

Rembrandt's: 9 Installations

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Antarctica
Jillian Allan
Greg Creek
Herbert + Mason
Sean Loughrey
Sally Mannall
Sanné Mestrom
Vin Ryan
Workshop Architecture

9 Artists and Architects interrogate a faux, 19th Century, French Chateau named after the 17th Century Dutch painter and built in 1970's suburbia

Exhibition Dates:
22 – 30 November 2008

Open to the public 10.00am - 5.00pm
Saturday 22 & Sunday 23 November
Thursday 27 November
Friday 28 November
Saturday 29 & Sunday 30 November

This is a joint project with RMIT University Design Research Institute, Urban Liveability, Knox City Council, City Development and Cultural Services, the Victorian State Government, Department of Planning and Community Development and the owners of Rembrandt's Entertainment Centre.



Introduction

Rembrandt's: 9 Installations is part of an ongoing change, thinking about how the physical and cultural environment might alter, and about what might be gained and lost during such transformations. It is these tensions that bear on the Rembrandt's: 9 Installations project.

The triangular land that Rembrandt's sits upon is identified in the Knox Central Urban Design Framework as a key redevelopment site, the location for a 'feature form': a building of significance in the creation of a new urban form for Knox Central. The architects and artists – have created responses that closely examine the building in itself: a diverse collection of projects that consider its light and relationships of its spaces, the qualities of its light and the proliferation of its ornaments both counterfiet and authentic.

Working at 1:1 does not provide answers to questions of much larger significance and scale – of civic identity and urban form. What we hope this project does do is give some sense of the change occurring upon and around this site, and evoke the aspects of memory, loss, discovery and invention that such change brings.

Anthony McInerney and Simon Whibley

At the base of this research project is a question about how the suburban can become civic and what have made it a site of cultural significance: a place of celebration, ceremony and memory, in the absence of a city centre, Rembrandt's and the Knox City Shopping centre were in many ways the popular cultural venues, places of public gathering and activity centre – a previously unknown urban form, a heart.

Knox is part of a Melbourne metropolitan area grappling with urban change brought about by the importance attached to the expanding shopping centre and the considered civic cultural precinct, its strategic proximity to the expanding shopping centre also its physical position as a gateway to Melbourne 2030 planning strategy, is a principal development processes of industry partners – Knox City Council, the Victorian State Government and private businesses like Rembrandt's.

The Heyson Prize in Handorf SA, Flux Capacitor at Utopian Slumps, Someone shows something to someone at Canberra Contemporary Art Space and Praying as Finished Product at Upper Hut Arts Centre, New Zealand.

Vin Ryan is represented in private collections in Australia and New Zealand. He has also worked extensively as a lecturer in drawing and art theory at the CAE, NMIT and RMIT TAFE.

Workshop Architecture

Born in Melbourne in 1969, James Staughton has completed both a Bachelor of Planning and Design and a Bachelor of Architecture at the University of Melbourne, graduating with honours in 1994. This was complemented by a Diploma of Design from the Danish International School in Copenhagen in 1991. In 1999 James co-founded the award-winning partnership Staughton Architects and merged with Anthony Styan-Brown Architect Pty. Ltd. to form Workshop Architecture in mid 2008. The practice believes in the mindful attention to all available information and detail, producing work that feeds on the unspent traces of recent ideology, cultural phenomena and physical artefact as primary generators of architectural expression. James has worked with various clients in the residential, institutional, commercial, urban design and public art sectors and has been involved in several collaborations with Melbourne-based artist Katherine Huang. James is a keen contributor to both the architectural profession and to architectural education. He is an active member of the Australian Institute of Architects and is a regular guest critic and design studio leader at RMIT University, Monash University, and The University of Melbourne.

Recent solo and group exhibitions include: 2008: Ocular Lab Retrospective Projects #3: Sally Mannall - Survey of Video Works 1994-2008 curated by Raat - partnership Staughton Architects and merged with Ocular Lab at Trinity College, Melbourne University, 2005: Near Distance, Show, Wellington; Trinity 9: Ocular Ride in A Fast Machine, Gertrude Artists Spaces, Melbourne; Labradors 12, Spaceman, Melbourne, 2004: Lapse, Ocular Lab, Melbourne, 2002: Octopus: Still Time, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne.

