

KENT



STATE

FOUR DECADES LATER

THURSDAY 13 MAY – SUNDAY 18 JULY 2010
UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY
THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

KENT STATE: FOUR DECADES LATER

University Art Gallery, University of Sydney
Thursday 13 May – Sunday 18 July 2010

In May 1970 the artist Richard Hamilton set up a camera in front of TV for a week. He recalled:

Every night I sat watching with a shutter-release in my hand. If something interesting happened I snapped it ...

In the middle of the week the shooting of students by National Guardsmen occurred at Kent State University. This tragic event produced the most powerful images that emerged from the camera, yet I felt a reluctance to use any of them. It was too terrible an incident in American history to submit to arty treatment. Yet there it was in my hand, by chance – I didn't really choose the subject, it offered itself. It seemed right, too that art could help to keep the shame in our minds; the wide distribution of a large edition print might be the strongest indictment I could make.

Kent State is the most onerous of all the prints I have made. Without anticipating the problems I chose to layer many transparent colours over each other to build the image from the overlaps and fringes ...

The Kent State student depicted, Dean Kahler, was not killed. He suffered spinal injuries and is paralysed.

Hamilton's influential work *Kent State* was a massive undertaking, a silkscreen print edition of 5,000 from 13 stencils. Sydney architect and writer Donald Gazzard donated the work to the University of Sydney in 1970.

This exhibition marks the 40th anniversary of the Kent State tragedy with Hamilton's print as its touchstone. The following artists Michael Callaghan, Barbara Campbell, Bea Maddock, Marie McMahon, Tom Nicholson, Susan Norrie, Raquel Ormella, and Justin Trendall were invited to exhibit work which engages with ideas of student activism, mass media and Hamilton's work. Richard Hamilton responded to this project:

It is good to know that the Kent State print still has a some juice left to carry a message ... It is necessary to have our memory refreshed ...

The artist statements on this poster were made in response to the following questions:

Where were you in May 1970?

Do you have any memory of the Kent State tragedy?

What was your first encounter with Richard Hamilton's work?

What connections if any are there between your work and the Richard Hamilton print *Kent State*?

Curators: Luke Parker and Ann Stephen

Exhibition intern and public programs coordinator: Melinda Gagen

Design: Peter Thorn

Acknowledgments:

Thanks to Richard Hamilton and the participating artists; Peter Thorn; Melinda Gagen; Paul Williamson, Fairfax Media; Katherine Yuill, Connie Tornatore-Loong and Hannah Kothe, curatorial assistants, University Art Gallery; Jane Johnson, Museum Studies, Faculty of Arts; George Pizer and John Webb, exhibition preparators; Luke Wagner Frame Makers, Hobart; Ross Peck, RP Art; Wendy Bacon; Patrick Bateman; Elly Howse; David Ellis, Director and the staff of Sydney University Museums.

Thanks to Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd for supporting Barbara Campbell's *Kent State Newsprint*.

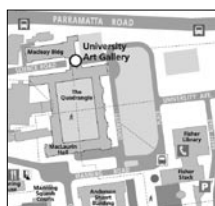
SIT IN: STUDENTS ARE REVOLTING!

4–6pm Thursday 13 May 2010
The History Room, S223, The Quadrangle
University of Sydney

Kent State, politics, activism and the art of the time including talks by: Ann Stephen, Luke Parker, Susan Norrie, Patrick Bateman, Marie McMahon, Raquel Ormella, Elly Howse and Justin Trendall.

