an exploration of the archives of the Architecture Museum, UniSA by seven artists

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A collaboration between the Architecture Museum, School of Art, Architecture and Design, UniSA, the Australian Experimental Art Foundation, curator Vivonne Thwaites with Christine Garnaut, Julie Collins and writer Ruth Fazakerley

Jacobus Capone
Kirsten Coelho
Nici Cumpston
Nicholas Folland
Lily Hibberd
Sandra Selig
Sera Waters
This catalogue is published to accompany the exhibition

build me a city

Jacobs Capone, Kirsten Coelho, Nici Cumpton, Nicholas Folland, Lily Hibberd, Sandra Selig, Sera Waters

Exhibition Curator: Vivonne Thwaites with Christine Garnaut, Director, Architecture Museum

Curator’s acknowledgements

I would like to thank the artists for their commitment, energy and creativity in producing new works for this project. Thanks also to Dr Christine Garnaut, Director, Architecture Museum, for her enthuastic participation in this project. Dr Julie Collins, Collections Manager, Architecture Museum, for her work with the artists over an extended period of time; Dr Ruth Fankelrey, Research Fellow, School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University for her catalogue essay; the AEAF team: Director, Christine Morrow, and Ken Bolton, Julie Lawton and Michael Grann and to Domenico de Claris (immediate past Director) for agreeing to the AEAF’s involvement in the project; Dr Mary Knights, Director, SAGA Gallery. School of Architecture and Design, University of South Australia, for advice in the early stages of the project; Helen Fuller, who alerted me to the archaeological dig that occurred in 2012 at the site of the new Royal Adelaide Hospital; North Terrace, Adelaide. Excavations turned up a veritable treasure trove of items, providing a snapshot of Adelaide’s past. Some items from the dig are referenced in Kirsten Coelho’s work in Build me a city. the School of Architecture and Design, University of South Australia, for support with the production of the catalogue; Sandra Elms for designing the exhibition publication with her usual sensitivity and style; Arts SA for making Build me a city possible through its New Exhibitions Fund.

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Kirsten Coelho thanks Keryn Walke and John Hodges at SA Museum, Grant Hancock for photography, and Andrew Bartlett, furniture maker, for building of a shelf that forms part of the artwork.

Vivonne Thwaites is an independent curator of contemporary art projects that use an interdisciplinary approach to make connections with history, culture and ecology. She lives and works in Adelaide.

Selected projects: 2012 Build me a city, AEAF, Adelaide; 2011 Beads Cross, with Fiona Salmon and Anna Žeželj, Flinders University City Gallery; 2011 River Storrs, Adelaide Central Gallery; 2010 Littoral, with Jean Fornasiero, Cameragallery, Hobart; 2006 Writing a painting, Adelaide Bank Festival of Arts; South Australian School of Art Gallery, University of SA; 2006 in the world. Tamworth Festival; Bandeira Bastion, Tamworth Festival and toured nationally; 2004 Holy Holy Holy Adelaide Bank Festival of Arts, Flinders University City Gallery and toured nationally; 2001–2002 Here is where the heart is, a Centenary of Federation project; Art Museum, University of South Australia and toured SA with Country Arts SA; 2001 Ern’s/hers/hers/er’s, Tolita Adelaide Festival, ArtSpace, Adelaide Festival Centre; 1999 Three Views of Kaurna Territory: Nile, ArtSpace, Adelaide Festival Centre. In 2006 Vivonne was awarded the University of Sydney Power Studies at CITé Internationale des Arts in Paris. Her projects have been funded by numerous agencies including: Australia Council, Arts SA, Gordon Darling Foundation, Australia China Council, AsiaLink, UnISA International, the History Trust, the Myer Foundation and Visions of Australia.

Front cover: Sera Waters, Spire for one (listening to the light) (detail), 2011–2012, Pepper, sting light, line, headphones, spire approx 90 x 40 cm (hanging from ceiling); photography by Grant Hancock.

Back cover: Tins from Jack Cheesman’s Interface, Jack Denyer Cheesman collection, Architecture Museum. S383/1 (referenced by Nicholas Folland); photography by Steve Wilson.

Inside cover: Jack Cheesman’s Interface, Jack Denyer Cheesman collection, Architecture Museum S383/1

Dr Ruth Fankelrey, Research Fellow, School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University, Melbourne, is engaged at RMIT as part of a major project investigating the impact and reception of contemporary art (including memorials) in urban public spaces. Ruth trained as a visual artist and has worked in multiple roles within the arts industry as an educator, administrator and writer. She has a longstanding research focus on the field of public art and its discourses (including policy, funding and management), with a particular interest in considering the effects of such discourses on everyday urban social and spatial relations. Her current research focuses on contemporary memorial practices (in particular counter-monuments), and on histories of Australian public art, exploring relationships between concepts of art, landscape and environment in the urban design and visual culture of the 1960s and 70s.