Sally Mannall is a Lecturer on the MFA Program, (Melbourne and NZ) School of Art, RMIT University. She is a founding member of Ocular Lab Inc. Melbourne.

Greg Creek

Greg Creek's large drawing works represent a political perspective on personal and public histories and Edinburgh and is currently preparing a project for exhibition in Scotland in 2009.

Herbert+Mason

Benjamin Stibbard is a master's graduate from RMIT and practices with Idle Architecture.

Herbert + Mason is an architectural and design practice that remains dedicated to the realisation of buildings and design. We interest in mechanisms of relationships between art and political cartooning. His work has been shown in Australia, New Zealand and Asia. He has held residencies in Paris, London and Edinburgh and is currently preparing a project for exhibition in Scotland in 2009.

Jillian Allan

After an almost eighteen year break, Jillian Allan returned to full time study. She completed a Diploma of Visual Arts from Swinburn University of TAFE in 2004. She went on studying with RMIT University and completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) studying Art in Public Spaces at RMIT University. Jillian is currently majoring in Printmaking in 2007.

During her time as an undergraduate her main source of reference has been the perceived connection between women, animals and anthropomorphic myths that connect the two together. Her work, which is regularly exhibited, consists of artist books, mingles and relief prints. They are in private and public collections in Australia and overseas.

In 2007, Jillian was selected as one of the artists for the Print Council of Australia 2007 commission. In the same year she received a special award as a part of E.D. Daniels Scholarship & Bursaries for the Australian Federation of University Women Award.

As a way of re-assessing her practice, Jillian enrolled in the Public Art course and has started to examine ways of intervening into public space through ephemeral works. Her focus during this time has shifted towards the aspects of recalled and collective memory, concealed lives, the narrative of site and private emotions in public spaces - such as mourning. She hopes to do further study on the latter as a research project.

Sally Mannall is a Lecturer on the MFA Program, (Melbourne and NZ) School of Art, RMIT University. She is a founding member of Ocular Lab Inc. Melbourne.

Rembrandt's: 9 Installations Floorplan

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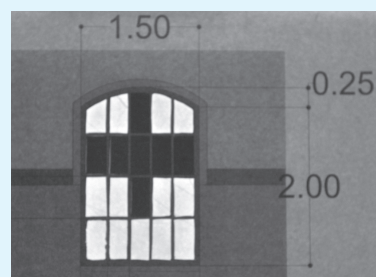
Sean Loughrey

Eight Crosses, Eight Windows
(Possible Things Project 3)
Front Facade & Bus Shelter, Burwood Hwy
(outside Knox Shopping Centre)
Ripstop material

Rembrandt's will host a series of fluorescent yellow heraldic crosses, placed within the window frames of the façade of the building. As with my previous site-specific interventions, this project prescribes to unify a building with an incongruous visual element. On this occasion a series of eight two-dimensional cruciforms or shapes made from 'ripstop' (a material used for making tents) are incorporated into eight windows. A focus within this work is repetitive structures, or repeated, multiple forms seen together in relation to the site. The windows are essentially a series of grids, eight windows - eight grids, modernist and formal. The intervention is abstract: repetition and process are contrasted with the building's Dutch Colonial Revivalist, Second Empire characteristics.

This series of emblematic crosses are seen as heraldic signs. The building is seen as an object in the world, like any other object. The notion of heraldry here is a reference to the diverse groups that frequented the venue in its many manifestations. In some ways, heraldry defines an historical element of suburban life - groups of people under the one banner, whether it be family groups for weddings or clubs. Now the site is to be redeveloped, its history transformed and reinvented.

<http://home.iprimus.com.au/sean64/loughrey/>



2

Jillian Allan

Deities Three: Ascendancy, Now Presenting... & Grounded.
Informal Stair, Female Staff Changing Rooms & Level One Foyer
Linocut on constructed paper dress (hand and machine stitched Japanese tissue and Hoshi paper with silk thread, double-sided adhesive tape, Velcro, cardboard and boning) with hand stitched paper gloves. *Grounded* also constructed with silk tissue.

