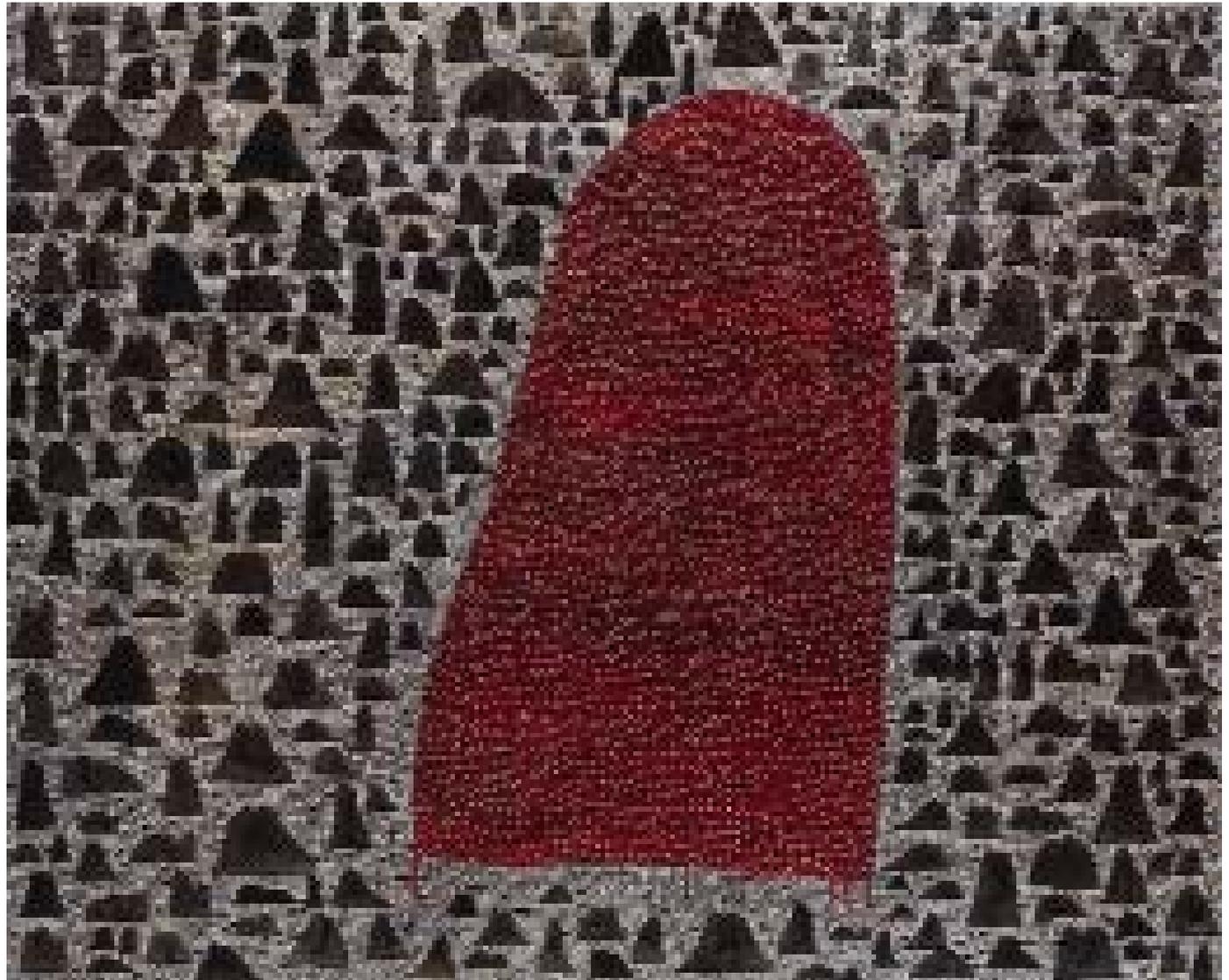
In this exhibition the mountains represent a dramatic new *démarche* in Dadang's art. The mountain has a special meaning and deep spiritual significance in Indonesian culture, especially in Javanese and Balinese culture and in both Hindu and Buddhist religions.¹⁰ Indonesia is a place of active volcanoes and indeed, I first met Dadang when selecting works for the first Asia-Pacific Triennial at his house on the slopes of the active volcano Mt Merapi in Central Java. Dadang also explains that Indonesians use the term 'mountain' to express a huge accumulation of something. And the huge accumulation in these paintings is the accumulation of victims of violence, 'from minute to minute, from hour to hour ... gathering together to share their suffering and to make a contribution to open what happened in the past'. The dominant form has changed from a series of heads to a series of mountains. The heads in his previous paintings have become undifferentiated dots: the Count Project has become a Project Uncounted and Uncountable. The tragic significance of the images is made the more telling by the beautiful colours with which some of them are presented. Dadang had used many colours in his paintings when he studied at University. However, he

used a severely restricted palette when he commenced work on the theme of the Killing Times, with the colours having particular significance for the content of the paintings, using red for violence, brown for dried blood and black for dark memories, relieved occasionally by gold as a symbol of enlightenment." But he is now deploying the full range of colours, gorgeous, delicate and iridescent, recovering the lives by preserving the memory of those who may have been allowed no other memorial.

I would like to thank the artist and Glen St J. Barclay for help in preparing this essay.

CAROLINE TURNER

- ¹ Caroline Turner interview with the artist in 2004. See also Caroline Turner, 'Wounds in our hearts' in Kathryn Robinson (ed.), *Asian and Pacific Cosmopolitans: Self and Subject in Motion*, Palgrave, London, 2007, pp. 77-99. For a discussion of Indonesian contemporary art see Caroline Turner, 'Indonesia: Art, freedom, human rights and engagement with the West', in Caroline Turner (ed.), *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific*, Pandanus Books, Canberra, 2005, pp. 196-217.
- ² Hermawan Sulistyono, 'The Forgotten Years: the missing history of Indonesia's mass slaughter Jombang-Kediri 1965-1966', PhD dissertation, Arizona State University, 1997, UMI, p. 51. See also Robert Cribb (ed.), *The Indonesian Killings of 1965-1966: studies from Java and Bali*, Clayton, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990, p. 22.
- ³ Dadang Christanto, *Kengerian Tak Terucapkan/The Unspeakable Horror*, Mahameu Offset Printing, Jakarta, 2002, p. 29.
- ⁴ Sulistyono, 'The Forgotten Years', p. 205.
- ⁵ Charles Darwin University, Newsroom, <http://www.cdu.edu.au/newsroom/stories/2003/april/count/>
- ⁶ Alison Gray, 'Looking Elsewhere', *Artlink*, vol 25, no 2, pp. 37-38.
- ⁷ Christanto, *Kengerian*, p. 28.
- ⁸ Christine Clark, 'Dadang Christanto: keeper of memories', in Caroline Turner and Nancy Sever (eds), *Witnessing to Silence: art and human rights*, Australian National University, Canberra, 2003, pp. 52-55.
- ⁹ Astri Wright, *Soul, Spirit and Mountain: Preoccupations of Contemporary Indonesian Painters*, OUP, Kuala Lumpur, 1994, pp. 38-46. Wright points out the mountain symbol is found in prehistoric art as well as in Hindu-Buddhist iconography and is embedded in weaving and cloth as well as wood, metal and stone as a representation of this and the spiritual world.
- ¹⁰ For a discussion of the symbol of the mountain in Indonesian culture see Wright, *Soul, Spirit and Mountain*, and Joseph Fischer, (ed.), *Modern Indonesian Art, Three Generations of Tradition and Change, 1945-1990*, Singapore National Printers Ltd, Singapore, 1990. Fischer notes that the ninth-century temple of Borobudur is a representation in stone of the cosmic mountain found throughout South and Southeast Asia in traditional stories and that to 'understand the meaning, symbolism and historic importance of the mountain is to begin to comprehend Indonesian belief and culture and particularly that of Java and Bali', and that in Central Java *Gunung Merapi* (Fire Mountain) are 'symbols of the real and other worlds, of life and death, of decay and rebirth, of violence and serenity' (p. 14).
- ¹¹ Communication with the artist June 2008. He also notes a concurrent series focussing on batik - *batik terbakar* may have affected him as the batik from North Java (influenced by Chinese culture) has bright colours.



Dadang Christanto, *Give testimony*, 2008, acrylic on Belgian linen, 137 x 167 cm. Courtesy the artist.



Julie Dowling, *Matriarch: Auntie Mollie*, 2002, acrylic, red ochre and plastic on canvas, 150 x 120 cm. Private collection.