The Sydney Morning Herald
smh.com.au

**UNIVERSITY
ART GALLERY**



University Art Gallery
War Memorial Arch
The Quadrangle
The University of Sydney
Mon – Fri 10am – 4.30pm
Sun 12 noon – 4pm
T 02 9351 6883
E ann.stephen@sydney.edu.au

Front cover: Richard Hamilton *Kent State* 1970, screenprint, JW Power Collection, University of Sydney, managed by Museum of Contemporary Art, gift of Mr Donald Gazzard, 1970 © the artist



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY



MICHAEL CALLAGHAN

In May 1970 I was 17 years old, studying art at the local technical college in Wollongong before going on to complete my studies in Sydney at the National Art School. I vividly remember the Kent State tragedy hitting the television screens, the genuine shock and real astonishment expressed on all sides of the violently divergent political divisions of the day. The Vietnam War was ever present, the first televised war in history, brutality and horror was beamed nightly and relentlessly into homes across the world. Conscription into the military loomed in the background for all eligible young Australian males. Kent State represented a turning point underlining the nightly televised assault, the barbaric futility of the war in Vietnam. It turned a spotlight on the damage that civil society was undergoing; the fabric seemed to be giving way.

My first introduction to the work of Richard Hamilton was via the Thames & Hudson paperback *Pop Art*. A few years later I saw Hamilton's print *Kent State* and discovered its stark resonant power. Invited to make a work in response to the 40th anniversary of the print I studied it again – it remains timeless, its clarity undiminished.

Time continues to throw up the same issues as relentlessly as the televised horror of the Vietnam War once did, different horrors in different places. The shooting murder of a young Iranian woman, the 26 year old philosophy student Neda Agha-Soltan by plainclothes security or militia, in the 'stolen' election demonstrations in Tehran in 2009 is the modern parallel to Kent State. A state murder, the same senseless brutality, the same casual disregard for human life by an oppressive government acting against dissenters within its own society.

I have previously dealt with images of death in my work. Viewing the 40-second video posted on the Internet, repeatedly seeing the point in time when a young woman's life ceases, was the most harrowing experience. It only seemed possible to convey the true depth of horror of this damning document by freezing the moments in time just before and just after Agha-Soltan's cruel death.

Michael Callaghan
State Murder in Tehran 2010
(detail) diptych, Epsom digital
prints, each 67 x 87 cm (image
size), 91 x 111 cm (paper size)
edition of 10, 5 artist proofs
(with technical assistance by
Gregory S. McLachlan)

Michael Callaghan is a
Sydney-based artist who has
been making work concerned
with art and politics since 1975,
first as part of the Earthworks
Poster Collective at the Tin
Sheds, University of Sydney,
and later when he established
Redback Graphix. He is currently
working on a set of sculptures
and digital prints on the 'War on
Terror' in Iraq.

BARBARA CAMPBELL

In May 1970 I was attending primary school in rural South-East Queensland. Getting anything – food, education, news, culture – required visible effort. By 1970 we had a television but reception was poor; the signals bouncing off relay towers along the valley until received by free-standing aerials my father had planted in the cow paddocks around our house. It wasn't until secondary school in Brisbane that I learnt anything about Richard Hamilton's work. Just that one iconic example of British Pop art – Hamilton's *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* (1956) was offered. We acknowledged it and moved on. But I have remembered it.

I've made *Kent State Newsprint* in direct response to Hamilton's 1970 screenprint, both his methodology and the imagery. His rules for image generation (setting up a camera in front of the television to record whatever would appear there) preceded the image. Similarly, I have used my haiku generator (scanning newspapers for five and seven syllable runs of text that I then combine into credible haiku) to plunder the pages of *The Sydney Morning Herald* from May 4–8 1970, the week of the Kent State shootings and their subsequent reportage. Hamilton has written about the time delay between the events on the Kent State campus and hearing of it in the UK. I've also been able to track the time delay between Ohio and Sydney through the newspaper sequence. Like Hamilton, I've chosen to produce an edition of 5000 *Newsprints* (in my case by using newspaper offset print technology) to allow maximum dispersal. Finally, it is up to the gallery visitor to fully realise *Kent State Newsprint*, by taking one of the sheets off the stack and making a graphite rubbing of any of the haiku on the floor nearby.

Sydney-based artist Barbara Campbell has been making performances since 1982. In developing and presenting her works, Barbara plies the specific physical and contextual properties of a given site, be it art gallery, museum, atrium, tower, radio airwaves or the world wide web.