The rite of passage is a journey we are all familiar with as we make our way through childhood, adolescence and adulthood and onto the inevitable. Each gender has their own process of dealing with it, which appears to date back to the earliest forms of civilisation. An example of this is the practice of girls in ancient Greece who, on the day prior to their marriage, would leave their childhood playthings in the temple of Artemis - the goddess of many things, including chastity and childbirth. As with all rituals, this signalled the end of one stage of their lives and the beginning of a new one.

Over the centuries, this ritual and the ceremony surrounding it appears to have altered. A girl's coming of age is now marked by their 'debut' into society with the prospect of marriage and/or therefore ascending to a new level. *Rembrandt's*, as a community hub, has been witness to many of these ceremonies.

The work consists of three paper dresses situated throughout the site as a series of recalled memories or stages. These 'spectres' reflect the notions of both the expectations and fragility possibly felt by the debutante. For her it is a time of excitement, but mixed with apprehension for what the future might bring.

Dressed elegantly in white, these otherworldly creatures full of hope and promise have wandered through the labyrinth of corridors and stairs, in the hope of taking their place in the outside world as women.

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Workshop Architecture

(represented by James Staughton)
Golden Memories
Main Dining Room
Foamcore board, glue, tape and paint

Golden Memories draws on the palpable sense of cultural preservation that exists within the abandoned shell of this once hotspot of suburban celebration. All remnants of human life have vanished whilst every conceivable physical artefact lies untouched, complete and preserved. Our intervention takes on the guise of the culprit and assumes responsibility for this mysterious evacuation of the space. It is located centrally, on the diagonal axis as an ominous black object, at once obelisk, asterisk, death mask and cloak. A time capsule of sorts, it creates a visual implosion from the view cones of selected artefacts (the roadside signboard and the stereo hanging of faux Rembrandt paintings) into an inner sanctum of golden memory.

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Sally Mannell

Cake & Untitled (DVD)
Dining Room and Stage
Cake and Projection

The two projects Sally Mannell is presenting at *Rembrandt's* engage with the social and cultural context of the venue. *Cake*, an edible multi-tiered model of the building, is conceived as a symbolic farewell gift to the community. Referencing the long history of *Rembrandt's* as a function centre and borrowing from the tradition of the wedding cake, the work will be cut up and distributed to the community attending the event. Each piece of the cake, a small slice of the building, is offered as a memento in acknowledgment of the significant personal, social, and cultural histories attached to the site.

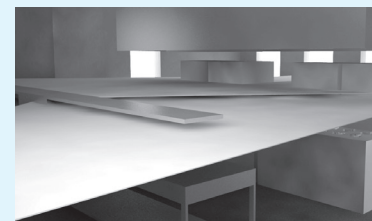
Untitled (DVD) activates the anticipatory space of the now inactive site. The dining tables set and prepared for the next event echo the ethos of *Rembrandt's*. These tables now silently await an event to reactivate its function. A solo waiter unsets the tables, performing the actions in reverse. Played in 'forward' motion the beginning is the end, a final disassembling of *Rembrandt's*. Slippages in motion and action reveal the trope, unravelling the work into a shifting of readings between pathos and slapstick. The end as a beginning - albeit with unsure manoeuvres and a degree of humour.

1

Antarctica

(represented by Simon Whibley)
Diamond Drape
Kitchen
MDF, timber, steel rod, paint

Antarctica's project, *Diamond Drape*, focuses on the back of house, the intriguing behind-the-scenes spaces that are (unlike the rest of *Rembrandt's*) without decoration, spatially determined by function and fairly ordinary. These spaces, such as the kitchen, sit as strangely contemporary occupants of a time-capsule, disconnected from the sense of real and imagined memory that fills the rest of the building and surrounds its objects. Our work is the intervention into the kitchen of one of these objects, an enormous clone of a diamond draped table seen in the first floor dining room. This object jams the space: making it unworkable, burying its functionality and splitting its space. An addition, subtraction and division, to give a sense of the imaginary that pervades the front of house spaces.