The Architecture Museum acquires, preserves, and manages architectural and related records produced by private practitioners based in South Australia. It holds more than 200,000 items including approximately 20,000 drawings and a 2,000-volume library. It is publicly accessible and is housed in a purpose-designed space in the University of South Australia’s Kaurna building, Fem Place, Adelaide. The Museum promotes scholarly enquiry into South Australia’s built environment history, seeking funding for research projects based on its collections; publishes research outcomes from museum-centred projects; and arranges public exhibitions of its holdings.

The Australian Experimental Art Foundation is a not-for-profit contemporary art space to be established in Adelaide. It was formed in 1974 by a group of Adelaide artists and theorists in order to both encourage new approaches to the visual arts and to promote the idea of art as ‘radical and only incidentally aesthetic’. The AEAF occupies a building in the Lion Arts Centre that incorporates a gallery space, bookshop and artists studios as well as housing a research library and an historically significant archive of artists’ books. Alongside an exhibition program focusing on new work that expands current debates and ideas in contemporary art and culture, the AEAF also presents public programs, performances, publications and symposia.

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Introduction

Build me a city has evolved over an extended period of time. The artists Jacobus Capone, Kirsten Coelho, Nici Cumpton, Nicholas Folland, Lily Hibberd, Sandra Selig and Sera Waters have had access to the Architecture Museum archives at the University of South Australia to reflect on place and history in the generation of new projects specifically for the AEAF.

Approaching the project’s theme from different disciplinary perspectives, they have imaginatively constructed new works. Museums are increasingly interested in artists engaging with and drawing out particular nuances in items that may otherwise have languished or at least may have been exhibited only from a linear historical perspective. In allowing this process to occur, new readings evolve of what may otherwise have remained a static view of history.

Vivonne Thwaites

Curator
By the beginning of the seventies, Arthur Danto observed recently, ‘…one could no longer teach the meaning of art by examples, for the possibility of counterexamples had vanished’. The situation he described was one in which the boundaries between art and non-art, and between artist and art viewer, appeared to have been transformed forever. A succession of art practices – pop, conceptual, networked, performance, installation, environmental, social – only reiterated the uncertainty entailed in distinguishing art from anything else. Furthermore, they revealed the demise of a certain historical narrative in which new art was presumed to progressively deposit the old. There were no longer unequivocal examples of art, not-art, or even obsolete art to help explain art’s status and boundaries. Art had acquired a fundamentally altered relationship with its audiences and institutions, and with its past.

Ongoing dispute over what that altered relationship might really be, or should be, has not been confined simply to artworld debate about innovations in the locations, subjects and materials of art but, I would suggest, is entangled in a much broader set of cultural debates about history and memory, about art and its audiences and institutions in different contexts.

Archival forms, records and effects, the certainties of those narratives purporting to represent universal experiences, the inevitability of the present… [The art] assumes anomic fragmentation as a condition not only to represent but to work through, and proposes new orders of affective association, however partial and provisional, to this end, even as it also registers the difficulty, at times the absurdity, of doing so.’

Jacobs Capone’s transient, performative memorial, produced in collaboration with composer Tiffany Atkinson, reflects upon the description given to a series of house plans in the Museum’s collection: ‘Sketches for unknown house(s) of unknown ownership and location’. Both absurd and poignant, the blunt statement speaks of absences and distance, of something lost and unknown. In recent years, the Architecture Museum has been the catalyst for an increasing number of exhibitions, ad hoc and contingent assemblages of objects and documents upon which ordered systems of registration, attribution, interpretation and presentation are brought to bear. They hold out the promise of an order to come, while displacing the incongruous juxtapositions, tantalizing glimpses, impenetrable silences and gaping holes that all too often ‘that sense of the absurd, the futile, or the impossible, which ultimately haunts the logic of the archive’. The underlying imperative of the archive might well be ‘to connect what cannot be connected’. Certainly, something of a ‘will to connect’ unites the diverse approaches adopted by the artists participating in Build me a city in their engagement with the Architecture Museum. Hal Foster describes this attitude to archival art as:

“What is lost and unknown. It is a will to totalize so much as a will to relate – to probe a misplaced past, to collate its different signs (sometimes pragmatically, sometimes paradoxically), to ascertain what might remain for the present…I assume atomic fragmentation as a condition not to represent but to work through, and propose new orders of affective association, however partial and provisional, to this end, even as it also registers the difficulty, at times the absurdity, of doing so.’

The museum has been implicated in the reproduction of narratives of historical continuity, universality, and impartiality that have had deeply oppressive effects. Such criticisms have provoked calls for strategies that actively disrupt the certainties of those narratives purporting to represent universal experience – ‘counter-memories’, for example, that present histories grounded in the individual, the local and the particular, that are multiple, provisional, and fragmentary, able to be actively constructed and reconstructed by their audiences in different contexts. Artists have correspondingly asked questions about historical representation and the authority which attaches (or fails to attach) to particular documents and narratives through archival regimes; working to appropriate, reveal, contest, or reconfigure archival forms, records and effects.