THE ART OF MISSING PERSONS: LOSS AND RECOVERY IN THE PORTRAITS OF JULIE DOWLING

Since the age of seven, Badimaya artist Julie Dowling has sought to recover and record the lives of her extended Aboriginal family through the art of portraiture. Her work blends personal and political observations with biographical research based on archival texts, government records, family photographs, and oral histories.¹ Each painting adds another layer to the collective biography of her family and contributes to the wider narrative of the Indigenous history of the Mid-West region of Western Australia. Through her commitment to story telling Dowling has become an important spokeswoman for the Badimaya community. Along the way she has also become one of Australia's foremost contemporary artists.

Dowling is a consummate story teller. The stories she tells – of dispossession, stolen children, social alienation, connection to kin and country, and cultural survival – are not unique to her family. Strikingly similar stories are heard in Indigenous households throughout the country. For Dowling, the telling of these stories is an essential component of her practice:

I'm beginning to understand that art is all about story ... or breaking apart a story to tell something new. I think I'm trying so hard to bring about family unity because [we are] breaking apart and our language is dying. People in my family are drifting away from their understanding of environment and are becoming stressed and unhappy in their lives ... something is missing and it hurts. ...²

Many of Dowling's subjects are missing persons – relatives and community members who should have been present in their family's lives, whose stories should be known, but who were absent as a result of the Western Australian Government policy of removing Aboriginal children of 'mixed blood' from their families to institutional care.³ It should be understood that the Aboriginal communities of the southwest and southern regions of the Mid-West were at the epicentre of colonial dispossession in Western Australia. The collateral damage of having been removed or having had children taken was a raft of trauma-related behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse, violence, and mental illness that further alienated people from their families.

The assimilation policies of the Western Australian Government and the covert role of the Catholic Church in breaking up Aboriginal families is a recurring theme in the artist's work. Dowling's grandmother, Mary 'Mollie' Dowling (*née* Latham), was removed from her family in the Gascoyne region of the Mid-West and taken to a Catholic mission in Perth. The artist writes:

The Catholic Church was such a great influence because my grandmother was taken away from her mother and placed in an orphanage in the assimilation era. What I grew up with was inculcation through the grace of God but found it very difficult to understand so I started to paint about it and to understand what it meant for me and my family to be taken away from culture and community through a violent act.⁴

Dowling was raised in the Roman Catholic Church and attended a succession of Catholic schools. Her childhood was marked by a tension between finding acceptance and communion within the Church and

the growing awareness that this same institution had 'stolen' her grandmother and denied the sovereignty and right to religious freedom of her grandmother's people.

Dowling remembers:

*There were nuns who knew my Nana, and my Mum, and us. We were bundled into this sort of colonial theme of the colonial church, which is really weird. It was like we were owned by the Church. ...*⁵

This tension between her Aboriginal heritage and her Catholic upbringing permeates much of her work. As curator Jeanette Horn has noted, these two influences work in tandem 'to produce paintings in which the life of Indigenous communities and the history of Christianity in Western Australia are brought into powerful juxtaposition'⁶

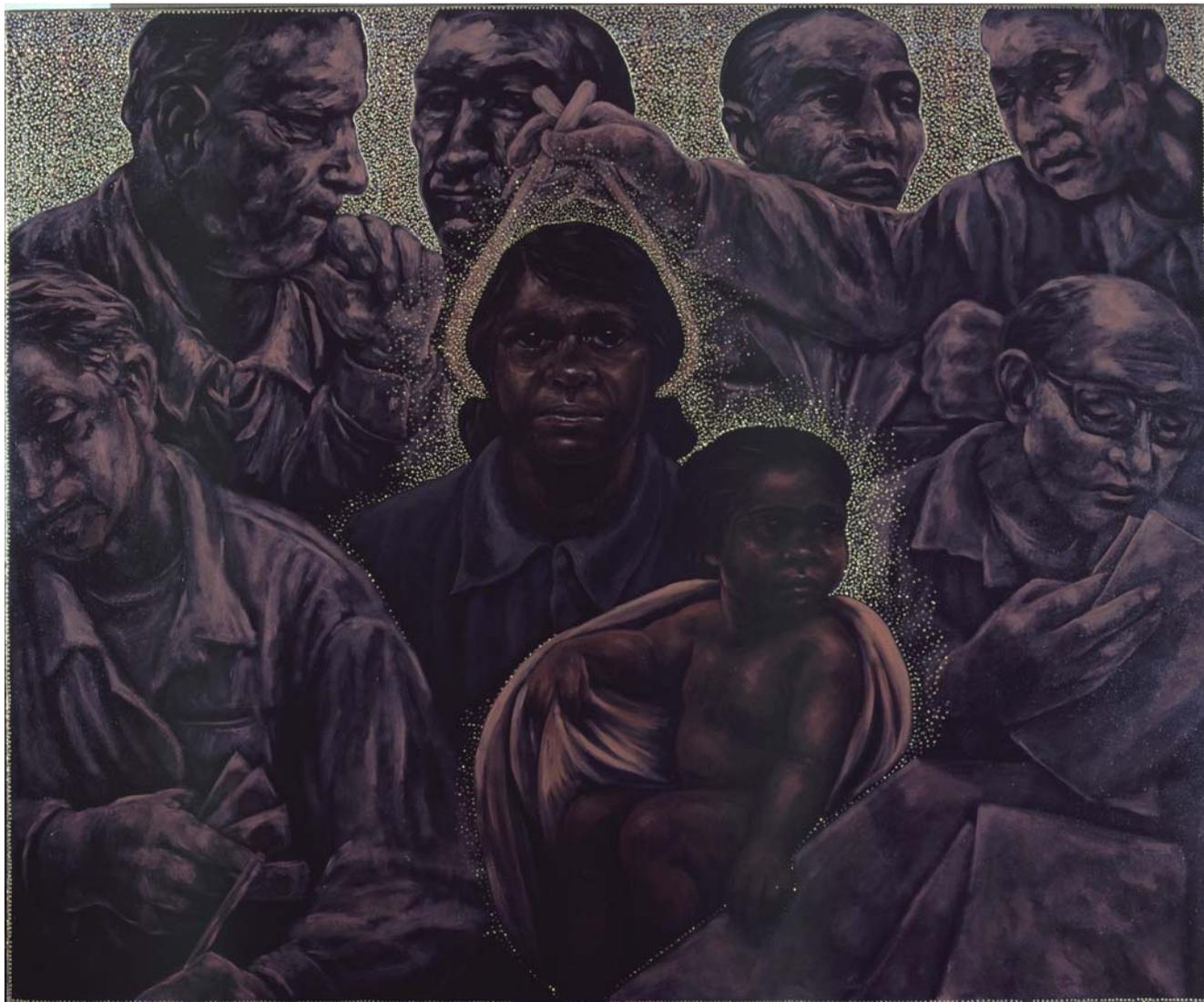
In Dowling's 2001 work *Ethnocentric*, for example, the artist depicts an Aboriginal woman and her baby in the renaissance style of Madonna and Child. At first glance the 'black Madonna' seems to be surrounded by the usual reliquary of saints. A closer inspection reveals these are not saints but scientists. In the left hand corner of the canvas is written '1/2 1/4 1/8 1/16 1/32 White'. The text refers to the method the State used to designate people's Aboriginal status on a sliding scale from 'pure blood' to 'white'. These calculations were used to determine who would be removed. In the painting one scientist holds callipers to measure the mother's head. The callipers form a halo marking her martyrdom to the science of eugenics.

By inserting a black face into a traditionally white Christian milieu Dowling plays on the tradition of the 'black Madonna'. Placing Aboriginal subjects within the Christian image which most strongly idealises the sanctity of the mother and child bond, she highlights the complicity of the Church in the breaking of that bond and the failure of missions to adequately protect the Aboriginal children placed in their care.

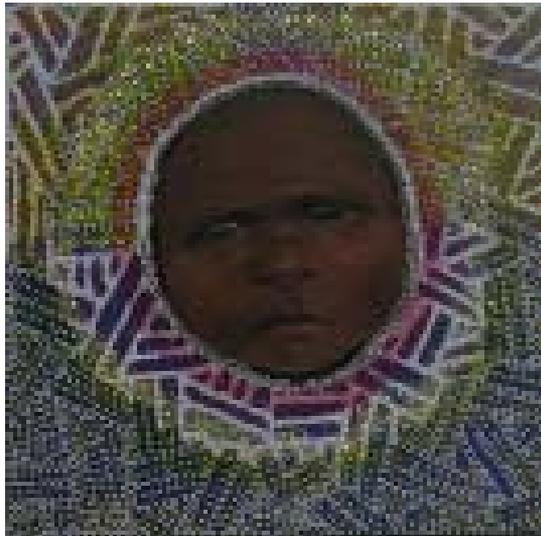
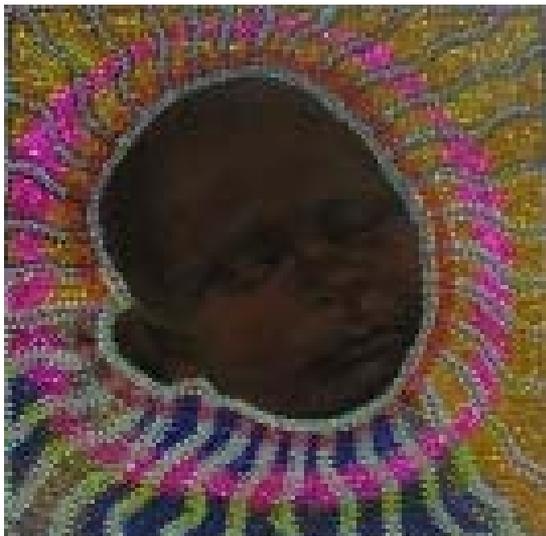
In a similar manner the artist draws on the Catholic iconography of her childhood in her 2005 *Nyorn* series. In this series of ten small works, Dowling portrays her maternal great aunts and uncles as Orthodox/Catholic icons. She first began painting icons in the mid 1990s as an act of reconciliation:

*My first reason for doing 'icons' was to document the people who had been taken away from their families with the Catholic Church in order to heal both ... both the church and the people. ... I found that they ended up being something more about letting people know about the individuals as people to be contemplated.*⁷

In these works, the artist imagines her grandmother and her nine great aunts and uncles as little babies. The artist has created a halo around each face using multi-coloured dot designs in the art style of the Western Desert. By rendering the dots in gold, silver, and pearlescent paint she creates the illusion of a richly jewelled canvas.



Julie Dowling, *Ethnocentric*, 2001, acrylic, red ochre and plastic on canvas, 100 x 120 cm. Private collection.



clockwise from top left: Julie Dowling, *Nyorn: George, Mary, Violet, Edward*, 2005, acrylic, red ochre and plastic on canvas, 30 x 30 cm each. Milson collection.

In each work the baby's face radiates from the canvas. According to the Canons of the Orthodox Church, an icon represents a sanctified or deified person who, in traditional depictions, is suffused with the Holy Spirit. Through the use of dot-painting she replaces the Holy Spirit with spirits of the Dreamtime. Her deliberate use of Aboriginal language in the title and accompanying text reminds us that Aboriginal spirituality is 60,000 years old, and that within Aboriginal religious traditions there is an equivalent pantheon of 'holy' men and women.

Dowling writes of the *Nyorn* series:

*This series is a celebration of the traditional births of my Grandmother and her siblings. 'Nyorn' is a Noongar expression referring to something that is at one extreme endearing and at the other, something to be pitied. These images are of a stylized fantasy of what my elders must have looked like as little Nunifas (babies) as newborns.*⁸

Each painting is accompanied by a short biography. For the portrait of her Great Uncle George she writes:

*Great Uncle, George Latham, ... the seventh of my great grandmother's children ... was born in the bush at a women's birthing place known as Waddi Forest in the Gascoyne region of Western Australia. Uncle worked all his life in the Gascoyne region. He was a horse whisperer, stockman/drover, prospector, boxer, sprinter and storyteller. He never married but had two children. Uncle passed away late last year at the ripe old age of 90 as a well-respected elder.*⁹

Many of the *Nyorn* babies appear as adults in other paintings. In the *Dispossession* series, for example, Great Uncle George is painted from life. This time we see him as Julie knew him – an old man, with great dignity but also touched by great sadness. On the canvas behind him are written the words 'Give me back my land'. Dowling estimates that she has painted over one hundred portraits of her different family members¹⁰. In each painting another aspect of their life is revealed. She comments:

*I really like contacting that sense of humanity, just the fact that a lot of these people are relatives to me, that they're put into [a] situation where people can actually see them and the stories they have with them. ...*¹¹

Dowling believes that George, her Grandmother, Mollie, and their siblings were separated from each other by their non-Aboriginal father based on the colour of their skin.¹² This issue of having one's Aboriginality defined by skin colour is one that Dowling returns to in several of her paintings. Her 2004 work, *The Brothers (skin)*, for example, highlights the divisions that occur in families of mixed descent. The painting shows two brothers side by side. However, while the darker brother gazes out confidently from the canvas, sure of his identity, his fairer skinned brother looks away as if questioning himself and afraid to challenge the viewer's conception of him.

As the fairest skinned members of her Badimaya family, Julie and Carol experienced racism from 'both sides of the fence'. She states:

[M]e and my sister and my mother were the fairest ones in the family and I've come to know that we're sort of like a litmus test for relationships between Wudjula and Aboriginal people. And that's because we're really on the razor's edge. We actually understand all the tensions that exist between Wudjulas and blackfellas.¹³

As an artist she has used this liminal position to her advantage. In some ways being caught between the two worlds has allowed Dowling to become a cultural ambassador or translator. Her art practice is an attempt to help non-Indigenous people to understand some of the problems facing the Aboriginal community today. Issues such as the divisions within Aboriginal society based on skin colour, the increasing distractions of urban life for young Aboriginal people, and the general breakdown of Aboriginal families as a result of the 'stolen generations' are all of concern in Dowling's work.

In her painting, *The prodigal*, Dowling alludes to the widespread rupture of the Aboriginal family and cultural institutions as a result of the colonial encounter. The image depicts a young woman who is a drug addict. In the exterior landscape surrounding the woman we can see two figures walking away after having helped her 'score'. Distorted emu tracks and everlasting daisies depict the 'hit' or drug rush she is experiencing. The garish exterior is contrasted against a calmer interior landscape which shows a clear blue sky and the central figure of her mother trying to lead her back to the old ways of her people. Dowling comments:

This work concerns the worst of distractions in Wudjula [White] society and how it keeps us from our spirituality and family. The woman in this picture is thinking of returning to her country and is yearning for an escape ... posing the question of whether she will [ever] make that decision to return home.¹⁴

Dowling associates her earliest attempts at portraiture with an attempt to capture the faces and stories of 'missing' people. In a 2002 interview, the artist recalled:

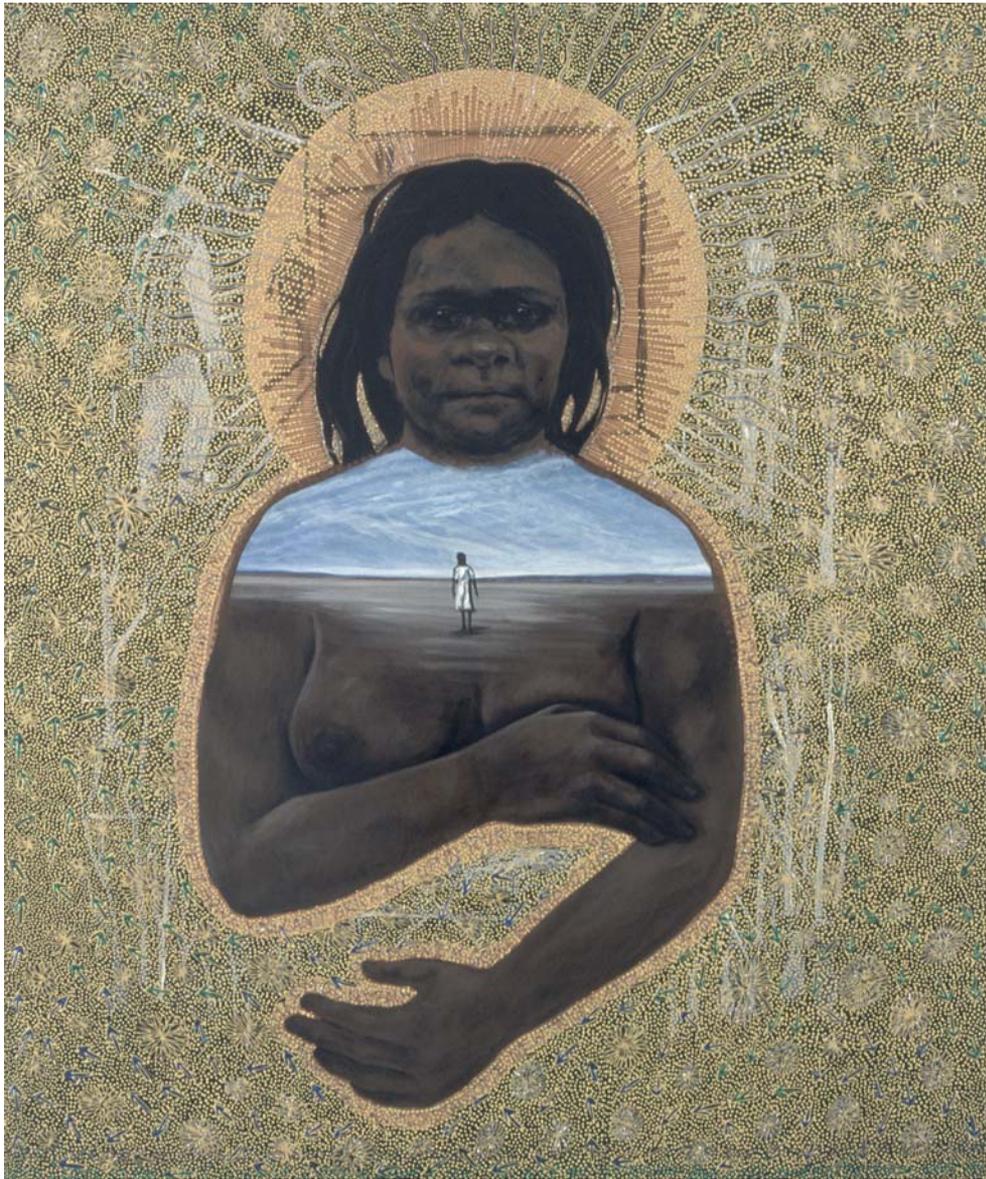
I started doing pictures when we used to live in Armidale, in part of a Homes West block of flats. Being a single parent, Mum sometimes found it pretty hard to make ends meet ... so she begrudgingly used to make her way back to Nana's whenever she was in a pretty bad way.¹⁵