3

Greg Creek

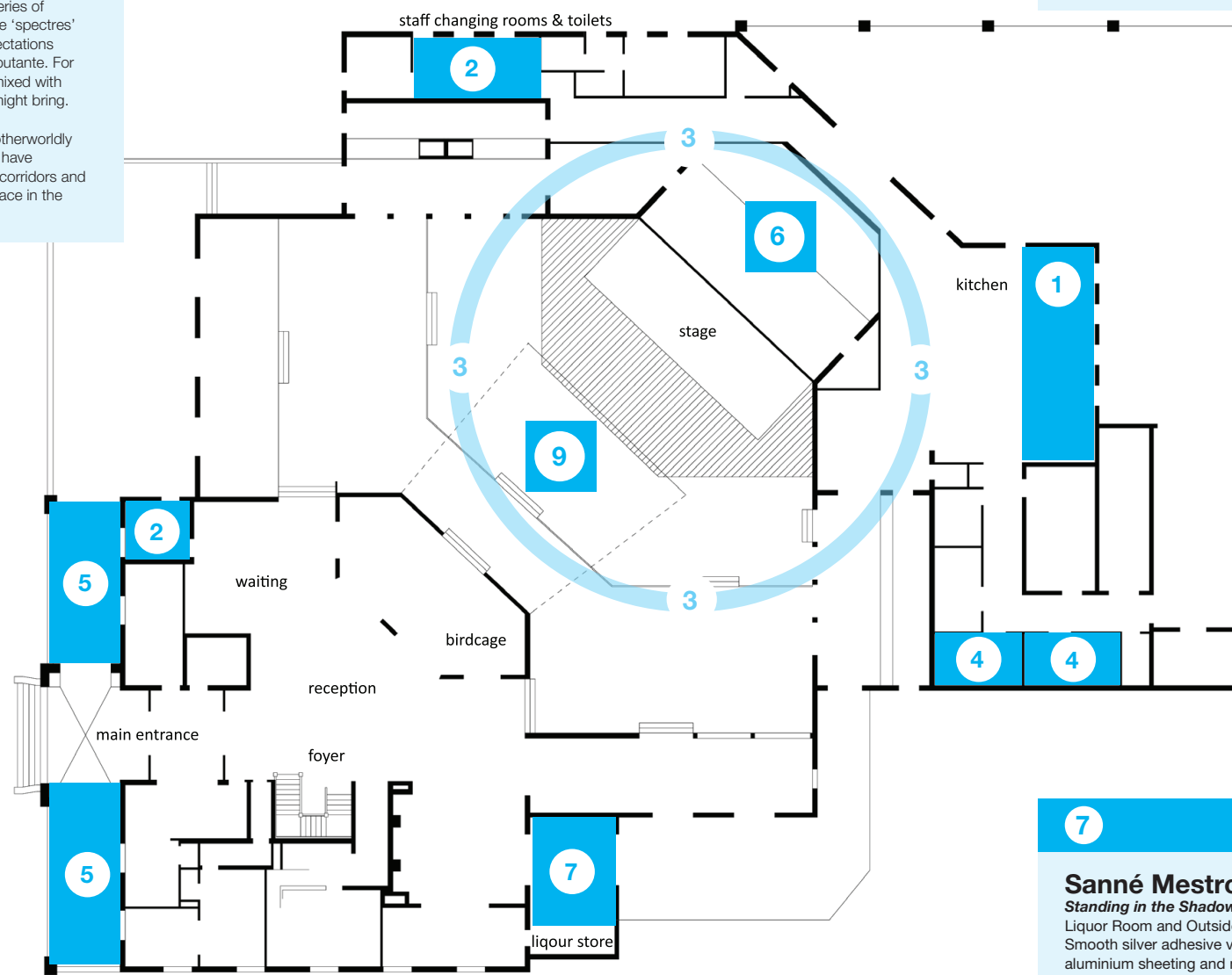
Manifesto Drawing (Knox) 2008
Kitchen, Servery and Main Seating Area
Ply sheet, acrylic pigment, chalk, paper clay slip

The work marks a trail through *Rembrandt's* with 20 or so cladding boards. The boards, made from timber ply, vary in dimensions from 70 x 100cm to approx 100 x 200cm.

