



AN ARTBACK NT TOURING EXHIBITION

AN EDUCATION
RESOURCE FOR SCHOOL
STUDENTS

THE EDUCATION KIT

INTRODUCTION

This education material has been produced by Artback NT to coincide with the exhibition *Some Like it Hot*.

It has been designed to engage senior students with the key themes of the exhibition through suggested activities for both the gallery and the classroom and in reference to the national visual arts curricula.

We recommend using the kit in conjunction with the *Some Like it Hot* exhibition catalogue.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM VISUAL ARTS

RESPONDING

- Considering viewpoints of artists and audiences
- Identifying visual conventions
- Investigating societal, historical and cultural contexts for the production of artworks
- Analysing and interpreting artworks

MAKING

- Using and experimenting with different materials technique and technologies
- Exploring different ideas, experiences, observations and imagination
- Engaging with critical and creative thinking to produce artworks that communicate ideas

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THE EXHIBITION

Some like it hot, is an exhibition curated by Wendy Garden that showcases the work of two accomplished, much lauded and much-loved Northern Territory based artists: Therese Ritchie and Franck Gohier. These artists are well known for their satirical work that combines wit and humour with astute social observation. In this exhibition Garden reflects on their practice through the lens of gender representation in the context of settler imaginings of the tropics.

Throughout history, climate has been held accountable for a range of behaviours and intense heat has been associated with inertia, sloth, promiscuity and violence. Art historian Andrew McNamara notes that the tropics have been seen as a space 'beyond humanity and civilisation', a place that for many carried a threat, or indeed the promise, of anarchy and chaos. An unruly frontier with an ethos of rugged individualism and licentious behaviour.

Gohier, born in France, arrived in Australia as a child, moving to Darwin with his family in the aftermath of the extreme weather event Cyclone Tracey. Sifting through the domestic debris of that devastation began a fascination with the expressive possibility of utilising seemingly random juxtapositions of images and objects to highlight an inherent absurdity. His works, characterised by a bold Pop-like aesthetic, belie a deeper engagement with reinterpreting familiar visual codes for socio-political commentary.

Gohier's paintings included in this exhibition allude to gender stereotypes popularised in mid twentieth century comic books, romance novels and action films. Drawing upon narratives of

fraught masculinity and trapped femininity, he humorously probes gendered expressions of love and strife in the sweltering heat of the Top End. Other works take their cue from recent superhero narratives depicting women as action heroes wrestling crocodiles or fighting the bad guys. Through parody, Gohier exposes the limited range of positions inscribed in many popular culture texts and the heterosexist frameworks that reinforce particular ways of being.

Ritchie brings her background in photo-journalism, her political awareness and her skills as a graphic designer to her insightful take on human behaviour. With an arts practice based in photography and digital collage, she has been described as an 'artist'. Fuelled by social activism, she turns her camera on the world and mines existing imagery from popular culture and art history, hybridising and reconfiguring different visual elements to build complex composite images. Her conceptually layered images draw attention to the anomalies, incongruities and injustices of the everyday.

In works created specifically for this exhibition she unpacks hypermasculinity not as an indictment of men per se but as an exploration of the power structures and social messaging through which behaviour can be reinforced, enacted and enculturated. Her male protagonists act out a range of masculine personas drawing upon socio-cultural stereotypes.

Both artists unsettle us and encourage us to engage more critically with perceived norms.

THE CURATOR

WENDY GARDEN



Wendy Garden has held numerous curatorial positions in public galleries in Victoria and the Northern Territory. She is currently Assistant Director Access and Engagement at the Libraries and Archives of the Northern Territory. She has over twenty years' experience curating exhibitions including solo artist retrospectives, group shows and touring exhibitions.

Recent curatorial projects include *Therese Ritchie: Burning Hearts* (2019-20) and *Between the Moon and the Stars* (2019) both held at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory; *On the Beach and Storm in a Teacup* at Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery (2015) and *A Curious Evolution: Rose Farrell & George Parkin*, Deakin University Art Gallery (2015).

She holds a doctorate in art history from the University of Melbourne and a Masters of Arts research degree. Her writing and research interests focus on contemporary Australian art and photography. She is President of the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand.

Q&A WITH WENDY GARDEN

What inspired you to curate this exhibition?

The idea for this exhibition came from my experiences of living in Darwin over the past six years. First of all it's very hot. Coming from Melbourne I was used to scorching days over forty degrees, but Melbourne's heat is very dry and the weather is changeable. I was unprepared for the relentlessness of Darwin's humidity which makes the ambient temperature feel much hotter, particularly in the build-up. The heat can be overwhelming.

Many years before I moved here, I carried out research for my doctorate at the Northern Territory Library and came across late nineteenth century newspaper articles that expressed fears of the effects of heat on the white population expressed as 'going troppo'. There were degeneration anxieties which was a response to both the heat and isolation of the Top End and a sense that it was a place beyond civilisation. I found these articles fascinating and they were definitely a prompt to dig deeper into the relationship between climate on character.

The other thing that I observed living in Darwin was that a particular type of masculinity is more apparent here than in cities such as Melbourne and Sydney. The Territory has always been understood as a very 'blokey place'. In the early years of Chinese and European settlement in the nineteenth century, non-Aboriginal men considerably outnumbered non-Aboriginal women. Early historians described it as 'no place for a woman', ignoring the fact, that not only were Aboriginal women living in this part of the country for thousands of years, but that there were women here running stations and doing hard physical work. Darwin has changed a lot in

recent years, as have understandings of gender, but I observed vestiges of earlier gender tropes in some of the men I met. There is also a romanticising of difference here, which I have never encountered in other places in Australia. Long standing Territorians think of themselves as very different from the rest of the country, particularly regions 'down south'. At the same time Darwin's population is very itinerant and multicultural so there is a tension between the dynamism of the new and old Darwin which is interesting.

The exhibition provided an opportunity for me to reflect upon these different aspects and bring the various threads together in an attempt to understand Australia's most remote capital city.

Why did you select these two artists?

When I first arrived in the Territory to take up the role as Curator of Australian Art at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT), the museum was preparing a major retrospective of Darwin-based artist Franck Gohier. I had the opportunity to write about his work and that gave me a chance to do a deep dive into his practice and develop a strong understanding of his work and the issues he addresses.

Much of Franck's work is informed by the periphery-centre debates of postmodernism in the 1980s and 90s. Being located in Darwin these continue to have great relevance. Gohier asks the big question: What if? What if the dominant movements in twentieth century art came from Darwin? What would Pop Art look like if Andy Warhol lived in Darwin and not New York? But the one body of work that I hadn't addressed was his paintings of women. Standing in the gallery towards the end of the exhibition, I thought I must write about these one day. For me

curating an exhibition is really an excuse to write and it is through writing that I crystallise my own understanding, so Franck's images were really the catalyst for the show.

In 2019 I curated a retrospective of Therese's work at MAGNT. She is also an artist I have huge respect for. She is a fierce social commentator and has an astute eye. And while she doesn't usually make work specifically about gender, she is interested in the behaviour and attitudes of the non-Aboriginal population in Darwin, particularly men and I knew she would contribute with perceptive observations for this exhibition.

Both Franck and Therese are critical observers of life in the Territory and so it made sense to bring them together for this show.

What are the key themes that this selection of work highlights?

Gender is central to this exhibition. The exhibition is about considering the constructs of femininity and masculinity and the legacy of twentieth century stereotypes that linger today. While there have been huge shifts in understandings of gender to embrace greater fluidity, these have really only gained traction in recent years.

Gender stereotypes were questioned and disrupted during the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 70s, however they still informed the socialisation of many people growing up at this time. I'm interested in the enculturation that occurred during many people's childhoods - the pervasiveness of popular culture role models that reinforced heteronormative gender understandings and instances of the subversion of these.