On these long emotionally fraught journeys by train and bus, Dowling's mother would entertain the artist and her twin sister Carol by pointing out people who were related to them along the way. She passed out notepads and encouraged the girls to sketch the people they encountered. Dowling recalls:

The biggest part of the journey was about trying to look out for people who might be related to us. Every time we went out, there was always the hope that people who have been taken away, or people that have



Julie Dowling, *My Great Uncle, George* (*Dispossession* series), 2004, acrylic and red ochre on canvas, 120 x 100 cm. Courtesy Brigitte Braun Gallery, Melbourne.



Julie Dowling, *The prodigal*, 2002, acrylic, red ochre and plastic on canvas, 120 x 100 cm.
Collection of Elizabeth and Hylton Quail.

*been estranged from us ... would suddenly walk up ... in town and Mum's job was to point them out. Early on it became our job as well, so it was part of the kind of connection with us and with her. ...*¹⁶

Thus from the very beginning Dowling's art was an act of recovery, an attempt to gather as many possible fragments of her missing family together to put them together again and to find a space for herself and her sister Carol within the wider family history. She was drawn to the medium of portraiture precisely because of its ability to recover and reinstate its subjects for a wider audience:

*I wanted to do [portraiture] as my main focus because I felt that stories are about people ... literally. Because a human is a contained package and can be introduced to viewers as if they are strangers meeting a new person. ...*¹⁷

As a wider body of work, Dowling's art is an endeavour to recover some of the hidden histories of the Mid-West. By putting a face to the Indigenous history of the region she seeks to animate her family's stories and to bring them alive for non-Indigenous audiences. In introducing her family to us she challenges us to understand their unique experiences and perspective. This is a conscious act of reconciliation. This is Indigenous history looking right at you.

ANNA EDMUNDSON

¹ Dowling writes, 'I take in a lot of oral history through association with my extended family and my sister who does recording. ... I research a line of a story to understand a time in place for historical pictures and I do research in books, archives and photo stock. ...I do interviews over cups of tea, at funerals, at gatherings and rally's, doing research for other people's family tree's and sometimes people come to me with stories ...', Email correspondence, Julie Dowling to Anna Edmundson, dated 26 May 2008. In the author's possession.

² *Ibid.*

³ Beginning with the *Aborigines Act* of 1905, the Western Australian Government exercised rigorous control and considerable intervention into the lives of Aboriginal people. This included the right to define their ethnicity (as pure-blood Aborigines, half caste, quadroon, etc.); to remove children of mixed-descent from their parents; to regulate where they could live and work, and with whom they could marry and whom they could associate with. These policies persisted until the early 1970s.

⁴ Dowling to Edmundson, 26 May, 2008.

⁵ Dowling interview with John Stanton on 10 December 2002, cited in John E. Stanton, 'Julie Dowling: In Her Own Words', in Howard Morphy and Nigel Lendon (eds.), *Synergies*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 2003, p. 24.

⁶ Jeanette Hoorn, Exhibition Panel, *Strange Fruit: the Art of Julie Dowling*, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 2007.

⁷ Dowling to Edmundson, 26 May 2008.

⁸ Artist's statement for *Nyorn* series, courtesy of Brigitte Braun Gallery, Melbourne.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Dowling to Edmundson, 26 May 2008.

¹¹ John E. Stanton, 'Julie Dowling', 2003, p. 26.

¹² Dowling to Edmundson, 26 May 2008.

¹³ Interview with Anna Edmundson for National Museum of Australia on 17 March 2005, courtesy of the National Museum of Australia.

¹⁴ Artist's statement for *The prodigal*, courtesy of Brigitte Braun Gallery, Melbourne.

¹⁵ John E. Stanton, 'Julie Dowling', 2003, p. 22.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Dowling to Edmundson, 26 May 2008.



JANENNE EATON: OUR SPEED IS OUR POINT OF VIEW

The Avenue of Honour

The way Janenne began the interview, from the centre at high speed, it was fairly meaningless until I caught the drift:

Our speed. Think of how we relate to information, for example the Avenue, how people's interaction with it has changed from the time it was made to now. People speeding past, maybe they'll read the sign. It sticks in my mind, the idea I read, somewhere, that the faster we go the more we focus on the horizon. That is like the Avenue, the faster you go, focusing on the road ahead, the less you pick up of what you're passing through. Our speed is our point of view.

How we live with a digital ecology, we're so often in that space, alert and activated, where time and space is collapsed into a nano-second, a constant flicking present. I like the word longueur – duration – how things form over time, how meaning is only formed through duration, in relation to place, through an accumulation of memories, action, politics, weather. Sedimentation, settling down – that is an action of time. On the other hand suspension, the constant flickering presence, is no time, or rather it is virtual time: an artificial suspension of the material and mental processes.

This was not turning out to be an interview. She was way ahead of me. My preparation had been to jot down my impressions of Janenne's paintings, accumulated over twenty years. Only one of those notes is worth mentioning, the hypnotic optical effect. Her paintings seem to have their own life. They are alert. Some seem to quiver as if electrified or alarmed.

After Janenne left, I sat down to think through our conversation in relation to the works of art and to retrace the path it had taken (which for me had been unexpected). Traversing the Avenue, the end is the horizon towards which the passing trees are a blur. 'To quote something I read,' said Janenne, 'the faster we go the more we focus on the horizon and the less we experience what we're passing through!' From the car moving at fifty kilometres an hour it is not possible to read the names. Few would notice that there are plaques on the trees that form the avenue. Those who read the introductory sign may think fleetingly: this tunnel of trees is a memorial.

After the First World War, avenues memorialising the dead ANZACS were planted on the approaches to country towns throughout Australia. In the spirit of the makers of those avenues, Australians to this day vow: 'At the going down of the sun we shall remember them!'

'Our speed is our point of view,' said Janenne. The memorial avenue at Bacchus Marsh in Victoria is not like it was when first planted. The traveller by horse and cart moved slowly enough for the plaques to be seen.

opposite: Janenne Eaton, *The Avenue of Honour - anatomy of a monument* (detail), 1995, rice paper, linen and photographs, 15 panels, 208 x 32 cm each. Courtesy the artist.

More to the point – for seeing – the names inscribed were of people the passers-by had known. Each tree grew for one of the district's many young people who died in a great war. Recruitment for the First World War was local, soldiers from a district stayed together for the duration, their number dwindling as men were killed. War was experienced as a local affair.¹

Now stately, arching, forming a green tunnel overhead to and from Bacchus Marsh, the avenue, in 1918, comprised mere twigs, inconspicuous in long grass. For as long as the living could not forget, a reminder was not needed. A rough reckoning of time suggests that the community would travel in the shadow of death until the trees grew tall enough to shade the avenue. One thousand local people came together to create the avenue, their work involved many returns to dig the holes, plant the trees, mulch, water, foster and label each tree. They found in the project multiple ways to count over and measure out their dead. The death toll and the length of the avenue was an equation measurable by the number of the saplings to be planted, the intervals between plantings, and the number and names of the dead. Each tree represented a man who did not return from war. The names affixed to the trees were in alphabetical order. With the exception of a nurse (whose inclusion was perhaps an afterthought) the avenue of the dead was in a numerical marching order.