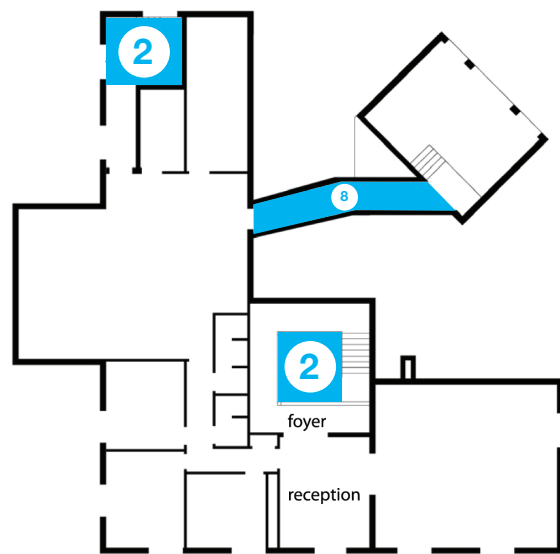
Many boards bear a stencilled inscription of lists of individuals or councillors or other names, including some with Knox City or other markings. Each, in turn, carries the sweep of a mopped gesture of liquid clay slip that obscures details of the boards and image/texts.

The boards are positioned against parts of the built interior - obscuring a number of the reproductions of Dutch painter Rembrandt van Rijn's paintings or leaning against columns, grouping around areas of floor, marking passages and so on. The boards loosely follow a path that circles from the kitchen areas, through the adjacent servery areas and around the out-front tables.

The work traces a mopping/cleaning motif from the service areas of *Rembrandt's* through to its public areas, relating both aspects. The cleaning, wiping-away gesture embedded in the clay and hoarding boards suggests a wiping out of memory, site and form yet one that is overlaid with ambivalent notions of agency or affirmation - the identity KNOX CITY and the names of individuals, perhaps locals, in whose name *Rembrandt's* does or does not exist.



Ground Floor



First Floor

7

Sanné Mestrom

Standing in the Shadow of the Shaman
Liquor Room and Outside the Liquor Room
Smooth silver adhesive vinyl, contact vinyl, aluminium sheeting and mixed media

Establishing a relationship between astronomy and architecture, the silver temple-like liquor room faces the rising sun filling it with light - like a fish tank fills with water.

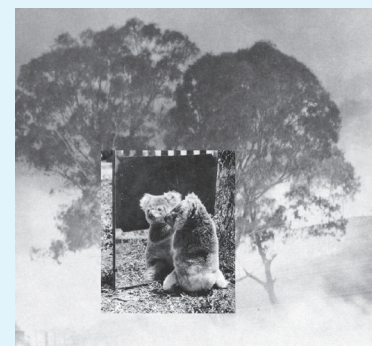
Light is the organising principle of this work. As a mediator of space - physical and metaphysical - the light is proportionate only to itself; it remains indivisible and all things are affected by it equally. Turrell: "the best magic of all is the magic that is real".

I am interested in working with that power...

www.mestrom.org

This project has been generously sponsored by Capral Ltd

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Vin Ryan

Debut: Recordings From Yesterday and the Day Before
Upstairs passage leading to the bio box
Video - 8 minutes

I wanted to make a piece for this show that did more than just respond to the original function of the space. *Rembrandt's* was a place within the suburbs for special events to be celebrated. I liked the idea of injecting a more banal, everyday, suburban narrative back into the space.

A dark, upstairs corridor and my son's highchair tray seemed like just the right fit to explore this train of thought.



Acknowledgments

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Anthony McInnery & Simon Whibley, Curators
Clare McCracken, Project Officer

Danny Lacy, Graphic Design
Vince Lopes, Owner of Rembrandt's
Lyn Wellard, Administration Rembrandt's
John Parkinson, Technical Assistant Rembrandt's

Rembrandt's: 9 Installations would not have been possible without the support and enthusiasm of RMIT students Ikmal Ariffin, Amanda Hedman, Mark Hocking, Lisa Seibert, Anson Tsui, Gary Walker and Tian Wu.

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Herbert+Mason

(represented by Bertrand Lai)
and Benjamin Stibbard
Gloria Soame
Freezer One and Two
Wood, Perspex and gold leaf

"One constant in a world of variables...not much but as much as any man can offer: time, pain, love, hate, age, war, death, laughter, fever." 1

Australia's suburbia still continues to hold the dreams and ambitions of the people. It provides sustenance to the weak, inspiration to live and a roost to raise our young. Its physical condition determines the health of the nation; we owe it a closer look.

'Homo Suburbensis, Bruce Dawe.