Barbara Campbell
News Haiku: Observer
22/11/09 2009
Dymo label on paper
14.8 x 21 cm

SODDEN NEWSPAPERS

EVERY DAY, OF EVERY WEEK

THEIR DECAYING SCENT

OBSERVER

22 / 11 / 09

BEA MADDOCK



Where were you in May 1970?

I was teaching printmaking at the National Gallery School in Melbourne and living in a flat on Punt Road, Richmond where I collected visual material from local newspapers and magazines under category headings. Captions, text and dates were removed so that only the photo-journalism remained. The photo-screenprints and photo-etchings offered no easy interpretations or solutions for the here and now imagery. I was attracted to the language of contemporary printmaking overseas and especially that of Eduardo Paolozzi, Joe Tilson and Richard Hamilton.

Do you have any memory of the Kent State tragedy?

I would have seen press photos and one of the students had Richard Hamilton's print that was put up in the Print room at the National Gallery School.

What was your first encounter with Richard Hamilton's work?

It was one of his black and white altered crowd-scene prints.

What connections if any are there between your work and the Richard Hamilton print Kent State?

It made me think about working on a larger scale with screen prints. Later in 1974 I used a reproduction of the Francis Bacon collotype of Richard Hamilton along with a self portrait photograph taken under a copy camera to produce the silver-gelatin artist proof print called *Self Portrait with Richard Hamilton* (in the collection of Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Tasmania).

Bea Maddock
Late Night Viewing 2010 (detail)
pencil on paper, framed
150 x 83cm

Bea Maddock was born in Hobart, Tasmania in 1934. She studied Fine Art at the Hobart Technical College 1952-56 and at the Slade School of Art in London 1959-61. She taught from 1962 to 1984 in Launceston and Melbourne. She moved back to Tasmania and in 1984 began work on two large projects based on her voyage to Antarctica and the Aboriginal lands of Tasmania and Victoria.

MARIE McMAHON



Marie McMahon
Green Dresses 2010
Collage, Butterick dressmaking
pattern packet
22 cm x 13.7 cm

Marie McMahon worked with Earthworks Poster Collective at the Tin Sheds, University of Sydney from 1975, with Redback Graphix, Sydney, and then in remote area Aboriginal arts and education in the Northern Territory. Marie currently teaches drawing at the Art Workshops, Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning at the University of Sydney. Her recent collage and giclee prints exhibited in 2009 at the Damien Minton Gallery were about Cambodia.

In May 1970 I was a sixteen year old student at the National Art School, Avoca Street Annex in Randwick.

I don't remember if I was aware of the Kent State tragedy at the time but I know that the American war in Indochina had entered my consciousness through photographs and film footage. In my mind, South East Asia was a real place and the people were real. My father had worked for the Australian Armed Forces in South East Asia during the late 1960s and I had been partly educated there.

During the early 1970s the war was a topic for heated discussion at our family home in Sydney. One of my brothers had his birth date pulled out in the Conscription draw. One of my sisters had a boyfriend who became a conscientious objector. I marched in the Vietnam moratoriums. I don't recall the exact chronology of all this but I have never forgotten the televised film footage of Buddhist monks protesting against the war, on fire in the streets of Saigon.

I have since had the opportunity to spend some time in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, where survivors of the American war have their personal histories to tell. A friend in Hanoi survived the bombing by US Forces of her childhood village, and friends in Cambodia looked into the abyss of the Pol Pot years. A nominally neutral country, Laos became a dumping ground for US bombs.

At Toul Sleng Museum in Phnom Penh I saw photos of clothing taken from victims of the Khmer Rouge. A power vacuum created by the war in Vietnam had made the regime possible. At the Vietnamese Women's Museum in Hanoi I saw items of hand stitched clothing, embroidery, hand made fans and parasols, made by women while they fought in the war.

I thought about the clothing the protestors at Kent State might have worn in May 1970 and of outfits I wore myself at the time. I found Vogue, Butterick and Simplicity dress patterns from the early 1970s. The illustrations on the packets became windows through which to return to the period. Clothing can be personal, cultural, historical and highly aesthetic.