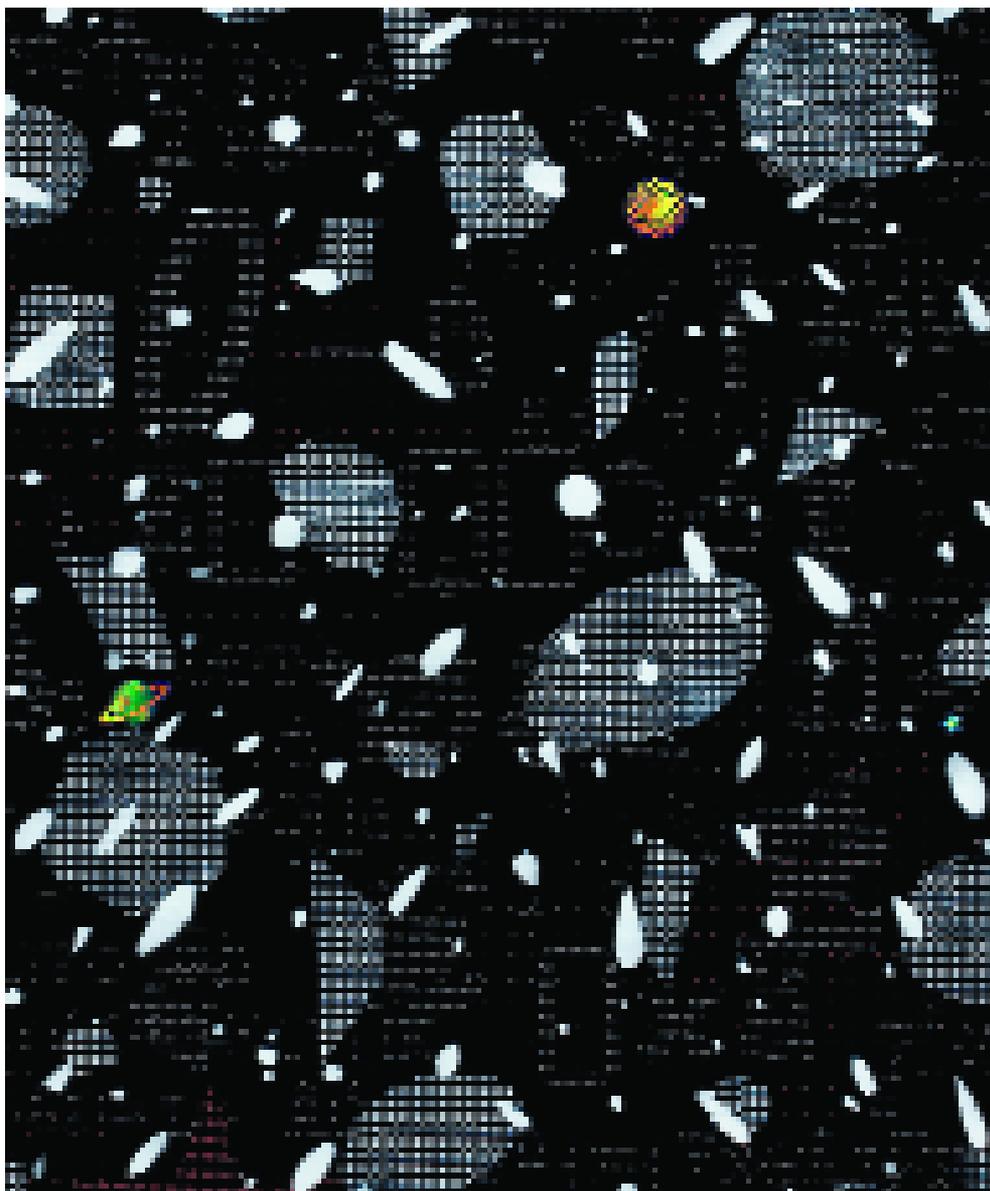
Janenne studied archaeology when she was at university. Photographing each tree in the avenue, and each plaque, she saw how the memorial was shaped by the history of its ageing and maintenance. There were replacement trees and replacement plaques (each with the print-style of its own time), some graffiti, and one private memorial. Attached to the label of one tree was a plastic-covered photograph of a crashed Holden car – a memorial to someone who had died some time before her visit – that was indicative of a new theatre of public remembrance. Along our highways in recent years have appeared crosses and flowers, names and photographs, commemorating people killed at those places in road accidents. The avenues that were planted as civic war memorials nearly a century ago acquire a fresh significance by association with the spontaneous flowering of these roadside memorials.

The *Avenue of Honour – anatomy of a monument* literally re-traces the avenue. Janenne frottaged each tree. Having made the rubbing of a tree and its nameplate she transferred the image onto a tall banner. On the banner's other side she hand-copied an image of the tree from a photograph she'd taken of it. Installed for exhibition, the translucent banners were hung in two lines from the ceiling, with each of the two hundred and eighty one 'trees' in the place it has in the Avenue. Viewers could weave their way between the trees as well as proceed down the avenue.

A few of the banners, only, are included in the 2008 exhibition at the Drill Hall Gallery.

opposite: Janenne Eaton, *The Avenue of Honour – anatomy of a monument* (installation view), 1995, rice paper, linen and photographs, 15 panels, 208 x 32 cm each. Courtesy the artist.





Janenne Eaton, *Beep code*, 2008, enamel and decals on canvas, 183 x 153 cm. Courtesy the artist and John Buckley Gallery.

Beep code, Untitled, and Someday, maybe

Suspension and suggestion have chased each other in Janenne's expressive vocabulary like a cat its tail. Typically, the imagery is shadowy, in black, white and grey tones, as in *Beep code* and *Someday, maybe (we'll meet again)*. Or it is literal and insistently enamelled (as in *Untitled*). Colours are either no more than a tinge or they are solid: when a grey painting incorporates lines of solid colour, the effect is strange. In *Beep code* and *Someday, maybe* forms and text rise to the surface and dip below, floating in layered grids as if in water. What is enmeshed beneath the surface is only part of the complexity, however. The imagery is doubly inscrutable where parts of the surface blind the eyes with mirror-like reflection. The insistent repetition of dot and grid, together with the ambiguity of the imagery, suggest complexity. The effect is quivering, implying some urgency. However the signs, when readable, are manifestly bland and challenge the process of looking in yet another way by ruling out any need for urgency. Consequently the paintings seem haunted by an unseen or barely-seen presence, yet the promise of revelation comes to nothing.

Recently Janenne introduced an absolute that disturbed the accustomed viewing of her paintings. Viewers like me had settled into seeing in her paintings the expression of life as chronically unfixed and indeterminate. No resting place for the eye or mind was given by the paintings; rather, they seemed to describe a digital world of unreflective immediacy in which, to quote Janenne, 'time and space are collapsed into a constant, flickering presence.' Two years ago, in the centre of her exhibition for Helen Maxwell Gallery at Silvershot in Melbourne, was a banner inscribed with the word NOTHING. In the context, *Nothing* served like a token in a game. It entered the field to cancel the possibilities held out by the exhibition's imagery of skulls and scrambled computer code. Divested of imagery by the injunction to see nothing, the paintings were stripped to the bare marks of grid and pixel. *Nothing* continues to be a caveat for Janenne's recent work, though her exhibition of May this year, 'Nothing lasts forever' possibly made the injunction conditional.

When *Nothing* entered the scene the archaeologist was revealed. David Hansen picked up the cue in his essay for the 2006 exhibition:

Eaton also cites her training as an archaeologist as having had a significant effect on her art practice She recalls one particular epiphany, encountering a book of aerial photographs which "revealed a visual, temporal history of crop-growing patterns stretching back to the Bronze Age, moving forward again through Roman times, and so on into the present." footnote???

Repetition is everything in Janenne's pursuit of the grid and dot, yet the appearance of regularity is deceptive. The paintings' look of computer graphics and the high finish are illusions created by hand with traditional materials and techniques. The dots are hand-painted. The effects are chronically unstable.

To create the grid Janenne has, since 2001, sprayed enamel paint from a spray-can through a smallish piece of builder's mesh: she purloined this one morning from a construction site. Since the mesh obscures the bit of canvas she is spraying, she has to guess the effect she is creating. The piece of mesh is small. Her task is complicated further by having to reposition it several times to spray the canvas. Creating an even effect across the canvas under those conditions is a considerable test of skill. It boils down to experience. The grid is created dot by dot on a basis of intuition born of knowledge acquired over time.