From the perspective of this discussion, Build me a city, a collaboration between seven artists, a curator, and two different institutions, might conceivably be viewed as one moment in the convergence of multiple discourses that are engaged in probing the relations between art, institutions and audiences, in exploring representations of history and historical value, and relations between past and present (and inevitably the future). The project explicitly links the Architecture Museum’s archives, principally concerned with the practice of twentieth century South Australian architects, with ‘the city’, real or imagined, as a place layered with histories and memories, technologies that both affect and effect its reproduction and development over time. Build me a city directly draws upon the curator’s experience in connecting artists with institutions (Writing a Painting 2006, and Home Stores 2011), as well as prior forays by visual artists into the Architecture Museum’s holdings (Out of Site, 2006, curated by Melinda Rankin).
Clive Milne House, c. 1913
(Referenced by Nicholas Folland)

Nicholas Folland’s explorations of the Architecture Museum’s archives focus on the easily overlooked material traces of past knowledge, the technologies and rationalities involved in imagining and mediating the environment. The leather case of Adelaide architect Jack Cheesman (1905–1994) and its contents of string, pencils, rubber bands and rulers, sketch books and work journals, point to Cheesman’s individual history and the particular local and disciplinary contexts in which he worked. Investigating parallels with string figures, however, such as the ubiquitous childhood game of cat’s cradle, Folland draws attention instead to the role of simple materials (such as string) as powerful, creative tools that embody ways of knowing, reasoning about, and intervening in, space and form.

With her digital light and sound installation, Sandra Selig returns a consideration of the human body and its experiences to the archival encounter. Like the opening and closing of a door or shutter from within a darkened room, shapes of bright light slide, stutter and snap across the gallery, revealing glimpses not of what lies in the virtual spaces outside but rather the changing impressions of a space within. Selig pairs the work conceptually with black and white photographs of domestic interiors from the Architecture Museum, typical records of architectural practice, carefully crafted and devoid of people. In so doing she highlights the photograph’s neglected materiality as an object of human engagement that offers experiences of both connection and disconnection.

Kirsten Coelho’s explorations of the Architecture Museum’s collection reflect on narratives of Adelaide’s colonial history and to consider the experience and meanings of home for the city’s first white settlers. Coelho links the contemporary discovery of pottery shards with an account of the Finlaysons, a Scottish couple attracted to Adelaide in 1837 by its reputation as a dissenting haven and for the potential to minister to the natives. To Adelaide in 87 by its reputation as a dissenting haven and for the potential to minister to the natives. The ceramic pieces commonly unearthed at Adelaide in 87 by its reputation as a dissenting haven and for the potential to minister to the natives, Finlayson’s, a Scottish couple attracted to Adelaide in 1837 by its reputation as a dissenting haven and for the potential to minister to the natives.

As Coelho suggests, often the rough emotional and physical terrain of relocation that the Finlaysons and other settlers experienced. Although dislocated from familiar surroundings and failing in his missionary intent, William Finlayson is nevertheless recorded as an able explorer; farmer, land developer, and a city pastor – in many ways successfully fashioning the Arcadian vision of many would-be colonists. The tale gives an insight into the complex individual and collective negotiations involved in imagining, experiencing, and shaping places of inhabitation (while acknowledging that the violence of dispossession and relocation was an experience more widely shared).
If one characterisation of the archive, following Foucault, is as an instrument of power, discipline and knowledge that shapes the sensible and the sayable, Lily Hibberd, like other artists in Build me a city, is concerned with its obverse, what goes unrecorded and unsaid – the absences and the seemingly disconnected. Tracking fragmentary references to the long vanished buildings of a former orphanage in the Adelaide Park Lands, Hibberd’s installation maps a new set of relationships across the past and future surfaces of the city. Weaving fact and fiction, she mobilises all kinds of documentary, material, and human resources to assert connections between the natural, material world, between specific locations, buildings, and individual bodies, and between the institutional regimes of incarceration involved in the shaping of personhood as much as the built landscape. The impulse to connect everything, as Foster observes, reveals a hint of paranoia – the ambition to recoup failed visions in art, literature, philosophy, and everyday life into possible scenarios of alternative kinds of social relations, to transform the no-place of the archive into the ‘no-place of a utopia’. Hibberd’s utopic/dystopic quasi-fiction hints more directly, however, at the uncertainty, if not the absurdity, of such a project. Rather than excavating the past, Hibberd assembles a future path through past markings, making it available as a site of possibility, for inspection and interrogation. The latest iteration of the artists’ archival explorations over the past year come together in the exhibition Build me a city to reaffirm that neither history, memory nor the archive are merely a matter of ordering and interpreting what has been left behind, but are intimately concerned with the creation of ‘a world to come’. As Knut Eliassen argues: ‘archives are at the same time that which produces and reproduces the well-known and familiar and that which allows for ruptures and breaks with the past and the advent of something new [...] Archives might store the past, but they are fundamentally technologies of the future and as such eminently political’.  