The cut away figures from the pattern packets are laid over landscapes of Indochina. The figures could be ghosts. Or they could be 1970s versions of the sculpted Apsara dancing girls that embellish the surfaces of temples at Angkor and other sites, in precisely described costume and hair-styles, dressed to accompany the dead when they enter paradise.

TOM NICHOLSON

I was born three years after Kent State. My relationship to the Vietnam War was initially mediated through my parents. My mother always took me to the annual Palm Sunday rallies in the 1980s, which were very formative, and shaped my fear about nuclear holocaust. I am a generation removed from Kent State, though I received some kind of aged version of that political moment through a childhood consciousness of 1980s peace activism. Later, at university, I learned about Kent State in an academic context, and at art school I became aware of Hamilton's picture. During my time at art school I was affected by several mass media images of violence, remote geographically but politically-speaking very close: the footage of the Dili massacre, the images from the war in Yugoslavia, and (to go back to images from my adolescence) Tiananmen Square. Apart from their obvious political significance, images from these events fed work directly and precipitated thinking about how art, image-making, and actions relate to contemporary political events, how real-time actions and delay respond to one another. The work in this show, *Marat at his last breath*, is a 16mm film transferred to digital video, a spin-off from *Flags for a trades hall council*, a public installation of four flags on the rooftop of the Trades Hall Council in Melbourne from 2005-6. The images on the flags were generated by an extended drawing process in which the face from Jean-Louis David's painting of the *Death of Marat* was re-worked over several months. The insistent working upon the surface of an image perhaps shares something with Hamilton's immensely elaborate printing process, which reflects the 'thinness' of the television image and restores to that image a density commensurate with the weight of the body. In an iconographic sense, there is a curiously strong connection between Hamilton's Kahler and David's Marat: the horizontal body, the arm, the discolouration. Both dwell on stilling, or a kind of suspension, and the political meanings of that suspension. The inadvertent character of Hamilton's process is important to me. *Flags for a trades hall council* concerns events which serendipitously occurred while those flags were flying above that building. I use the text in the film work to capture these events, though that text begins with a description of my flags being taken down for the day of the rally against Howard's industrial relations bill (a precondition of the project). The work unfolds from the enforced withdrawal of art from the spaces of these real-time events, a withdrawal which in a paradoxical way is perhaps also a precondition for Hamilton's great work.



Tom Nicholson
Marat at his last breath
2005-6.
16mm film transferred to digital video, silent, 13mins30seconds.
camera: Matthew McCaughey
courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery.

Tom Nicholson (b. 1973) is an artist who lives in Melbourne. He has worked with archival material and the visual languages of politics and propaganda, often using public actions and focussing on the relationship between actions and their traces. He is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, and is a Lecturer in Drawing in the Faculty of Art & Design at Monash University. www.tomn.net

SUSAN NORRIE

'Talk of the devil and he'll appear'
Erasmus, *Adagiorum Collectanea*

'What is noteworthy, about terrorism as a contemporary phenomenon is that, while manipulating the referential circularity between media stories and violent actions, it has succeeded in imposing an apocalyptic frame in which suspension of disbelief appears to be the rational course and no commentary as to its discursive configurations seems relevant.'

Joseba Zulaika and William A. Douglass, 'Waiting for Terror'; *Terror and Taboo* 1996 p.30

Where were you in May 1970?

At East Sydney Technical College, attending lunch meetings with the filmmaker Tim Burns about dynamite and bombing the Art School.

Do you have any memory of the Kent State tragedy?

Yes. I thought that the 'murders' were based on fear and ignorance.

What was your first encounter with Richard Hamilton's work?

I was always interested in his use of photomontage linking politics and technology. My three photo-lithographs, *Untitled*, 1999, are based on found newspaper images that show the interdependence of terrorism and global media networks. The first depicts two hooded ERP terrorists in Argentina at a press conference. The second depicts the soviet defector Igor Gouzenko (hooded to prevent identification) during an interview at an undisclosed Canadian location. The third is a lone hooded hijacker from TWA Flight 847, shown stowing his gun into his pants before reading a statement to the press. Terrorist acts systematically expose and exploit assumptions about social and world order. The perpetrators – like those whose lives they put at risk – are victims of authoritarian systems compelled to drastic action. Their acts invoke a counter operation that is often just as brutal. In this sense terrorism can be seen as an outcome of highly bureaucratic, institutional systems intolerant of any difference.