How would you describe the practice of being a curator?

I've always thought of my role as a curator as that of a conduit between artists and the public. It is about creating platforms for conversations not only between the artist and the visitor, but also between artworks. I am very conscious when I select artists to work with, and which artworks to include in exhibitions, to consider what artworks have to say and how diverse works interact. By juxtaposing images and objects that are saying different things about a subject you can create a space for dialogue which the visitor then enters into.

I think the role of the curator is to push boundaries, ask difficult or interesting questions and provide a forum for the audience to consider the human condition and issues of relevance to us today. And this is achieved by bringing together visually thought-provoking work.

THE ARTISTS

FRANCK GOHIER



Franck Gohier's punchy irreverent humour combines an acute sense of the absurd with shrewd commentary to expose the vanities, foibles, delusions and struggles that characterise contemporary society.

Wendy Garden, curator

Gohier's practice is built upon a vast cultural substratum that spans the disciplines of art-making, social commentary, and historical inquiry – mobilising elements of all, without ever committing to one.

Tai Mitsuji, writer, art historian and curator

Franck Gohier's practice, which primarily incorporates printmaking, painting and sculpting, presents an ongoing exploration of his environment and experiences. Stylistically, Gohier makes use of imagery and motifs from both the media and popular culture to create satirical, politically and socially motivated works that reflect society's faults, frailties and triumphs.

Franck was born in Brittany, France and arrived in Australia as a child accompanied by his parents in 1972. They emigrated for political reasons, to a country which they deemed more progressive than France at the time. Three years later the family moved to Darwin to work in salvage operations in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracey. As a child, Franck remembers sifting through the debris of this devastation which had a formative impact on his artistic practice in years to come.

Gohier completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts in printmaking at the Northern Territory University (now Charles Darwin University) in 1991 and has exhibited regularly since 1987. He was a lecturer and technician in the Printmaking Department of the Northern Territory University in the 1990s and in 1996, together with George Watts and Leon Stainer, set up print workshops which became known as Northern Editions. During this period, he collaborated on limited edition prints with various Indigenous communities and initiated an art program for Aboriginal inmates at Berrimah Prison. He established Red Hand Prints with Shaun Postie in 1996, an open access studio that held community workshops and actively supported the printmaking

activities of Indigenous artists. Since 2002 he has been concentrating full time on his practice.

Gohier has exhibited widely around Australia and in Germany and Indonesia and was the subject of a major retrospective held at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory entitled *Franck Gohier: A thousand miles from everywhere* in 2018. His work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including *Streetwise: contemporary street culture*, National Gallery of Australia, 2015, and *The Phantom show* – an exhibition that travelled to regional galleries in New South Wales from 2015 to 2016.

His work is held in major institutional collections around Australia and private collections in New Zealand, China, Hong Kong, France, Germany, Netherlands, South America and the United States. Gohier is represented by Mitchell Fine Art, Brisbane and James Makin Gallery, Melbourne.

Q&A WITH FRANCK GOHIER

What motivates you to create art?

Initially, as a child, my motivation to create Art was simply to copy images from comic books to pass the time as an awkward introvert. Since then I have created Art to communicate ideas that I find difficult to express in other manners...a struggle to find meaning in a meaningless world.

How would you describe your artistic process?

My artistic process usually starts with an interesting conversation or a snippet of information from an article, an event on the news, a meme on social media, an image in a comic book, an encounter with another human or an epiphany. This is soon followed by a quick doodle and some rough notes in a sketch book.

After this I work out which medium is most suitable to convey the idea. Should it be a painting, a print... a sculpture? Do I want to create a single iconic image or do I want to get the message across to as many people as possible in a print run? Is scale important to convey the concept? Large scale pieces can dominate and over power the viewer whilst smaller artworks are more intimate and invite the audience in. Once this is figured out I then gather the necessary materials and tools from the studio.

A large part of the artistic process is also having a good inventory of materials to work with already stocked in the studio. Knowing where to acquire materials and the logistics and costs of getting them to the studio are also critical. I am always scouring op shops, antique shops, lawn sales and auction sites trying to find new and interesting materials and objects that speak to me and will be interesting to incorporate into new works.

Do you have a clear idea of a work before you start?

I don't always have a clear idea of an artwork before I start. Sometimes I simply find a comic book image that really resonates with me on some level. I trust this intuition and scale the image up onto a canvas on board and just start painting. The resolution of an idea can come later...or not. It doesn't matter as long as you're creating you're not procrastinating.

How do you know when a work is finished?

A work is finished when it feels right....this is not a cop out answer. It's very difficult to describe instinct or intuitiveness. After devoting most of my life to art I don't think about it anymore. An artwork will let you know when it's finished or when it's not working. An understanding of formal aesthetics and colour theory go a long way though.

What is important to you as an artist to communicate to audiences?

My primary focus has never really been to communicate to audiences per se. I make art mostly for myself. I am my own primary audience. If a work is finished and I am happy with it then my work is done. The journey of making the object is what is important to me, not the end product so much. After that point, after that process, I have no more need for the object and am of course happy to release it to an audience. Everybody brings their own subjectivity to the table and so I do find the discourse and dialogue an audience generates really interesting too, as an artifact of the making experience.

What is your interest in comic books and how is it referenced in your work?

When my family arrived in Darwin mid 1975 the whole town was still devastated by Cyclone Tracey from Xmas eve of 1974. My parents had bought a sea chest full of Franco/Belgian comics such as Asterix & Obelix, Lucky Luke, Iznogoud, Tintin, Smurfs etc. We moved from caravan park to caravan park until Darwin was rebuilt. My folks both drew when they were younger and so I took up copying the comic book images into cartridge journals to pass the time. There is also a nostalgic appeal for me with comic books with the products advertised within them. They speak to a time and place.

As an undergrad at art school I realised that comic book images could be transgressed for socio-political messaging such as the Situationist International movement (1957-1972) which later informed Punk aesthetic artists like Jamie Reid from Britain. At uni I had always found traditional Pop Art way too tame and a bit of a dead end. I was disappointed as I had spent so many years appropriating comic books and so was looking for a way to make the genre a bit more edgy. Neo Expressionism was a la mode and so I started combining visual elements that more closely duplicated my sentiments.

I often finish paintings with an expressive black line around the edges. This is to further reference the artwork as a singular comic book frame. A still in a celluloid film. A point in time. It denotes the possibility that an event may have happened prior or an event may occur after that particular image.

The Phantom is a character that you incorporate repeatedly? What is the connotation of this?

The Phantom comics have always had great appeal in places like Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, PNG, India etc. This is because it is one of the very few comic book publications that contained Indigenous people. The Phantom comic character's ancestor was a European victim of piracy who washes up shipwrecked on the shores of a mythical place called Bengali. He is nurtured back to health by a local Indigenous tribe and then promptly appoints himself as the arbitrator of law, morals and ethics, settling inter-tribal disputes with his guns blazing. I utilise the imagery of the Phantom as a symbol of colonialism at worst and at best as a well-meaning but patronising 'white fella'. I worked for many years with Indigenous communities as a collaborative printmaker and I met plenty of Phantoms over that period.

What is the role of text and typography in your work?

Text in imagery can allow me more direct and immediate communication of ideas. A word will often jump out at you visually before the actual pictorial elements do. This is a powerful tool for messaging and slogans etc.

Typography is very evocative of certain time periods and genres. As such it can be used to great effect to communicate extra layers of meaning. As an example, the Cooper Black font is bulbous, fun and evocative of early 1970's even though it was created in 1922. French Clarendon, a font released in 1845, is closely associated with the wild west and rodeos. Typography comes with its own cultural baggage which can be used to reinforce its own historical narrative or it can be subverted, out of context, to create chaos and confusion.

Text and typography are great tools to have in the tool box.

What is the significance/process of titling your works?