Sera Waters' The sea connection (detail), 2011-2012

Linen, video, cotton, beads, sequins; steps, embroidery approx 50 cm diameter

Photography by the artist

Sera Waters also begins with white settler experiences of dislocation and distance in Adelaide, focusing on their mediation by material and social forms – the maintenance of homeland connections through daily letter writing, community bonds forged by inhabitation in a new environment, through shared spiritual beliefs and the rituals of religious observance. In references to the Stow Memorial Congregational Church, built in Adelaide in 1867 and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas, Waters re-enters an on-going connection between the Architecture Museum and designed by the architect Robert George Thomas. She focuses on the extant Gothic-styled church as an important intermediary between settler’s memories of their homeland and new experiences of the landscape and of light. Waters constructs embroidered objects, or situations, incorporating sound, photographs, and moving images that invite reflection on human desires for connection and transcendence through the evidence of the artist’s labour, aim to speak more broadly about time, repetition, and dedication.

Lily Hibberd 'Coup de Soleil' (installation detail), 2012

Paper sunbursts, oil on canvas extracted from cypress trees at Adelaide Gaol site, bound book, poster prints and video, dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist and Galerie de Kruysen, Paris

Photography by the artist

Endnotes


7 See N. Bourniaus, Postdigital Culture: Culture as Screenplay How Art Reproduces the World (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002)


11 C. Merewether ‘Art and the Archive’, in Merewether (ed.) The Archive, p.17

12 As a Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn describes his own artistic practice, cited in H. Foster, An Archival Impulse, October 110 (2004): 9-22, p.10

13 Foster, An Archival Impulse, p.21


16 Foster, An Archival Impulse, pp. 21-22

Artist’s statement

Sketches for an unknown house, at an unknown location, the title of a group of blueprints by Andrew Benko held in the Architecture Museum, presented me with an irresistible fiction to explore. Also, I found amongst a collection of Benko’s black and white ‘holiday’ photographs, none of which had background information, one which depicted an illuminated, neon sign similar to those seen on Broadway. The sign read, ‘divertimenti’. It was as if this photograph subtly suggested an avenue to investigate and hence to decipher the Sketches for an unknown house …

In studying Mr. Benko’s Sketches it appeared to me that an action was needed in order to briefly liberate them from their confines and to assist them in assuming their assigned title. The required journey seemed to be to translate the initial sketch/drawing into something that could disappear or be lost, thus making it ‘unknown’. (A ‘momentary memoriam’ itself illuminating the passage and transitory phase from known to unknown.)

I undertook a series of actions to facilitate and nurture a passage for the sketch from one stage to the next.

I selected one of the blueprints and acknowledged and separated each line in the drawing. I then used these lines to construct a secondary drawing which simply acknowledged the building blocks (each individual line) of the initial piece of information; in turn, that drawing was deciphered again.

I passed on the resulting sketch to Tiffany Alison Ha, a Perth-based emerging composer, who translated the information into a musical score and a sound piece. The written score itself existed momentarily as I engaged in a process of censoring it (by blanking out selected parts) after its realisation, leaving only traces of its existence.

For a brief glimpse of time the lines constructing Benko’s drawing will assume the form of sound; they will be heard and then disappear from perception, thus passing from the known to the unknown.

Jacobus Capone

b 1986, Perth

Perth-based emerging artist working between performance, installation, sculpture, painting and video media

Selected CV
Bachelor of Visual Arts, Edith Cowan University, Perth, 2007.

Solo projects/exhibitions: the reparation of the heart, Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne and the Flux Factory, NY, (forthcoming 2013); under the radar, Brisbane Festival, Queensland, 2012, the calm nocturne through close white touch, The Cable Factory, Helsinki and on dislocation and disillusion/teaching two limbs the idea of time, free range gallery, Perth, 2011, Nine Prayers for Palomar, PICA, Perth and A Work for a Mountain, Vancouver Arts Centre, Albany, WA, 2010.


Public art: To Love, 2006, walking from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, to pour water from the Indian Ocean into the Pacific (crossing Australia by foot) supported by his sister Gemma. Treasure Hill Artist Village Fellowship, AIR, Taipei International Artist in Residence, Taiwan, 2013, the Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship for Emerging Artists, 2012; Australia Council Helsinki studio residency, 2011.

Small black and white photograph ‘divertimenti’, undated Andrew Benko collection
Architecture Museum S259/6
(Referenced by Jacobus Capone)
Artist's statement

Recently my ceramics practice has been focused on the exploration and reinterpretation of nineteenth and early twentieth century enamel wares and ceramics produced for a domestic market in early Australia. Through an investigation of these objects I am searching for a new visual meaning so as to view the historical through the context of the contemporary object. In the circuitous history of objects, enamel wares were made and bought often to replace fine china in working class households, with some pieces having the form and surface decorations resembling the patterns of English and Chinese bone china tea sets. To reconstruct some of these objects in clay is to create a cycle whereby the ceramic object attempts to emulate the metal object. The work also endeavours to convey some of the domestic history of objects by highlighting the potential abstractions that arise on the surface through their use and subsequent deterioration.