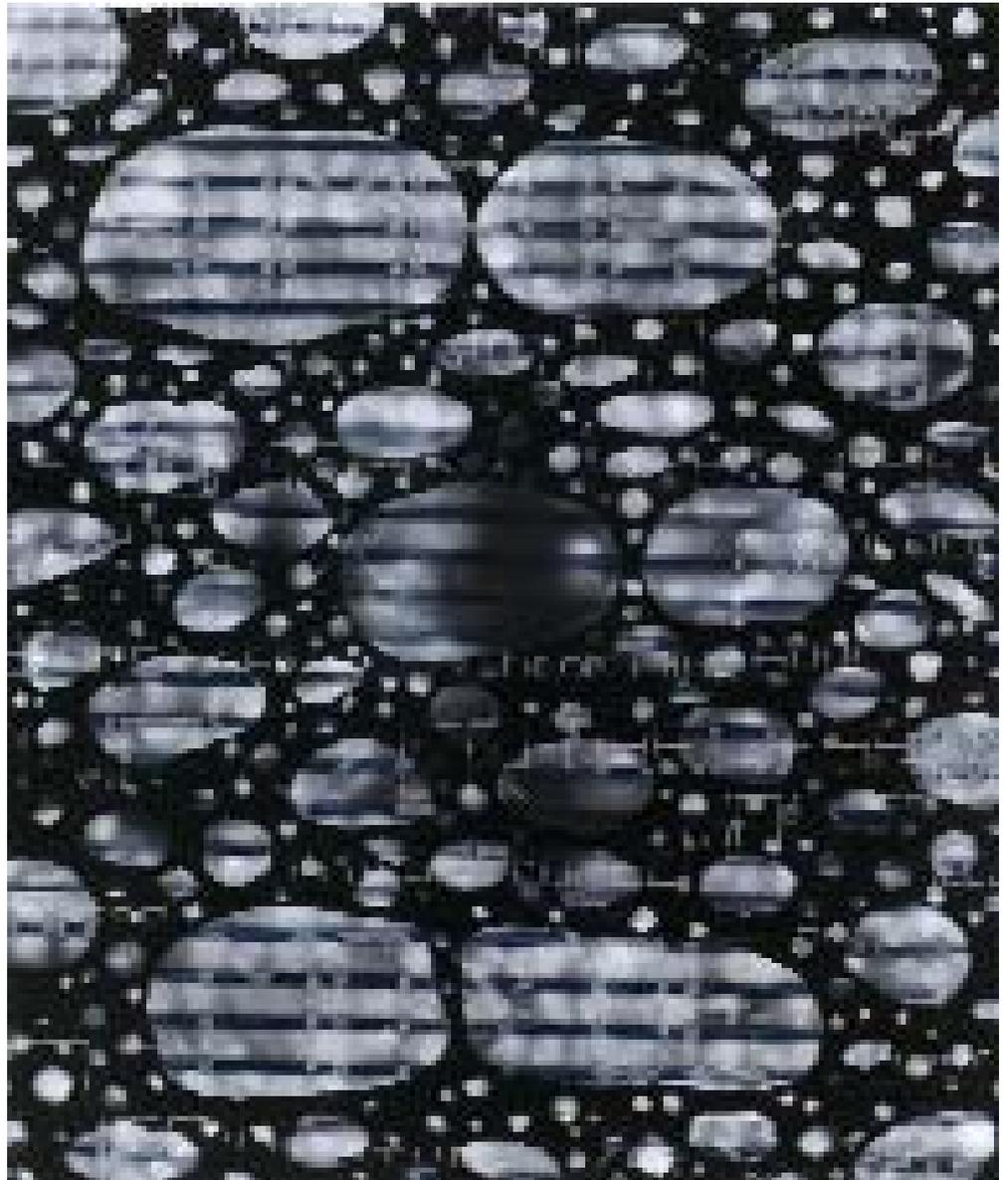
The consequences for her art are two-fold. The viewer reads the images as digital and computer-generated, however the paintings reveal the work of the artist: slow, painstaking and repetitive.

Janenne's mark is the regular product of practice and eye judgment, of long time and mental programming, yet its subject is the grid.

The subject of these paintings is the grid and pixel. Janenne's concept is that they are the archaeological imprint of our time.

MARY EAGLE

¹ Janenne Eaton's wall text for *The Avenue of Honour – anatomy of a monument*.



Janenne Eaton, *Someday maybe (we'll meet again)*, 2006, enamel on canvas, 183 x 153 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Helen Maxwell Gallery.



JANET LAURENCE: RECOVERING LIVES – RESUSCITATING LANDSCAPE

*Memorials are spaces of dreaming, reflection... They present what is absent.*¹

Janet Laurence's art often compels us to consider past lives: lives of fallen soldiers, forgotten lives of specific sites, lives of lost species. Her work is deeply connected to memory, history and the environment. Using materials that evoke memory, that have a presence of history, and that connect us to environment, Laurence creates spaces that we find ourselves immersed in – symbolic spaces, contemplative spaces, memorial spaces.

Walking into the *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier* (1993) at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra one is struck by the quietness of Laurence's four memorial pillars of glass, marble, metal, and wood which stand tall, reaching upwards towards Napier Waller's evangelical dome.² The pillars are subdued in comparison to the vivid glow of the mosaic dome and the strong patriotic figures flanking them on each side. Mimicking the mullions dividing each of the stained glass windows, the pillars are the silent space in-between. They are noiseless but not voiceless. As the viewer walks towards the pillars, footsteps echo through the space, surrounding them, embracing them, ensuring that their presence is felt – in fact magnified. The senses are heightened, one can hear oneself breathing and one's thoughts resonate loudly. The gravity of the place is felt. The pillars, representing the four elements of water, earth, fire and air respectively, are tactile; one has the urge to run one's fingers across the surfaces. Their pure materiality grounds us, 'bringing it back to a relationship with the organic world'³. This is a place where our own personal histories become entangled with the histories of the lost, fallen and unknown.

The connection of elemental matter to personal, communal and historical memory is crucial in the art of Janet Laurence. It is through memory and personal experience that we become involved with an artwork. Matter and material therefore become a method of triggering memory, recalling history and commemorating lives.

In *Edge of the trees* (1994–95), located at the Museum of Sydney, Laurence and her collaborator Fiona Foley use a 'language of materials' to reveal the botanical, indigenous and colonial memory of the site. Twenty-nine pillars of sandstone, steel, and wood, form a symbolic space that illuminates shared histories. The wooden pillars, for example, 'were actually trees that had originally grown around the Museum site – they were cut down and became posts in the foundry over at Pyrmont which then became the McWilliams winery and from there we were able to return them to the site again! We retrieved them from a building site as heritage materials.' Laurence turned the architectural notches in the posts into windows that now house archaeological items from the museum's collection, remnants of past lives such as hair, seed, shell, oxide and ash. Engraved into the various pillars are the names of the traditional Eora inhabitants, places on the harbour, first-fleeters, and pollen readings from the Governor's garden. A haunting sound component maps out the names of the indigenous tribes that were living around the harbour in 1788. By referencing the previous lives of the site, *Edge of the trees* creates a dialogue between past and present

opposite: Janet Laurence, *Botanical residues (after the great glasshouses)* (installation view), 2005, Duraclear on acrylic, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist.

that enables us to move forward. The title of the work is derived from the writing of anthropologist Rhys Jones 'who wrote a beautiful piece about two groups of people who don't exactly meet but somehow become entwined, one looking at the other through this edge of the trees' - in this space 'they mingle and intertwine like a weaving towards the future.'⁴

The interconnectedness of natural and cultural histories is a theme that Laurence returns to in many of her works; this fascination has been fuelled by her involvement with museums and research into museum collections. Following a research project at the Melbourne Museum, Laurence began thinking about creating memorial spaces dedicated to the botanical species that have disappeared from the modern world. She envisaged a *Ghost glasshouse* that sat in opposition to the tradition notion of a glasshouse - one in which 'no plants grow inside - it is a memory space, a memorial'⁵ for lost species.

The glasshouse, following on from the natural history museum and the anthropological museum, was a nineteenth century phenomenon, an ingenious architectural structure which housed botanical specimens from the far reaches of the globe. Here, under a glass domed false environment, tropical plants were catalogued, collated, fertilised and cross-pollinated - owned, controlled. The glasshouse not only symbolised man's ingenuity but now also acts as an emblem of the atrocities of European colonisation, of imperialism and the pillaging of natural resources.

[Nineteenth century] museums were trying to name and claim and know everything. This is really about a museum of what is lost - of what cannot be claimed - of revealing that which is lost through naming, through naming that creates opacity.

Laurence conceives a *Ghost glasshouse*, a large maze made up of sheets of clear glass engraved with the names of lost plant species. As the viewer walks around the maze looking through the layered glass the inscriptions build to create varying depths of translucency, at some points one has a clear view through to the other side, at other points the view is totally obscured by a volume of loss.⁶ A strong sense of absence weighs heavily on the viewer as they realise that this is a glasshouse void of life.

Similarly, in the series *Botanical residues (afterlife of the great glasshouses)* (from 2003 onwards) Laurence presents ghosted glasshouse spaces of the past. Individual, bleached out photographic fragments of the glasshouse structure are printed on sheets of clear acrylic. Overlaid, the panels communicate with one another and begin to reveal some sort of narrative related to the history of the site, but it is not the whole story. The narrative is interrupted; sections appear to be missing, overshadowed by a smoky viscous haze - a somewhat toxic grey cloud that hovers between and above, obscuring the clarity of the imagery beneath. Negative encroaches upon positive, each revealing details that are concealed in their opposite. Reflection comes into play, placing the viewer somewhere in-between, both entwined in the image and yet still somewhat removed.



Janet Laurence, *Botanical residues (clouded memory)*, 2006, Duraclear, shinkolite acrylic, aluminium, oil and pigment, 100 x 230 cm. Courtesy the artist.