Most of the titling of my works comes after I have decided that an image is finished. The title becomes a summation, an extra clue, breadcrumbs to deciphering the meaning of the artwork. The top layer of the strata.

How would you describe the aesthetic of your work?

Pop expressionism, Agitprop, Situationist, Absurdist, Socio-political.

Are there artists/art movements from history that inspire you?

Rosalie Gascoigne, Joy Hester, Barbara Hanrahan, Ian Fairweather, Ken Whisson, Peter Booth, Wilson McCoy, Kitty Kantilla, Rover Thompson, Asger Jorn, David Shrigley, Robert Rauschenberg, Anselm Kieffer, Phillip Guston, Bill Traylor, Sailor Jerry, Louise Bourgeois, Niki de St Phalle, Alfred Wallis... and more.

How would you describe the artist's role in society?

I'm still not exactly sure about the artist's role in society but my intuition says that it's not really to manufacture huge 30ft, chrome Hot Dogs to trade as commodities to the 1% or sell to institutional collections so that they can attract as many perplexed humans through the turnstiles as possible...or is it? Lol

THERESE RITCHIE



There's nothing more satisfying than being able to make a picture about a complicated issue. It's a way that I understand and translate the world.

Therese Ritchie

Therese Ritchie is a resident Darwin artist, photographer and graphic designer whose experiences and insight into the political and social life of the Northern Territory continue to inspire her passionate commitment to her arts practice and her valuable contribution to Australian contemporary art.

Born in Newcastle in 1961, Therese arrived in Darwin in 1980 and commenced her study of photography at the Northern Territory University (now Charles Darwin University). Over the next decade she explored graphic arts and political poster art while freelancing as a photographer for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age*, *Time* and *Who Magazine* amongst others. She also worked as a designer/illustrator and photographer on numerous assignments for the Darwin Legal Service and Territory Health Services.

Her creative collaborations with Chips Mackinolty and Peter Cook through Green Ant Research Arts and Publishing during the 1990s established her reputation for satirical commentary. In 2001 she studied animation at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne and then returned to Darwin where she lectured in Graphic Design at CDU between 2000 and 2002. At this time she also set up her own graphic design business, Black Dog and in 2004 she completed a Masters by Research in Visual Arts at CDU.

Therese has exhibited her artwork regularly since 1989. She has been included in numerous group exhibitions including *Contemporary Australia: Women* at the Queensland Art Gallery of Modern Art and exhibitions at the Australian Centre for Photography; Perth Institute of Contemporary Art and Flinders University Art Museum amongst others. She collaborated with artists from the Borroloola region in 2016 on *Open Cut: Jacky Green, Sean Kerins, Therese Ritchie*, an exploration of the complex relationship between Aboriginal people and the mining companies working on their land. A survey exhibition with Chips Mackinolty was held at the Charles Darwin University Gallery in 2010 and in 2019 a major retrospective exhibition *Therese Ritchie: burning hearts* opened at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. In 2021 *YOU ARE HERE* an exhibition with truth-telling at its core was held at Charles Darwin University Gallery.

Her work is held in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Gallery of Modern Art Queensland, Artbank, Araluen Arts Centre, Flinders University and Charles Darwin University.

Q&A WITH THERESE RITCHIE

What motivates you to create art?

Anything motivates me. Emotions, colour, light, snippets of conversation on a bus. Grief, pleasure, a person's face, or their tone of voice. Life is so interconnected and all aspects of the experience of life from the sublime to despair are inspirational, they are textural, dynamic and insightful if you stay the course.

How would you describe your artistic process?

Tricky as it is never one thing. The constant part of the process is that I commit to following what inspires me. These flashes come in small grabs, accompanied by a feeling of excitement, as if I were about to embark on an adventure. The second step is to trust the inspiration, and always act on it, as it almost never plays out chronologically and I often don't know what I am doing, it's a very vulnerable stage, so I keep it close to my heart and keep working and trust my instincts/feelings within the process. I stay with it until the pieces all fall together, this can take a long time or a short time.

I take photographs of skies, clouds, trees, people, objects, plants, birds, animals, insects whatever inspires me. I use my camera or my phone and I upload them onto my computer regularly. I store them in folders according to their subject matter and back them up. I also photograph drawings/scribbles/notes that I might create or images that I like or parts of images and file them. I never stop collecting as this process is the bones of my work and I enjoy the research. I will spend a lot of time preparing the images that I collect by clipping and masking areas out that I don't want, preparing the colour and tone of the elements that I do want. This preparation can take hours and days but I enjoy it and it helps for a smoother

more satisfying experience when marrying or juxtaposing elements when creating the collages. If I am reading as well, I take notes on my phone and email them to myself and file them in separate but related folders so I can reference them at a later date. Words inspire me. I generally build or collage my images with a Wacom tablet or mouse in Photoshop, but use Illustrator, Painter, and Studio Paint simultaneously, so am often taking images in and out of several software programs to get the effect I want. I have a very good commercial printer who uses archival paper and inks and who knows my files. I always need a proof to size and on the archival paper to check for flaws and or if the tone/emotion translates properly.

How do you know when a work is finished?

I get a sense of peace or feel relaxed.

What is important to you as an artist to communicate to audiences?

What I feel and how interconnected everything and everyone is, and I want them to be able to open up, even momentarily, to perhaps feel the beauty that lives inside the hardest places.

Describe your interest in photography and the role it plays in your work.

Photography keeps me grounded. I love its immediacy and in particular, the intimacy of portrait photography. I use photography to collect images, follow light and document actions and people. They are all important parts of my research and the final process of building a collage.

What do you like about collage? How do you incorporate it as a creative strategy in your work?

I just love using images or parts of images that already have cultural weight and meaning and I love juxtaposing these images with contradictory

images to challenge, open things up and ultimately to confront. I love the art of refining those visual puns or tricks so that the viewer can have the experience of working it out for themselves. The process of finding these images is also exciting, I get very hungry for the right tone, colour, shape. It is like a treasure hunt and very intuitive.

How does your work as a graphic designer sit with your practice as a visual artist?

Being a graphic designer has helped evolve the skill of refined communication. Creating an image/concept that is not too ambiguous, not too didactic, just the right amount of humour. It's a recipe, like alchemy. You have to give the client what they want. Learning what they don't want is always the first step. I enjoy the intimacy of this relationship, it hones my insight and ability to read a person, see what is behind their words etc. On a technical level, the software programs are very satisfying and have become second nature to my creative process, I love the combination of text and imagery, very, very powerful medium.

What is the benefit of/attraction to creating a series of related images?

I can work on up to 10 images at once as there are many elements of other images that I am trying to incorporate. I seem to have a lot to say all at once. It is difficult to just stop at one image, so much easier to work with all the elements if I can move them from file to file, I never really know where they will end up. So a series is logical, I might make 10-15 images but only several make it to the wall. It's like driving a car—so many things to think of at once, but the coordination and trust creates movement. Movement is life.

What is the significance/process of titling your works?

Sometimes the title of a piece will come to me before the actual image. Other times I am at a loss to title my work. Titling my work is convenient as I make a lot of pictures and need to find them in my archives, but it is also significant because a good title is like full stop at the end of a sentence. Makes it complete and final.

What is the role of research in your work?

Very important. Sometimes I read maybe 4-5 books on a topic of interest, taking notes, absorbing, this can take months. I also collect images; I walk and observe and take photographs—it's the trawling stage. I collect data and then I let it settle until I can begin building the images.

Would you consider your artworks as conversations or statements?

Both. But I am hoping they generate that texture or feeling that collapses time and is often indescribable.

Would you describe your artworks as paintings or photographs or prints?

All of the above, sometimes, straight photographs, or collaged paintings but they are digital prints at the end of the day as they are created within a virtual environment that then have to be printed out digitally.

What is the role of intuition in your work?