The body of work in Build me a city seeks to highlight the dislocation and disillusion encountered by some of the first settlers of the inner Adelaide area. The story of William and Helen Finlayson, Scottish missionaries who arrived in Adelaide in 1837, is an example of the spirit in which imagined arcadias and dystopian realities emerge. The first dwelling of the Finlaysons on the banks of the River Torrens was built with tea tree saplings and twigs and held together with broken hairpins.1 Domestic objects have the ability to communicate both material culture and social histories. It is possible to construct real and imagined narratives through the re-examining of objects.

The disjunction between the real and lived environment and the bucolic imagery on many pieces of utilitarian pottery brought to these shores by early settlers amplifies the rough emotional and physical terrain of relocation. Society and history can be recorded also through objects; they provide the trace elements and evidence of the worlds from which they have come. The images of the shards sourced from archaeological finds discovered at the new Royal Adelaide Hospital site on North Terrace aim to highlight the incongruity between the imagery portrayed on the ceramic shards and the actual lived experience of South Australia's first European settlers. These images are exhibited alongside newly produced ceramic objects in porcelain which are suggestive of use whilst being devoid of any pictorial surface decoration. The objects and photographic images create a commentary and dialogue between the social history and material culture of early migrants to South Australia.

The new ceramic objects emphasise the make-do, the adaptation and use of objects in the experience of the settler. When old and new worlds collide a new object, use or understanding comes into being.

The use of the imagery on the shards and the porcelain clay as a material in the hand-made objects also makes reference to migration through the acknowledgement of the history of ceramics itself – production methods, perceived ideas of value, commodification and established trade routes. Loudon's Encyclopaedia may have been utilised perhaps in a similar way to an internet search engine, to access different kinds of information with which to build and create new homes and furnishings. Old and new colliding, settlers reinventing and adapting to the unknown.


Kirsten Coelho

b 1966, Denmark
Adelaide-based potter working mainly in porcelain

Selected CV
Master of Visual Arts, South Australian School of Art, University of South Australia, Adelaide, 2004; Bachelor of Design (Ceramics), South Australian School of Art, 1988.


Kirsten Coelho

Oil can, cup, funnel, bottle, boule (detail), 2012
Porcelain objects, dimensions variable (tallest: 28 cm)
Courtesy the artist, Helen Gory Galerie, Melbourne and BMGArt, Adelaide
Photography by Grant Hancock
Solo exhibition: **having-been-there**
Gallangather, Melbourne, 2011.

**Group exhibitions:**
- Finalist in the 2009 Western Australian Indigenous Art Award at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. Finalist in the 17th, 18th, 20th, 21st, 24th and 25th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards held annually at Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin.

**Selected CV**
- Bachelor of Visual Arts with Honours (Photography), South Australian School of Art, University of South Australia, Adelaide, 2004.

**Artist’s statement**

**having-been-there** is a series of images created in response to my Barkindji family’s ancestral country in the desert of central western New South Wales. The surroundings are rich in the spirit of our ancestors. One hundred kilometres north of Broken Hill quartzite ridges traverse the country known as the Barrier Range, country that holds memories and direct evidence of Aboriginal occupation. Aborigines used quartzite to make stone tools and hunting weapons. Some landscape features provided shelter from prevailing winds, as captured in the work Shelter I & II. In the foreground of **Shards** you can see the remnants of the Indigenous inhabitants’ tool-making workshops, as there are thousands of discarded fragments or shards left on the ground. **Settlement view** includes a figure; she is looking towards the ‘settlement’ of station houses. The term ‘settlement’ alludes to the colonial view. **Fossil waterhole** is a permanent water source, even in times of extreme drought. It is an important site for men’s ceremonial purposes. There are caves in the rocky outcrop and ancient fish-scale fossils not far from the water source. A site overlooking the area shows evidence of an ancient stone tool-making workshop. Cracked rocks and the shards are prolific in one large area, high up on a hill with an expansive view. From this vantage point you can see the natural amphitheatre where up to one thousand people from many different language groups would come to gather for important ceremonies.

There are many ancient rock art sites within the area including those in Mutawintji National Park. My work incorporates some small images of rock peckings – of an emu, kangaroo and an Aboriginal man holding a boomerang. These were created using quartz to tap in to the soft sandstone.

I am interested in raising awareness of the places that show occupation by Aboriginal people. I spend as much time as I can walking the country, speaking with cultural custodians and developing a true and rich sense of place from an Aboriginal perspective. People may have cultural obligations to many locations over great distances, so it is imperative that they have a deep understanding of how to survive. There are subtle signs in the landscape that inform various clan groups of food and water sources. These signs are vital to survival in this country of extreme temperatures and vast distances between obvious fresh water supplies.