Janet Laurence, *Transfusion*, 2007, C type photograph on metallic ground, oil glaze with acrylic and pigment, 100 x 300 cm. Courtesy the artist.

These monochromatic remains speak of emptiness, absence and loss in a way that is evocative of WG Sebald's treatment of memory in the book *The Rings of Saturn*.⁷ Sebald's writing, like Laurence's glasshouses, has a photographic silver gelatine imagery about it that feels stuck part-way through the developing process. The imagery is slowly coming to the surface, the scene sparks emotion. It is familiar to the viewer as though they may have taken the photograph themselves but as it is only partially developed they struggle to precisely identify the place or recall the exact memories associated with it. It is like an episode of *déjà vu* – the mind attempts to retrieve a memory from the recesses of the past, yet it remains just out of our reach.

The use of glass and glass-like materials in Laurence's work has become important precisely for this reason of activating memory. As a material, glass can be solid or fluid, representing transition and flux – like the memory it appears truthful but can also play tricks on us. Laurence considers that these physical qualities bring the viewer into the artwork:

Memory and layering and being in a space and at the same time you bring to it your own memory and your own present experience. I suppose it is this incredible thing about glass, a reflective material like glass or a transparent material like glass, because you project into it, you reflect into it, you see through it, you see yourself in it! It is as though you are printed into it, layered into it.

From the artificial environment of the glasshouse, Laurence's recent work, the *Landscape and residue* series (2007-08), moves into the natural realm of the Australian bush. The site we encounter has been ravaged by bushfire. Among the burnt out remnants of a eucalyptus forest Laurence has draped all manner of botanical and scientific apparatus. This tangle of cords, beakers and medical vials creates some sort of ambiguous life support system; is this an attempt to revive these threatened species, or is it simply maintaining the current state of inertia, or perhaps it is in fact draining the last ounce of life from landscape? What is clear is that ecology appears to be hanging in the balance. Laurence presents the fragmented imagery on large sheets of reflective metal. She introduces panels of burnt wood, veils of oil and pigment mixed with ash from the site, and mirrors that double and blur the image. As a series, the works build from bleak, stark imagery somewhat reminiscent of the *Botanical residues* project, with heavily veiled areas of white ash and a focus on the lifeless burnt landscape. Again the colouring is muted; whites through to greys through to charred blacks. There is however a hint of new life, a touch of colour that resuscitates hope. The series culminates in the work *Transfusion* in which patches of verdant green growth break out of crevasses in the scorched black bark. Laurence mimics the new growth with veils of burnt orange and vivid green. As this natural recovery unfolds, new life returns to what had once appeared lost.

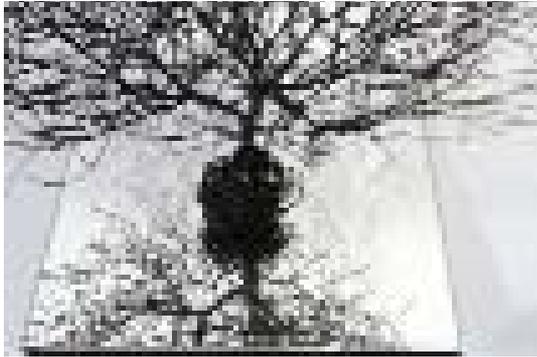
Environmental fragility and the idea of recovering lives through regeneration is further explored in works like *Carbon futures* (2008). Working in collaboration with a glass blower, Laurence places botanical specimens inside glowing hot glass bulbs to create glasshouses on a miniature scale. The shear heat of the glass ignites the specimen, reducing it to ashes and residues of the plant form. These catacombs of cremated remains are a homage to lost life but one that surprisingly reveals great hope. During the process

Laurence witnessed a variety of natural phenomena: in one case the specimen burnt out completely, vaporising, leaving only a trace of smoke that swirled up and mixed with the inside layer of glass; in another, the seed pod of a burnt specimen opened up from its ashes and release its seeds as the process of regeneration began. This strikes a chord with Laurence:

There is an incredible story of how there was a whole variety of Western Australian species in a museum in Vienna and during the war the museum caught fire. Everything burnt – but all these banksias they just opened up and released their seeds! Isn't that incredible! There is just such a kind of fascination about regeneration, about renewal. On the one hand there is the amazing destruction, amazing loss, and on the other hand... well it is like 'out of the ashes'...

ANTHONY OATES

- ¹ Janet Laurence and Peter Tonkin, 'Space and Memory', *Architecture Australia*, vol 92 no 5, October 2003, p. 55.
- ² *The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier* was a project completed in collaboration with TZG Architects. On 11 November 2003 the remains of an unknown soldier from the First World War was placed in the tomb. The tomb sits in, and is inspired by, the Hall of Memory which was designed by Napier Waller and completed in 1958.
- ³ Janet Laurence in conversation with the author, 8 July 2008. All other quotes are from this conversation unless otherwise noted.
- ⁴ Janet Laurence, *Edge of the trees*, unpublished artist notes.
- ⁵ Janet Laurence, *A Ghost Glass House for Lost Botanical Species*, unpublished artists notes.
- ⁶ The effect is perhaps not dissimilar to that of the place names Laurence used on the *Australian War Memorial* in London which trigger in and out of focus according to the viewing distance.
- ⁷ See *The Rings of Saturn*, Vintage, London, 2002, p. 32–40 for Sebald's account of his visit to Somerleyton Hall in Yorkshire where there once stood a magnificent glasshouse. The glasshouse was burnt down in a gas fire in 1914. Here the author meets the gardener in the outside grounds and is engaged in conversation. When the gardener learns Sebald is German he recalls the mixed emotions of wonder and sorrow he felt during the Second World War when the bombing squadrons flew out overhead from Somerleyton to carry out air raids on Berlin. The site where the glasshouse once stood, and by inference the glasshouse itself, becomes intertwined with a history and memory that took place well after its own history had ended.



left: Janet Laurence, *(Exquisite) Carbon corpse* (detail), 2008, burnt specimen on glass shelf, 35 x 25 x 25 cm. Courtesy the artist.
centre: Janet Laurence, *Carbon futures*, 2008, blown glass vessel with burnt botanical specimen on glass shelf, 15 x 25 x 25 cm. Courtesy the artist.
right: *(Exquisite) Carbon corpse* and *Carbon futures* (installation view).

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES AND LIST OF WORKS

DADANG CHRISTANTO

Dadang Christanto was born and educated in Indonesia but has lived in Australia since 1999. He has exhibited or given performances in Tokyo, Hiroshima, Yokohama, Osaka, Fukuoka, New York, Havana, Bangkok, Venice, Brazil, Canada and Korea as well as in Australia and New Zealand. He has been artist-in-residence at the Universities of South Australia, Magdeburg and Berlin, at Monash University, The Australian National University and the Ecole cantonale de l'Art du Valais in Switzerland and the Manukau School of Arts, Auckland, New Zealand. He has been a lecturer at the School of Art and Design at the University of the Northern Territory in Darwin and lectured at the College of Fine Arts at the University of New South Wales in 2005. He is now an independent artist in Brisbane and an adjunct academic at Griffith University. His art works are held in major public collections in Australia and overseas.

Gathering, 2008

acrylic on Belgian linen
nine panels, 102 x 83 cm each
Collection of the artist

Recovery mountain I, 2008

acrylic on Belgian linen
137 x 167 cm
Collection of the artist

Give testimony, 2008

acrylic on Belgian linen
137 x 167 cm
Collection of the artist

Recovery mountain II, 2008

acrylic on Belgian linen
137 x 167 cm
Collection of the artist

Head in between mountains, 2008

acrylic on Belgian linen
137 x 167 cm
Collection of the artist

Scent of a mountain, 2008

acrylic on Belgian linen
137 x 167 cm
Collection of the artist

Pile, 2008

acrylic on Belgian linen
137 x 167 cm
Collection of the artist

Video compilations of Dadang Christanto's performances 2003-2007

curated by Caroline Turner and filmed and edited by Katie Hayne and Ursula Frederick

JULIE DOWLING

Julie Dowling was born in Perth, Western Australia, in 1969. Of Badimaya and Irish descent, Julie is one of Australia's foremost contemporary Indigenous Australian painters whose primary medium is portraiture. Her work has been represented in exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of South Australia and Art Gallery of Western Australia and overseas. She was a 2001 and 2002 finalist in the Archibald Prize for Portraiture and was named as 'most collectable artist' in 2002 by *Australian Art Collector*. In 2005 Dowling was given a fellowship for Indigenous art from the Australia Council, and in 2006 was awarded an honorary doctorate in literature from Murdoch University. The Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne produced a major survey of her work in 2007, and in 2008 she was selected for the inaugural Triennial of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Australia.