Everything. You will have people love your work, dislike your work, ignore your work, put it on a pedestal for a moment in time, but none of that is important, because all those judgements, if you take them seriously, will take you off course. Staying true to your intuition as you evolve as an artist is an honest life, it's the only way to stay true to yourself.

IN THE EXHIBITION

VISITING THE GALLERY

The exhibition comprises twenty artworks - ten from each artist - plus a short audio visual.

There is an introductory panel as well as extended labels for each artwork.

Therese Ritchie's images are digital collages and Franck Gohier's are paintings on board.

Therese's images mainly portray men and Franck's mainly portray women.

In the context of this show both artists reassess perceptions of binary gender roles and identities.

Spend guided time looking and discussing a selection of works as a class group.

Analyse artworks using the key artworks in this kit or refer to the general guiding strategies to facilitate engagement with alternate artworks.

Then ask students to work in pairs to explore one more image from each artist in depth.

Students will be required to share their experiences back in the classroom.

GENERAL QUESTIONING STRATEGIES

SUBJECTIVE ENQUIRY - THE EXPERIENCE OF THE WORK

Encouraging imaginative responses, intuitive associations and emotional connections.

What does the work remind you of? How does it make you feel? What is the mood created?

Using all the senses as filters for responding to the work.

What can be smelt, felt, tasted and heard as well as seen.

STRUCTURAL ENQUIRY - HOW THE WORK IS MADE

Unpacking the making process - the materials, tools, processes and techniques.

Describing the elements of art such as colour, shape, line, tone, composition and pattern.

Deciphering the artistic language, particular stylistic characteristics and artistic conventions.

CULTURAL ENQUIRY - THE CONTEXT OF ITS MAKING

Exploring the cultural and social worldview that informs the work.

Engaging with perceptions and viewpoints from different people, places and times.

Understanding the artist's personal perspective informed by their concerns, enquiries and life experiences.

ABOUT THE ARTWORKS

The works by **Therese Ritchie** are drawn from three separate bodies of work.

- A series of four images depict bare-chested young men set in a scene of luxuriant, tropical foliage.

The male figures, gun in hand, cowering and sweating profusely, take aim at an unknown threat beyond the picture plane.

The visual elements are chosen for their symbolic weight. The settings are borrowed from the 19th century artist Martin Johnson Heade who painted exquisite tropical environments featuring oversized orchids and delicate hummingbirds. By placing the male protagonists in an overtly feminised landscape, Ritchie makes comment on patriarchy's fears of the feminine and its quest for mastery over what it cannot control. In these images the flowers have agency while the gun seems to be missing its target in a reversal of the usual symbolic associations with these elements. The flower stamens are female genitalia, the ring is Cardinal Pell's, the seemingly buff males demonstrate physical imperfections and appear weak, incapacitated and overpowered despite their musculature.

The series was made against the backdrop of the #MeToo movement that resurfaced in 2021 amidst revelations about the behaviour of male politicians and staffers in Australia. The titles of the images are based on phrases men use to defend their actions. 'Look what you made me do' is a common retort in situations of domestic violence, while the phrase 'simply did

not happen' was uttered by Attorney-General Christian Porter in response to a historic rape allegation. Other titles are drawn from existing romance novels or by accessing romance novel title generators on the internet. Romance novels, marketed primarily at women, more often than not include plot lines that normalise the subjugation of women, promote their dependency on men and glamourise violent or dominating behaviour. Romanticism is further signalled through the artist's choice of colour palette and 'dreamy' lighting.

- A series of three images depicting men and animals in staged stark outdoor settings.

These melodramatic images present stereotypes of hyper masculinity where attributes of strength and vigour are glorified through exaggerated bravado and expansive assertive gestures. Muscle-bound men poised for action draw on archetypes of the rugged outback hero made popular through film, art and literature and firmly entrenched in settler mythologies of national identity. They are also vehicles to dissect images of power and power relationships - a damning exposé of patriarchal society's dominance over nature and natural resources.

In *Buffalos and Bushrangers* a cowboy with an Elvis quip is poised for a showdown with an oversized buffalo skull, one hand ready to draw his gun, the other pointing the finger of Adam with the attitude of Mick Dundee. Rob Ansell was an actual buffalo hunter that inspired the Crocodile Dundee character. Buffalo hunting was a brutal frontier industry that became

emblematic of colonial conquest. This image is partially a response to a historical photo of men standing triumphantly waist deep in buffalo carcasses that the artist came across in her research. The long horned buffalo is a still an ubiquitous emblem on belt buckles, bumper stickers and beer coolers in the NT.

In *Wildlife Selfie* a macho, outback-type character leaps heroically across the back of a standing zebra, bloodied machete in one hand and mobile phone recording his bravado in the other. Zebras were exotic gifts from the colonies fetishised back in Europe and here the passivity of the animal is in stark contrast to the dynamic action of the hunter. Researching sociological analysis of the selfie the artist came across data that highlighted the propensity for women to take selfies from above, thereby diminishing themselves, while men generally photograph themselves from beneath so that they are effectively looked up to.

In *Crocodile* a swashbuckling figure pits himself against a snarling crocodile. The image is based on a painting by colonial artist Thomas Baines, an artist-explorer on the Gregory Expedition to Northern Australia from 1855 to 1856, which dramatises an encounter with a sleeping crocodile. There is a nod to boys' own adventure here. The man in the suit represents a different sort of reckless bravado, that of blinkered self-interested corporate or political power. He stares quizzically at those particular stamens drifting past.

There is something of the trophy hunting in all these images. Set in deep, brooding, melodramatic space they conflate masculine vigour and strength with dominance over nature, which is seen as something to

conquer, master or consume regardless of the threat it poses.

- Two images are drawn from an exhibition called *Groggy* in 2013.

In these images the artist set out to expose the uncomfortable truths about alcohol consumption and the place it occupies in our national mythology. While photographing drunken brawling in the street outside an infamous Darwin pub she was directly confronted by an intoxicated patron. The man's angry gesture and glaring expression reveals the way some men use their physicality to intimidate others, while the huge inflatable beer can on the hotel's lawns, serves as a visual link underlining the way aggressive behaviours are emboldened by alcohol consumption. Using her trademark visual and verbal punning one of the images mimics the graphic conventions of a beer label.

The works by **Franck Gohier** were created between 2015 and 2021.

In these works the artist considers representations of femininity in popular culture and the role this plays in articulating and disseminating gender stereotypes. Rather than propagating these social norms he dispels and questions them using tongue-in-cheek melodrama.

The works can be considered in three categories.

- Works that depict females trapped by limiting societal expectations. These present narrow life opportunities for females as girlfriends, wives and mothers confined to domestic situations or waiting by the phone to be validated by male attention. In these works, Franck repeatedly employs tally marks as a graphic symbol. These are the marks that prisoners may etch

on a cell wall and that signal endless entrapment and frustration. Equally dark clouds occur in a number of works hinting at stormy emotional states.

- Works that portray Amazonian-like women demonstrating agency and power. They are figures of action in direct contrast to the passivity attributed historically to expectations and representations of the female sex. These female characters wrestle crocodiles and rescue superheroes with ease.
- Works that incorporate homosexual and cross-cultural protagonists signalling that there are alternative ways of existing within narrow social frameworks and that there are also human experiences that unite across sexuality and race.

There are a number of stylistic conventions that Franck returns to drawing on distinct visual languages and incorporating his own. He utilises the flattened space, bold flat colour and strong graphics of comic book aesthetics adopting the black edged framing device to evoke a window into a specific moment in time, while inferring an ongoing narrative.

He often incorporates text which supports this storytelling, drawing on the visual conventions of sign writing, stencilling, hand drawn and mechanically printed typographies, to vocalise the humour that forms the core of his absurdist messaging.

Working on board as opposed to canvas gives the works a billboard status that also contributes to the theatricality of the works.

