

Anthony Mannix

Callan Park Gallery
3 to 19 December 2009



Anthony Mannix, an exhibition of work by Australia's most celebrated Outsider artist, will open at the Callan Park Gallery on Thursday 3 December, 6 to 8pm. The opening will feature a rare collaborative performance by Anthony Mannix, with a live reading of recent writings called 'The Being of Art', accompanied by a tape loop soundscape by The Loop Orchestra.

Anthony Mannix, co-curated by the artist and Professor Colin Rhodes, will be on display until Saturday 19 December.

Callan Park Gallery

Sydney College of the Arts

The Visual Arts Faculty of the University of Sydney

Balmain Road Rozelle NSW 2039 Australia (enter opposite Cecily St)

Further information: www.usyd.edu.au/sca Email: callanparkgallery@usyd.edu.au

Gallery hours: Saturday, 11am to 4pm. By appointment on other days.

Free admission and parking.

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The University of Sydney

SCA
SYDNEY COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Anthony Mannix: A Network of Technique

The Art Brutists: Those making Art Brut are an extremely strange particle of the world. They belong to it and yet they don't. They are speaking from the deserts, the voids and the vortexes to give You messages but the messages are so disturbing so extreme that they are done away with in institutions. (Anthony Mannix, *Journal of a Madman No.4*, p.6)

Anthony Mannix has spent many years 'done away with in institutions' one of which was Rozelle Hospital, so he comes full circle with this latest exhibition: his artworks displaying the full force of what he has called his 'schizophrenic cosmology' in a place that previously always attempted to erode these psychotic landscapes.

Anthony Mannix is one of Australia's leading Outsider artists and has, in a career that spans over 30 years, exhibited domestically, in Europe and the United States of America. His work has recently been shown in 'Australian Outsiders' at the Orange Regional Gallery; Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Halle Saint Pierre, Paris, France (2005-07). In 2008 Mannix was included in 'Handle with Care' the Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Recent solo exhibitions include 'A Cerebral Odyssey: Anthony Mannix', at Orange Regional Gallery (2008) and 'Anthony Mannix: The beast of the unconscious and other well-known entities' at Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest (2009). Mannix was the 2009 winner of the Contemporary section of the Fisher's Ghost Art Award.

As is evidenced by this latest exhibition Anthony's practice is diverse, encompassing artist's books (housing images and an eclectic range of writings), drawings, paintings, and found sculptural constructions. An emphasis on materiality is ever present: glass, wood, wire, resin, tea, solder, acrylics, ink, canvas, leather, gouache, metal, and perspex, to name but a few substances that give shape, colour and texture to his art. Concurrent with this visual practice is his exploration of sound. In such sound works (often accompanied by long time collaborators The Loop Orchestra) Anthony reads from his voluminous writings; by turns philosophical, humorous, poetic, surreal, emotional and psychological. Anthony's creative practice, in all its manifestations, is a process of anthropologically documenting journeys

through his unconscious; journeys facilitated by psychotic experience. Anthony characterises his own work as follows:

My artistic output over the last twenty-five years has had one point and that has been to document the landscape of psychosis and the unconscious. It involves an intuitive invention of cultural anthropology to make some order of the plethora of hallucinations, visions, spirits, ghosts, apparitions, and creatures, which populate this, altered perspective. I have learned my trade myself; patterns, designs and artefacts I have observed in all worlds go to form a network of technique. ('Outsider Art Statement', p.1)

Ultimately art-making becomes for Anthony a method by which a concrete reality, his unconscious landscape, is actually constructed; creative expression simultaneously creates and documents his 'schizophrenic cosmology'. This radical mode of creation, which Anthony calls 'the art of schizophrenia', animates alternate realities. He writes of this process:

the art of schizophrenia might be seen as a constant make-shift construction of a mental sculpture. the thing is welded to reality but not part of it. this sculpture of thought and personal history is a very mobile thing and is being added to constantly throughout a schizophrenic experience becoming more and more complex, becoming more and more unmanageable and in need of alteration and repair. it is not exposed to the ravages of climate and vandals as such but to the destructive contact of reality and the real in this it is the incomprehensible. With the inverse of the concept and method of anarchism, for a separate reality is being brought into being. (*Erotic Journal of a Madman*, p.23)

In this realm, which constitutes a mental art-making experience, fixed concepts are replaced by fluidity: an unstable evolving reality forever at the point of collapse, forever at the point of reinvention. Anthony conceives of art-making not only as a way of constructing and maintaining such realities but also a way of navigating through the landscapes themselves. He writes: "My style of art is a dance to maintain control, to establish a compass with which to navigate the schizophrenic

experience" (*Erotic Journal of a Madman*, p. 27).

In using art-making as a compass to navigate through madness, Anthony's practice can be situated within the field of Art Brut and Outsider art, artistic tendencies with which he also self-identifies. He suggests that works of this nature move beyond contrived representations, instead presenting to an audience live, vital entities: "It is not so much that Art Brut represents something, it's that Art Brut is more the actual thing; if it's the entity it is the entity; if it's the raging chasm within you it is that and not just a representation" ('Art Brut' Radio Eye, May 2000).