Dispossession series, 2004

five works:

Me, Myself, Julie,

My Sista, Carol

My Mum, Ronnie

My Nana, Molly

My Great Uncle, George

acrylic and red ochre on canvas

120 x 100 cm each

Courtesy Brigitte Braun Gallery, Melbourne

Warriedar Marban - Wedge-tailed eagle Cleverman, 2006

acrylic and red ochre on canvas

142 x 71 cm

Private collection

Budjarri Yorgah (pregnant woman), 2006

acrylic and red ochre on canvas

142 x 71 cm

Private collection

Matriarch: Auntie Mollie, 2002

acrylic, red ochre and plastic on canvas

150 x 120 cm

Private collection

Matriarch: Auntie Elsie, 2002

acrylic, red ochre and plastic on canvas

150 x 120 cm

The Malone family collection

The prodigal, 2002

acrylic, red ochre and plastic on canvas

120 x 100 cm

Collection of Elizabeth and Hylton Quail

Nyorn series, 2005

10 works:

Richard

May

Frank

Fred

Violet

Edward

Arthur

George

Mary

Dorothy

acrylic, red ochre and plastic on canvas

30 x 30 cm each

Milson collection

Ethnocentric, 2001

acrylic, red ochre and plastic on canvas

100 x 120 cm

Private collection

JANENNE EATON

Janenne Eaton lives and works in Melbourne. She is currently Head of Painting, Victorian College of the Arts, The University of Melbourne. She holds a BA (Archaeology and Art History) from The Australian National University and was awarded a Master of Arts, Fine Art, at RMIT. Janenne Eaton has held over 20 solo exhibitions (including at the ANU Drill Hall Gallery) and participated in numerous group exhibitions including at the National Portrait Gallery, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Gallery of Victoria and the National Gallery of Australia. Her works have been collected by institutions such as the National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, National Portrait Gallery, Heidi Museum of Modern Art, Parliament House as well as university collections, corporate and private collections in Australia and overseas. She was awarded the Geelong Contemporary Art Prize, the Canberra Critics Circle Award, the Gold Coast City and Conrad Jupiters Art Prize, the Canberra Times National Art Award, as well as being awarded a Visual Arts Board studio residency at Paretai, Italy.

The Avenue of Honour – anatomy of a monument, 1995
rice paper, linen and photographs
15 panels, 208 x 32 cm each
Courtesy the artist

Beep code, 2008
enamel and decals on canvas
183 x 153 cm
Courtesy the artist and John Buckley Gallery

Someday maybe (we'll meet again), 2006
enamel on canvas
183 x 153 cm
Courtesy the artist and Helen Maxwell Gallery

Untitled, 2008
enamel on canvas
175 x 150 cm
Courtesy the artist and Helen Maxwell Gallery

JANET LAURENCE

Janet Laurence was born in Sydney where she currently lives and works. She was awarded a Master of Fine Arts, College of Fine Arts, from the University of New South Wales in 1993 and has also studied at the New York Studio School and the Academia Belle Arte, Perugia. From 1996–2005 she served as a Trustee at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and she is currently a member of the Australia Council Visual Arts Board. She has exhibited extensively since the 1980s with major solo exhibitions held at the ANU Drill Hall Gallery, the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne, Art Gallery of New South Wales, and Queensland Art Gallery, as well as group exhibitions at the Art Gallery of South Australia, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Lawrence Wilson Gallery, Perth, National Gallery of Australia, Tokyo International Forum, and Auckland Art Gallery. She has been commissioned to complete numerous major public artworks, most recently at Changi Airport, Singapore, CH2 Building for the Melbourne City Council, and the Australian War Memorial at Hyde Park, London. Her works are held in most state galleries, the National Gallery of Australia, and the Museum of Contemporary Art as well as public and private collection worldwide.

Ghost glasshouse (model), 2002
screen-print on glass with metal stand
100 x 60 x 30 cm
Courtesy the artist

(Exquisite) Carbon corpse, 2008
burnt botanical specimen on glass shelf
35 x 25 x 25 cm
Courtesy the artist

Carbon futures, 2008
blown glass vessel with burnt specimen on glass shelf
15 x 25 x 25 cm
Courtesy the artist

Transfusion, 2007
C type photograph on metallic ground, oil glaze with
acrylic and pigment
100 x 300 cm
Courtesy the artist

Carbon heart, 2007
Burnt wood, oil, pigment, duraclear photograph on acrylic
and mirror
100 x 290 cm
Private Collection

Botanical residues (Voice echo), 2008
voices echo

Carbon capture III (working title), 2008
100 x 220 cm

White fire, red ash (working title), 2008
100 x 240 cm

CONTRIBUTORS BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Mary Eagle is a Curator, Writer and Post Doctoral Research Fellow with the Research School of Humanities, ANU.

Anna Edmundson is a Senior Curator at the National Museum of Australia and a PhD Scholar with the Research School of Humanities, ANU

Professor Howard Morphy is the Director of the Research School of Humanities, ANU.

Anthony Oates is the Exhibitions Officer with the Drill Hall Gallery.

Nancy Sever is the Director of The Australian National University Art Collection and Drill Hall Gallery.

Caroline Turner is a Senior Research Fellow with the Research School of Humanities.

CURATORS

Nancy Sever

Nancy Sever has been the Director of the Australian National University's Drill Hall Gallery since its opening in September 1992 and Director of the ANU Art Collection since 1998. She is a graduate in Latin American Studies from La Sorbonne and a postgraduate in Art History and Curatorship from the Australian National University. Nancy Sever has been working in the visual arts for 25 years, including as a Director of several commercial galleries in Australia and Nepal and as Cultural Affairs Officer at the Australian Embassy in Paris (1989-92). In 2006 she was awarded the decoration of Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters by the Government of France for services to culture, both in France and Australia.

Caroline Turner

Dr Caroline Turner is a Senior Research Fellow at the Research School of Humanities, The Australian National University. She was from 2000 to 2006 Deputy Director of the Humanities Research Centre at ANU. Prior to this she spent 20 years as a senior art museum professional. As Deputy Director of the Queensland Art Gallery she organised over 60 international exhibitions. In the mid-1980s Turner also began working in the area of contemporary Asian and Pacific art. Co-founder and Project Director for ten years for the Asia-Pacific Triennial Project which, over three exhibitions in 1993, 1996 and 1999, attracted audiences of 60,000, 120,000, and 155,000, Turner was also the scholarly editor of the three major catalogues and the book *Tradition and Change: Contemporary Art of Asia and the Pacific* (University of Queensland Press, 1993). Her latest book on this subject is *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific* (Pandanus Books, 2005).

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ART AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

This project is part of the programmes of the Research School of Humanities at ANU. We acknowledge the strong support of the RSH Director, Professor Howard Morphy. The project began in 2000, a theme year devoted to 'Law and the Humanities' at the Humanities Research Centre. Christine Chinkin, a Visiting Fellow at the HRC and Caroline Turner, then Deputy Director of the HRC, began a discussion that would grow into this project. We have been joined by many other scholars and artists whose vision and ideas have made this project possible, including the Australian Research Council Discovery Grant Team for 'The Limits of Tolerance' (Caroline Turner, Pat HOFFIE, Margo Neale and Jennifer Webb). Over the last eight years we have held three international conferences and several workshops. There have been associated events including involvement by visiting artists, postgraduate and undergraduate students. We have curated four exhibitions. The first, in 2003, was *Witnessing to Silence*, curated by Nancy Sever, Christine Clark, David Williams and Caroline Turner, with fifteen artists from twelve countries, at the Drill Hall Gallery and the School of Art Gallery, ANU, and also with events at the Canberra Contemporary Art Space, National Museum and National Gallery of Australia. In 2005 the exhibition *Future Tense: Security and Human Rights*, curated by Pat HOFFIE and Caroline Turner, was held at the Queensland College of Art Gallery, Griffith University with eight artists from seven countries. In 2007 *Thresholds of Tolerance*, curated by David Williams and Caroline Turner, was held at the School of Art Gallery, ANU. The fourth exhibition *Recovering Lives* is held at the Drill Hall Gallery and the School of Art Gallery, ANU, in 2008. The Drill Hall Gallery exhibition is curated by Nancy Sever and Caroline Turner. The School of Art exhibition is curated by Caroline Turner and David Williams. This exhibition coincides with a Research School of Humanities international conference held jointly with the National Museum of Australia in August 2008 and convened by Professor Cassandra Pybus, Dr Paul Arthur and Dr Caroline Turner. Further information can be found at <http://www.anu.edu.au/hrc/research/ahr.php>.

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The ANU Visual Arts Foundation (http://www.anu.edu.au/endowment/content/foundation_for_the_visual_arts/)

NANCY SEVER AND CAROLINE TURNER

RECOVERING LIVES

ANU Drill Hall Gallery, ANU 7 August – 21 September 2008

Recovering Lives is a publication of The Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200

Curators / editors: Nancy Sever and Caroline Turner

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