EXHIBITION ACTIVITIES

Q & A

Break into pairs and choose one work by Franck and one work by Therese to analyse in depth.

Look closely at the artworks, read the labels and consider the titling.

Describe the visual qualities of the work, how it has been made and the intentions of the artist.

Prepare a set of 5 questions for each work and then swap with you partner to answer.

Record thoughts, impressions, questions and responses.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Compare and contrast the artistic practices of these two artists.

Look for similarities and difference in the works in the exhibition.

Describe the qualities of the work. What is the visual impact and the mood evoked?

Analyse how they have been made. What processes and techniques are used? How do they contribute to the look and feel of the finished work?

Consider the visual language. What are the repeated motifs and stylistic conventions that become part of a particular artistic language as well as the signs, symbols and stylistic traits referenced from existing visual languages?

Consider the motivation and intent of the artists. What do they wish to communicate to audiences? What stories do they draw on? What stories do they tell?

Take notes.

JAIL BREAK



Franck Gohier

Jail Break, 2019

synthetic polymer paint on board, 123 x 92 x 5 cm

LOOKING AND DISCUSSING

Imagine this painting is a visual script for a scene from a television drama.

- **List and describe the props, the stage set, the fashions and the hairstyles.**

How do they set the scene? When and where is it set?

Is it indoors or outdoors, urban or rural, contemporary or historical?

What makes you think this?

- **Focus on each of the characters in turn.**

Describe their body language and imagine what they are thinking and feeling.

Compare and contrast the two women. What is similar? What is different?

Give the characters names and suggest what their connection is to each other.

- **Look for the following visual clues and suggest how they contribute to the story.**

– the blue bird and the key

What do bluebirds represent? What do keys represent? Where do you see this sort of imagery?

– the noughts and crosses game

Who are the players? Who is the winner? What else can Xs and Os refer to?

– the hash marks

What is being tallied? Who is doing the tallying? Where are marks like this often made?

– the dark clouds

What do they hint at? What is beneath? What do they hide?

- **Describe the mood of the scene.**

Is it calm and peaceful or are there tensions brewing? What makes you think this?

Analyse the qualities of the mark making and the juxtaposition of different qualities and styles of imagery. Which marks feel passionate? Which feel dispassionate? Which parts seem bold or loud and which more faded?

How does this create a sense of dynamism in the composition?

Imagine a soundtrack for the scene.

What would it be?

- **Locate any written text.**

What does it say? Why has it been crossed out? Are they statements or thoughts?

Imagine what the characters may say to each other and suggest some dialogue.

- **Consider the title.**

Where is the jail? Who are the captors and who is escaping?

Brainstorm what may have happened in the lead up to this scene and what could happen next.

ACTIVITY

Break into groups to perform this visual script.

Talk through the characterisation, dialogue and action.

Identify a director, a stage manager and the key actors and take turns directing and performing.

Storyboard what may have lead up to this scene and what may unfold afterwards.

Consider:

How has the artist drawn attention to societal expectations for women.

The artists appropriates imagery sourced from the 50s and 60s.

Have perceptions and expectations of women's roles changed between then and now? How?

THE RESCUE



Franck Gohier

The rescue, 2021

synthetic polymer paint on board, 125 x 82 x 6.5cm

LOOKING AND DISCUSSING

Imagine you are part of the Search and Rescue team that has been called to this scene.

What has happened? Who is being rescued?
Who is doing the rescuing?

Enact the 4 point rescue plan below to collect data and assess the situation.

1. Scan the environment

Is it a rural or urban location?

Describe the vegetation. Is it bush, grasslands, rocky country...? Is the ground boggy or hard?

Is there a local water supply. Is it fresh or saltwater? How far is it from the incident?

Is there a town or village in the vicinity?
Any road access or airstrip?

How much daylight is there?

Any weather events likely to impact?

2. Identify the characters

How many people are involved?

Describe what they are wearing?
Any clues as to their identities here?

Where have they come from?
Where are they going?

Do a background check on the Phantom and the Amazonian woman.

3. Assess the situation

Is anyone injured or incapacitated?
Why is the Phantom dripping wet?

Interview the woman to get the story from her point of view.

What does the word narcissism mean?

Who does it refer to?

Does it provide any clues as to what may have transpired?

4. File a report

Use the data collected to formulate a hypothesis.

What are the power relations being encoded here?

How do the protagonists question perceptions of society norms?

ACTIVITY

Write up a brief on-the-spot report that incorporates an annotated sketch of the scene.

Include character studies of the Phantom and the Amazonian woman and a summary of the Narcissus story.

Detail how the artist has drawn on the symbolic potential of characters and stories from popular culture and mythology to reflect on contemporary society.

Consider:

What is the new story being told?

BUSHRANGERS & BUFFALOS



Therese Ritchie
Bushrangers and buffalos, 2021
digital print, 80 x 50 cm

LOOKING AND DISCUSSING

Imagine this image is on the front page of the NT News. What might the headline be? What sort of story might accompany it? What might the tone of the reportage be? Suggest a thought bubble or a caption for the photo.

Imagine this image is an advertisement in a glossy magazine. What is it selling? Replace the male figure with a female figure. What would it be selling then?

Imagine you are the location scout for the photo shoot for the ad. Where is this place? Is it a real place or a studio set-up?

Describe the qualities of the location. What mood is evoked? How does this contribute to the 'story' being told?

Strike a pose like the figure in this image. How does it make you feel? List words to describe this feeling.

Even though the figure is standing still would you describe it as an active or passive stance? Why?

Consider the hand gestures. How do you read them? Are they familiar? What do you associate them with?

The figure is a composite of parts of many male figures collaged together by the artist.

Can you identify the cowboy, the bushranger, the body builder, a classical Greek sculpture, the hand of Adam, Elvis. Suggest why she has collaged them together. What is the effect?

What other characters or scenarios from popular culture are you reminded of by this persona?

Brainstorm some male stereotypes. What qualities of masculinity do they promote?

The artist says the 'cultural template of a powerful person is male'.

How is power expressed in this image? What is the animal represented here? How do you read the relationship between the figure and the animal?

Imagine the figure seated. How would that change the dynamic of this relationship?

ACTIVITY

Write up the pitch for the ad campaign, including some copy.

Alternately compose a short newspaper story that describes the scene and the protagonist.

Consider:

What are stereotypes and how do they come about?

What sorts of character traits and exploits are generally associated with masculinity?

Further research:

Compare and contrast the three images in this series depicting men and animals.

Analyse how they express a predatory relationship with the natural world.

Investigate how these images reflect Australian settler mythologies of national identity.

Consider in relation to other images from the history of Australian art that depict men in outback or bush settings eg paintings from the Heidleberg School.

SIMPLY DID NOT HAPPEN



Therese Ritchie
Simply did not happen, 2021
digital print, 80 x 50cm

LOOKING AND DISCUSSING

- **Imagine you are the figure in this image.**

Where are you?

Describe the vegetation and the surroundings.

What does it feel like underfoot?

What is the weather like?

What time of day is it?

What can you hear and smell?

Is it a place you are familiar with?

What are you doing?

Describe what is happening.

What are you looking at?

Why are you holding a gun? Why are you shooting? What are you shooting at?

Are you on the attack or the defence?

Are you in control of the situation?

How are you feeling?

What are you thinking?

Why are you sweating?

- **List words to describe the mood and the atmosphere of this work.**

Suggest how the artist has created a sense of foreboding and unease.

Consider the shadows, scale, composition, colour scheme and quality of the light.

- **Unpack the symbolism of the gun and the flowers in this image.**

Which is perceived as feminine and which as masculine. Why do you think that?

Brainstorm the associations, ideas and qualities that contribute to this perception.

Nature is often considered passive.

Is that the case in this image?