Using medium-format film cameras enables me to slow my pace, and the hand-colouring process gives me the time to reflect on the cultural stories shared with me by our senior cultural custodian and law man, Barkindji Elder and fellow artist, Badger Bates.
Nicholas Folland

b 1967, Adelaide
Adelaide-based installation artist

Selected CV
Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours), South Australian School of Art, University of South Australia, Adelaide, 1999, Master of Visual Arts, University of Sydney, 2009.


Anne & Gordon Samstag International Photography Scholarship, 1999; Master of Visual Arts, University of South Australia, Adelaide, 1999, Visual Arts Scholarship, 1999; Anne & Gordon Samstag International of South Australia, 2009.

Selected CV
Adelaide-based installation artist

Artist’s statement
The Architecture Museum is not only defined by its capacity to preserve a record of local architectural vision but also by its ability to document the creative endeavour of reimagining landscape. A number of unrealised and incomplete drawings support the Museum’s collection of resolved architectural drawings; some of the former were sketched quickly as thoughts occurred to the architect about how to solve or to illustrate potential solutions to problems. These scraps of salvaged notebooks and torn paper articulate the thoughts and ideas of active minds and negotiate the concerns of existing and future environments. We can be sure that for every architectural vision realised many other possibilities have fallen by the wayside. It is somewhere here, in the city that never was, that we glean insight into the heritage of the constructed world that identifies the priorities and specificities of our relationship to place.

Within the Museum’s archives there are four substantial collections of architects’ tools; they belonged to F Kenneth Milne, Ralph Knowles, Andrew Tidswell and Jack Cheesman. The collections consist mostly of pencils, rulers, tape measures, French curves and compasses. These tools of trade serve to coordinate the unfathomable task of transformation, and form a conduit between mind and matter; not only between the hand and the page but also between the eye and the world around us, where dreams and realities struggle for their place in an ultimate vision.

Jack Cheesman’s briefcase is unique in its honesty and appears to have been simply put to one side at the end of a day’s work, ready for the following day on the job. Like a Boy Scout, Cheesman was prepared for anything, and, while there is no obvious measuring device to be seen, the case contains string, chalk, matches, razor blades, numerous small pieces of cloth, clips and rubber bands, along with postage stamps, personal photographs, car parts and note books. Cheesman’s likeness appears in the photographs, but the briefcase embodies the man as a creative thinker, with all of the basic tools necessary to explore and imagine the possibility of the world before him. Perhaps without the rule of measurement, which mechanically fragments objects, time and space he was better equipped to dream of the (im)possibilities.

Cat’s cradle figures may represent animals and birds, landscape features such as mountains and rivers or architectural forms from grass huts to bridges and even the Eiffel Tower. The predominantly linear and enclosed figures can be seen as temporary and speculative architectures, a negotiation of form and structure. They illustrate the icons, values and everyday activities of the diverse cultures in which this craft is embedded, and in this way the seemingly simple, yet often complex, form of play reflects our relationship to place, status and priority.

The game of cat’s cradle is truly one of the minimal crafts, wherein string as a basic and foundational tool is strung within the armature of the human frame; hands, toes, knees, elbows, neck and mouth are all called on to give structure to line and to create intimate architectures within the landscape of our bodies. Therein lies a world defined by the limits of our reach and dexterity, described by a loop of string, but with the potential to transform infinitely, limited only by imagination.

Left: Tins from Jack Cheesman’s briefcase
Jack Denyer Cheesman collection, Architecture Museum S89/1
(Referenced by Nicholas Folland)
Photography by Steve Wilson

Nicholas Folland Right: Threshold (keys) (detail), 2012
Keys, key rings, dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Ryan Renshaw Gallery, Brisbane
Photography by the artist
Artist’s statement

Coup de Soleil tells the story of Margaret Toban, an eighteen-year-old woman who in 1856 suffers a case of sunstroke and is committed to the lunatic cells at Adelaide Gaol. People fear the sun because of the threat of Antipodean madness. There is no cure for the sunstroke. The only remedy is shelter and total seclusion. Build me a city documents the tale of this woman and the strange future city of Adelaide across a two-part installation.

Part one: Counter-Panopticism on North Terrace, the invisible and inverted cosmic logic of Adelaide city

Mapping the cosmic logic of the city of Adelaide, this print series reveals the cosmic organisation of three major institutions of confinement along North Terrace: the Gaol, the Destitute Asylum and the Lunatic Asylum. The form of the west end of the Gaol is heliotropic, in accordance with the trajectory of the sun. The wastelands and slaughterhouse – spaces of damnation – are to the west of the Terrace, where the sun sets. Surrounding the Gaol is the dumping ground and a wretched swamp.