What connections if any are there between your work and the Richard Hamilton print Kent State?

The connection is political, as I have an ongoing interest in states of fear/misinterpretations and victimisation. For instance, *HAVOC*, 2007 (16 channel video installation, produced for the 52nd Venice Biennale) continues a concern with how media is manipulated and controlled by governments and multinational companies actively involved in exploiting developing countries. *HAVOC* is based on an oil/gas drilling accident in East Java, Indonesia. Initially the Indonesian Government suppressed information on the incident and so it seemed important to take such a story to Europe. The installation includes a video of 'four horsemen of the apocalypse', in balaclavas and heavy metal t-shirts. In reality these horsemen carry tourists across the sea of sand at the base of Mount Bromo, East Java, and wear balaclavas for the cold. This scene plays on the difference between the literal and the metaphorical, the real and the feigned.

Susan Norrie is a Sydney-based artist. She works across media including painting, photography and video. Her recent projects have focused on intercultural issues. Norrie was one of three artists representing Australia at the 52nd Venice Biennale, 2007.

Susan Norrie
Notes from Havoc 2007
pigment print on cotton rag
paper, printed by Artisan Ink
(Paul Ogier and Catherine
Rogers)



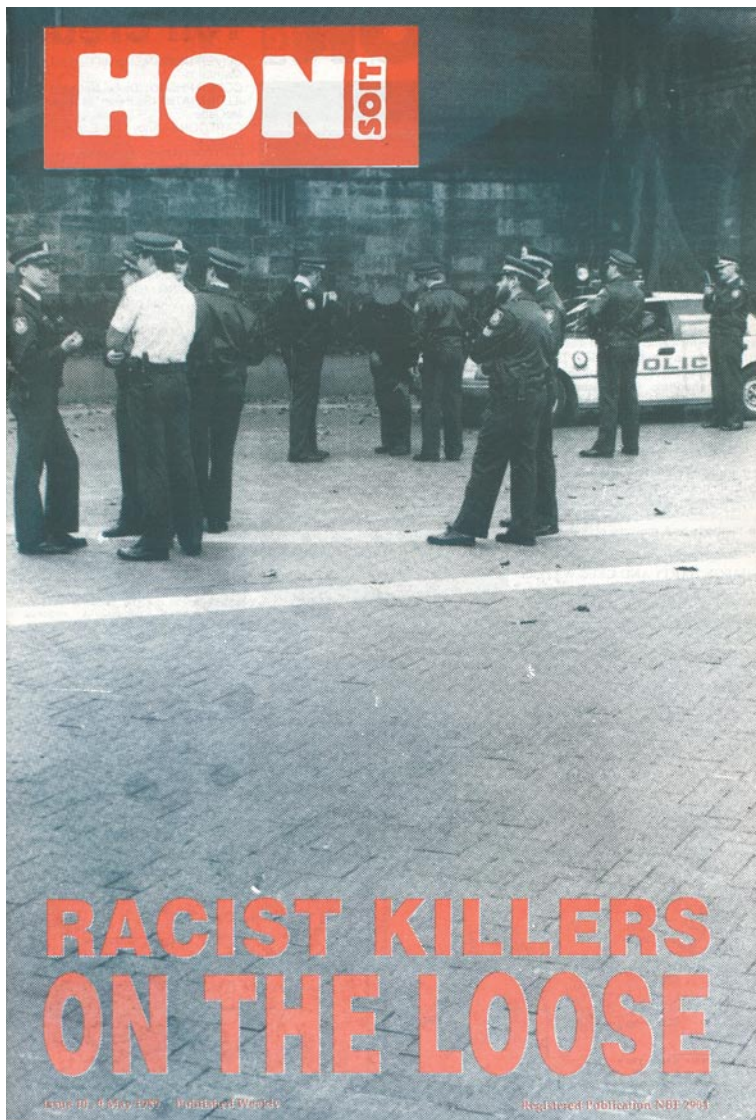
RAQUEL ORMELLA

I was 16 months old in May 1970. My family had not been in Australia long and we were living in a house that had been divided up into two flats in Cronulla. I have a vague recollection of my mother explaining to me a scene of a student being shot that appeared in a Hollywood movie in the early 1980s (maybe with Winona Ryder in it), as referring to the shooting of some students at Kent State University. Since then I know the event through the works of different artists: Robert Smithson's *Partially Buried Woodshed: 20 Truckloads of raw earth*, and Renee Green's film *Partially Buried in Three Parts*. I think I first saw Richard Hamilton's print *Kent State* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, when it was on loan from the Power Collection, and most recently I saw it there in Glenn Barkley's show *Multiplicity*.