The white lily has been associated with purity, innocence and devotion and is sometimes used to refer to Virgin Mary. Suggest why the artist has chosen to include this flower centre stage.

How has the artist created a sense of menace in the way the lily is rendered?

Guns are normally associated with power over others. Is this threat played out here?

- **Read the title of the work.**

Where have you heard that before?

Suggest why the artist chose this title?]

What is she drawing our attention to?

ACTIVITY

Imagine this is a scene from a reality TV show such as *I'm a celebrity get me out of here*.

In pairs pose as the celebrity in the image and an interviewer and role play a post-production Q&A session.

Where did the celebrity find himself and what were the challenges he faced? Why does he feel threatened or trapped? What has taken him out of his comfort zone.

Record the interview on your phone.

Consider:

Curator Wendy Garden says these images comment on patriarchy's fear of the feminine and its quest for mastery over what it cannot control.

How is the artist reinterpreting gender stereotypes in this image?

How does the artist draw attention to gender relationships?

IN THE CLASSROOM

Encourage students to share their thoughts and impressions of the works they encountered in the exhibition.

Use this discussion as a springboard to engage in research, writing and making activities that further explore the themes of the exhibition and the significance of the artists' practices.

The activities in this kit focus on two key themes:

CUT & PASTE – collage as an artistic strategy
HEROES & HEROINES – representations of gender

Other activities explore:

HUMAN BEING – the human condition
ART & ARTISTS – exploring artistic practice

Utilise the Key Words and Quotes for Discussion to engage students in investigating and understanding the artists' practice and the works they produce.

CUT AND PASTE

Ritchie creates her images through a process of digital collage. She scavenges art historical fragments and popular culture imagery and pastiches them together to create composite images that recalibrate the meaning of the parts into a new proposition.

Wendy Garden

I just love using images or parts of images that already have cultural weight and meaning and I love juxtaposing these images with contradictory images to challenge, open things up and ultimately to confront. I love the art of refining those visual puns or tricks so that the viewer can have the experience of working it out for themselves.

Therese Ritchie

My work is a form of urban archaeology. I often go to lawn sales, op shops, the tip shop, local historical sites, sifting through to find the detritus of Northern Territory history – scraps and objects imbued with a story that I can use in my artwork. I often find objects on eBay or in antique stores when I travel. Friends who know what a mad collector I am also bring me treasures occasionally. I have an extensive library of historical and art publications to research from and the local archive is only a 15-minute walk from my studio.

Franck Gohier

CLASS DISCUSSION

Both Therese and Franck utilise a technique akin to collage in their art practice. What is collage?

What is the effect of incorporating found imagery or objects in artworks?

What is the effect of juxtaposing and combining different images?

What associations are referenced when borrowing images and visual conventions from other genres, cultures, places and times?

Investigate how Franck and Therese have used collage in their works.

Contribute observations from *Some Like it Hot* and list on the board.

Analyse how the artists have reinterpreted and recontextualised imagery to create new meaning.

Consider the symbolic nature of visual conventions as well as specific imagery.

Build a glossary of words and concepts associated with the practice of collage. eg appropriation, pastiche, parody, juxtaposition, satire, irony, pun.

Break into groups to research definitions and then share with the class.

Create a class art dictionary.

WRITING ACTIVITY

Choose one of Franck and one of Therese's images from the exhibition that appeals to you.

Write a paragraph about each work and include words from the art dictionary in your writing.

Describe how and why the artists have used collage and pre-existing imagery in their work.

Compare their different visual styles and techniques.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Research the use of collage as an artistic strategy in the history of art.

For instance: Modernists art movements such as Cubists, Surrealists, Dada, Neo-dada and Pop...

Contemporary artists such as John Stezaker, Wangechi Mutu...

Analyse how artists and art movements have utilised this technique in their work.

Choose two historical and two contemporary artists to research in more depth.

Collect images and take notes from your readings.

Use this research data to create a powerpoint of images and quotes to share with the class.

In your presentation articulate the qualities of the works that appeal to you and the artist's techniques and intentions.

MAKING ACTIVITY

Both Franck and Therese incorporate social and political commentary in their work.

They utilise collage to reinterpret and recontextualise perceptions and to question everyday norms.

Make a series of A4 sized collage works that draw attention to a contemporary issue that concerns you.

Hunt for images from the everyday world, popular culture and the history of art.

Photocopy, scan, redraw or cut out these images and build an image bank of reference material.

Choose parts of the images that resonate with you to utilise in your collages.

When making your works consider

- the symbolic nature of the imagery you repurpose and the storytelling possibilities this presents
- the visual impact of combining different elements and how to resolve the composition
- the potential of combining image and text
- the possibility to create new interpretations and layered meanings
- the expressive possibilities of including visual and textual puns

Choose the most successful of the A4 series as a basis for a large poster work.

This work could be created digitally or through a print-based media such as screenprinting.

HEROES AND HEROINES

Their [Franck Gohier and Therese Ritchie's] work draws upon gender stereotypes forged in the national imaginary in the early years of settlement and popularised in mid-twentieth century comic books, romance narratives and adventure films – stereotypes, that despite today's greater gender fluidity continue to resonate in society today.

Wendy Garden

CLASS DISCUSSION

Brainstorm a list of descriptive words and concepts generally ascribed to masculinity and femininity.

List them on the board and discuss the associations and implications of these words and concepts.

What roles, characteristics, behaviours and activities do they suggest?

What assumptions and social expectations do they encourage?

Are they limiting or aspirational terms?

Discuss:

What is gender? What are gender stereotypes? What are gender binaries?

Formulate some definitions and responses as a class.

The gender binary is an increasingly outdated classificatory system that perceives gender as two distinct and opposing ideas of masculinity and femininity, equated with men and women.

Binary perceptions are predicated on assumptions that men are active/dominant/strong and women are passive/submissive/weak.

Brainstorm some other binary couplings in relation to perceptions of gender.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Many artists have used their work to examine, question, and criticise the relationships between gender and society.

Break the class into groups to research one of the following topics:

- Gender representation in the history of art including images of men and women.
- Contemporary artists that explore or critique issues of gender in their work.
- Representations of gender in the media and popular culture.

In your group explore a range of works and discuss the perceptions of gender being communicated.

How have gender stereotypes been upheld or questioned?

What are the conventions of representation that contribute to these readings?

What sorts of power relationships are promoted?

Who are the primary audiences for the different images?

Share your findings with the class and ensure every group member contributes something to the discussion.

What have you learned about historical, social and cultural constructions of gender?

MAKING ACTIVITY

Phantom is the 'white man's fantasy of invincibility, a poster boy for early 20th Century imperialist thinking that espoused Western might and moral righteousness.

Wendy Garden

In the exhibition *Some Like it Hot* Therese Ritchie's images are predominantly of men while Franck Gohier's predominantly depict women. What sorts of gender stereotypes do they critique? How have they done this?

Consider the protagonists they include in their images. Where have the figures been sourced? What do they represent? How have they been reframed symbolically to encourage a different interpretation?

Choose one of the following ideas to make an artwork

- Create an advertisement that promotes gender equality or gender diversity
- Rework a gender biased image from the history of art to present a different perception

Consider

- stereotypes and how these can be reframed
- the symbolic power of images and characters from popular culture
- the legacy of historical/cultural/social storytelling

BEING HUMAN

People interest me the most. Their cultural backgrounds, views on life, motives, fears, aspirations and so on. And also how these elements necessarily help shape history and events.

Franck Gohier

Life is so interconnected and all aspects of the experience of life from the sublime to despair are inspirational, they are textural, dynamic and insightful if you stay the course.... the world is incredibly fibrous.

Therese Ritchie

CLASS DISCUSSION

Discuss the term human condition.

What is meant by it? What does it refer to?

Analyse how these two Territory artists reflect on the human condition in their work.