The mid-point of North Terrace is a staging post and site of exchange. Alongside the Military Barracks is the labour depot, a girls’ reformatory (serving a similar purpose in assigning girls to work), and the Destitute Asylum (later a lying-in ward). To the extreme east, where the sun rises, we encounter recuperation and light in the Botanic Gardens and Public Waterworks. Pure breezes from the River Torrens soothe and heal those in the former Hospital, Lunatic Asylum and Colonial Orphans Home. Here is a space of purification and sanitation in which the cleansing prospect of the River, the restorative effects of the gardens and cool air from the park combine to offer sanity and sanctification.

A spatial logic plays out through this solar trajectory, which demonstrates the origins and reasoning of colonial institutional care and incarceration. We discover how people in the welfare and mental health system today are caught in transit between these spaces; those who might be regarded as the city’s outcasts are still pushed out of sight, beyond the urban limits, while the radial design of the National Wine Centre now ghosts the Orphan Asylum, obliterating the precinct’s memory with delectation.

Part two: Sun Hat Eclipse

This sequence of images follows the movement from west to east on the map on the wall drawing. It includes photographs taken at the three sites and images from archives. A typed footnote included on the lower part of each poster details Margaret Toban’s story, in her own words. It is told in three parts as she moves through the three institutions and the three states of exile and eclipse. Information is also noted on the history of each site and building.
Sandra Selig

b 1972, Sydney
Brisbane-based artist

Selected CV
Master of Arts (Research) Visual Arts, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, 1999.

Solo exhibitions: be some other material, Artspace, Sydney, 2011; waves depend on us (light from Tokyo), Milani Gallery, Brisbane, 2009; circuit, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2006.

Group exhibitions: Be some other material, Artspace, Sydney, 2011; Waves depend on us (light from Tokyo), Milani Gallery, Brisbane, 2009; Circuit, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2006.

Exhibitions:

Solo exhibitions:
- Be some other material, Artspace, Sydney, 2011
- Waves depend on us (light from Tokyo), Milani Gallery, Brisbane, 2009
- Circuit, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2006

Group exhibitions:
- Build me a city, AEAF, Adelaide, 2006
- The Moon and its Ghosts, Experimenta Illumination, Federation Square Big Screen, 2010
- In the Space of Elsewhere, Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston University, London, 2008

Public and private commissions:
- Cloud wall, 111 Eagle Street, Brisbane, Cox Rayner Architects, 2012
- Continuum, Brisbane International Airport, Bligh Voller Nield Architects, 2008
- Stray lines, Brisbane Magistrates Court, Cox Rayner Architects, 2005
- Australia Council Tokyo Studio, (awarded 2006, taken 2008)
- Great Britain, International Artist in Residence Program, Guernsey College of Further Education, Art and Design, St Peter Port, Guernsey, Great Britain, 2004

Australia Council Tokyo Studio, (awarded 2006, taken 2008)

Sandra Selig’s be some other material, 2011, a work that precedes Continuous Corner, was created over a three-week Artspace residency period. Selig’s ongoing series of light installations draws on the philosophies of Yoshihara Jiro, the founder of the mid-twentieth century ‘Gutai’ group of artists in Japan. Selig’s work invokes the Daoist concept that through perseverance humans can alter the substance of the world around them so that it becomes ‘live’ and apparent in new ways. In her work we see how an artist can ‘bring matter to life.’ The artist has an interest in mathematics, geometry, patterning, and gestalt effects; and a fascination with the insubstantial qualities of atmosphere, light, and sound. Selig’s work consistently responds to both site and space.

In response to her research at the Architecture Museum, and while developing her work Continuous Corner, Sandra wrote this poem:

Paper of an aged black and white photograph;
surface of void and light.
Evaporated spaces that were.
Here now, in my hands.
Cut sheets of geometric light and shadow surface
on the architecture as architecture becomes its surface.
Black and white
Void and light
Paper transforms.
Projected, it may move across a surface as light moves across a wall, except that you can feel it and hear it.

Sandra Selig
2012
Sera Waters  

b 1979, Murray Bridge, SA  

Adelaide-based multi-media artist exploring repetitive crafting using embroidery and sculpture  

Selected CV  

Bachelor of Visual Arts with Honours, South Australian School of Art, University of South Australia, Adelaide, 2000; Master of Arts (Studies in Art History), the University of Adelaide, 2006  


Group exhibitions: Build me a city, AEAF, Adelaide, Niederschau; Galerie Handwerk, Munich, Germany; Sensation Seekers, Fontanella Gallery, Adelaide; Objectified, SASA Gallery, Adelaide, 2012; Sensory Loop, Tanworth Textile Threnod, touring, artrooms, Adelaide, Imagining Interiors, JamFactory, Adelaide, Home Stones, Adelaide Central Gallery and Migration Museum, Adelaide, 2011; Talents, International Trade Fair, Munich, Germany, 2009  

Inside SAM’s Place residency, SA Museum (with Craftsouth), 2011; Ruth Tuck Scholarship to attend Royal School of Needlework, Hampton Court Palace, Surrey, UK, 2006  

Artist’s statement  

Collectively I see my works as memorials dedicated to the ghosts that haunt the present, raising and seeing from the still-active memories of South Australian colonial history. My ancestors began arriving at Port Moonta as early as 1838 and took shelter in temporary tents and eventually durable dwellings – all the while building complex tangles of encounters, emotions, and stories which passed along generations. To me, their legacies are these tangles. I take them up and reinterpret them into embroidered and knotty objects and scenarios that confound my present with their many, many pasts. To contemplate these tangles I make using ‘time’, over and over again making laboriously, repetitively and intimately. Time makes space, space to be mindful of the unknown terrain of inner lives that records could not commit to history and of aspects of lives deemed unthinkable. Over generations, connections have been forged to this place through a make-do, then more enduring, ‘homeliness’.  