In responding to how my location, in relation to the events at Kent State, might become a springboard for the creation of a new work, I asked myself what happened when I was a student that had a similar impact. In 1988 and 1989 I was a student at the University of Sydney. 1989 started with the opposition leader, John Howard, coming onto campus to sell his Voluntary Student Unionism policy. At the end of the year the devastating massacres of students in Tiananmen Square, Beijing occurred. However, the event that created an ongoing disquiet in me was the events leading to the death of Aboriginal man David John Gundy.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, April 26th 1989 the police entered the University of Sydney Camperdown Campus looking for John Porter, an Aboriginal man who had shot at two police officers on High St Woolloomooloo. They were stopping and questioning all dark skinned students or those with curly or dread-locked hair. The police search terminated early the next morning with the illegal entry and shooting by the Tactical Response Group of David John Gundy in his own house on Sydenham Road, Marrickville.

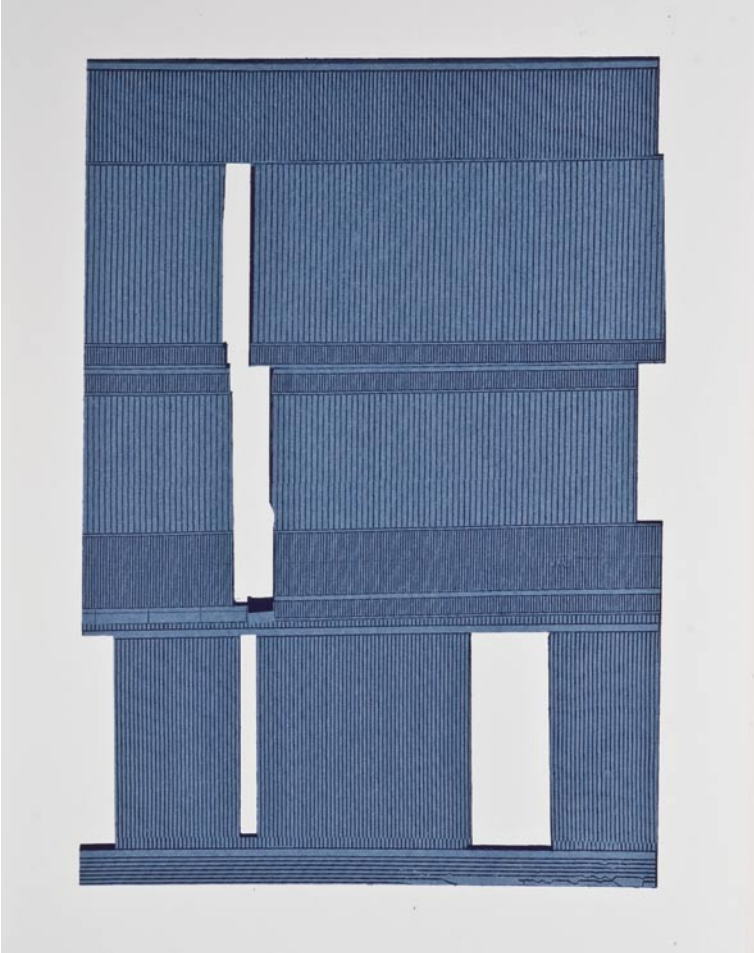
To me this event, and its subsequent reporting in student media, illustrated the intense divide of the co-existing communities of the University of Sydney and Redfern. While I was shocked and disturbed by the police presence that day, for those people who were subject to searches conducted in Redfern at the same time it was an all too familiar occurrence. Several student journalists covered the event, however no-one from the Redfern Indigenous community was reported with their reactions to the searches or the shooting deaths of Police Constable Allan McQueen and Gundy.