So if you see from the corner of your eye one of the many heads that populate Anthony's work turn to watch you, or the solder in his sculptural constructions liquefy and drip on to your suddenly burning skin, or the pages of his books fall open at an illustration of yourself, know that there are entities at work within these schizophrenic cosmologies; entities imbued with the energy of their creation; the 'altered' energy of their creator, who writes: "Those that make art brut and outsider art look to the 'altered' states, the 'altered' space and see no reason why it should be 'altered', see no reason why it should not be part of what is life" (*Journal of a Madman* 1994-95, p. 161).

Here then at the Callan Park Gallery Anthony again makes his internal vision 'part of what life is' and in so doing opens a dialogue between madness and sanity showing, once more, that the vortexes of the Brutists have many evocative messages to offer us. Asylum walls that once incarcerated and silenced Anthony now reverberate with his 'schizophrenic cosmology', a realm at once idiosyncratic and familiar. An audience's ability to connect with Anthony's entities, his raging chasms, ultimately demonstrates that each of us live in an 'altered' state of our very own; that we are all, in fact, extremely strange particles of the world.

Dr Gareth Jenkins

December 2009

Select bibliography

Mannix, Anthony and Graeme Revell. 'A Concise History of the Machine' and 'The Skull (excerpt)'. A Bead to a Small Mouth. Audio Release, Barooni 1989.

Mannix, Anthony. 'Anthony Mannix: Talks to Ulli Beier' & 'Chamber of Disrupted Sensation'. *Outsider Art in Australia*, Aspect No. 35, 1989. 64-77.

Mannix, Anthony. 'Anthony Mannix Talks to Ulli Beier: Coming to Terms with Demons: The Latest Book of Drawings.' *Southerly* 64:1 (2004). 31-46.

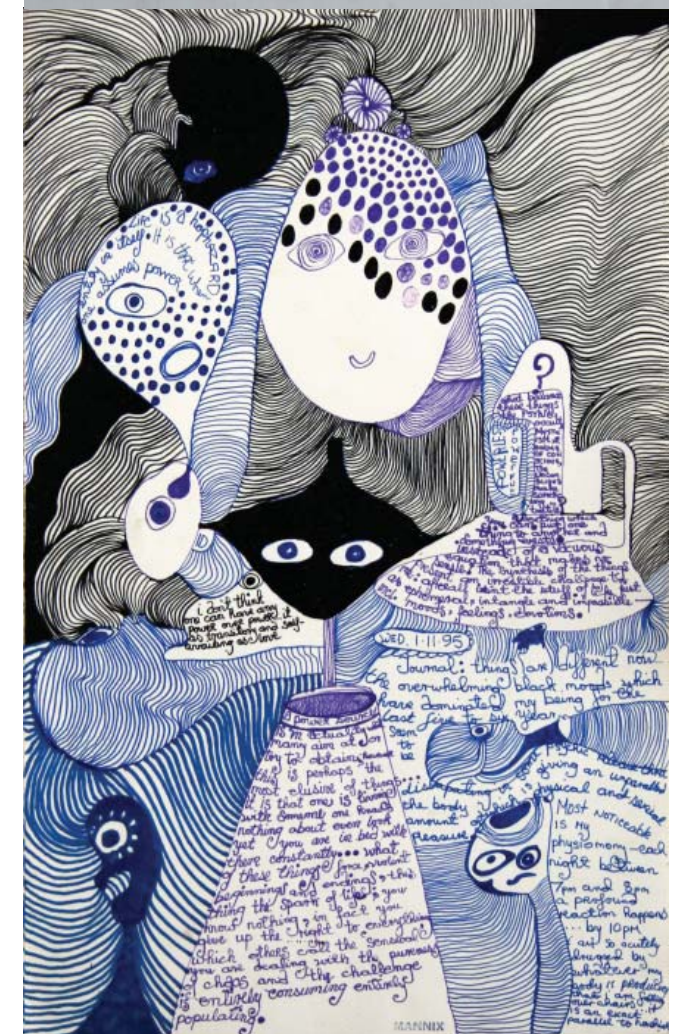
Mannix, Anthony. 'In some ways I have come to An End', and 'Dear Liz Parkinson'. *A + T [Art & Text]* no. 27 (Art Brut: Madness and Marginalia), December-February: 1988. 68, 72.

More information regarding the work, practice and exhibitions of Anthony Mannix can be found at his web site: <http://www.anthonymannix.com/>

Dr Gareth Jenkins completed a PhD on the artist's books of Anthony Mannix in 2008. His thesis is available as a free download at: <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/89/>



Images: (left to right) A Diatribe at an Hallucination, 1997. Black felt pen, gouache on white envelope, 32.2 x 45.5cm; Fortune-telling is perhaps the world's most deadly art, 1991. Pen and ink, 34 x 51cm; The Green Lady, 1988. Ink and gouache on brown paper, 30.3 x 45.4cm; and Why did you give me the gigantic bloody ..., 1989. Ink and watercolour on paper, 28 x 37.3cm.



Images: (top) The Beast of Slow Disembowelment, 1996. Ink on brown envelope, 26.5 x 37.7cm ; (bottom) The Schizophrenic's Travel Notes, 1995. Ink on paper, 32 x 57cm.