Stow Memorial Church is an early example of Victorian Gothic Revival architecture in Adelaide. I am fascinated by how this English architectural style, imported and transplanted into the young settlement, offered a familiar and communal space for those forging a new life far from their known home. In my family’s historical records there are letters pertaining to my ancestors John and Emma Braddock and their nine sons who arrived in Adelaide in 1852. The letters reveal that Stow Memorial Church was the place where they eventually sought spiritual comfort, community and connection. Not unusually, the Braddocks experienced numerous struggles in living in the early colony. One recorded through letters is their difficulty in resolving past conflicts with relatives in England via an irregular post system and lengthy periods of time between correspondence. I imagine the Bradocks (especially their son William who took it upon himself to try to reconcile one misunderstanding which plagued his father) visiting Stow Memorial Church and looking up, into the light and high ceilings, visioning the sun-filled sky above, attempting to reach beyond the grounded physicality of their everyday selves. Now many generations later we share the same sun. Similarly, I look up, soak in the sun’s light, in an attempt to transcend myself and find guidance in the natural environment. These works centre around light, as enabling transcendental thinking, as well as contemplative and repetitive practice, as a means to make connections across time.  

Stow Memorial is a spire-less church, even though Robert George Thomas’ winning architectural design featured a spire and the church’s building committee desired a spire to ensure ‘impressiveness and associations’. Like an architectural spire reaches toward the sky and sun, my Gothic-inspired portable spire-for-one offers a symbolic space to reach upward, beyond one’s self. Standing underneath the coloured light, looking up, I hope that, like Cedar Prest’s Gothic rose-stained glass design which features in Stow Memorial Church, this round embroidery and film is a colour-filled homage to the light of the Australian sun. It is also a portal across time. The sun, both awesome and mundane, has maintained a daily presence across human life. It is a defining experience of life in Australia, and I picture people past living beneath the sun – basking, baking, burning – just as we do now. I find a form of connection and transcendence in such repetitiveness; from the sun’s relentless presence, to the act of intensive stitching. These acts and observations transcend time. My research into the nineteenth century Gothic Revival uncovered an active belief in spirits, spectres, ghosts and open communication across time. In particular it was thought photographs could ‘record’ sightings of spirits; as an outpouring of ectoplasm (sometimes with ghostly faces being seen within), or spiritual glares and flashes caught on film. Using the Gothic method of ‘rational supernatual’ I have lovingly made wearable faux ectoplasm. This Australian sun-baked white ectoplasm (an Antipodean inversion from the black English Victorian ectoplasm) is my attempt to communicate with the unreachable across generations. As well, photographs with stitched glares make similar attempts, with the glare relating back to the Australian sun, one aspect of daily life that my ancestors and I share.
List of works – contemporary

Jacobus Capone

DIVERTIMENTI (memoramic murals for an unknown house), 2012
Mixed media installation incorporating screen printed images of domestic scenes (total 26 cm)

Lily Hibberd

Consalve, 2012
Installation
paper sunhoods, oil extracted from olive trees at Adelaide Gaol site, found book, poster prints and video dimensions variable

Sandra Selig

Continuous Corner, 2012
Single channel digital video projection with sound:
9:50 mins
courtesy the artist, Milani Gallery, Brisbane and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

Sera Waters

Spire for one (listening to the light), 2011–2012
Perspex, string, light, linen, headphones
spire approx 90 x 40 cm
(hanging from ceiling)
The sun's connection, 2011–2012
Linen, video, cotton, beads, sequins, steps
embroidery approx 50 cm diameter

courtesy the artist and Galleriemyth, Melbourne

List of works – historical references

Jacobus Capone

Conjecture (not’s real), 2012
String, multiple components dimensions variable
Threshold (keys), 2012
Keys, key rings dimensions variable
courtesy the artist and Ryan Reynolds Gallery, Brisbane

Nicholas Folland

Jack Cheesman’s briefcase
Jack Denyer Cheesman collection
Architecture Museum, S54/1


Lily Hibberd

Wrennig, Thomas (1678) History of the City of Adelaide, J. Williams, Adelaide
Architecture Museum, B134

Sandra Selig

Oliver Milne House, c.1913
black and white photographs, F. Kenneth Milne photograph album
F. Kenneth Milne collection

Sera Waters

Architecture Museum, B1512