Raquel Ormella
One document among others:
Honi Soit, issue no.10, 9th
May 1989, *Racist Killers on
the Loose*, photo and cover by
Daniel Netthiem, Eds. Jason
Harty and Greg Water 2010
source material

Raquel Ormella was born in Sydney in 1969. She works across various media investigating the means by which critical reflexivity in contemporary art encourages processes of self-examination regarding political consciousness and social action. She has built a practice covering a diverse range of activities such as video, paintings, installations, drawings, and zines.

JUSTIN TRENDALL



Justin Trendall
Monument to Allison Krause
2010
screenprint on paper, 24 x 36cm

Justin Trendall is a contemporary artist who works with a combination of drawing, photography, screen printing and Lego. Since graduating from Sydney College of the Arts in the mid 90s, he has produced a body of work that focuses on the interplay of text and abstraction. Using the theme of architectural monumentality as a key reference point, his work explores the idea of giving cultural histories/memories a visual form.

Kent State isn't something I personally remember. But the events and mood of the late '60s is something I feel strongly connected to. In 1972, at the age of fifteen, I borrowed a copy of Bob Dylan's *Greatest Hits Vol 1* from a friend's older sister. I lived in Perth and from that album onwards music became a hugely important part of my life. I listened to everything and was always on the look out for new and stranger stuff. The music took me to another world; a bigger, more interesting world than suburban Perth.

Kent State was one of many things that I encountered in that world. Around 1973–74 my brother and I were getting *Rolling Stone* magazine sent from America. You couldn't get it in Perth. We got it because of the music but we ended up with the politics as well. The meaning of '68 came to me secondhand through this magazine. I gained my loose understanding of '60s politics through songs. It was a type of afterglow understanding; still angry but already tinged with pessimism. *Rolling Stone* magazine pieced together the references and spelled out the darker mood. The summer of love had been and gone.

There was a raft of martyred saints presiding over the aftermath of '68. Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Brian Jones. And high above these, their meanings not fully understood by me at the time, floated a trio of earlier names: John F Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. Somewhere towards the bottom of this list were the most recent victims; those killed at the Kent State massacre and at the Altamont concert.

The works I've made in response to the Kent State theme echo this atmosphere of pop melancholia. I have used the themes of monumentality and memorialisation as an important reference point in my work for some time now. In one particular body of work the idea of cultural memorialisation is invoked through the titles given to each piece. These pieces are visually related to both geometric abstraction and architectural drafting. By inserting historically loaded names into the standard title formats *Monument to Someone* or *A House for Someone and Someone* I set in play readings that are serious and ironic in their relationship to the idea of creating official cultural histories.

The four small monuments produced for this show are dedicated to the victims of Kent State. The larger abstract field offers shelter to Benno Ohnesorg and Neda Agha-Soltan. Ohnesorg was a student fatally shot by police while participating in a demonstration against the Shah of Iran's visit to Berlin in 1967. His death immediately took on emblematic proportions for the ongoing student revolt in Germany. It is an event often cited as having triggered radicalisation. Agha-Soltan was a philosophy student shot by the police in Tehran in 2009 while participating in one of the first demonstrations against election fraud. Images of her death circulated on the internet quickly becoming an emblematic reference point for the protests. In this series, *A House for...*, I try to forge links between unlikely figures, links that collapse time and context to produce a transient and redemptive glimpse of the larger ideals that transformed these names into cultural landmarks.