What experiences, characteristics, limitations, social and political aspects of human behaviour do they draw our attention to?

MAKING ACTIVITY

As a class brainstorm a list of common life experiences and emotional states that unite human beings.

Create a work on paper that reflects a human experience.

Make a class deck of oversized tarot-like cards where each card depicts a shared human experience or emotion.

ART & ARTISTS

Franck Gohier and Therese Ritchie have been practicing artists for many years.

Wendy Garden has curated an exhibition that teases out representations of gender in their work.

What other stories can be told?

SOME QUOTES TO THINK ABOUT AND DISCUSS

Curator and artist Glenn Barkley describes Franck Gohier's works as '**feral surrealism**' and '**a bit mongrel**' while Wendy Garden refers to Franck as having a '**punk sensibility**'.

What do you think these commentators mean by this? What qualities of Franck works do you think gave rise to this assessment? Create a word list of your own to describe the qualities of Franck's work.

Therese says about photography ***I love the way that whilst its true it's not true.***

Consider the role of photography in Therese's art practice.

Franck Gohier says, ***When dealing with serious political issues I find that humour mitigates against being overtly moral. It's a spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down.***

How have the artists used humour as a strategy in their work?

Both Franck and Therese compliment their arts practice with graphic design practices. Franck runs Red Hand Prints and Therese founded Green Ant Research Arts and Publishing with others in the 1990s. She also has a graphic design business Black Dog and is infamous for her satirical LittlePrick series which ape magazine covers.

Why do you think this way of working appeals to these artists?

Explore the artists' practice in the context of the graphic art of protest in Australia through poster collectives such as Earthworks Poster Collective [Tin Sheds Workshop at Sydney University], Redback Graphix [Wollongong], Jalak Graphics [Northern Territory].

In her catalogue essay for *Some Like it Hot*, curator Wendy Garden states ***The tropics are both a place and an idea***. What do you think she means by this? How are perceptions of place created? Consider the symbolic, sensory and emotional aspects as well as physical attributes. How does place intersect with national, cultural and personal identity? Explore the impact of place on the work of Franck and Therese.

RESEARCH AND WRITING ACTIVITY

Research the work of these two artists further.

Use the recommended resources in this kit to further explore the breadth and depth of their work and follow the development of their careers as artists.

Use the quotes for discussion or a perspective or comment you come across in your research elsewhere as a starting point to talk about the artists' work from a particular point-of-view.

Write a short essay that highlights a particular theme evident in the artists' practice.

You may write about one artist or both.

Refer to at least four artworks.

Design a two page document that includes image and text.

Collate into an e-mag of class writing.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS

appropriation
archetype
bricolage
collage
colonialism
ephemera
femininity
feminism
femme fatale
gender
idealise
juxtaposition
heterosexist
machismo
masculinity
melodrama
montage
motif
mysogyny
mythologise
narcissicism
Narcissus
parody
pastiche
patriarchy
protagonist
pun
satire
stereotype
symbol
symbolic
trope

QUOTES FOR DISCUSSION

FRANCK GOHIER

I do not place too much emphasis on explaining my paintings to an audience. Some are obvious, some are ambiguous, and others yet are totally absurdist. I do however invite the viewer to explore the visuals, to read the titles, to allow themselves to imagine what they may interpret the painting to be from their own subjectivity.

Franck Gohier
www.mitchellfineartgallery.com

People interest me the most. Their cultural backgrounds, views on life, motives, fears, aspirations and so on. And also how these elements necessarily help shape history and events. I often feature elements of the Territory to speak about the vitality of my own experiences living here and how this part of Australia is simply a microcosm that reflects all of humanity. 'Same but different' as we say in the North.

Franck Gohier, 2019
<https://artistprofile.com.au/franck-gohier/>

When dealing with serious political issues I find that humour mitigates against being overtly moral. It's a spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down.

Franck Gohier, 2019
<https://artistprofile.com.au/franck-gohier/>

My work is a form of urban archaeology. I often go to lawn sales, op shops, the tip shop, local historical sites, sifting through to find the detritus of Northern Territory history – scraps and objects imbued with a story that I can use in my artwork. I often find objects on eBay or in antique stores when I travel. Friends who know what a mad collector I am also bring me treasures occasionally. I have an extensive library of historical and art publications to research from and the local archive is only a 15-minute walk from my studio.

Franck Gohier, 2019
<https://artistprofile.com.au/franck-gohier/>

To live in the far north of Australia is to experience an amalgam of colloquialisms, Indigenous influences, Asian flavours, and a hint of the residual European 'mother country'. If nothing else, my conclusion would be that it is our irreverent sense of humour that consolidates this essentially disparate collective of humans as 'Australian'.

Franck Gohier, 2022
www.mitchellfineartgallery.com

Franck Gohier's artwork is steeped in his political and social consciousness. Satirical, politically and socially motivated his work is a reflection of society and its faults, frailties and triumphs.

www.mitchellfineartgallery.com

Gohier's work sits in an intersection between the global and the local, and its magic lies in the way it situates the international phenomenon of Pop art within a very local, regional context.

Glenn Barkly,
 1000 miles from everywhere, MAGNT, 2018, p5

Franck Gohier's punchy irreverent humour combines an acute sense of the absurd with shrewd commentary to expose the vanities, foibles, delusions and struggles that characterise contemporary society.

Wendy Garden,
 1000 miles from everywhere, MAGNT, 2018, p21

Phantom is the 'white man's fantasy of invincibility, a poster boy for early 20th Century imperialist thinking that espoused Western might and moral righteousness.

Wendy Garden,
 1000 miles from everywhere, MAGNT, 2018, p22

Gohier's practice is built upon a vast cultural substratum that spans the disciplines of art-making, social commentary, and historical inquiry – mobilising elements of all, without ever committing to one.

Tai Mitsuji, writer, art historian and curator

THERESE RITCHIE

We all have our blank spots where we don't want to look at stuff, but if I find that I am resisting life, I make art about it to help understand and feel it. If you take something on board and feel into it, you can develop more compassion and empathy; tease it out and maybe make a picture about it. There's nothing more satisfying than being able to make a picture about a complicated issue.

Therese Ritchie, artist

I realised there is a kind of triangle – we have a perpetrator, we have a victim and we have witnesses. Most of us are witnesses and as witnesses we have to start speaking out. If you have enough witnesses who speak out and speak against the perpetrator, you can get societal change. As an artist, I have had this belief system that if you could hold the experience of a person's story – no matter how far outside the realm of your own experience it is – if you can hold it for long enough and make a work about it that creates a dialogue – it can give people time and space. It honours them and it actually lays bare the perpetrators.

Therese Ritchie,
Wendy Garden, *Therese Ritchie:
Burning Hearts*, MAGNT, 2019, p8

Already existing images carry the weight of the past and cultures and a whole lot of things and you can decode it and its fun.

Therese Ritchie,
Burning Hearts video, MAGNT, 2019

I've always loved symbolism in art and in painting... Looking at a flower, a deer, a dog... There's a whole language in here and all these things mean something so this artist is speaking this visual language and its coded and its beautiful and it's so exciting.

Therese Ritchie,
Burning Hearts video, MAGNT, 2019

My emotional reaction or emotional connection to things underpins a lot of my work.

Therese Ritchie,
Burning Hearts video, MAGNT, 2019

Collage is fantastic because you have complete control but no control because you're using all these different elements.

Therese Ritchie,
Burning Hearts video, MAGNT, 2019

I go and hunt for images because I like to trawl and look for images, photograph things or see images in books and magazines or on the internet and then I pick parts of the images that inspire me.

Therese Ritchie,
Burning Hearts video, MAGNT, 2019

It occurred to me one day that you have to share yourself. I think when an artist makes work about anything, quintessentially there's always part of themselves in there, something pushing.

