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Greg Creek, *Dog Whistlers*, 2014; 126 transfer prints and mixed media on cut paper, desiccated dog, wax, newspapers, thread, steel; dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout, Melbourne.

REVIEW

## Greg Creek

by [Harriet Kate Morgan](#) | Posted 07 Jul 2014

In *Dog Whistlers and Thirty Four Drawings for Love, Death and Politics*, artist Greg Creek visually engages with the act of deception while surrendering a large portion of his artistic power to his audience in what is a particularly interactive show.

In the first series of works, Creek reflects upon what he sees as a regressive and fraudulent government: he revisits the political cartoon and allows the ordinary Australian gallery-goer to communicate their gathered hysteria through the opportunity to draw or write directly on the artworks. Creek not only calls out the political act of dog whistling but also provides a platform for the viewer's voice.

To 'dog whistle' is, of course, to communicate in a political context by employing coded language that is ostensibly bland or innocuous for a general audience but which has additional specific resonance for a targeted subgroup. Creek finds a way to make visible the 'inaudible' political frequency: in a room filled with a large number of delicate photographic transfers of Australian politicians' heads – which amalgamate to form a sort of metaphoric parliamentary question time – the viewer gets to translate the politician's whistle into its actual meaning. Choosing to take up a pen and write on these cartoon heads is a way of making the suppressed truth 'speak', even if only for one phrase.

Though reflecting this current mood of political unrest the breadth of Creek's body of work is quite remarkable. The extremely diverse range of drawings in the *Love, Death and Politics* series – all executed in totally different ways – depicts a plethora of subjects while bridging the enormous subjects of love, death and suffering.

But it also elucidates different modes of representation and the deliberate choices an artist makes in securing their often market-driven 'signature style'. In a room given over to these framed works, Creek and his non-signature style covers a great deal of ground, all the way from intensely coloured abstractions, collages and muted black-and-white detail-sketches to what appears to be an interpreted still life reminiscent of Giorgio Morandi.

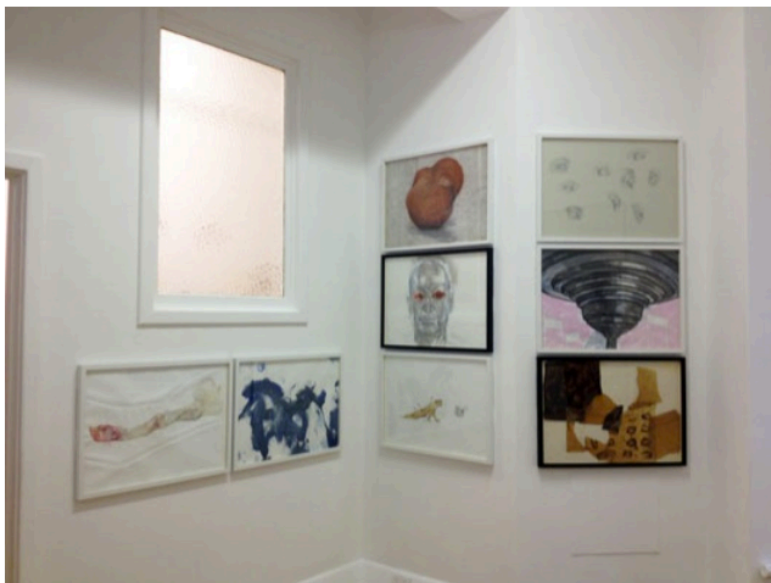
However multi-faceted, Creek's myriad of approaches undoubtedly attacks the medium of drawing, prising it open to reveal an exacting and undeniable Australianness. Whether or not the socio-political climate in Australia is actually as dark and insidious as I make it out it is certainly not helped here by what appears to be the artist's version of the soiled matinee jacket, initially made so famous by the tragic death of Azaria Chamberlain. Taken as a totality, the competing graphic signifiers of this room almost confused me, possibly a sign that Creek's truly is a radical art.

In the final reckoning, Creek's new work appears largely unworried by the usual ego-stroking tendencies an artist might display as he or she attempts to cement a visual brand. *Dog Whistlers and Thirty Four Drawings for Love, Death and Politics* goes beyond the idea of an artist merely presenting work – then sitting back to await a pat on the back – into a perplexing and provocative mental space that contemplates and reassesses Australian socio-political culture.

***Dog Whistlers and Thirty Four Drawings for Love, Death and Politics***  
**Greg Creek**  
**Sarah Scout**  
**26 June – 26 July**



Greg Creek, *Dog Whistlers*, 2014; 126 transfer prints and mixed media on cut paper, desiccated dog, wax, newspapers, thread, steel; dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout, Melbourne.



Greg Creek, *Thirty Four Drawings for Love, Death and Politics*, 2013–2014; mixed media on paper, 34 works, 50 x 70 cm each. Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout, Melbourne.



Greg Creek, *Obstacle*, 2013, from the series *Thirty Four Drawings for Love, Death and Politics*, 2013–2014; mixed media on paper, 34 works, 50 x 70 cm each. Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout, Melbourne.



Greg Creek, *Claustrophobia*, 2013, from the series *Thirty Four Drawings for Love, Death and Politics*, 2013–2014; mixed media on paper, 34 works, 50 x 70 cm each. Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout, Melbourne.

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