Therese Ritchie
<https://www.offtheleash.net.au/features/visual-arts/2019/10/therese-ritchie-burning-hearts>

Ritchie's images draw their viewers in, but they allow no easy resolutions.

Dr Julie Roberts,
catalogue essay, *Beautiful*, Sept 2005

As we come to expect, Ritchie is deeply concerned with the irony of race relations. Here is the combination of veiled hostility and wary intimacy that is so characteristic of settler societies. Along the beachhead at Nightcliff we see these complicated and contested relationships played out on a daily basis in the interactions between police and public, Larrakia and longgrassers, families and friends, tourists and the media.

Dr Sylvia Kleinert,
catalogue essay, *Beautiful*, Sept 2005

Being a truth-teller is not an easy path, but those of you who know Therese, know that she isn't interested in another road. She couldn't create and she could not live with herself if she wasn't honest in her creative work and in her life.

Chips Mackinolty,
*Therese Ritchie:
Burning Hearts*, Artlink, 2020

Their [Therese's images] power also lies in their arresting beauty and their commitment to uncomfortable truths in the confrontation with our history.

Chips Mackinolty,
*Therese Ritchie:
Burning Hearts*, Artlink, 2020

At the heart of Therese Ritchie's extensive oeuvre represented here—the burning heart if you will—is a refusal to compromise as an artist. Her work is deliberately historically derivative in style, but clearly empowering to a community, and brandishes its politics for the benefit of developing a greater awareness of the lives of individuals enlarged upon through Ritchie's journalistic agency and love of storytelling.

Aboriginal journalist, Lorena Allam
<https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4811/therese-ritchie-burning-hearts/>

Ritchie creates her images through a process of digital collage. She scavenges art historical fragments and popular culture imagery and pastiches them together to create composite images that recalibrate the meaning of the parts into a new proposition.

Wendy Garden,
Some Like it Hot, Artback NT, 2023, p

Art and activism exist in equal proportions in the artistic practice of Therese Ritchie. As an 'artist', art is the tool of her social action. Her art prods, provokes, directs, and intervenes in the social, environmental, and political structures that surround her. For more than forty years, Ritchie has produced works that provoke reactions, thought and discussion through her careful and controlled use of imagery that is sublime and disturbing in equal measure.

Miranda Wallace,
Therese Ritchie: Photography at the Crossroads,
Queensland Art Gallery, 2012

A resident Darwin artist, photographer, graphic designer and “digital Collagist” of more than 30 years standing Ritchie has wielded her gaze across the political and social life of the region with sensitive insight, often in company with her creative partner and brother-in-arms Chips Mackinolty... Ritchie’s finely grained sensibility born of all she has witnessed and experienced in the ‘paradise of sadness’ that is the Northern Territory, has taken her work beyond photo-journalism or biographical documentary. She goes where other images-makers of the Northern Territory frontier have rarely dared to venture: into a heart of darkness of our own making.

Anita Angel,
Looking at Art CDU Art Collection, CDU, 2013

Therese Ritchie is a truth teller. She tells the truth about this country and its history. Her work reflects the collision points of denial in our society, points that are everywhere you look.

Lorena Allam,
journalist, presenter and producer,
ABC Radio National

Photography is both her mainstay and her muse. It was through the lens of the camera that her artistic sensibility was first sharpened and it is the medium to which she constantly turns to make sense of the world around. For Ritchie the lens of the camera is more than just an augmented eye, or some sort of barrier between herself and the world, rather it is a way of filtering, deciphering and honing in on a critical moment.

Wendy Garden,
Therese Ritchie: Burning Hearts, MAGNT, 2019, p7

Harnessing the ethos of the political poster movement of the 1970s and 80s, her [Therese Ritchie’s] visual hijinks combine found imagery with text and irreverent humour to challenge the inequities and injustices she observes living in the Top End of Australia,

Wendy Garden,
Therese Ritchie: Burning Hearts, MAGNT, 2019, p7

With a fierce social conscience she [Therese Ritchie] spotlights perceived racism, hypocrisy, self interest and ineptitude with a ‘take no prisoners’ approach.

Wendy Garden,
Therese Ritchie: Burning Hearts, MAGNT, 2019, p7

The only way to live in this world is to actually go to the uncomfortable places in an attempt to experience and to understand them; incorporate them somehow because you can’t live your life in fear of what makes you uncomfortable, thus the work.

Therese Ritchie

RECOMMENDED REFERENCES

WEBSITES

<https://thereseritchie.com/>

<https://www.redhandprints.net/>

[Some Like it Hot - Artback NT](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Garden, W, *Some Like it Hot*, Artback NT, 2022

Ed. Wood W, Dr. Garden W, Barkley G, *Franck Gohier: A thousand miles from everywhere*, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, 2018

Garden W, *Therese Ritchie, Burning Hearts*, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, 2019

Angel A, *Looking at Art: Charles Darwin University Art Collection*, Charles Darwin University, 2013

Angel A, *Not Dead Yet, A Retrospective Exhibition*, Therese Ritchie and Chips Mackinolty, 2012

ARTICLES

Chips Mackinolty, *Therese Ritchie: Burning Hearts*, Artlink, Feb 5, 2020

<https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4811/therese-ritchie-burning-hearts/>

Julie Ewington, *Fire and Brimstone: Therese Ritchie*, The Cross Arts Project

<https://www.mixcloud.com/thecrossartprojects/fire-and-brimstone-therese-ritchie-interview-by-julie-ewington/>

Jeremy Eccles, *Therese Ritchie: burning hearts*, Art Almanac, 2019

art-almanac.com.au/therese-ritchie-burning-hearts/

In Open Cut exhibition, protest art challenges visitors to take action, March 30, 2018

<https://theconversation.com/in-open-cut-exhibition-protest-art-challenges-visitors-to-take-action-93574>

[Darwin artist Therese Ritchie celebrates 100 magazine covers for her satirical political art project Little Prick - ABC News](#)

[Darwin kidney disease exhibition depicts Tony Abbott and cabinet ministers on dialysis - ABC News](#)

AUDIO VISUAL

Artback NT, *Some Like it Hot*, 2023

Franck video from MAGNT exh how to access?

Series of short videos about the artist from different stage of his career

www.redhandprints.net/at-the-movies.html

Franck Gohier in his studio

<https://artguide.com.au/video/franck-gohier-a-thousand-miles-from-everywhere/>

The makers: Franck Gohier

ABC Radio National interview, broadcast Wed 13 Nov, 2019

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/the-art-show/the-makers:-franck-gohier/11696188>

A compilation of short videos about Franck Gohier's practice on his website

<https://www.redhandprints.net/at-the-movies.html>

Therese Ritchie: Burning Hearts, exhibition video, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xc8LD79Or0I>

Therese Ritchie: burning hearts, artist talk, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory
[\(22\) Therese Ritchie: burning hearts | artist talk - YouTube](#)

Therese Ritchie Artist Talk, Contemporary Australia: Women, QAGOMA
[\(22\) Therese Ritchie Artist Talk | Contemporary Australia: Women | GOMA - YouTube](#)

Fire and Brimstone: Therese Ritchie, interview by Julie Ewington

[Fire and Brimstone: Therese Ritchie, Chips Mackinolty, Todd Williams & Djon Mundine — 29 August to 26 September 2020 - The Cross Art Projects](#)

FURTHER RESEARCH

What Art Tells us about gender (NB Includes ads)
<https://youtu.be/K7rANu5vlnA>

Poppy Collier – Representations of women in art history
<https://www.poppycd.art/the-representation-of-women-in-art-throughout-history/>

Gender Stereotypes in Advertising - shEqual
<https://shequal.com.au/get-real/genderstereotypes>

[Representations of Masculinity and Femininity in Advertising - ANA Educational Foundation \(aef.com\)](#)

Vitamin C+, *Collage in Contemporary Art*, Phaidon, 2023

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